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Julia Therese Tempesta

Trinity College, Hartford Connecticut, jtempesta@gmail.com

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Finding Home (بَيْت) Along Farmington Avenue
Assessing Models of Refugee Resettlement in the Greater
Hartford Area

Julia Tempesta

Professor Abigail Fisher Williamson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Arts
with honors in Public Policy and Law

TRINITY COLLEGE

Hartford, Connecticut

Spring 2019

Acknowledgements

For Professor Williamson. Thank for all the time and dedication you put into assisting me with writing my thesis. It was a great process learning from your expertise and research in migration policy. Without your connections within the Greater Hartford refugee resettlement circle, I could have never completed over twenty interviews. You are the best advisor I could have asked for.

For Heba Karkar. Thank you for all the Saturdays and Sunday afternoons we spent interviewing refugee families in the Hartford area. Only with your linguistic skills and cultural knowledge, was I able to interview seven Syrian refugee families. Best of luck with your graduation from Hall High School and future endeavors!

For Professor Bauer. Thank you for all your help in arranging interviews!

For my fellow Public Policy and Law thesis writers. I am incredibly thankful to be part of such an engaging, warm and intelligent group of peers.

For my friends. Thank you to all my roommates for listening to me explain the minute details of social capital theory.

For my family, and brother. I will always appreciate you for encouraging me to follow my dreams and academic interests. I could have never completed this thesis without your emotional support throughout this entire process.

Abstract

This thesis explores how different models of refugee resettlement influence refugee integration outcomes. Currently, the US offers two primary models: sponsorship through a voluntary agency with support from a community group, typically a religious congregation. Private sponsorship, or unaffiliated volunteering with refugees also occurs locally across the United States. Previous literature largely addresses the challenges of case-management model in facilitating refugee integration, but does not assess how U.S. community-driven approaches to resettlement affect refugees' economic and linguistic outcomes. In the first section, this thesis examines the history of refugee resettlement in Connecticut through refugee admissions data, organizational analysis of the states' principle resettlement agencies, and the Hartford area's municipal involvement with resettlement. I find that Catholic Charities, Connecticut's largest case-management agency, has been ineffectual in its past initiatives in resettling refugees. In total, I conduct twenty-two interviews with case-managers, community volunteers and Syrian refugees. Overall, my findings suggest that community and private sponsorship (largely based in West Hartford) enhances refugee families' social capital, and, in turn, economic, linguistic, and social integration. At the same time, this phenomenon of largely privileged suburbanites helping individual refugee families achieve mobility perpetuates systems of metropolitan inequality.

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Introduction

On January 28, 2017, thousands of protestors crowded Hartford's Bradley International Airport and airports across the country to denounce President Donald Trump's first travel ban, which included a 120-day refugee ban from seven majority-Muslim countries and an indefinite ban on Syrian refugees. While a federal circuit court ruling blocked this executive order from going into effect on February 3rd, 2017, President Trump's subsequent two travel bans heightened security measures and de facto entrance criterion significantly reducing the United States refugee admissions from 85,000 in 2016 to only a projected 45,000 in 2018 (Bernstein and DuBois, 9, 2018). In fact, for FY 2018 a total of 22,491 refugees were resettled in the United States under this ceiling of 45,000 (Rush 2018). For FY 2019, Trump has set an even lower refugee ceiling of 30,000 potential admissions (Bernstein and Santos 2018). These restrictive actions have led to budget cuts resulting in national refugee resettlement voluntary agencies (volags) closing local offices and laying off staff (Alvarez 2018). While the Trump Administration's policies have adversely impacted the linguistic, cultural and financial resources of local volags, it remains unclear if national decision-making has affected local community involvement in refugee integration.

Clearly, refugee resettlement in the United State is under attack. But evidence suggests that refugees tend to economically and linguistically integrate successfully over time (Bernstein 2018 and Capps et al 2018). Indeed, the Obama administration was ramping up refugee resettlement in its final years (Bernstein, 2018, 7). With worldwide refugee populations at an all-time high (UNHCR 2018), it is worth considering how the United States can employ its resources to engage in refugee resettlement more effectively. Currently the US offers two primary models: sponsorship through a voluntary agency with regular support from a case

