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CHILD LABOR: AN ADAPTIVE STRATEGY AMONG SYRIAN REFUGEES

By

Tasneem Karim

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for Graduation *summa cum laude*  
and  
for Graduation with Honors from the Department of Anthropology

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates child labor as an adaptive strategy among Syrian refugees living in urban host communities in the Middle East. While research has shown an increasing prevalence of child labor in these communities, an anthropological investigation into how it manifests and why it persists is valuable in elucidating the implications of systemic barriers to socioeconomic success and the dissonances in discourse regarding child labor between families and aid workers. Accordingly, this research is based on transnational, multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork conducted in an urban host community in Irbid, Jordan, humanitarian/government offices in Irbid and Amman, Jordan, and the resettled Syrian refugee community in Louisville, Kentucky. Using grounded theory, interviews with the families and aid workers were analyzed to search for patterns in the narratives that were provided. The emerging themes included the use of adaptive strategy through parental investment, discrepancies in discourse between families and aid workers, and the dynamic relationship between culture and displacement. The primary dissonance in discourse appeared in the aid workers' culturalist explanations to child labor despite the absence of child labor in the cultural framework of the interviewed families. Nonetheless, the role of cultural conceptualizations of education in the decisions that led to child labor, in the case of one family, highlighted the disjointed and fragmented nature of culture itself. Through study of the relevant discourses and the various driving forces of child labor, this thesis stresses the crucial need for holistic strategies in child labor initiatives led by humanitarian organizations.

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## INTRODUCTION

The revolutionary sentiments of the Arab Spring reverberated differently across the Middle East, echoing in the form of large scale demonstrations for reform through economic and social justice. As a result, the landscapes of power, democracy, and conflict in the region have been indelibly transformed. While some countries such as Tunisia experienced largely peaceful transitions of power and continue to function as a successful post-revolution state, the Arab Spring's consequences for the Syrian Arab Republic were unique. They led to the eruption of a full-scale civil war that has precipitated the largest refugee and humanitarian crisis since World War II. The implications of the war have been multifold, forcing a massive exodus of Syrians in search of safety, shelter, and aid, and the opportunity for a life away from the violence and prying eyes of an oppressive regime. Although the media spotlight materialized well after the onset of humanitarian devastation, it eventually resulted in significant international attention to the plight of Syrian refugees in camps and host communities in the region and beyond. Nonetheless, the complex intersection of systemic barriers to socioeconomic success, and survival in spite of them, has been largely overlooked in mainstream media discourse.

The increasing prevalence of child labor in Syrian refugee communities in countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey is one outcome of such an intersection (Kuppers & Ruhmann 2016). Recent research has exposed an increasing number of children in these host communities joining the local labor market and in some cases, foregoing education entirely (*ibid.*). This thesis contributes to the understanding of the sociocultural, economic, and familial dynamics that undergird the statistics on child labor. Specifically, it investigates how child labor exists, if at all, within the cultural framework of the Syrian refugees, and how it may constitute an adaptive strategy in urban host communities. In doing so, this thesis dissects the discourse regarding child

labor at three levels: Syrian refugee heads of households, Syrian refugee children, and aid workers/government officials involved in child labor projects. Secondly, it explores the fragility, and yet adaptability, of culture in the midst of displacement, examining how families' conceptualizations of child labor transform through time and place, and what factors drive such changes.

I approached this subject through transnational, multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork conducted in an urban host community in Irbid, Jordan, humanitarian/government offices in Amman, Jordan, and the resettled Syrian refugee community in Louisville, Kentucky. Using a theoretical framework grounded in the sociological theory of family adaptive strategies, human behavioral ecological theory of parental investment, and the imposition of Western notions of childhood, I argue that, in Syrian refugee communities, child labor exists mainly as an adaptive strategy in response to systemic barriers to socioeconomic success, which are largely overlooked by humanitarian forces that are inherently shaped by Western ideals and preoccupied with legal issues surrounding child labor. This adaptive strategy, I contend, exists in spite of former cultural conceptualizations of child labor, which have been unsettled, and in some cases shattered, due to the destructive forces of displacement.

This thesis is organized into five sections: (1) a literature review, (2) methodology and data analysis, (3) understanding child labor as an adaptive strategy through parental investment using a human behavioral ecological model, (4) a discussion of the discrepancies in discourse of child labor, and (5) an analysis of the fragility of culture in response to displacement. Through application of the aforementioned theoretical framework to the narratives of Syrian refugees as expressed in semi-structured interviews, I critically examine child labor as an adaptive behavior in these communities, exploring how ecological forces within urban host communities compel



heads of households to utilize this adaptive strategy in order to increase economic fitness at the familial level. By identifying incongruences in discourse, I expose how humanitarian ideologies portray child labor as a cultural phenomenon in communities, where families' conceptualizations of childhood have been forcibly reconfigured. In doing so, I argue against a culturalist explanation in favor of understanding child labor as an adaptive strategy in Syrian refugee communities.

## I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the course of human history, children have been involved in labor of various types and degrees across the world. Child labor was an integral component of the agricultural economy worldwide, prevailing in the concept of family farms and family labor units. However, the advent of the industrial revolution brought about a sharp increase in children partaking as individual wage earners in extremely hazardous work, which often entailed long hours and posed major health risks. This prompted labor movements and reforms, leading to the establishment of laws that set restrictions in Europe and the United States (Griffin 2014). The outcry against child labor can also be linked to increased mechanization of industry and compulsory education for children (Boyden 1997). Both the formation of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1919 and the ratification of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 marked key turning points in the shift towards a humanitarian movement to end child labor, which has been characterized by "...a moral preoccupation with abolition through legislation and a zealous belief in the desirability of extending Western childhood ideals to poor families worldwide." (Nieuwenhuys 1996: 241). Child labor, defined by the ILO as "work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and

mental development,” is a reality faced by more than 160 million children today (Diallo, Etienne & Mehran 2013).

### **Defining Child Labor**

Regardless of the complex nature of child labor and the various degrees and types that take shape, nearly all forms of child labor are deemed unacceptable by the existing humanitarian and legal frameworks, which structure its local, domestic, and global conceptualizations. The definition prescribed by ILO, as mentioned above, is an outcome of ILO’s conventions on child labor, which have propelled the global agenda on child labor (Clerk 2011). Ratified by the Jordanian government in 1988, ILO Convention No. 138 set 15 years as the general minimum age for employment and 18 years for hazardous work (ILO 1973). This Convention states that in the case of insufficiently developed economies and educational facilities, the minimum age can be set at 14 years initially. ILO Convention No. 182, which was written in 1999 and ratified by Jordan in 2000, focused on the worst forms of child labor: slavery, trafficking, prostitution, and production and trafficking of drugs or any work that, by nature, endangered children’s safety and health.

In an effort to consolidate previous documents rooted in protecting children’s rights, such as the ILO conventions and the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was widely adopted in 1989 (Clerk 2011). Ratified by Jordan in 1991, the CRC is the “first legally binding international document that defines the range of human rights applicable to children, and is especially authoritative in that it has been the most endorsed human rights treaty yet written” (Tamkeen 2015: 7). Interestingly, the United States is one of only two countries that have not yet ratified the document. Article 32 of the CRC (1989: 9) denotes child labor as, “any work that is likely to be hazardous or to

interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development". In a noteworthy critique of such child labor legislation, anthropologist Olga Niuwenhuys (1996: 241) argues,

In spite of such criticism, the neoclassical belief that child labor is essentially a problem of household economics has continued to be espoused in the studies of child labor published under the auspices of national and international agencies such as UNICEF, WHO, and the ILO...typical of these publication is a moral preoccupation with abolition through legislation and a zealous belief in the desirability of extending Western childhood ideals to poor families worldwide.

### **Defining Childhood**

The doctrines and laws that define child labor rest on the universalization of a children's rights-based approach, which outlines inhumane and illegal activities that may jeopardize children's right to a childhood. Thus, fundamental to this study's discussion of the conceptualizations of child labor is the understanding of who children are and what constitutes childhood. As stated in Article 1 of the CRC, a child is defined as someone who is under the age of 18 years (CRC 1989). The CRC's prolific dispersal of a global notion of children's rights has shifted the understanding of childhood from the context of local suppositions to a universal arena, where there may not be consensus regarding the concept of childhood (Clerk 2011). It is important to consider how doctrines defining child labor have propagated Western notions of childhood and child labor without regard to the consideration of how,

...the conditions and shape of childhood tend to vary in central tendency from one population to another, are sensitive to population-specific contexts, and are not comprehensible without detailed knowledge of the socially and culturally organized

contexts that give them meaning (Levine 2007: 247).

Anthropologist Christine Gailey touches on this by asserting, “That childhood is a cultural construct is not news, but appreciating the intersections of class, ethnicity and gender in defining childhood may be” (1999: 116). Levine’s sensitivity to population-specific contexts can be applied to Syrian refugee families, who have endured complete upheavals of sense of space, home, and safety, resulting in role reversals within the family unit as a consequence of illness, disappearance, injury, and death, and many other ramifications of high-intensity armed conflict and displacement.

A relativist approach to understanding conceptions of childhood, as implied by anthropologist Levine, points to the prominence of the concept of cultural relativism in anthropology, where it has become a defining, yet contested, feature of the field. It has dominated both anthropological theory and practice, but such an approach has been viewed as controversial by human rights activists urging anthropologists to have firm stances on key human rights issues (Fluehr-Lobban 1995). This thesis draws on contesting discourses regarding culture and rights, both of which are of significant interest here because, “The intense and enduring debate between universalism and relativism in the field of human rights is premised on a fixed and abstract conception of both culture and rights” (Merry 2001: 31). Author Heather Montgomery, whose work on child prostitution in Thailand is considered as a classic in anthropology, highlights the contradictions that are inherent in the universalist approach found in human rights doctrines like the CRC. She states,

“While its provisions apply universally and equally to all children, it is individual children who suffer when their rights are infringed. The effect of human rights violations can only be felt by the individual and the consequences only suffered by the individual.

Indeed, it is easier to measure the failures of the Convention when its articles are dishonored than it is to measure its success” (2001: 85).

Universalism denotes a global, yet Euro-American centric, application of rights whereas cultural relativism argues for consideration of and respect for differences that may exist in local cultures. Conversely, the fluidity and historically-produced nature of both concepts must be considered. Cultural relativism gained support in anthropology during the early twentieth century, when anthropologists had to contend with the misuse of evolutionary theory and the portrayals of non-Western communities as primitive (Merry 2001). This materialized in a rejection of the UN’s Universal Declaration on Human Rights by the American Anthropological Association in 1947. Members of the association believed that there was a, “...failure of the universal values of the Declaration to recognize the validity of different ways of life” (*ibid.*: 34). The proliferation of the divisions of the UN and its documents, driven by universalist underpinnings, resulted in the expansion of a rights-based approach to humanitarianism. This approach was mainly promoted by ambassadors from America and Europe, establishing a strong link between Western cultural ideals and the emergence of rights discourse in humanitarian work (Leary 1990).

This conjunction is expanded upon by Merry (2001: 38-39), who suggests that both rights and culture, as concepts, have changed since their inception in humanitarianism and anthropology, respectively:

Over the past fifty years, the conception of human rights has shifted from its original meaning, rooted in liberal theory, of civil and political rights to an expanded notion of collective, cultural, and social and economic rights...Culture is now understood as a process, developing and changing through actions and struggles over meaning, rather

than as a static shared system of beliefs and values – the dominant view in 1947.

In doing so, Merry asserts that cultural relativism and universalism along with culture and rights, today, cannot be seen as absolutely opposed to each other. However, the largely global ratification of the ILO Conventions and the CRC, and the continued application of these documents to the legal frameworks that are instituted by states suggests that childhood, as a concept in humanitarianism, remains fixed and uniform regardless of cultural or environmental context. Montgomery addresses this conjunction of the Western ideology of childhood in human rights discourse and cultural relativism, and asserts that,

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is premised upon the notion that concepts such as human rights or children’s rights are not negotiable at the local level and that differences between cultures and between individuals within culture can be ignored. The boundaries of childhood have become fixed and the parameters of a ‘normal’ or acceptable childhood have been set (2001: 82).

Nonetheless, adoption of a relativist approach to understanding conceptions of childhood in different cultures, as stated by Levine, ignores the unbound and often internally complex, stratified, and conflicted nature of culture itself. Thus, outlining the emergence of cultural relativism and universalism, and the conjunction of the two concepts within human rights elucidates their roles in shaping how and why Euro-American-centric conceptions of childhood have proliferated and continue to dominate human rights discourse. Montgomery highlights the dangerous implications of this trend in humanitarianism by stating that documents such as the CRC have, “...a tendency to misinterpret, and even sometimes to demonize, other cultural attitudes towards children” (*ibid.*: 84).

The most discernable assumption manifest in the Western ideology of childhood is one

that deems a Western conceptualization as morally upright or rather, higher, than those of non-Western communities. Within this assumption, then, is the idea that there is a progressive tendency in society, and Western states have achieved or are the closest to the final stages of progression. Thus, there exists a dangerous teleology in human rights doctrines, which impose a “developed” notion of childhood on the “less developed”. Defined by Ernst Mayr as a concept concerned with an end goal and a progressive narrative focused on developing towards this goal, he explains teleology as a belief, “...that changes in the world were teleological in nature, leading to ever greater perfection” (1998: 38). Mayr denies the existence of such a concept since, “trends toward perfection are not found in nature nor have any mechanisms been discovered that could produce such trends” (*ibid.*). Anthropology’s aversion to teleological notions that are rooted in social Darwinism furthers the anthropologist’s support for a relativist approach in humanitarian work on child labor. However, as stated above, complications arise with cultural relativism, because it assumes a comprehensive, coherent, and harmonious nature of culture.

### **Child Labor in Pre-Conflict Syria**

Since this study predicates itself on understanding the parameters of child labor in the cultural context of Syrian refugee communities, the prevalence of child labor in Syria prior to the onset of the crisis in 2011 must be considered. In the legal framework of child labor in Syria, as per the Syrian Labor Law, employment of children who are 15 years old and older is permitted for certain types of work (ILO 2012). The 2006 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) for the Syrian Arab Republic, conducted in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) by the Central Bureau of Statistics, Pan- Arab Project for Family Health, and the League of Arab States, found that four percent of children between the ages of 5 and 14 years worked (*ibid.*). The total percentage does not represent the total number of child laborers, as

children may have been working several jobs at once. Furthermore, the MICS claims that the percentage increases in rural areas (5.5 percent) and drops significantly to 2.6 percent in the context of urban environments. It also details the differences in prevalence by governorate and socioeconomic status, noting that affluent governorates had significantly lower percentages of children involved in labor (*ibid.*).

An older study conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, FAFO, and UNICEF in 2002 estimated that 17.8 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 17 years were involved in labor (ILO 2012). Even prior to the inception of the Syrian conflict, reliable, up-to-date statistics regarding child labor did not exist, which is likely a result of the lack in a national child labor survey. Conducted between 2010 - 2011, ILO's National Study on the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Syria attempted to fill this gap by identifying the driving factors for child labor and providing appropriate recommendations (*ibid.*). The national study concluded that poverty was the most significant driving factor; specifically, it discussed worsening living conditions due to a drought the region had been experiencing since 2006<sup>1</sup>. The drought had resulted in large-scale migration from the eastern region to coastal or southern areas, and large urban concentrations such as Damascus and Aleppo. The national study states, "These migrants end up living in tents after taking their children out of school, especially the girls, to work during the summer and ensure a stock of food supplies for the winter" (ILO 2012: 98). Additionally, it discussed "a spread of a culture of acceptance" of children working in place of their mother. ILO (*ibid.*: 106) states,

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<sup>1</sup> The impact of the drought was further exacerbated by government policies that corrected fuel and fertilizer prices. It affected areas in not only Syria, but also Jordan, Palestine/Israel, Iraq, and Turkey. Scholars have suggested that the devastating environmental implications of the drought, paired with the Syrian government's lack of action in trying to assuage its effects on the agricultural economy, were contributing factors that led to the civil unrest that unfolded in 2011 (Greenwood 2014).



The research team encountered many mothers of working children who stated that they would be frowned upon if they were to work – it is socially unacceptable, whether it be from the husband who forbids his wife to work, or from the social environment that perceives child labor in a positive light if it prevents the woman from working.

The narrative presented here by the ILO national study suggests that, at least to a certain degree, a combination of adaptive strategies, utilized due to environmentally driven displacement, poverty, and norms associated with the gendered cultural framework of rural Syrians, contributed to the prevalence of child labor in rural areas in pre-conflict Syria.

### **Child Labor in the Context of Jordan**

Of the over five million registered Syrian refugees, 659,246 have fled to Jordan (UNHCR 2017). However, the Jordanian government estimates that unregistered Syrians bring the total close to 1.5 million (Malkawi 2015). As per the Population and Housing Census released in 2016, non-Jordanians make up thirty percent of the Jordanian population with Syrian refugees representing nearly sixteen percent, making Jordan one of the most responsive host countries along with Lebanon and Turkey (UNICEF). In response to bombings near the border, strain on public services, and overburdened infrastructures, the Jordanian border was made impermeable for Syrian refugees in June 2016. Rising costs of housing, and access to and availability of water, electricity, and medical services are examples of infrastructures that have become strained. Ramifications of such strain include the frustration and grievances of already economically marginalized Jordanians (European Parliament 2017). In consolidating a collection of interviews that embody alternative Jordanian voices that stand in solidarity with the Syrian crisis, Dr. Hermann (2015: 4) for the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung recognizes,

While many in the Jordanian government are trying hard to provide a safe space for

Syrians seeking refuge there, mainstream discourse in Jordan is becoming disturbingly discriminatory, racist, and anti-refugee. “The Syrian refugees are a burden on Jordan” has become a common refrain. Indeed, at times it seems as if Syrians are being held personally responsible for all of manifold challenges that Jordan currently faces.

The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (2016: 9), in collaboration with the Jordan Response Platform and the United Nations, created a three-year (2016-2018) response plan which “further integrates refugee and resilience responses into one single plan for each sector and places the resilience of national systems and institutions at the core of the response.” One of the plan’s objectives is to increase income generation and employment opportunities for vulnerable Jordanian men and women because, “The Syria crisis has also increased the competition for work between vulnerable groups as refugees are often willing to accept any type of casual or informal work in an effort to cover basic living expenses” (Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation et. al 2016: 83). In response to these issues, the Jordanian government agreed to issue 200,000 work permits for Syrian refugees in February of 2016 (Staton 2016). This was a highly controversial decision since only 36.3 percent of local Jordanians aged 15 years or older were employed in 2015 (UNDP 2015). However, only 35,000 of the projected 50,000 work permits were successfully issued in 2016, suggesting that there are many challenges that must be overcome for the program to work efficiently (Staton 2016). These challenges persist partly due to the lack of knowledge regarding the process of obtaining work permits and beliefs about it being prohibitively expensive (Tamkeen 2015: 15).

According to the National Child Labor Survey, which was published in 2016 and conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, approximately 1.89 percent of children in Jordan (nearly 76,000) are engaged in labor. This statistic is nearly double

the statistic that is published in the national survey conducted in 2007 (ILO 2016). Interestingly, the worker-population ratio was found to be the highest among Syrian children in comparison with all other nationalities, including Jordanians (Center for Strategic Studies 2007). This study was a large undertaking that covered 20,000 households across all twelve governorates of Jordan, including Zaatari camp. The findings are supported by a 2015 inspection done by the Ministry of Labor, which found that the majority of child laborers were Syrian refugee children who served as the sole breadwinner of their families (Bureau of International Labor Affairs 2015: 2). The significant prevalence of this phenomenon in Jordan warrants an understanding of the environment-specific factors that shape child labor, which are entangled and overlapping in complex ways.

#### *Driving Factors*

Difficulty in obtaining work permits is recognized as a push factor for child labor amongst Syrian refugee children, some of who work because of the belief that there are lower risks of prosecution for working without a permit compared to adults (Kuppers & Ruhmann 2016). This is one of many factors contributing to the deteriorating socioeconomic statuses of Syrian refugee families living in Jordan. According to the Jordan Home Visits Report conducted in 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) found that two out of three Syrian refugees were living below the Jordanian absolute poverty line. Economic vulnerability is exacerbated by rising costs of rent in Jordan and inadequate support from both state and non-state players (Kuppers & Ruhmann 2016). These are just a few of the multitude of push factors leading to the drastic increases of child labor. According to a report entitled *Child Labor Report 2016 (ibid.)*, the overall push and pull factors for child labor include the aforementioned economic reasons, exhaustion of other coping mechanisms, lack of access to

education, health situation, family situation, and lack of humanitarian assistance provided by UNHCR, NGOs, and host governments. Specifically, in regard to Jordan, the report states that these factors include the lack of financial means for medical treatment or insufficient health insurance, guaranteeing education for younger siblings, role of being the eldest child of the family, single-parent led households, and lack of documentation, which further impedes access to education.

### *Access to Education*

In Jordan, public education is free for all residents, including Syrian refugee children (Tamkeen 2015). However, Human Rights Watch (2016) reported that during the 2015-2016 school year, approximately 36 percent of school-aged registered Syrian refugee children were not enrolled in formal education. A multitude of barriers obstruct Syrian children's access to education, including the several caveats that exist in enrollment for formal education. First, many refugees that reside in host communities in areas outside the designated refugee camps lack documentation because of the strict enforcement of the "bailout" system<sup>2</sup> by the Jordanian government. As a result, once they leave camps, many families are unable to access humanitarian assistance and subsidized healthcare and enroll in formal education. Second, the "three-year rule" enforced by the Ministry of Education prohibits any child who has been out of school for more than three years from enrolling in formal schooling (Christophersen 2015). The protracted nature of this crisis means that the reality for most children who have been fleeing conflict is that they have been doing so for several years. Flight usually does not occur in one

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<sup>2</sup> Refugees in Jordan were able to leave camps via an official process called "bailout" until 2015. There were several requirements for this, one of which was having a relative who was a Jordanian sponsor above the age of 35. However, in 2014, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) stopped issuing MoI cards to those who exited camps without authorization (bailout) and banned UNHCR from providing asylum seeker certificates to them (Norwegian Refugee Council 2016).

step – from home to another country; rather, it is typically a protracted process of moving from place to place within one’s own country before eventually crossing the border into another state. This can take several years. Since the publication of the Human Rights Watch report mentioned above, the Ministry of Education, and other ministries have begun to relax policies, such as the documentation requirement, and have established catch-up programs targeted at children aged 8 – 12 who are more than three years behind in schooling (Human Rights Watch 2016). Another barrier is the capacity of the education system and its infrastructure, such as classroom and teaching staff. Schools have begun to adapt by implementing “double-shift” programs so that several groups of students can be taught in one day (Tamkeen 2015). Nevertheless, according to the Ministry of Education, upwards of 35,000 students remain on waiting lists due to overcrowding of schools (Stiftung 2015). Furthermore, lack of public school buses makes it difficult for struggling families to afford transportation, especially in the case that schools with space aren’t easily accessible from host communities (Human Rights Watch 2016).

#### *Access to Health Services*

Almost immediately after the Syrian crisis began, the Jordanian government made it possible for Syrian refugees to access healthcare facilities for free and be treated the same as insured Jordanians as long as documentation – specifically, Ministry of Interior (MoI) cards – could be presented (Amnesty International 2016). However, due to the significant strain posed on the health infrastructure and other public services, the Jordanian government changed this policy in 2014 and made it a requirement for Syrian refugees with MoI cards to pay the same rates as uninsured Jordanians (*ibid.*). A UNHCR survey conducted in 2015 found that this policy caused a severe decrease in access to curative and preventative health service for Syrian refugees living in host communities (*ibid.*). In fact, this study found that 58.3 percent of Syrian adults

living with chronic conditions were unable to access healthcare services. Given the increasingly high prevalence of chronic diseases among the Syrian refugee population and the already existing structural barriers, this change in policy has exacerbated the health of refugee communities significantly.

### *Employers of Child Laborers*

In exploring the factors that contribute to the prevalence of child labor prevalence in Syrian communities in Jordan, it is important to examine the role of employers. An ILO study (2016) found that only 11 percent of employers admitted to recruiting children over the last 3-4 years, but 84 percent said that they employed children during the past 1-2 years. Although it is difficult to draw connections due to the lack of an in-depth study regarding the perspectives of employers of child laborers, the ease employers experience in employing Syrian children, who will agree to longer hours and lower wages, may justify the increase in recruitment. However, the study discovered that when asked about why they employed children, 46.7 percent of interviewed employers stated “empathy” as the reasoning. The study also notes, “The reason with the second highest number of responses was that children demand less pay.” (*ibid.*: 54). Furthermore, if employers of child laborers are caught by labor inspectors, they are fined 500 Jordanian Dinars (JD) (Tamkeen 2015). However, evidence presented by the Child Labor Department at the Ministry of Labor suggests that the administration of fines doesn’t always occur in cases of both Jordanian and Syrian child labor (*ibid.*).

### *Sectors of Employment*

Due to the extreme vulnerability of refugees, especially refugee children, the barriers to exploitation by employers are weak. These exploitative tactics may vary depending on the sector of employment. According to Koppers & Ruhmann (2016: 21), the variety of sectors that Syrian

refugee children work in include “cleaning work, selling in shops or in the streets, work in restaurants, collecting trash in the street, work on construction sites, loading/carrying materials, as well as work as a mechanic or carpenter are all found both inside and outside the camps.” According to the study done by ILO (2016), the majority of children involved in the labor market are engaged in selling foods and/or drinks (38 percent). Eighteen percent of the children interviewed were found to be providing services such as hairdressing or shoe cleaning whereas sixteen percent were found to be “vending”, which is defined as retail excluding foods and drinks (*ibid.*). Moreover, many children are found in the agriculture sector, especially in areas such as Mafraq and the Jordan Valley, where large farms employ Syrian family units for seasonal work (Tamkeen 2015). Tamkeen also comments on the exploitative nature of this sector, which “...is also ripe for exploitation and abuse, with most Syrian families recruited informally, and consequently facing extraordinarily low wages and long hours” (*ibid.*: 20).

#### *Preventative and Protective Framework within Jordanian Law*

As discussed in an earlier section, Jordan ratified both ILO Convention No. 138 and No. 182, which are the two fundamental documents focused on child labor in international law. While Convention No. 138 sets the minimum age for employment at 15 years of age, national legislation regarding children incidentally surpasses its requirements (*ibid.*). Under Article 73 of the Jordanian Labor Law No. (8) of 1996, the minimum age is set at 16 years of age, after which education is not compulsory (*ibid.*). Conversely, under Article 74, the minimum age is set at 18 years for hazardous work that may endanger the health of children (*ibid.*). However, children between the ages of 16 and 18 must not work for more than six hours a day and must be given a break after four hours of work (ILO). The National Framework for Child Labor, formulated by the Ministry of Labor in collaboration with ILO and UNICEF, is another mechanism in Jordan’s

preventative and protective framework; it has been instrumental in integrating the efforts among various ministries in the government including the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Social Development (Kuppers & Ruhmann 2016).

## II. METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

This thesis combines two phases of ethnographic data collection, both of which utilized semi-structured interviews with participants found using convenience sampling. Defined as a type of nonprobability sampling, convenience sampling involves participants who, “are sampled simply because they are “convenient” sources of data for researchers” (Lavrakas 2008: 149). The data collected in Jordan contains perspectives from three principal spheres: Syrian refugee heads of households, Syrian refugee children, and aid workers and a government official working on child labor initiatives. Thus, the narratives expressed in this set of data offers insight into differences that may exist in how child labor is conceptualized. The addition of the perspectives of resettled Syrian refugee heads of households in Louisville, Kentucky, on the other hand, contributes to the understanding of the fragile nature of culture as a result of displacement. In both phases of research, the families were interviewed in Arabic with the help of translators, who were briefed on aims of the study and ethical guidelines. Semi-structured interviews offered flexibility in discussion and the opportunity to collect comprehensive narratives. Apart from the affiliations of four of the five aid workers/government official to their respective organizations, the identities of participants are kept confidential. Both sets of data are used in conjunction with each other to explicate the multi-faceted nature of child labor. The cross-situational analysis of two groups – refugees in an urban host community and refugees resettled to a third country – was chosen to understand how changing circumstances impact families’ beliefs about child labor



and its necessity or lack thereof.

### **Irbid and Amman, Jordan**

The first phase was conducted over a period of three weeks in late April and early May 2017, resulting in 10 semi-structured interviews and one focus group discussion (FGD) (interview guides attached, Appendix B). Five Syrian refugee families were found through a local NGO in Irbid. The heads of households from these families participated in semi-structured interviews while one FGD was conducted with four children, all of whom were engaged in labor at the time; these interviews were conducted in Arabic. Semi-structured interviews were also used to engage with four aid workers and one government official in Jordan's capitol, Amman – the site of nearly all country-level humanitarian offices. All of these interviews were conducted in English, with the exception of one, which was done in Arabic with the help of a translator. Participants included representatives from an NGO in Irbid, ILO, Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Tamkeen Fields for Aid, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Retroactive approval from the University of Louisville Institutional Review Board was obtained for this phase of the study (17.1054).

Heads of households provided valuable insight and first-hand experience about the factors, constraints or social structures that pushed them to allow their children to work. Accordingly, they were asked questions that probed general demographics, household information, financial conditions, children's status in education, access to humanitarian aid, access to healthcare services, perceptions of child labor, and perceptions of the humanitarian definition of child labor. The perspectives of children were incorporated to understand how they conceptualized their involvement in labor, elucidating whether agency or socialization come about as a result. The viewpoints of aid workers and government officials, who were chosen

based on relevance and accessibility, are valuable as they may point to larger notions present in the humanitarian and legal arena. They were asked about the challenges they faced in implementing initiatives to curb child labor in Syrian refugee communities and their understanding of the role of culture in its high prevalence.

All interviews with the families were arranged to be held in one day, when the families had come to the NGO for a workshop. Throughout the course of the day, each head of household was interviewed in a private room. Both written and verbal consent were obtained prior to beginning the interview, and consent was received to make audio recordings (Arabic written and verbal consent form attached, Appendix A). The verbal consent included asking for permission to include his or her child in the focus group discussion. The written consent form stated the participants' privacy, confidentiality, and the right to refuse to participate in any component of the interview or terminate the interview altogether. In the case the participant was illiterate, the written consent form in addition to the verbal consent was read aloud to ensure comprehension. Children from four of the five families were gathered for the FGD in a private room, where individual verbal assent was received to ensure they did not feel pressured to partake in the interview. In order to maintain confidentiality, each child was given a questionnaire containing demographic questions prior to the discussion. The FGD was chosen as the form of data collection for children to mitigate power differentials and provide a secure and comfortable environment. The semi-structured interviews with aid workers and the government official entailed the same process of obtaining both verbal and written consent.