worker, and sponsorship through a voluntary agency with support from a community group, typically a faith-based organization. Private sponsorship, or non-affiliated volunteering with refugees, also occurs locally across the United States. In other words, private volunteers assist refugees without the supervision or coordination of a voluntary resettlement agency. Volag case-management and community-driven sponsorship seek to assist refugees in their transition and acculturation to the United States. Through interviews and analysis in Greater Hartford, CT, this thesis examines how these two approaches to resettlement affect refugees' social capital and integration outcomes. The findings will suggest that community sponsorship and private sponsorship enhance refugee families' social capital and, in turn, economic, linguistic, and social integration. At the same time, however, the phenomenon of largely privileged suburbanites helping individual refugee families achieve mobility perpetuates systems of metropolitan inequality. Specifically, individual refugee families receive support to flee or subvert struggling urban neighborhoods and schools, taking with them the skills and entrepreneurial spirit that immigrants often bring. In a society riddled with systemic inequalities, the bridging social capital that sponsorship creates plucks select families from urban poverty, while reinforcing the processes of flight that trouble communities such as Hartford.

Discussion of traditional voluntary agency case work is not new in scholarly literature. Nor indeed are discussions of the role of faith-based refugee co-sponsorship. However, scholars continue to disagree over definitions, factors and determinants of refugee integration. In fact, the United States Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) does not even provide an official definition of integration on its website. Furthermore, much scholarship neglects the fact that U.S. refugee resettlement programs have offered little information on long-term refugee integration outcomes. Specifically, researchers lack information regarding non-economic integration outcomes such as

English-language proficiency, civic and community involvement and psychosocial wellbeing. In addition, the highly localized nature of refugee services creates a large gap of research concerning how community members, religious congregations and volag caseworkers determine refugee integration outcomes across the United States. In this introduction, I first provide a brief overview of the history, and objectives of the United States Refugee Resettlement Program (USRP). Next, I discuss the efficacy of co-sponsorship and volag casework models in promoting refugee integration outcomes. To assess these models, I track the available information and gaps of knowledge regarding refugee integration outcomes from major American research institutes, think-tanks and academics. Within this section, I also focus on the role of social capital in bridging access to refugees' economic, linguistic and social integration.

Overview of United States Refugee Resettlement

According to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951). A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group (United Nations Refugee Convention 1951). Currently, there are approximately 68.5 million people around the world who have been forced from their home (UNHCR: 2018). Among them are nearly 25.4 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18 (UNHCR: USA 2018). Fifty-seven percent of these refugees come from three countries: Syria (6.3 million), Afghanistan (2.6 million) and South Sudan (2.4 million) (UNHCR: USA 2018).

The Immigration and Nationality Act and the Refugee Act of 1980 grant refugees' entry into the United States. For each federal year, the President determines the refugee ceiling, which does not have to be met, but cannot be exceeded (Bernstein, 3, 2018). Historically, the total

number of refugees coming to the United States has fluctuated along with global events and U.S. priorities (Krogstad and Radford 2017). For instance, United States presidents prioritized accepting thousands of Cuban and Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s and 1980s due to their Cold-War deterrence policies. From 1990 to 1995, for instance, an average about 112,000 refugees arrived in the U.S. each year, with many coming from the former Soviet Union (Krogstad and Radford 2017). However, refugee admissions dropped off to fewer than 27,000 in 2002 following the terrorist attacks in 2001 (Krogstad and Radford 2017). This number has since risen under the Obama Administration, and dropped again within the context of President Trump's restrictive migration policies. According to Kallick and Mathema (2016), refugees consist of approximately 8 percent of all foreign-born individuals in the United States. When selected to enter the United States, refugees must go through an intensive security screening process by the United States Department of Homeland Security which can last years. When granted admission, refugees undergo cultural training before departure.

The United States resettlement program is a public-private program that is run by the Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). These organizations distribute funds and cases to nine national, mostly religious-based resettlement agencies ("volags") that provide services to newly arrived refugees through a network of local affiliates in communities across the United States. PRM funds short-term services for 30 to 90 days, which are used to cover expenses for refugees' immediate needs including reception at the airport, housing and clothes and enrollment in social services (Bernstein and Dubois, 3, 2018). This amount of cash is minimal - \$2,075 for each refugee in FY 2018 and is often supplemented by community groups, volunteers or private donations (Bernstein and Dubois, 3, 2018). Refugees

also have access to federal government benefits, including Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, food stamps or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. That being said, benefits greatly differ from state to state.