### **Louisville, Kentucky**

The second phase of research was conducted throughout December 2017 and January 2018. Approval from the University of Louisville Institutional Review Board was also obtained

for this phase of the study (17.1054). Three Syrian refugee families were found using local contacts in Louisville, a city where nearly 19,000 refugees have been resettled since 1993 (Kentucky Office of Refugees 2016). The economic and social strain caused by the large influx of refugees in in Irbid are absent in Louisville, where the barriers experienced by refugees are distinct. It is assumed that child labor does not take place in this community due to legal and educational requirements. Conducted in Arabic, the interviews in this phase involved only the heads of households. Following the protocol used during data collection in Jordan, the participants' consents were obtained using an informed consent form, which was read allowed by the translator (Appendix C). The guiding questions of the semi-structured interviews mirrored the questions that were used in Jordan with the exception of one question, which probed how their conceptualizations of child labor had changed since being resettled in the U.S (interview guide attached, Appendix D). All interviews took place in the homes of the participants, whose identities remain completely confidential throughout this thesis.

### **Challenges Encountered During Research**

Given the doubly-vulnerable nature of the communities in question (displaced and marginalized), securing interviews with Syrian refugee families posed a challenge in this study, although not an insurmountable one. Child labor, central to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century human rights discourse and legal framework, has become a taboo topic often invoking silence and shame. As a result of the combination of the topic and communities of interest, finding participants was not always easy. In Jordan, partnering with an NGO that the families were already familiar with helped establish access and a measure of trust. The NGO connection ensured that the families who were interviewed had children involved in labor. However, this was not the case in the Louisville phase of the study in which two of the three families claimed to not have been

previously involved in child labor. In Louisville, some potential participants did not consent to interviews, which was likely a result of the lack of a trusted connection and concerns with discussing a controversial topic in an unfamiliar environment.

### **Grounded Theory**

The exploratory nature of this thesis facilitates the use of grounded theory, which was first formulated by sociologists Glaser & Strauss in 1967 to provide a framework for discovering emerging patterns in data (Cohen and Crabtree 2006). Today, it is a widely recognized methodological framework used in qualitative research. According to H. Russell Bernard's *Research Methods in Anthropology* (2006: 463), grounded theory entails the following steps:

- (1) Produce transcripts of interviews and read through a small sample of text.
- (2) Identify potential analytical categories – that is, potential themes – that arise.
- (3) As the categories emerge, pull all the data from those categories together and compare them.
- (4) Think about how categories are linked together.
- (5) Use the relations among categories to build theoretical models, constantly checking the models against the data – particularly against negative cases.
- (6) Present the results of the analysis using exemplars, that is quotes from interviews that illuminate the theory.

Using grounded theory, this thesis is shaped into sections that expound the emerging patterns in the narratives of Syrian refugee families and aid workers/government official.

### **Terminology**

Within the parameters of this thesis, the term “household” is defined as a unit that pools resources and occupies a housing unit. According to anthropologist Brian Schwimmer (2003), the composition of a household must “accommodate ecological, demographic, economic realities that sometimes hinder people from setting up living arrangements according to their ideals.” It is

crucial to use this definition of “household” since more than a quarter of the 500,000 Syrian refugee households are led alone by female heads of households, who often have extended family members under their care (UNHCR 2014). A refugee is defined as per the 1951 UN Convention, as anyone who has been forced to flee because persecution or conflict, and is currently living outside their home country. Children of refugees in the context of this topic are considered as refugees. Although this definition does not precisely follow the ones enshrined in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, it is consistent with the conditions listed in these two instrumental components of international law. Registration with UNHCR is not used as a precondition for establishment as a refugee.

Although the head of household is typically the individual in sole charge of the household, for the purposes of this study, the head of the household is defined as a parent figure who cares for his/her household, even if he/she may not be the sole breadwinner. “Work” or “labor”, in relation to children working or being engaged in labor, will be considered as any form of employment (in any location) that provides financial compensation. Aid workers are defined as individuals employed by non-profits, non-governmental organizations, and national/international agencies that work to provide humanitarian aid and implement assistance programs. The perspective of only one government official is incorporated; although government agencies have drastically different methods and approaches to humanitarian efforts, the government official interviewed is placed in the same category of analysis as the aid workers included in this thesis.

### III. ADAPTIVE STRATEGY THROUGH PARENTAL INVESTMENT: IRBID, JORDAN

This thesis utilizes the sociological theory of family adaptive strategies in framing the

investigation of child labor as an adaptive strategy in Syrian refugee communities. Central to this theory is the consideration of the structural barriers that are faced by families, and how these barriers may limit their behavior when the available repertoire of options is restricted as a result (Moen & Wethington 1992). Family adaptive strategies are thus defined as, "...actions families devise for coping with, if not overcoming, the challenges of living, and for achieving their goals in the face of structural barriers" (*ibid.*: 234). In the case of the Syrian refugees interviewed in Irbid, structural barriers are ubiquitous. Located about 92 km north of Amman, Irbid is home to 21 percent of registered refugees living in Jordan; the number is likely much higher when unregistered refugees are considered (UNHCR 2017). Irbid's proximity to the Syrian border and Zaatari, the largest Syrian refugee camp, has resulted in it becoming an area with one of the largest concentrations of both registered and unregistered refugees. Strain on public services, in addition to increasing social tensions between Jordanians and Syrians, has fostered the growth of a multitude of structural barriers to socioeconomic success for Syrians.

The insights gathered during the interviews in Irbid demonstrate how households utilize family adaptive strategies in response to encountering numerous structural barriers present in urban host communities, with child labor as a vital structural adaptation at the household level. Accordingly, framing the prevalence of child labor in Syrian refugee communities as a large-scale utilization of family adaptive strategies, "...invokes the role of families and households as flexible, decision-making units, actively choosing various patterns of behavior, rather than as merely compliant and submissive" (Moen & Wethington 1992: 234).

The field of human behavioral ecology emerged within evolutionary anthropology through the application of evolutionary ecology models to help explain the diversity of human behavior, and how it varies with changing ecological conditions (Winterhalder & Smith 2000).

Ecological conditions are defined as, “physical and social aspects of the environment, as well as the state of the individual within that environment” (Nettle 2013: 1032). By approaching human behavior as one that is extremely adaptable to shifts in the environments, human behavioral ecology is rooted in the assumption that, “humans have mechanisms of adaptive learning and plasticity by virtue of which they can rapidly find adaptive solutions to living in many kinds of environments” (*ibid.*: 1032). Thus, this field holds significant potential for helping explain how behaviors found among Syrian refugees develop as a response to extreme and drastic environmental shifts. The theory of parental investment in human behavioral ecology is relevant to the discussion of child labor in this thesis, because it suggests that, “parents are concerned not only with their economic success but also with their reproductive success, the survival of their children and continuation of their genetic lineage” (Taylor 2005: 414). Furthermore, this theory posits that parents allocate care and resources between their children based on each child’s “perceived economic, social and reproductive returns” (*ibid.*: 414). It becomes evident through analysis that this theory may be applicable in the case of Syrian refugee families, who allocate working opportunities to older children because of both the economic benefits and the needs of younger children within the family.

Parental investment and family adaptive strategies are thus used to explain how child labor exists as a strategy through which agency of the family is materialized in an environment that places systemic constraints on the ability of Syrian families to survive and achieve some level of socioeconomic security and viability. In doing so, the following narratives of the five heads of households, all of whom had children involved in labor, are organized by the patterns that emerged during analysis using grounded theory. The participants were heads of households of varying sizes (two – seven individuals), and their ages ranged from 30-52 years old. Four of

them had arrived in Jordan in 2013, while one had sought refuge in 2014. Finally, four children's perspectives are presented to help elucidate their conceptualizations of involvement in labor.

### **Challenges to Employment as an Adult**

Only one of the five participants identified themselves as the breadwinner of their household. Incidentally, this participant was also the only employed and male head of household. In discussing his employment experience as a refugee living in Irbid without a work permit, the participant explained the uncertain nature of his job, which he described as non-salaried and hourly-based. When asked whether he believed his income was adequate in supporting his family, he answered no, and stated that he was also in debt to others who have assisted him and his family. Furthermore, he acknowledged the lack of registration with UNHCR, and thus documentation, as the largest barrier he had encountered in the job market. Two other participants, who spoke about their spouses' employment, also stated that they were not in possession of work permits. One participant, whose spouse was employed with a valid permit, explained that her husband was fearful of employers who would not pay him and maintain the conditions agreed upon signing the job contract. Another participant, whose spouse was employed with a work permit, explained that his salary was not enough to support a family of five, because,

He doesn't have a good paying job and sometimes he works and sometimes he doesn't. I must give my children money every day but there's no work every day. At least, he must take 250 JD [Jordanian Dinar] so we can live – home, electricity, water bills that we must pay. 170 JD [\$240 USD] is not enough.

Only one of the five participants described their household's monthly income as sufficient while others described it as "not enough" or "it's okay, but not enough".



Forms of physical documentation that confirm the legal status and identity of Syrian refugees living in urban communities thus emerge as key barriers in finding legal employment for heads of households. Be it registration with UNHCR or a work permit, for which documentation is required, these remarks suggest that the process of obtaining documentation is not easily accessible. As a result, heads of households must weigh the costs and benefits associated with illegal employment, which could have dangerous repercussions such as detainment (Norwegian Refugee Council 2016). In some cases, the consequences can be more extreme. One participant explained that her eldest child (an adult at the time), who had been working without a work permit, was caught by labor inspectors and deported to Syria. There is evidence of these forms of unlawful deportations of Syrian refugees occurring in Jordan (Human Rights Watch 2016), which is a clear violation of the principle of non-refoulement, as detailed in UNHCR's 1967 protocol.

Encountering these barriers to legal employment and considering the risks associated with illegal employment compel the heads of households, who receive insufficient income and experience exploitation at the hands of their employers, to consider alternate options. With the unmet structural needs for a functioning household, as explained by the participant above, the ability of the child to work and avoid legal consequences appears as a convenient strategy that can be utilized. Family adaptive strategies thus can be understood using a structural approach, which “emphasizes the ways that larger social structural forces constrain, and to some extent determine, the repertoire of adaptations available to individual families in a given society” (Moen & Wethington 1992: 243). The barriers to legal employment and the insufficient nature of income both with and without a work permit can be seen as structural forces that limit the ability of the family to adapt to constraining economic realities.

When asked about the reasoning behind her unemployment, one participant discussed her desire to work, but being unable to because she lacked a work permit and had to tend to the needs of her children at home. Another participant echoed similar sentiments about being unable to work due to the needs of her younger children within the house. The gendered notion of employment within the family becomes apparent here. In her ethnographic work on family-life in Syria, Andrea Rugh (1997: 235) asserts,

Maintaining a difference between male and female roles – whatever people may think about its fairness – has an important stabilizing effect on families that is rarely recognized. The more the males and females need each other to perform tasks they cannot do for themselves, the stronger family ties become...When the family is as central to a society as it is in the Arab world, attacks on its vital relationships – in this case, the connection between males and females – come to be seen as attacks on the society itself.

The structural forces in urban host communities, such as the barriers to legal employment and insufficient income, force a reconfiguration of the family, with the child assuming a new role. However, the ability of the family to preserve gendered notions of responsibility can be perceived as resilience and agency on behalf of the heads of households. This furthers the argument of child labor as an adaptive strategy, because the perceived resilience and agency gathered from the insights of participants, "...call forth the active (rather than passive) role of the family unit and underscores the dynamic nature of family life..." (Moen & Wethington 1992: 246).

### **Health Condition as an Agent of Structural Barriers**

Two participants also attributed their inability to work to their health conditions. One head of household, who was 50 years old, explained, "I am diabetic and I have hypertension. I

tried to work but I couldn't work so there was no other option. I can't work and no one lets me work because of my age." This suggests that the structural barriers previously discussed are exacerbated by the presence of health issues, many of which are correlated with the trauma and violence that refugees encounter during the process of displacement. Another participant discussed her son's issues with malnutrition, which she attributed to the lack of monetary assistance. Explaining the consequences of her financial state, she said,

We can't buy high quality food...I can't buy the food I want to buy. Most of our meals are cooked meals without meat or chicken. There are no eggs, cheese or milk for breakfast. I don't have the basic things...I took him to the doctor and they gave him nutritious things and we must continue going there. I tried to collect money to take my son to the nutrition doctor, but there is no money now. When I collect money, I will take my son.

This insight implies that the relationships that exist between health condition and structural barriers can be understood as complementary, with both having damaging implications on each other.

The male head of household stated that three of his family members had illnesses. His wife suffered from a disease related to her cervical disc. His youngest son, who was involved in labor, had issues with his thyroid glands, for which, he said, "life-long treatment is required". His eldest son, who was also involved in labor, had vitiligo. When asked whether these illnesses had affected his family's financial situation and how often his children worked, he explained,

The blood analysis cost 280 JD so I must cut from my other needs and then collect money for the analysis...sure, they have to work more to get money for the treatments.

My eldest son is looking for another job.

When another participant was asked whether her son's issues with eyesight had affected the

financial situation of her family or how often her son worked, she described the barriers experienced by her family and the issues affecting them as interconnected, suggesting that the decisions that led her child to work was a result of this intersection.

Through discussion of these insights, it becomes clear that health conditions, many of which arise in conjunction with the experiences during displacement and a marginalized existence in an urban host community, deteriorate families' resiliency to structural barriers to socioeconomic success. Understanding how health conditions limit the repertoire of adaptations available to the family unit establishes a link to the use of child labor as an adaptive strategy. Poor health conditions can then be seen as agents of the structural forces present in urban communities, whose effects are reinforced as a result. This amplification of structural barriers, through poor health condition, exemplifies deleterious shifts in the ecological conditions present in these families' environments, which highlights the importance of a behavioral ecological model in understanding child labor as an adaptive behavior. Human behavioral ecology is concerned with how "behavioral diversity arises because the payoffs to alternative behavioral strategies are ecologically contingent" (Nettle 2013: 1035). Therefore, the pertinence of conceptualizing child labor as a behavior within a behavioral ecological model becomes evident.

When asked about the degree of medical insurance or subsidized health services the participants receive, all participants denied having any medical insurance. This is consistent with the earlier discussion regarding limited access to healthcare services for Syrian refugees in Jordan. Limited access to healthcare services is thus another example of a structure barrier, which, in combination with other barriers, strengthens the necessity of child labor as an adaptive strategy utilized at the household level.

### **Challenges in Accessing Education**

Of the five heads of households who were interviewed, only two had children who were working while enrolled in school. One of these participants, who was registered with UNHCR, had children who were all enrolled in formal education at public schools. When one participant was asked why his children were not enrolled in school, he identified leaving his former refugee camp as the reasoning. It can be assumed that lack of documentation was the major barrier in this case, since he had noted that he did not have an “identifying card” - likely the Ministry of Interior card. While explaining why her son was not enrolled in school, another participant said, “To help his father and we don’t have the eye access.” “Eye access”, here, refers to UNHCR’s cash assistance program, which is redeemable using iris scans; this will be further expanded in the following section. The lack of access to documentation and lack of access to education, thus materialize into two complementary structural barriers that emerge as interconnected in their ramifications.

Another participant addressed overcrowding and capacity issues when asked about the reasoning behind her children not being enrolled in school. She said,

I couldn’t put my son in school because there was no space for him in the schools. I spent two years going to schools but there was not enough space for him. He was already not doing anything so I let him go to work and he wanted to work anyways.

She also discussed the difficulties her daughter experienced in enrolling in school after many years of having to forego education:

When we came to Jordan, she was supposed to be in the sixth grade but we couldn’t put her in the sixth grade because she hadn’t gone to first, second and....grades. We put her in the fourth grade, and she almost passed, but she was bullied and people made jokes about her. She didn’t pass and complete her studies.

These remarks highlight the extreme adversities Syrian refugee children must endure because of the protracted nature of displacement. Wide-scale implementation of catch-up programs and strategies to increase access to these programs in schools are vital in order to lift these barriers. They also draw attention to the tense relations in Jordanian host communities, where education is a resource that has become highly strained, and has led to further marginalization of Syrian children. The inability of children to attend school, as presented in these narratives, demonstrates “constraining economic, institutional, and social realities in the larger opportunity structure” (Moen & Wethington 1992: 234). If schooling is not an option, child labor becomes apparent as a fruitful strategic action. For children who are able to access education, as in the cases of two families, working after school and during the weekends highlights the importance of a “rational choice” approach to family adaptive strategies, which “underscores the role of choice, within the confines of structural constraints, in an effort to maximize family well-being” (*ibid.*).

### **Insufficient Humanitarian Assistance**

All participants answered no when they were asked whether they believe the degree of humanitarian assistance they were receiving was sufficient. Four out the five participants were registered with UNHCR; the participant who was not registered explained that he had lost all assistance he was receiving after leaving his camp. Furthermore, when participants were asked whether they would want their children to stop working if they were able to access more aid, all participants answered yes. In response to this question, one participant said, “Yes, if I get aid, I would let my children go back to school because they love it and they wish to be back.” These responses illuminate the way in which families conceptualize child labor as compulsion by structural forces and as a strategy that would not be necessary if the limitations instituted by the presence of these forces were mitigated through appropriate humanitarian assistance.

All participants, apart from one, mentioned the detrimental effects of the lack of “eye access”. As it was mentioned above, “eye access” refers to the cash assistance program UNHCR established in Jordan, which became the first country in the world to distribute cash grants to refugees using iris scan technology (Dunmore 2015). Through this program, refugees are able to withdraw aid and use it in ways they deem best, making it a very efficient and effective form of assistance. However, in 2015, only 23,000 Syrian families living in host communities were benefiting from the program (*ibid.*). Although this number is likely higher today, there still are many families who are deprived of this assistance for one reason or another, as it is evident from the participants’ anecdotes. The parameters of this thesis, however, does not allow investigation into the barriers faced by refugees in accessing such cash assistance. Nonetheless, these remarks suggest that the structural forces discussed above are augmented by the lack of sufficient humanitarian assistance. This highlights the inherent economic nature of child labor in this community, where constraining ecological forces that result from structural barriers, such as the lack of sufficient humanitarian assistance, compel heads of households to devise adaptive strategies.

### **Rationalizing Children’s Involvement in Labor**

When the participants were asked to discuss the most significant driving factors behind their children’s involvement in labor, there were various answers. Monetary assistance, however, emerged as a common theme throughout all participants’ answers. One head of household explained, “To help his father and support his family because my husband can’t do his work alone...We can’t buy everything. We need coupons and the eye access from the aid organizations. If we had the eye access, my son wouldn’t have to work.” Another participant echoed similar sentiments, and cited that her son helps his father obtain enough money to pay the

rent. She also acknowledged that having access to the cash assistance program led by UNHCR would make it possible for her son to stop working and return to school.

While drawing attention to the lack of humanitarian assistance as discussed above, these two remarks also elucidate the manifestation of the Syrian refugee family unit as a household economy in urban host communities. Child labor can then be conceptualized as an integral strategy central to the functioning of the household economy.

The depiction of these household economies as “role allocating, income pooling, and income spending units is both intuitively compelling and empirically valid” (Moen & Wethington 1992: 235). Economic success through child labor emerges as the key objective as understood by the family unit. However, how does economic success contribute to the survival of these children in the future? While outlining the high prevalence of child labor in Syrian refugee communities within the framework of a family adaptive strategy has allowed a detailed analysis of the immediate exigencies of their environments, a more macro-level approach can elucidate how heads of households incorporate expanded temporal considerations in their decision-making processes. Consequently, application of the theory of parental investment within the behavioral ecological model becomes crucial. The theory of parental investment, according to Taylor (2005: 414), postulates that parents are concerned with “...their reproductive success, the survival of their children and continuation of their genetic lineage”. Specifically, parents use “...behavioral mechanisms that allow them to distinguish the social, economic, and reproductive potentials of their children, and allocate resources and care differentially in such a way as to maximize their own genetic representation in future generations” (*ibid.*).

Although reproductive success usually denotes maximizing the number of children, in this context, it can be described by the presence of children who “require large investments in



human capital...to secure a livelihood, attract mates, raise families, and continue the genetic lineage” (*ibid.*). Child labor is a large investment, by heads of household, in human capital; its materialization in the community results in economic security within the family. Furthermore, the shifts in environment, as experienced by Syrian refugees, can shape how parental investment takes form. With this in mind, reproductive-success-maximizing behavior in this community must be approached as being malleable, given the cultural and ecological context and evolving conceptualizations of children’s roles within the family unit. The differential allocation of resources and care becomes evident when examining the birth order of the children involved in labor in these families. The eldest children in all five of the households were involved in labor, suggesting that parental investment entailed consideration of how economic output on behalf of the eldest children would maximize success among the younger children.

Lack of access to education was also described by a participant as the major factor that drove her family to allow their children to work. A different participant explained, “...we were living in a paid place but when we were kicked out, we needed to find a solution. We moved to another house and she started to work.” Another participant stated, “He wants to show his personality to help his family...he wants to take his own money from his sales.” This statement suggests that, at least from the participant’s perspective, working provides agency to the child, whose sense of responsibility and productivity are magnified by working. Nonetheless, the variations in how heads of household rationalize the need for their children to work is apparent through these insights, justifying the multi-faceted approach that was used to explicate child labor as an adaptive strategy. The obligatory nature of these rationalizations must be emphasized. Heads of households, as understood through the interviews in Irbid, feel compelled to resort to child labor – one of the few remaining strategies within their limited repertoires of adaptations.

When participants were asked whether they believe their children gain any non-financial benefits through working, four participants answered no, and expressed a desire for their children to study instead. These participants characterized the skills their children were gaining through labor as non-transferrable to future employment opportunities. However, one participant stated, “Yes, absolutely...he knows how to be confident. He knows the work – he learns how to work in the future.” This remark highlights a way in which heads of households conceptualize positive implications of child labor for their children’s future livelihoods, with reproductive success as a critical concern. Moreover, it demonstrates the realistic need for workplace skills, even for a child, in a drastically marginalized environment, where economic exigencies transform priorities within a family unit. These insights valorize a life-course approach to family adaptive strategies, which

combines aspects of structural and rational choice theories within a temporal framework to place family and individual strategies of adaptation in a larger historical, social, and cultural context of shifting opportunities and constraints, resources and demands, norms and expectations (Moen & Wethington 1992: 245).

### **Forms and Conditions of Labor**

Discussion with the heads of households revealed a variety of sectors of employment for children. These included: running a furniture moving service with his father, helping customers at a paint store, cleaning dishes in a restaurant, working in a beauty shop, and assisting customers in a garment shop and tailoring. Conditions of each child’s work varied as well. While explaining the nature of his nine-year-old son’s work, one participant said, “...he studies after school and he goes to sell gum with his friends for fun.” Conversely, his 17 year-old-son worked eight hours a day, every day. Another participant’s daughter, who was 17 years old, typically

worked 10 hours a day for six days every week, but had changed to 11 hours because of seasonal requirements. The longest work shift mentioned was 12 hours a day for six days a week for a participant's 15-year-old-son. Another participant's 14-year-old-son worked six days a week as well, but for 10 hours each day. Moreover, when describing how her son's work schedule changed during the summer, a participant noted that her 12-year-old-son worked up to 16 hours a day. These insights reveal the demanding and varying nature of the labor market that children participate in in Irbid.

The participants were also asked whether they were aware of any risks or dangers their children encountered while working. Four out of the five heads of households acknowledged the presence of some risks, mainly attributing them to negative influences from outsiders. One participant explained, "Maybe my sons learn bad words from the streets. There is school and there are parents in the kid's life. They must learn from school and learn from parents – there must not be other sources for kids to be influenced. But I can't control this situation." Two participants also addressed health issues such as injuries and body pain. Others emphasized the dangers their children face in returning home late at night. Acknowledging these dangers while simultaneously expressing the urgency of the need for their children to work furthers the argument for understanding child labor as an adaptive strategy in Syrian refugee communities, where structural barriers and ecological exigencies force heads of households to reconfigure priorities and concerns regarding their children.

### **Ideals in Contrast with Reality**

Questions aiming to ascertain the heads of households' sentiments regarding their children's involvement in labor provoked emotional responses from the participants. Their responses included: "I'm upset", "It's a disaster", and "I'm upset and not comfortable [with my

children working] at all". One participant described her grievances with her family's reality, and stated, "I don't agree that my son has to work and I don't like that my son has to go and work. But we need this. Our situation is really bad. We have psychological issues and high pressure. My husband and I have psychological issues." These emotional remarks suggest that child labor's place in these families' realities is one that is heavily contested. Heads of households acknowledge the compulsory nature of this strategy, but struggle with coming to terms with its divergence from what they understand to be an ideal scenario. Participants were also asked to explain what constituted childhood in their opinion. Common themes in their conceptions included education, time with friends, space, time to play, and protection. The male participant emphasized his children's desire for an education, and asserted, "Yes. They would love to go to school." One participant lamented being unable to give her children an ideal childhood and said, "My children are missing things I can't give them." The absence of such themes in the childhoods that materialize in these families in Irbid underscores the distance between their realities and their perceived ideals of the roles and activities within the family unit.

Furthermore, all participants answered yes when they were asked whether the situation (in relation to their children's involvement in labor) would be different if they were still living in pre-conflict Syria. Many of the participants became emotional in response to this question as well, indicating just how different their reality is in comparison to an ideal that is far removed from the forces of displacement. All five of the participants stated that their children would not have been working in pre-conflict Syria. One head of household explained,

When I was in Syria, I used to plan for everything for my children's future. But I lost everything. I imagined another life for my children, for my son. I don't feel comfortable here [Jordan] because I am living in one room with all of my family. When I was in

Syria, I had my own house so everything was different. I imagined another image for my son's future.

Another participant discussed her hopes for her daughter's education and said, "Sure. At least, I would have my own house and my daughter would have completed her studies. I was an owner of a shop but I lost everything." These narratives exhibit how encountering the aforementioned structural barriers, which are mediated by larger forces of displacement, disables the ability of the family to work towards pre-existing ideals and expectations regarding the role of the child. Nonetheless, the resilience inherent in these narratives cannot be ignored. The life-course approach to conceptualizing child labor as an adaptive strategy becomes pertinent once again. The historical and spatial context, as emphasized in the life-course approach, must be considered, because,

For refugees, the life course was unpredictable and fraught with danger. Narratives facilitated forging continuity between past and future. They made sense of the chaos and disruption war imposed by endowing the life course with continuity, coherence, and logic (Petee 2005: 48).

While there is a reconfiguration of the child's role in these families, child labor becomes a logical mechanism through which families find continuity in their sense of economic security and in an overarching sense of resiliency.

### **Children's Accounts of Involvement in Labor**

The FGD involved four children, whose ages ranged from 11 – 17 years. Two were the eldest children in their respective households, which were of various sizes including two, three, five, and six individuals. Only the youngest participant was enrolled in school; he attended school daily and worked afterschool every day. During the FGD, the children were asked to

explain why they were working. All of them referred to the help their parents needed. One participant asserted, “Because I’m in charge in my house and because I’m living with my mom alone.” Another participant noted, “I help my family with the home rent.” The function of the family unit as a household economy is reinforced through these remarks. When asked to explain what they like about working, three of the four children explained that working allows them to help their parents. Another participant noted that she doesn’t like to work, but must do so because of her circumstances. One child added that working allows him to spend time with his friends, and he likes the way he is treated by them. The youngest child described how he likes working with his father. Another participant said that working allows her to spend time outside instead of being home. These insights suggest that children are able to find positive implications of their involvement in labor, with some gaining a sense of agency and partaking in increased socialization.

The children were also prompted to discuss what they don’t like about working. Two participants responded by describing how tired they feel as a result of working regularly. The other two children described their experiences with bullying at their workplace. One participant stated, “I don’t like how people treat me and deal with me. I’m in pain from people saying mean things – saying that I do nothing.” Another participant expressed similar sentiments and said, “I don’t like the way people deal with me and how they talk to me.” The dangers encountered by children become apparent through these narratives, signifying the mentally and socially challenging nature of being involved in the labor market as a child.

In an effort to gauge the ways in which children socialize while working or how working may contribute to their sense of identity in their communities, the participants were asked a series of questions aiming to reveal the presence of such dynamics. When the children were

asked whether they felt like a bigger part of the community because of working, two different responses were given. Two children agreed and answered yes; the other two children said no with one explaining, "...because of the way they treat me at work. I don't feel this." The participants were also asked whether working has changed their relationships with their family. There was a general consensus among the answers; all of the children shared sentiments of missing time with their families. They explained that their work schedules prohibit them from spending as much time with family and friends as they once used to.

When the children were asked whether working changed their relationship with their friends or people in their communities, all four of the children mentioned limited time with their friends because of their work schedules. Surprisingly, none of these responses indicated that children are socializing to an increasing degree as a result of their involvement in labor. In order to further probe the presence of socialization, children were asked whether they believe working was benefiting their communities. All four of the participants responded by saying no, emphasizing that they believed their work was elementary and not of any significance. These results imply that child labor, even as experienced by children in the Syrian refugee community in Irbid, exists largely as an economic adaptive strategy. Nonetheless, the role of children in helping materialize this strategy, in conjunction with their ardent desires to assist their families, implies agency within the child.

#### IV. DISCREPANCIES IN DISCOURSE: IRBID AND AMMAN, JORDAN

In presenting the conceptualizations of child labor at three different levels (heads of households, children involved in labor, and aid workers/government official), this thesis investigates the discrepancies in discourse surrounding child labor in Syrian refugee

communities in Jordan. As developed by Foucault, discourse can be understood as,

ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them.

Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon 1997: 108).

Exploring how these three groups discuss child labor not only elucidates their conceptualizations of what it is and how it manifests in their consciousness, but can also help identify the presence of larger historically contingent ways of thinking and producing meaning. This becomes especially important in the discussion of how discourse differs between aid workers/government official and the families involved in child labor, highlighting how differences in conceptualizations may be related to Western ideals of childhood inherent in humanitarianism and humanitarian practices. However, discerning the differences in how heads of households and children conceptualize child labor and childhood is also valuable in illuminating various modes of thinking and rationalization at two levels within the household. Their discourses thus portray the realities of their social world along with the ideas and exigencies that dwell within it.

### **Children and Heads of Households**

The discussions above presented the grievances heads of households had regarding their inability to provide their children with their perceived ideal childhoods. Similar sentiments were found in remarks about their children's involvement in labor, which they acknowledged as a reality they wished were not true. When the children were asked to explain what they believed childhood to be, all four of the participants asserted that they did not have a childhood. One participant (17 years old) asserted, "Absolutely not...maybe I think - comparing with other girls



with the same age, I should be in university.” This signifies continuity in the discourses between heads of households and children, both of whom recognize how the interplay between structural barriers in their communities has stripped them of their pre-existing, culturally shaped notions of childhood. Furthermore, when the children were asked whether they believe it is okay for children of their ages to be working, all four participants answered no. The similarity to the narratives given by the heads of households must be emphasized, as it implies that members of the family unit subscribe to the same discourse. The children were also asked to define child labor in their own words. While the youngest child said that he did not know, the three older participants’ responses included: “It’s horrible, I feel sorry”, “It doesn’t make sense to me”, and “Kids must be educated”. As discussed in the previous section, heads of households also identified education as a component of the perceived ideal childhood that was absent in their children’s realities. Thus, education becomes a common theme in both the children’s and heads of households’ discourses, underscoring child labor’s position as largely antagonistic to education, at least in the case of the Syrian refugee community in Irbid. Nonetheless, the youngest participant’s apparent regular attendance in school indicates the capacity of some families to forge a middle ground between child labor and education.

As part of this larger investigation into the differences that may exist in how child labor is conceptualized in refugee families and in the humanitarian sector, heads of households were asked whether they agree with ILO’s definition of child labor. The definition describes child labor as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development” (ILO). Surprisingly, all five heads of households stated that they wholeheartedly agree with this definition. One participant explained, “Sure, I 100% agree. It’s not an issue of my hands – it’s out of my hands.” The ease with which all

participants agreed with this definition suggests that child labor, at least at the discursive level of analysis, occupies the same niche in the discourses found in humanitarian doctrines and Syrian refugee families in Irbid. Heads of households were also asked to explain whether ILO's definition was applicable to their children's work. When the participants were asked whether it applied to their children's involvement in labor and described their circumstances, four answered yes, and one participant said "almost". This unexpected application of a humanitarian definition of child labor by the families suggests that the heads of households are acutely aware of the negative implications of their children's involvement in labor. However, these congruencies in discourse must be understood within a historical context.

### **Perceived Driving Forces behind Child Labor**

Including a historical context demands the posing of the following questions: How have imperialism and colonialism proliferated Western conceptualizations of childhood? How have these notions in humanitarian doctrines established an elevated moral stage, which families, regardless of context, feel compelled to underwrite in their own conceptualizations? In an attempt to find answers to these questions and identify any congruencies or incongruities in discourse within the humanitarian field, the aid workers and the government official were asked a series of questions that probed their perceptions of the driving forces of child labor in Syrian refugee communities. When asked why child labor persists in these communities, the representative from ILO referred to the multifold impacts of displacement: economic challenges, lack of employment opportunities for adults, and insufficient compensation from international humanitarian organizations. She spoke about the doubly vulnerable state of the Syrian refugee population, which, as she explained, contained many children who have faced significant educational gaps that need to be addressed. The participant from UNICEF referred to the high

prevalence of child labor as a “negative coping mechanism” because of the protracted nature of the Syrian crisis. Specifically, she discussed high unemployment levels and poverty, and said, “When you talk to the people, they know it will have some negative effects on their children. But unfortunately, there are so many limited opportunities for them to provide for their families.” The NGO representative in Irbid alluded to the families’ need for extra monetary assistance as motivation. Moreover, the Tamkeen representative discussed the high percentage of households led by single women, explaining that many elder male children within households undertake the role of supporting the mother financially; she also cited insufficient humanitarian assistance as a driving force.

The insights from these four aid workers suggest that they are, in fact, aware of the structural barriers that force families to utilize child labor as an adaptive strategy in urban host communities. The economic impetus to child labor is thus recognized by these aid workers, indicating that they attribute financial insecurity to its high prevalence, at least to a certain extent. However, how central is this acknowledgement in their broader discourse and conceptualizations? Interestingly, when the MSD representative was asked to explain the driving forces that he believed to be most significant, he asserted that all Syrian families are able to receive all the assistance they may need, justifying his support of the Jordanian government’s rigidity in prohibiting Syrian children to partake in labor. Here, a significant discrepancy emerges. Although the discussions with families in Irbid demonstrated the overwhelming degree of barriers they have experienced in obtaining humanitarian assistance, the MSD representative claimed that these barriers simply did not exist. The implications of this apparent negligence regarding the link between child labor and the barriers to humanitarian assistance are deleterious in that it likely affects his approach to child labor related initiatives implemented by MSD.

The NGO representative, on the contrary, acknowledged the link between families' economic exigencies, which are driven by the lack of humanitarian assistance, and the prevalence of child labor. However, he stated, "They don't consider that education is important for children... They do like education but they don't think it's important." This is a divergent narrative, one that was not evident in the discussions with heads of households and children, which indicated education as being central in their perceived ideals regarding childhood. Although he recognized the economic realities faced by the families, their disregard for the importance of education, according to him, is more significant in their rationalizations of child labor. This discrepancy in discourse is especially critical because of the NGO representative's position as president of the NGO through which the families interviewed in Irbid were found. Given his influential role within the organization, his misconceptions regarding Syrian families' perceived ideals regarding childhood likely affected the NGO's approach to child labor related workshops, which all of the interviewed families participated in. Specifically, it is possible that there was a preoccupation with highlighting the value of education to these families to address the perceived lack of regard for education. Not only is this inefficient, but it is also extraneous in approach.

### **Imputing Child Labor to Culture**

Further discussions with the representatives of the humanitarian sector in Jordan entailed questions that were asked to help understand their perceived challenges regarding child labor eradication in Syrian refugee communities. Many of their remarks focused on differentiating the perceived ideals regarding child labor and childhood in Syrian communities compared to Jordanian communities. Using grounded theory to find emerging patterns, it becomes clear that these perceived differences were mediated through the concept of culture in their discourse.

When the NGO representative was asked about differences in policies for Syrian child labor and Jordanian child labor, he claimed, “The Jordanians are more concerned about the issue. In Syria, it seems like it’s too normal to have child labor.” The MSD representative noted Syrian families’ needs for excess income due to the worsening economic situations in urban host communities, but explained that from his perspective,

The first thing is their culture...the culture of Syrian families is different from Jordanian customs - their culture is that every child has to train on any job or in crafts but our kids – they have to complete their studies. There are no Jordanian families here that do that – just the poor people that allow their kids to work without completing their studies.

When the Tamkeen representative was asked about what measures should be taken to help alleviate the high prevalence of child labor, she discussed the difficulties posed by inherent cultural values in Syrian refugee communities, and stated,

The thing is that maybe awareness raising regarding child labor and how it’s going to affect them later on could be one of the things that could be done. As I said, it’s within the culture – it’s really hard to change a whole perspective – it’s a culture thing. It’s really hard to change that. But maybe, if we raise awareness that labor harms them...it’s hard and it’s a culture thing that’s been there forever...Basically they are used to working as a child in Syria. Most of them, they don’t have a clue that what they’re doing is wrong. They used to do this in Syria before coming here...the problem is the family’s perspective and how they actually see that it’s a normal thing for them.

Therefore, what emerges through the narratives given by the NGO, MSD, and Tamkeen representatives is a theme of imputing child labor in Syrian refugee communities to Syrian culture. By denoting child labor as “normal” for Syrians, as done by the NGO and Tamkeen

representatives, they presume that it is inherent in Syrian conceptualizations of childhood. Moreover, the Tamkeen representative's claim that families are unaware of the negative implications of child labor on their children suggests that there is a severe disconnect in communication and understanding between Syrian refugee families and local aid workers, who remain incognizant of how child labor is truly conceptualized by the individuals involved. These incongruences in discourse are detrimental to the efficacy of these aid workers' humanitarian efforts, which emerge as having disregard for the multifaceted nature of the structural forces and factors associated with child labor. Identifying Syrian culture as the "first" factor to be considered when discussing challenges to eradicate child labor further indicates the existence of deeply ingrained prejudices in humanitarian discourse in Jordan.

Imputing child labor to culture thus becomes a mechanism through which these aid workers "other" Syrian refugees – a phenomenon that has been seen globally in xenophobic discourses regarding migrants. Although Jordan and Syria have some cultural differences, their conjoined, historical position in the Levantine region has resulted in significant overlap in cultural values and traditions. How, then, is it possible that these Jordanian aid workers subscribe to a culturalist rhetoric? The undertones of identity politics in the presented humanitarian discourse provide clarity to this question. Identity politics is a phenomenon in which the politicization of culture occurs, which is then used to support not only exclusiveness, but also mechanisms of exclusion (Eriksen 2001: 136). Excluding and othering Syrian refugees in Jordanian host communities, as done by these three aid workers, is thus the materialization of an epistemology which attributes the quality of life of an individual to their culture (*ibid.*). This cultural fundamentalist discourse rooted in identity politics, then, becomes an exercise in the imposition of power by humanitarian organizations on communities that are regarded as the

object of assistance. The relationship between discourse and power, here, cannot be emphasized enough, because “these social categorizations involve variabilities in access to power...[and] power equalities or differentials are at work in defining who can address whom, and from what symmetrical or asymmetrical positions” (Wolf 1999: 7).

### **Western Hegemony in International Humanitarian Agencies**

Although the ILO and UNICEF representatives acknowledged that cultural tendencies may be a driving factor for a small percentage of Syrian refugees who fled from rural areas, both of these participants primarily discussed the lack of comprehensive approaches in humanitarian work on child labor. The ILO representative explained,

...we're trying to convince more donors to invest money so as to have an impact on children that means fulfilling the whole circle...building the capacities of those men or women in order to earn their own job either through mini-income generating projects or through building their capacities and providing decent job opportunity, economic zones, industries that will give the family the opportunity to raise their income as an alternative of having their children in the labor market.

In sharing similar sentiments, the UNICEF representative discussed the need for a holistic and multi-sectoral approach that includes provision of livelihood opportunities for families that include education, health, and child protection. While addressing the challenges to implementation of such holistic approaches, the ILO representative attributed them to the discord between donors' perspectives and the realities in urban host communities:

When it comes to child labor, the legal definitions, mechanisms and policies are all the same. Whether UNICEF is working on child labor or Save the Children, they adapt their programs and initiatives based on the general definition of child labor. But as I

mentioned, we rely more in designing our projects as per the donor perspectives – not as the real needs.

These remarks diverge from those of the NGO, Tamkeen, and MSD representatives. They highlight these two representatives' recognition of the way structural forces interact to induce a high prevalence of child labor. Their endorsement of a holistic approach in humanitarian work is mediated by this recognition, indicating a parallel component of discourse with Syrian families. The differences in discourse between these two groups of aid workers can likely be attributed to the nature of their respective organizations – one is locally derived and one is representative of international humanitarian agencies. It is possible that culturalist explanations are found among the former group, because it is comprised of aid workers who are more involved and closer, in terms of direct contact, with Syrian refugee families. This higher degree of localized contact and the resulting culturalist rhetoric is perhaps an example of how “intensified contacts between groups in many parts of the world pave the way for the entrenchment of boundaries and violent identity politics” (Eriksen 2001: 136). The UNICEF and ILO representatives, on the other hand, are further removed from direct interaction in Syrian refugee communities.

Nonetheless, the ILO representative's insight draws attention to the influences that donors to agencies, such as the ILO, have on the strategies and approaches to humanitarian work. International humanitarian agencies' donors are often Western governments, whose goal-oriented approach to humanitarianism and funding control how and where provision of humanitarian assistance can take place. The role of donor governments is not simply financial support, and with the advent of goal-oriented humanitarianism, they have become more involved in decision-making processes within the humanitarian system (Macrae and Leader 2000: 5).



Their imposition of Western conceptualizations of childhood thus occurs through earmarked aid. These international humanitarian agencies thus function under universalist approaches to humanitarianism, one that deems the Western conceptualization of childhood to be morally higher than those of non-Western communities. Thus, there exists a dangerous teleology in humanitarianism and human rights doctrines, which impose a “developed” notion of childhood on the “less developed.” This results in a preoccupation with the eradication of child labor as a phenomenon and yet the absence of substantial mechanisms that adopt a holistic approach and work to minimize the structural barriers that force children into labor. Although the ILO and UNICEF representatives acknowledge their agencies’ shortfalls, they are restrained from strategizing more appropriate initiatives by shortages in impartial or inadequate funding and the primacy of objectives by donors.

## V. CULTURE AND DISPLACEMENT: LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Analysis of the narratives gathered from the families interviewed in Jordan demonstrated the validity of the argument for child labor as an adaptive strategy and as a phenomenon that does not exist within the cultural framework of Syrian refugee families, as suggested by the NGO, Tamkeen, and MSD representatives. Nevertheless, an investigation into how culture and cultural conceptions of childhood are shaped by displacement is imperative in this thesis. Accordingly, the narratives shared by the three families in Louisville, Kentucky guide this inquiry. Their positions within the continuum of displacement denote another degree of movement in place, which is useful for this analysis. The intersection of culture and child labor in this discussion requires the deconstruction of the concept of culture, the understanding of which often entails use of the contesting concepts of idea and material (Wolf 1999). While an

idealist view elucidates how ideas in hegemonic Western ideologies have shaped modern conceptualizations of child labor, a materialist view takes into account the restrictions placed by ecological exigencies and the material products of such restrictions. One can then argue that child labor, in its most basic form, is a material product of systemic barriers to socioeconomic success. However, culture and ideas within culture shape the way in which families select and utilize certain adaptive strategies such as child labor. In attempting to understand how this occurs among Syrian refugee families, the active and dynamic relationship between culture and displacement become visible.

Unlike the interviews conducted in Jordan, the interviews in Louisville involved both heads of households. All three families had been resettled to the US in 2016. Prior to resettlement, they were all living in urban host communities – two of the families had been in Turkey and one had been in Amman, Jordan. These families' sentiments regarding structural barriers to socioeconomic success in their respective communities were similar to those shared by the families in Jordan. These included insufficient income, lack of adequate humanitarian assistance, and lack of documentation as a barrier to education. One head of household emphasized the link between child labor and the lack of humanitarian assistance, and said, "The families in the camps received aid. So, it didn't make sense for their kids to work." Thus, these interviews reiterated how economic needs that are driven by structural forces exist as the primary impetuses to child labor.

### **Rationalizing Child Labor without Previous Involvement**

Only one of the three families had children who were involved in labor during their stay in host communities. Nonetheless, the conceptualizations of the two families that were never involved in child labor are important in explaining how experiencing displacement and being

familiar with the structural forms of violence that materialize as a result can shape how individuals rationalize phenomena that they may have previously been deemed as irrational. When the families were asked what value, if any, they saw in child labor in their respective host communities, one head of household explained,

It was necessary to provide for the family. Bills have to be paid. There's no other solution...Under certain circumstances, it's not up to the child – he or she needs to provide for the family. It's difficult for the parents and it's not a good thing. But it is what it is and they have to do what they have to do.

While discussing the difficult scenarios faced by children in their communities, another head of household asserted,

They couldn't do anything. They were forced because it was a difficult situation...They didn't want their kids to work, but they were forced to...They were oppressed. It's such a difficult sight to see the children working. They were working in a terrible environment...but how else are they going to live? It's very difficult...it destroys the child's future prospects.

Even though these participants chose not to utilize child labor as an adaptive strategy, their remarks imply that they were fully cognizant of its necessity in their communities, which they recognized to produce circumstances that led families to allow their children to work. When the heads of households were asked if they agree with ILO's definition of child labor, one participant said, "Yes, of course...it distracted them from their studies." Also highlighting the importance of education, another participant stated, "Yes, we agree wholeheartedly. For us to see children working very hard, it's not a good thing. It affects their ability to develop and learn. Without education, it's really hard for them in the future. It destroys them." Their narratives thus indicate

that their perceived ideals of childhood, which valorize education, exist within a contested conceptualization, which also accounts for observed negative implications of child labor in their communities. This exhibits congruence in the discourses between these two families and the families interviewed in Jordan.

The heads of households were also asked to explain if and how their opinions regarding child labor have changed since the onset of war in Syria, since seeking refuge in Jordan/Turkey, and since moving to the United States. One participant claimed that he has continued to believe that it is “wrong” throughout these three stages, but acknowledged that “...it depends on the circumstance...What can one do?” Although he claims stagnancy in his opinion through place and time, his conceptualization of child labor as obligatory and forced is clear. Another participant discussed the transformations she observed in her communities throughout the course of displacement. She explained, “At first, no one would allow their child to work. I don’t remember seeing any kids work in Syria before the war. Now, I see it often. But, I can’t blame the parents. They have no choice.” Her husband elaborated on this observation, and stated, “Of course, it has changed. People have to live. I used to receive 25 Turkish Lira a day for extremely physical work. There was once a kid who did the work of three men, and he only received 15 Turkish Lira. His dad passed away. It’s difficult to witness such a thing.” This family thus explicitly recognized the changes in their conceptualizations that were mediated by the observed implications of displacement in their communities. The power held by the forces of displacement is evident in these narratives, illuminating how previous cultural understandings of child labor in families become unsettled.

### **Emergence of a Divergent Family Narrative**

The most distinct conceptualizations of child labor and childhood, in comparison to all the Syrian refugee families included in this thesis, were found in the narrative of the third family in Louisville. The children in this family were involved in labor while living in an urban host community in Adana, Turkey. Situated near the Mediterranean coast in southern Turkey, the city of Adana hosts nearly 200,000 refugees (Fansa 2017). Given the magnitude of the refugee population, it is likely that a multitude of structural barriers exist in Adana's host communities. In fact, approximately 5,000 school-aged Syrian children do not have access or have limited access to education in Adana (Memişoğlu). Although enrollment in public schools does not require documentation, the majority of urban Syrian refugees in the city do not have documentation because of economic and social barriers (*ibid.*). This was confirmed by the head of household in this family, who discussed access to education in his community:

The school situation has gotten better for Syrians living in Turkey. Syrians are able to study with Turkish students in school. The kids learn the basics of the language and are then slowly assimilated into the Turkish education system. Anyone, regardless of whether they live in camps or houses, can be admitted to schools without having to have papers or other things. He also spoke about the lack of humanitarian assistance that was received by his family and the resulting economic challenges during their nearly three year-long stay in Adana. He explained, Because our family was so big [there was a total of 10 people in his household], agencies did not see it fit to provide us with aid. We only received 300 Turkish Lira [\$75 USD] in total during our whole time in Turkey. They [humanitarian agencies] saw us as being able to provide for ourselves, but they did not take into account what jobs we were working or how much we were making.

These insights indicated that, despite there being an ease in access to education, economic demands of this large household were the primary driving force behind his child's involvement in labor. However, further discussion revealed that contributing to the pooling of income within the family was not the only motivation for his child, who was 12 – 15 years old while in Turkey. The child, according to the head of household, approached his job in woodworking as a meaningful occupation through which he gained valuable skills, suggesting that his inclination to work was a function of agency. While discussing the Syrian family unit, Andrea Rugh addresses role allocation within the family, and how it is “consistent with a worldview structuring life around homogenous, stable family groups whose members honored their obligations to one another” (1997: 176). This sense of agency within this child likely exists in conjunction with his perceived obligations to the family, which aided in his rationalization of being involved in labor.

When the participant was asked whether his children were enrolled in school in Syria, he discussed how he considered education to not be crucial for his children. He clarified this assertion by stating that he believed it was important for them to reach the seventh grade, but learning trade was of utmost importance afterwards. As the head of household, he could not justify financial investment into his children's education in Syria, where, as he explained, examinations and further schooling required payments. Moreover, he acknowledged similar sentiments in his children, who “thought solely of work and wanting to work after finishing school.” His insights made it apparent that his children, who are now much older, were involved in labor even in pre-conflict Syria. This is a significant point of divergence from the family narratives that have been presented thus far; none of the other interviewed families in this thesis engaged in child labor prior to displacement. This head of household was also the only one to explicitly disagree with ILO's definition of child labor. He claimed, “I don't think of child labor

as this. If a child can study and is capable of doing it, they should. If they can't, learning a trade is the best thing to do in order to better themselves.”

Central to this divergent narrative is the absence of secondary education (beyond the seventh grade) in the family's perceived ideals of childhood. The head of household's insights make clear that their economic exigencies in pre-conflict Syria were linked to this apparent preference of the acquisition of trade skills through employment over education. However, given that they lived in a very small and rural town in Syria, it is possible that this preference was also shaped by existing cultural tendencies in both the household and the community. While discussing his understanding of the value of education, the participant explained that he had never obtained formal education as a child. His father passed away while he was very young, and consequently, being the eldest child in the family, he had to assume the role of the breadwinner in the household. Acknowledging the participant's history in conjunction with his children's desires to work brings the concept of culture to the forefront of this discussion. The presence of what seems to be a transgenerational conceptualization of education in this family indicates that cultural values within the household partially shaped the decisions that led to their children's participation in the labor market.

When the head of household was asked whether his family's opinions regarding child labor had transformed throughout their experience of displacement, he explained that his children had always “thought strongly in favor of working after finishing school [up to the seventh grade].” However, resettlement to the U.S. caused an increase in the emphasis placed by the family on education. He stated,

...now they don't have to worry about getting money. The younger kids now have the incentive to study as compared to the need for their work before. They don't need to

worry about making ends meet anymore because of the help being given to us by the government. Education is now extremely important to us in America.

The removal of the economic exigencies that existed in pre-conflict Syria and Turkey thus resulted in a significant shift in the family's capacity to value education and incorporate it into their conceptualizations of an ideal childhood. The power of displacement once again becomes visible. Here, resettlement – a transformation in place – induced changes in pre-existing cultural conceptions regarding education and child labor, indicating a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between displacement and culture.

### **Culture as Unbound and Internally Disjointed**

Analysis and discussion of the insights that were given by the families in Jordan exhibited the absence of child labor in the cultural framework of Syrian refugees. However, the narrative of the third family slightly challenges this conclusion. Economic constraints faced by the family drove the prioritization of labor over education, and the absence of these constraints in the US enabled their capacity to value education for their children. However, the function of culture in shaping this decision-making process, in Syria and Turkey, is evident for both the head of household and the child. Having to forego education and assume the role of breadwinner of the household at a young age likely shaped the head of household's outlook regarding the positive implications of children's participation in labor. Furthermore, experiencing the way in which his labor contributed to the socioeconomic success of his family presumably transformed his understanding of the value of education itself. This understanding was transmitted to his children, who also conceived the value of their labor to be greater than education. Childhood and education are two concepts that are often linked together, but it is crucial to consider how ideas about childhood, which include education, are cultural constructions that are passed down and



transformed across generations (Crewe & Axelby 2013).

Although culture is experienced in contrasting ways by each individual, much of it is communicated to children by parents, who “mold children’s behavior according to sets of assumptions that they have learned themselves and of which, they usually are not fully aware” (Rugh 1997: 182). Thus, the significance of transgenerational cultural conceptualizations mediated through the transmission of culture from parent to child must be highlighted in this family, for they contribute to the larger driving forces of child labor in their narrative. Moreover, this divergent narrative contains a familial conceptualization and organization that incorporated child labor into perceived ideals of childhood. The value in this cannot be discounted, because no one form of organization or perceived ideal is best, and each one contains differing costs and benefits that are weighed by the family under varying ecological conditions (*ibid.*). In the case of the Syrian refugee family, these costs and benefits are negotiated under the oppressive forces of displacement. The predisposition to utilize child labor as an adaptive strategy in Turkey, as exhibited by this family’s use of it, even in pre-conflict Syria, highlights the conjunction of cultural conceptualizations and economic exigencies, the latter of which is more significant in terms of impact on the decision-making process. This is elaborated by Heather Montgomery in the discussion of her work on child prostitution in Thailand:

It is possible for the anthropologist to view the children’s references to filial duty or to clients as friends as cultural statements which acknowledge different cultural conceptions of children and childhood but, at the same time and more importantly, as rationalizations of an economic strategy which enable the families to retain dignity and achieve agency (2001: 97).

Montgomery's work demonstrates the variation of culture within a culture, considering that child prostitution as a strategy is engaged in mostly by poor children, who use cultural conceptions to aid in rationalizations of their work; elites or middle-class children in Thailand would never engage in such work.

The absence of culturally derived conceptualizations, even partially, in the aforementioned narratives and the presence of them in the diverging narrative therefore signify the internally disjointed nature of culture. Often ignored by cultural relativism, this view of culture is now promoted by modern anthropology, which rejects culture as an integrated and bound concept. Anthropological theory, today, views culture as

...historically produced rather than static; unbounded rather than bounded and integrated; contested rather than consensual...rooted in practices, symbols, habits, patterns of practical mastery and practical rationality within cultural categories of meaning rather than any simple dichotomy between ideas and behavior... (Merry 2001: 42).

This approach to culture is essential in understanding child labor in Syrian refugee communities, where variations in culture exist; these variations lead to differences in how and the extent to which child labor is utilized as an adaptive strategy. Regardless of the degree of influence by cultural conceptualizations of childhood, imputing a phenomenon that is largely economically driven to culture is not only symbolic of subscribing to the deleterious forms of cultural relativism, but it also assumes culture as bound, static, and internally harmonious.

Such variations within culture are accentuated in response to displacement, which forces the negotiation and reconstruction of cultural values within communities. The transmission of the conceptualizations of childhood from parent to child, as discussed earlier, explains culture as a concept that must be understood concurrently as tradition and

communication (Eriksen 2001), but it must also be recognized as “roots, destiny, history, continuity and sharing on the one hand, and as impulses, choice, the future, change and variation on the other” (*ibid*:132). In the context of displacement, which entails the upheaval of a sense of place, these changes in culture occur through the transformation of barriers, reconfiguration of the immediate exigencies of families, and shifts in familial organizations and dynamics. These are exhibited by changes in the third family’s conceptualization of childhood after being resettled to the US. However, they are also evident in the families who did not participate in child labor in pre-conflict Syria, but chose to do so once seeking refuge in Jordan. Thus, culture emerges in these narratives as tied to place and time, with changes in place inducing transformations within culture. This reshaping of culture is tied to shifts in identity, which remain fluid throughout displacement, suggesting that identity becomes spatialized in ways that allow for high mobility and multiple meanings of place (Peteet 2005). Although child labor is mainly driven by economic constraints, the variations of the conceptions of childhood, which are culturally produced but rendered unstable through displacement, thus point to the unbound nature of culture itself.

## CONCLUSION

As presented in this thesis, the narratives of the Syrian refugee families in Irbid and Louisville have exposed child labor as a multi-faceted phenomenon, which cannot be explained by a singular driving force in either the household or the community. However, economic and financial constraints have emerged as its primary impetuses, showing the extent of the force of structural barriers to socioeconomic success in urban host communities. Their insights have uncovered the structural violence of poverty faced throughout displacement, during which families gain agency through active decisions to utilize child labor as an adaptive strategy. Thus,

it becomes clear that child labor does not exist as a characteristic and representative feature of Syrian culture within the Syrian cultural framework. In fact, attempting to understand child labor in this manner, as done by the three aid workers/government official who attributed child labor to Syrian culture, is emblematic of a dangerous and global trend towards xenophobia and the utilization of racist ideologies to exclude and “other” migrant populations. This trend, in the case of child labor, is further emboldened through the imposition of Western conceptualizations of childhood, which have not only driven the rights-based approach to a humanitarian movement to ban and eradicate child labor, but have also influenced how local aid workers and families themselves conceive child labor initiatives.

The dissonance found in the discourse between some of the aid workers/government official and the families highlights the need for the adoption of holistic-based approaches in humanitarian work on child labor, which must account for the systemic barriers that compel these families to view it as an adaptive strategy. The disintegration of these barriers in urban host communities hold the key to decreasing the prevalence of child labor, at least for families who do not consider it as part of their perceived ideals of childhood.

The narratives given by the families in Louisville demonstrated the internally disjointed nature of culture, which materializes differently from one population to another, one group to another, and one family to another. Although child labor does not exist within the framework of Syrian culture, certain cultural conceptualizations of childhood, which have been driven by pre-existing economic exigencies, shape the extent to which child labor is utilized within the household. Furthermore, the transformations of the conceptualizations of child labor through displacement, as shown in these narratives, signify the fragility, and yet adaptability, of culture in the midst of displacement, which has rendered Syrian refugees as an incredibly marginalized

population today. The ability of these families to survive in spite of the violence they have endured is a testament to their immense strength and capacity to take control under circumstances that are otherwise extraordinarily constraining. Thus, the anthropological lens emerges as imperative in this thesis, for it allows an understanding of the authenticities of the reality faced by families with the consideration of how strategies like child labor allow them to renegotiate their agency and retain a sense of dignity in communities where they are victim to exclusion.

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## APPENDIX A: CONSENT, JORDAN

### **Heads of Household (This will be read aloud to each participant):**

Hello, my name is Tasneem Karim and I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student at the University of Louisville in the state of Kentucky in the United States. I study Anthropology and Middle East and Islamic Studies. This semester, I am studying at the School for International Training in Amman. I am conducting an independent study project on *working children* in Syrian communities in Jordan. I am interested in learning more about the factors that lead children to work and your opinions on the subject matter.

I really appreciate you taking the time to partake in this interview (or focus group discussion). Your identity and your responses to the questions I will ask you will be kept completely confidential unless you want to identify yourself. You are not obligated to answer a question that you do not feel comfortable answering and you may end the interview or withdraw from this project at any time. If you give me your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of this interview. If you do not feel comfortable, the recording can be stopped at any time. I would also like to interview your child if you give me the permission to do so. Your child will be interviewed with several other children and it will be like a discussion. Do I have your permission to do this?

If you would like a copy of the final results of my study, please let me know. Thank you again for your time. Can I answer any questions before we begin?

### **Children (This will be read aloud to each participant):**

Hello, my name is Tasneem Karim and I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student at the University of Louisville in the state of Kentucky in the United States. I study Anthropology and Middle East and Islamic Studies. This semester, I am studying at the School for International Training in Amman. I am conducting an independent study project on *working children* in Syrian communities in Jordan. I am interested in learning more about the factors that lead children to work and your opinions on the subject matter.

I really appreciate you taking the time to partake in this focus group discussion. Your identity and your responses to the questions I will ask you will be kept completely confidential unless you want to identify yourself. You are not obligated to answer a question that you do not feel comfortable answering and you may end the interview or withdraw from this project at any time. If you give me your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of this interview. If you do not feel comfortable, the recording can be stopped at any time.

Thank you again for your time. Can I answer any questions before we begin?

### **Aid workers/Government official (This will be read aloud to each participant):**

Hello, my name is Tasneem Karim and I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> year student at the University of Louisville in the state of Kentucky in the United States. I study Anthropology and Middle East and Islamic Studies. This semester, I am studying at the School for International Training in Amman. I am conducting an independent study project on child labor in Syrian refugee

communities in Jordan. I am interested in learning more about the factors that lead children to work and your opinions on the subject matter.

I really appreciate you taking the time to partake in this interview (or focus group discussion). Your identity and your responses to the questions I will ask you will be kept completely confidential unless you want to identify yourself. You are not obligated to answer a question that you do not feel comfortable answering and you may end the interview or withdraw from this project at any time. If you give me your permission, I would like to make an audio recording of this interview. If you do not feel comfortable, the recording can be stopped at any time.

If you would like a copy of the final results of my study, please let me know. Thank you again for your time. Can I answer any questions before we begin?



## **PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM – AID WORKERS**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT TOPIC:** Understanding the Cultural Framework behind Child Labor and its Manifestation as an Adaptive Strategy in Syrian Refugee Communities

**STUDENT NAME:** Tasneem Karim

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this project.

My name is Tasneem Karim. I am a student with SIT Study Abroad Jordan: Refugee Health and Humanitarian Action program. I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting. However, before you agree to participate in this study, it is important you know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, at any time, please ask me. You should be satisfied with the answers before you agree to be in the study.

### **Brief description of the purpose of this study**

The purpose of this study is to learn more about the factors that lead children to work and your opinions on the subject matter.

Your participation will consist of answering a few questions and will require approximately 30 - 60 minutes of your time.

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and no penalties should you choose not to participate; participation is voluntary. During the interview you have the right to not answer any questions or discontinue participation at any time.

## Rights Notice

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop participation. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

- a. *Privacy* - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.
- b. *Confidentiality* - all confidential information will be protected.
- c. *Withdraw* – you are free to withdraw your participation in the project at any time and may refuse to respond to any part of the research. Participants who desire to withdraw shall be allowed to do so promptly and without prejudice to their interests

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may visit the World Learning website and check its policies on Human Subjects Research at:

<http://studyabroad.sit.edu/documents/studyabroad/human-subjects-policy.pdf> or contact the Academic Director at [bayan.abdulhaq@sit.edu](mailto:bayan.abdulhaq@sit.edu).

If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at phone: 796356132 or email at: [tzkari01@louisville.edu](mailto:tzkari01@louisville.edu).

Please sign below if you agree to participate in this research study and acknowledge that you are 18 years of age or older.

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Participant Informed Consent Form - Heads of Household

### نموذج موافقة على المشاركة في بحث

#### هدف البحث:

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو معرفة العوامل التي تقود الأطفال السوريين للعمل و سبب تزايد هذه الظاهرة مؤخرًا بالإضافة إلى آراء المجتمع حول الموضوع. و نأمل أن تكون نتائج هذه الدراسة تساهم في تحليل ظاهرة عمالة الأطفال السوريين في الأردن.

يعتبر هذا البحث احدى متطلبات مؤسسة التعلم الامريكية في الأردن: دراسات عامه حول الصحة وتنمية المجتمع. نتائج هذا البحث ستكون متوفرة على شبكة التواصل العنكبوتية ( الانترنت), و من الممكن أن تستخدم هذه النتائج في المستقبل لأغراض بحثية أخرى.

#### الخصوصية والسريه:

كل المعلومات التي سيتم جمعها ستعامل بسرية تامة من قبل الباحثه ولن يطلع على البيانات إلا الباحثه نفسها. بالاضافه الى ذلك سيتم اتلاف البيانات فور الانتهاء من الدراسه وتحليل النتائج.

#### حقوق المشاركين:

المشاركة في البحث طوعية وبمحض اختيارك. لا يتطلب الاشتراك في البحث ذكر الاسم او ما يدل عليه ومهما كانت اجابتك او رأيك فان هذه الاجابات والآراء لن تؤثر بأي شكل كان على وضعك. كما انه لديك الحق بعدم المشاركة في البحث ان شئت، و اذا ما غيرت رأيك وقررت الانسحاب بعد المشاركة فيمكنك الانسحاب كذلك. ومن حقك رفض السماح للباحثه باستخدام بيانات الدراسه في اي دراسات أخرى ستقوم بها الباحثه الرئيسيه.

#### المعايير الاخلاقيه لمؤسسة التعلم الامريكية:

أ. الخصوصية - كل المعلومات سيتم تسجيلها وحمايتها كما ستعامل بسرية تامة, من حقك رفض تسجيل المقابله وذلك من خلال الباحث الرئيسي.



ب. عدم الكشف عن الهوية - لا يتطلب الاشتراك في البحث ذكر الاسم او ما يدل عليه إلا إذا اختار المشارك خلاف ذلك.

ج. السرية - إن جميع الأسماء ستبقى سرية تماما ومحمية بالكامل من قبل الباحث.

من خلال التوقيع أدناه، فإنك تعطي الباحثه المسؤولية الكاملة لحفظ هذا العقد ومحتوياته. كما سيتم توقيع نسخة من هذا العقد واعطائها للمشارك.

5. أقرار موافقه:

من خلال التوقيع أدناه، فإنك توافق على استخدام ردودك على أسئلة الاستطلاع في دراسة بحثية بعنوان عمالة الأطفال في مُجتمعات اللاجئين السوريين في الأردن). كما أن توقيعك يعني أنك لا تمنع باستخدام ردودك على أسئلة الاستطلاع خلال هذه الدراسة في دراسات مستقبلية على مواضيع مماثلة . وعلاوة على ذلك ، توقيعك يعني فهمك الكامل لحقوقك أثناء المشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

---نعم لا--- اوافق على تسجيل المقابلة علما بان المقابلة سيتم اتلافها خلال شهر عند الانتهاء من تحليل المعلومات.

توقيع المشارك \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ: \_\_\_\_\_

6. أقرار سرية:

من خلال التوقيع أدناه فإنك ملتزم بحفظ المعلومات المقدمة من قبل المشاركين في الدراسة بسرية في جميع الأحوال. وهذا يشمل هوياتهم، اجوبتهم على الأسئلة، أو أي معلومات أخرى.  
توقيع الباحثة \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ: \_\_\_\_\_

توقيع المترجمة \_\_\_\_\_

التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_

## Participant Informed Consent Form - Children

### نموذج موافقة على المشاركة في بحث

#### هدف البحث:

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو معرفة العوامل التي تقود الأطفال السوريين للعمل و سبب تزايد هذه الظاهرة مؤخرًا بالإضافة إلى آراء المجتمع حول الموضوع. و نأمل أن تكون نتائج هذه الدراسة تساهم في تحليل ظاهرة عمالة الأطفال السوريين في الأردن.

يعتبر هذا البحث احدى متطلبات مؤسسة التعلم الامريكية في الأردن: دراسات عامه حول الصحة وتنمية المجتمع. نتائج هذا البحث ستكون متوفرة على شبكة التواصل العنكبوتية ( الانترنت), و من الممكن أن تستخدم هذه النتائج في المستقبل لأغراض بحثية أخرى.

#### الخصوصية والسريه:

كل المعلومات التي سيتم جمعها ستعامل بسرية تامة من قبل الباحثه ولن يطلع على البيانات إلا الباحثه نفسها. بالاضافه الى ذلك سيتم اتلاف البيانات فور الانتهاء من الدراسه وتحليل النتائج.

#### حقوق المشاركين:

المشاركة في البحث طوعية وبمحض اختيارك. لا يتطلب الاشتراك في البحث ذكر الاسم او ما يدل عليه ومهما كانت اجابتك او رأيك فان هذه الاجابات والآراء لن تؤثر بأي شكل كان على وضعك. كما انه لديك الحق بعدم المشاركة في البحث ان شئت، و اذا ما غيرت رأيك وقررت الانسحاب بعد المشاركة فيمكنك الانسحاب كذلك. ومن حقك رفض السماح للباحثه باستخدام بيانات الدراسه في اي دراسات أخرى ستقوم بها الباحثه الرئيسي.

#### المعايير الاخلاقيه لمؤسسة التعلم الامريكية:

أ. الخصوصية - كل المعلومات سيتم تسجيلها وحمايتها كما ستعامل بسرية تامة, من حقك رفض تسجيل المقابله وذلك من خلال الباحث الرئيسي.

ب. عدم الكشف عن الهوية - لا يتطلب الاشتراك في البحث ذكر الاسم او ما يدل عليه إلا إذا اختار المشارك خلاف ذلك.

ج. السرية - إن جميع الأسماء ستبقى سرية تماما ومحمية بالكامل من قبل الباحث.

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---نعم لا--- اوافق على تسجيل المقابلة علما بان المقابلة سيتم اتلافها خلال شهر عند الانتهاء من تحليل المعلومات.

توقيع المشارك \_\_\_\_\_

توقيع مُقدم الرعاية/ الوصي: \_\_\_\_\_

التاريخ: \_\_\_\_\_

6. اقرار سرية:

من خلال التوقيع أدناه فإنك ملتزم بحفظ المعلومات المقدمة من قبل المشاركين في الدراسة بسرية في جميع الأحوال. وهذا يشمل هوياتهم، اجوبتهم على الأسئلة، أو أي معلومات أخرى.  
توقيع الباحثة \_\_\_\_\_ التاريخ: \_\_\_\_\_

توقيع المترجمة \_\_\_\_\_

التاريخ \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDES, JORDAN

### Heads of Household

Please confirm that you have agreed to do this interview and have it tape recorded.

#### 1. *Demographic Information*

- a. When did you arrive in Jordan?
- b. How long have you been living in your current residence?
- c. How old are you?
- d. What is your marital status?
- e. How many members are in your family?
- f. Who is considered the breadwinner of the household?
- g. What is your household's approximate monthly income?

#### 2. *Employment Status*

- a. Are you employed?
  - i. If yes, do you have a work permit?
  - ii. If yes, do you believe your salary is enough to support your family?
  - iii. If not, what barriers have you encountered in the job market?
- b. If you are married, is your spouse employed?
  - i. If yes, does he or she have a work permit?
  - ii. If yes, do you believe his or her salary is enough to support your family?
  - iii. If not, what barriers has he or she encountered in the job market?

#### 3. *Household/Children Information*

- a. How many children do you have?
- b. What are their ages?
- c. Are they enrolled in school?
  - i. If yes, how often do they go to school?
  - ii. If not, why are they not enrolled in school?
- d. Do any of your children have jobs?
  - i. If yes, what do they do?
  - ii. If yes, how long have they been employed?
  - iii. If yes, how often do they work?
  - iv. If yes, why do you think it is important for them to work?
  - v. If yes, how do you feel about them working?
  - vi. If yes, would the situation be different if you were living in Syria?
- e. Certain organizations believe that *some types* of child labor may be: "work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development"
  1. What do you think of this?
  2. Do you think this definition accurately describes the work your children do?
  - ii. From your experience, do your children face any risks or danger when working?

- iii. Back in your home community in Syria, was it common for children to be working?
- iv. Besides financial reasons, do you believe there are any benefits for children to have work experience?
- v. How would you define childhood?

4. *Health Status*

- a. Do any members of your family have illnesses?
  - i. If yes, who has the illness and what do they have?
  - ii. Do you have medical insurance?
  - iii. If yes, how has this illness affected the financial situation of your family?
  - iv. If yes, how has this illness affected how much, if at all, your children work?

5. *Humanitarian Assistance*

- a. Are you registered with UNHCR?
- b. What kind of aid are you receiving?
  - i. Do you rely on financial assistance from NGOs, the Jordanian Government or other humanitarian agencies?
- c. In your opinion, is the amount of aid you are receiving enough?
- d. How does the degree of assistance from organizations affect how much, if at all, your children work?

6. *Additional comments*

- a. Is there any other information you would like to include?
- b. Do you have any questions I can answer?

**Focus Group Discussion - Children**

Please confirm that you have agreed to do this interview and have it tape recorded.

What is your age?	
How many members are in your family?	
Are you the eldest child in the house?	
Are you enrolled in school?	
How often do you go to school?	

1. *Education*
  - a. What do you like about going to school in Jordan?
  - b. What do you not like about going to school in Jordan?
  
2. *Working*
  - a. Why do you work?
  - b. What do you like about working?
  - c. What do you not like about working?
  - d. How does working make you feel?
  - e. Do you think you are a part of the community when you work?
  - f. How has working changed your relationship with your family?
  - g. How has working changed your relationship with your friends or people in your community?
  - h. How does working benefit your family?
  - i. How does working benefit your community?
  - j. How would you define childhood?
  - k. Do you consider yourself to be a child?
  - l. In your opinion, do you think it is okay for children to work?
  - m. In your own words, can each of you explain what you think child labor is?
  
3. *Additional information*
  - a. Is there any other information you would like to provide?
  - b. Do you have any questions for me?

**Aid workers/Government official**

Please confirm that you have agreed to do this interview and have it tape recorded.

1. Do you want your affiliation with your organization to be included in my report?
2. Which organization do you work for?
3. How long have you been working for this organization?
4. What is your position at this organization?
5. Can you give me a summary of what you think the child labor situation for Syrian refugees in Jordan is like today?
6. What challenges has your organization faced in dealing with this?
7. Do you think child labor is okay under certain circumstances?
8. When you think of child labor, what comes to mind?
9. What policies govern child labor in Jordan?
10. Are there any differences in child labor policies between Jordanians and Syrians?
11. What does your organization do when you find children involved in labor?
12. How does your organization aim to handle this increasingly prevalent problem in the future?
13. How can Syrian refugee communities move forward from this?

## تَعْلِيمَاتُ الْمُقَابَلَةِ

مَرَحِبًا، اسمي تسنيم كريم، أنا طالبةٌ في السنة الثالثة في جامعة لوزفيل في ولاية كنتاكي في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. أدرس علم إنسان/أنثربولوجيا و دراسات إسلامية و شرق أوسطية. في هذا الفصل، أدرس في

### School of International Training

في عمان. الآن، أقومُ بِمَشروعِ دراسةٍ مُستقلِّ حَولَ عَمَالَةِ الأَطْفالِ في مُجْتَمَعاتِ اللاجئين السوريين في الأردن. أنا مُهتَمَةٌ بِأَنْ أَعْرِفَ أَكْثَرَ عَنِ العِوَامِلِ الَّتِي تَقُودُ الأَطْفالَ لِيعْمَلُوا و عَنِ آرائِكُمْ حَولَ هَذا الأَمْرِ. و مهتمة أيضاً بدراسة هذا الموضوع لأن عمالة الأطفال في الأردن تزايدت بشكل ملحوظ في الأعوام الأخيرة و لديّ فضولٌ لِأَعْرِفَ السَّبَبَ و لِأَعْرِفَ كَيْفَ يَنْظُرُ النَّاسُ فِي مُجْتَمَعاتِ اللاجئين لهذا الموضوع.

أنا حَقًّا شاكِرةٌ لَكُمْ عَلى مُشارِكتِكُمْ فِي هَذِهِ المُقَابَلَةِ (التَّقاَشِ الجِماعِيّ). سَيَبِيئُ التَّعَامُلُ مَعَ خُصُوصِيَّتِكُمْ و إِجاباتِكُمْ عَنِ الأَسئَلَةِ بِسِرِّيَّةٍ تامَّةٍ إِلا إِذا أَرَدْتُمْ التَّعْرِيفَ بِأَنفُسِكُمْ. لَسْتُمْ مُجَبَّرِينَ عَلى إِجابةِ أَيِّ سَؤالٍ لا تَرتاحونَ لَه و بِإمكانِكُمْ إنْهاءَ المُقَابَلَةِ أو الانسحاب من هذا المشروع متى ما أَرَدْتُمْ. إِذا سَمَحْتُمْ لِي، فَسَوفَ أَسجَلُ المُقَابَلَةَ صَوْتِيًّا. يُمكنُ إِيقافُ التَّسجِيلِ متى أَرَدْتُمْ ذلك. أودُ أيضاً مُقَابَلَةَ أطفالِكُمْ إِذا مُنحتِ الأذنَ مِنْكُمْ، سَتَتَمُّ مُقَابَلَةُ أطفالِكُمْ مَعَ أطفالٍ آخَرِينَ فِي حَلِقَةِ نِقاَشيَّة، فَهل تَأذِنونَ لِي بِذلك؟ إِذا أَرَدْتُمْ الحُصُولَ عَلى نُسخَةٍ مِنَ النُّتائِجِ النِّهايَّةِ لِدراسَتِي، فَأخبروني.

شُكراً لَكُمْ مَرَّةً ثانياً. هل هناك أي سؤال قبل أن أبدأ؟

### الأطفال (سيقرأ هذا الجزء جَهراً لِكُلِّ شَخْصٍ مُشاركٍ).

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أُقدر حقًا وقتكم للمشاركة في هذه الحلقة النقاشية. ستكون جميع هوياتكم و ردودكم على الأسئلة مُحافظ عليها بسريّة تامّة إلا إذا أردتم التعريف عن أنفسكم. أنتم لستم ملزمين بالإجابة على أي سؤال لا تشعرون بالإرتياح حوله و يمكنكم إنهاء المقابلة أو الإنسحاب من هذه المشروع في أي وقت ستنتم. في حال أخذت أذنكم فأنا أرغب بتسجيل هذه المقابلة صوتيًا، إذا شعرتم بعد الإرتياح جِبال هذا الأمر فَيمكن إيقاف التسجيل في أي وقتز

شكرًا لكم مرّة ثانية. هل هناك أي سؤال قبل أن أبدأ؟

### ملحق (1) تعليمات المقابلة - رب الأسرة

الرجاء التأكيد على قبولكم إجراء هذه المقابلة و تسجيلها صوتيًا.

#### 1- أَسْئَلَةُ حَوْلَ السَّكَّانِ

- أ- متى وصلت إلى الأردن؟
- ب- منذ متى تسكن في مكان إقامتك الحالي؟
- ج- كم عمرك؟
- د- هل أنت أعزب أو متزوج؟
- هـ- كم عدد أفراد أسرتك؟
- و- من يعيل أسرتك؟
- ز- كم دخل الأسرة الشهري؟

#### 2- الحالة المهنيّة

- أ- هل أنت موظف؟
- إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، فهل لديك تصريح عمل؟
- إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، فهل ترى أن دخلك يكفي احتياجات أسرتك؟
- إذا كانت الإجابة لا، ما الصعوبات التي واجهتها بسوق العمل؟

- ب- هل زوجتك/زوجك تعمل، إذا كنت متزوجاً/متزوجة؟
- إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، فهل لديه/لديها تصريح عمل؟
- إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، فهل دخله/دخلها يكفي احتياجات أسرتك؟
- إذا كانت الإجابة لا، ما الصعوبات التي واجهها/واجهتها بسوق العمل؟

#### 3- المعلومات الخاصة بالأسرة والأطفال

- أ- كم ولداً لديك؟



- ب- كم أعمارهم؟  
 ج- هل هم في المدرسة؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، كم يوماً يذهبون للمدرسة أسبوعياً؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة لا، لماذا لا يدرسون في المدرسة؟

- د- هل يعمل أطفالك؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، ماذا يعملون؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، منذ متى يعملون؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، كم يوماً يعملون أسبوعياً؟ و كم ساعة يومياً؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، ما أهمية العمل بالنسبة لهم، برأيك؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، بما تشعُر و أنت تَراهم يعملون؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، هل سيكون الوضع مختلفاً فيما لو كُنت تعيش في سوريا؟

هـ-

- تعرّف منظمات حقوق الإنسان عمالة الاطفال بأنها: "العمل الذي يحرم الأطفال من طفولتهم و طاقاتهم و كرامتهم، ويؤثر سلباً على تطوّرهم الذهنيّ و الجسديّ".

- 1- ما رأيك بذلك؟  
 2- هل تعتقد بأن هذه التعريف هو وصف دقيق للعمل الذي يعمل به طفلك؟  
 - من خلال تجربتك، هل تعتقد بأن الأطفال يواجهون أي مخاطر خلال العمل؟  
 - هل كان عمل الأطفال شائعاً في سوريا؟  
 - بالإضافة إلى الأسباب الماديّة، هل تعتقد أنّ لِعَمَلِ الأطفال أيّة فوائد تتعلّق بِحُصُولِهِمْ عَلَى خِبْرَةِ عَمَلٍ؟  
 - كيف تصف طفولة؟

- 4- الحالة الصحيّة؟  
 أ- هل يعاني أيّ من أفراد أسرتك من أمراضٍ مُعيّنة؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، من منهم؟ و ما مرضه؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، هل لديكم تأمين صحيّ؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، كيف يُؤثّر هذا المرضُ على وضع الأسرة الماديّ؟  
 - إذا كانت الإجابة نعم، هل دفع هذا المرض أطفالك لأن يعملوا أكثر؟

- 5- المُساعدات الإنسانيّة  
 أ- هل اسمك مسجّل لدى مَفوضيّة الأمم المُتّحدة لِشؤون اللاجئين؟  
 ب- ما نوع المُساعدات المُقدّمة إليك؟

- هل تَعْتَمِدُ على مساعدات مَالِيَّة مُقَدَّمة من مُنْظَّمات غَيْر حُكُومِيَّة أو من الحكومة الأردنيَّة أو من هَيئاتِ إنْسانِيَّة؟
- ج- برأيك، هل حَجْمُ المساعدات المقدَّمة إليك كافٍ؟
- د- كيف يُؤثِّر حَجْمُ المساعدات التي تَتَلَقَّاها على عَمَلِ أطفالك؟ أي هل يَدْفَعُهُم حَجْمُ المساعدات للعمل أكثر فيما لو كان قليلاً؟

#### 6- تَعْلِيقاتُ إضافِيَّة

- أ- هل تريد أن تذكر أي معلومات أخرى؟
- ب- هل هُنَاكَ أيَّة أسْئَلَة؟

### الملحق (2): تعليمات المُقابَلَة - التِّقَاشُ الجَماعِيّ مع الأطفال

الرَّجاء التَّأكِيد على مُوافَقَتِكُمْ على إجراء هذه المُقابَلَة و تَسْجِيلِها صَوْتِيًّا.

#### 2- التعلِيم

- ج- ماذا الذي تُحِبُّونَهُ في الدوام المدرسي في الأردن؟
- د- ماذا الذي لا تحبونهُ في الدوام المدرسي في الأردن؟

#### 3- العمل

- أ- بِالنِّسْبَة لِلأَطْفال الذين يعملون منكم، لماذا تعملون؟
- ب- ما الذي تُحِبُّونَهُ في العمل؟
- ج- ما الذي لا تُحِبُّونَهُ في العمل؟
- د- بماذا يَجْعَلُكم العمل تَشْعُرُون؟
- هـ- هل تَعْتَقِدُ أنكَ عندما تَعْمَلُ تكون جزءاً من المُجتمع؟
- ف- كيف غير العمل طَبِيعَة عَلاقَتِكَ مع أسرتك؟
- س- كيف غير العمل طَبِيعَة عَلاقَتِكَ مع أصدقاؤك و أفراد المُجتمع؟
- ص- كيف يُفِيد هذا العمل عائلتك؟
- غ- كيف يُفِيد هذا العمل مُجتمعك؟
- و- هل يمكن أن يقول لي كل واحد فيكم ما هي عمالة الأطفال؟
- ك- هل تَعْتَبِر نَفْسَكَ طفلاً؟
- ي- برأيك، هل هو أمر مقبول بأن يعمل الأطفال؟
- ز- ما رأيكم بِعمالة الأطفال؟

- 4- مَعْلُومَاتُ إِضَافِيَّةٍ  
أ- هل هناك أية معلومات أخرى تريدون إضافتها؟  
ب- هل هناك أية أسئلة؟

الملحق (3): تعليمات المُقابَلَة – عَمَالُ الإِغَاثَةِ/المَسْؤُولُونَ الحُكُومِيِّون

الرَّجَاءُ التَّأَكِيدَ عَلَى مُوَافَقَتِكُمْ عَلَى إِجْرَاءِ هَذِهِ المُقَابَلَةِ وَتَسْجِيلِهَا صَوْتِيًّا.

- 1- هل تُرِيدُ أَنْ أذْكَرَ انخِرَاطَكَ فِي مُنْظَمَتِكَ فِي تَقْرِيرِي؟
- 2- فِي أَيِّ مُنْظَمَةٍ تَعْمَلُ؟
- 3- مِنْ مَتَى تَعْمَلُ فِي هَذِهِ المُنْظَمَةِ؟
- 4- مَا مُسَمَّاكَ الوَظِيفِي فِي المُنْظَمَةِ؟
- 5- هل يُمَكِّنُكَ أَنْ تُلَخِّصَ لِي رَأْيَكَ بِوَضْعِ عَمَالَةِ الأَطْفَالِ مِنَ اللّاجِئِينَ السُّورِيِّينَ فِي الأُردُنِ اليَوْمَ؟
- 6- مَا التَّحَدِّيَّاتُ الَّتِي تَوَاجَهُهَا مُنْظَمَتُكَ فِي التَّعَامُلِ مَعَ هَذَا الوَضْعِ؟
- 7- هل تَعْتَقِدُ أَنَّ عَمَالَةَ الأَطْفَالِ مَقْبُولَةٌ فِي ظِلِّ ظُرُوفِ مُعَيَّنَةٍ؟
- 8- مَا الَّذِي يَخْطُرُ بِبَالِكَ عِنْدَمَا تُفَكِّرُ بِعَمَالَةِ الأَطْفَالِ؟
- 9- مَا السِّيَاسَاتُ الَّتِي تَحْكُمُ عَمَالَةَ الأَطْفَالِ فِي الأُردُنِ؟
- 10- هل هُنَاكَ أَيُّ إِخْتِلَافٍ فِي سِيَاسَاتِ عَمَالَةِ الأَطْفَالِ بَيْنَ الأُردُنِ وَسُورِيَا؟
- 11- مَا الَّذِي تَقُومُ بِهِ مُنْظَمَتُكَ عِنْدَمَا تَجِدُ أطفَالاً يَعمَلُونَ؟
- 12- مَاذَا تَفعَلُ مُنْظَمَتُكَ فِي سَبِيلِ مُعَالَجَةِ هَذِهِ المُشْكَلَةِ ذَاتِ الإِنْتِشَارِ المُتَزَايِدِ فِي المُسْتَقْبَلِ؟
- 13- كَيْفَ يُمَكِّنُ لِمُجْتَمَعَاتِ اللّاجِئِينَ السُّورِيِّينَ أَنْ تَتَطَوَّرَ مُنْطَلِقَةً مِنْ هَذِهِ النُّقْطَةِ (مُشْكَلَةِ عَمَالَةِ الأَطْفَالِ)؟

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT, LOUISVILLE

UofL Institutional Review Boards  
IRB NUMBER: 17.1054  
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 12/11/2017  
IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 12/10/2018

### Child Labor among Syrian Refugees

Date:

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study by answering questions in an interview about child labor in Syrian refugee communities. This study is conducted by Dr. Peteet of the University of Louisville. There are no known risks for your participation in this research study. The information collected may not benefit you directly. The information learned in this study may be helpful to others. The information you provide will help researchers understand why child labor is happening in refugee communities. Your answers to the questions in the interview will be stored in a locked folder on the researcher's computer. The survey will take approximately 30-60 minutes to complete. An audio recording of the interview will be done.

Individuals from the Department of Anthropology, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Human Subjects Protection Program Office (HSPPPO), and other regulatory agencies may inspect these records. In all other respects, however, the data will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Should the data be published, your identity will not be disclosed.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. By answering the interview questions you agree to take part in this research study. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study you may stop taking part at any time. If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Tasneem Karim at (502) 235-2319. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office at (502) 852-5188. You can discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject, in private, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also call this number if you have other questions about the research, and you cannot reach the research staff, or want to talk to someone else. The IRB is an independent committee made up of people from the University community, staff of the institutions, as well as people from the community not connected with these institutions. The IRB has reviewed this research study.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research or research staff and you do not wish to give your name, you may call 1-877-852-1167. This is a 24 hour hot line answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

Sincerely,

**Signature of the Investigator**



Julie Peteet

**Signature of the Co-Investigator**



Tasneem Karim

Version Date: 12/04/2017

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE, LOUISVILLE

### *Demographic Information*

1. How long have you lived in Louisville?
2. Which country did you first seek refuge from after leaving Syria? a. Where were you living in that country? Camp/urban community? b. How did you get to the US?
3. How old are you?
4. What is your marital status?
5. How many members are in your family? a. How many children do you have? b. Before you came to the US, who was living in your household? c. Who is in your household here?
6. Who is considered to be the breadwinner of your household now?
7. Before the US, in the refugee camp or the urban community, who was bringing in income for the family?
  - a. What was your monthly income?
  - b. What was your monthly expenditure?
  - c. Was it enough for your family?
  - d. Were you receiving any assistance from UNHCR or an NGO?
8. When you were in Syria, before the war started, were your children enrolled in school?
  - a. Did any of your children work? If yes, why do you think it was important for them to work? If not, why?
  - b. Did any children in your community work? If yes, what did you think of this? What value, if any, did you see in children working?
9. After you fled Syria, were your children enrolled in school? (in camp/urban community)
  - a. Did any of your children work? If yes, why do you think it was important for them to work? If not, why?
  - b. Did any children in your community work? If yes, what did you think of this? What value, if any, did you see in children working in the urban community?
10. Certain organizations believe that some types of work that children do are defined as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.”
  - a. What do you think of this?
  - b. (if children did work at one point) Do you think this definition accurately describes the work your children did?
  - c. Do you think this definition accurately describes the work children did in your
  - d. Do you think children face any risks or danger when working?
11. How do you think your opinion about working children has changed...
  - a. Since the war in Syria starting?
  - b. Since moving to the country you first sought refuge from?
  - c. Since moving to the United States?
  - d. Do you think it is okay for children to work under certain circumstances?
12. Do you have any suggestions on how to prevent the increasing prevalence of child labor in Syrian refugee communities?