Criticisms of the Volag Case-Management Resettlement Model

Despite volags' resettlement purpose, there are still many unresolved challenges to promoting refugee integration and self-sufficiency. In the first month, volag case-managers assist refugees in meeting critical needs (housing selection and furnishing, airport pickup and assignment of welfare/social security cards). Simultaneously, case-managers search for *any* job opportunities for their refugee clients. Once a job has been assigned, caseworkers focus on ESL tutoring or classes so refugees can improve their English-speaking abilities. After spending one year in the United States, refugees are required to apply for lawful permanent residence card. The main problems in successful refugee integration are the limited resettlement time period of 90 days, and national funding. Volag employees face the immense challenge of transforming refugees into economically-sufficient and English-proficient citizens in under 3 months. With diminished national funds, caseworker resources are stretched and this ambitious goal is tempered. Both these factors affect economic self-sufficiency and English language attainment: the two main goals of United States refugee resettlement program (USRP).

In terms of employment, refugees are given jobs immediately whether or not this job fits the refugees' needs or credentials. This policy is consistent with USRP's goal of decreasing refugees' public benefit usage. Therefore, many refugees are underemployed or possess jobs which under-matches their skill-set. Due to the limited resettlement time period, refugees generally cannot wait for an ideal job to come up and usually take whatever opportunity comes first (Rana 2016). For instance, researchers studying resettlement in the Atlanta area,

Connecticut and Ohio, found that many refugees were sent to work at a chicken factories regardless of their level of education, experience or training (Rana, 2016, 71). While this type of labor provides refugees with a temporary job, a Georgetown Human Rights Institute review (2009) found that the USARP does not devote enough attention to breaking down key barriers to long-term employment for refugees. This is partially because employment services, provided by volags and state agencies do not receive enough national funding to adequately help refugees in their job search (Georgetown Human Rights Institute 2009). In an interview with Belmin Pinjic, the Director of Refugee Services at Lutheran Social Services of Michigan (LSSM), he states, “We need more funding, that’s the key” (Georgetown Human Rights Institute, 2009). In addition to lack of employment services, many casework volags do not provide refugees with adequate English language classes or training.

Legally, however, U.S. refugee regulations set aside specific funding for English language training and require that it be provided to the maximum extent feasible in manner that is linguistically and culturally compatible with a refugee’s background (Georgetown Institute of Human Rights, 2009, 71). Capps et al (2017) and Bernstein (2018) emphasize that limited English skills can slow refugee economic integration or accessibility to certain jobs. USRP’s emphasis of employment, however, compromises refugees’ availability to attend English classes. Refugees’ lack of transportation or disparate access to public transit also complicates scheduling ESL classes. In addition, the minimal government support for USRP language services may be insufficient to meet the needs of refugee groups (Capps et al 2017). In Detroit, Georgetown students found that LSSM only has only enough funding to start new ESL courses every four months. Therefore, newly-arrived refugees wait about four months before starting English

classes. In addition, there are only 325 seats available, which only allows a minority of the refugee population to be enrolled (Georgetown Institute of Human Rights, 2009, 71).

In addition to employment and language acquisition, an overarching goal of USRP is to encourage refugee's community involvement, which is often truncated by the caseworker's work load and 90-day time period. Indeed, the refugee resettlement program contains a number of ambitious integration goals to be achieved within a volag's short three-month period.

Furthermore, refugee participants sometimes feel that their caseworkers could not always provide enough time for them because of their caseload (Rana, 2016). Consequently, participants suggested that agencies should hire more caseworkers to assist the refugee clients. In addition, they recommended that an average of six months (180 days) would be an ideal time for resettlement given the different circumstances each refugee case came from or faced during resettlement (Rana, 2016). Simply put, a three-month resettlement period is not realistic given the enormity of USRP's language and employment goals. Given the Trump Administration's dismantling of the refugee program, however, it is unlikely that local volags will be given more time, support or resources to assist refugees.

Private and Community Sponsorship of Refugees

Refugee sponsorship arrangements take many forms depending on the context and capacity of receiving countries. In Canada, the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program, allows private individuals, community organizations, and nonprofits to select refugees for resettlement in addition to the government resettlement system (Fratzke 2017). Comparatively, the United States has no national policy of private-sponsorship and is a private-public partnership, which utilizes volags' local resources. This is not to say that private volunteering or sponsorship of refugees does not occur, but these initiatives do not effect U.S. refugee

admissions. Similarly, in European countries ad hoc initiatives which incorporate elements of private-sponsorship such as Refugees Welcome programs, have largely emerged since 2013 (Fratzke 2017). A variation of private-sponsorship, community-based sponsorship refers to the informal and formal community networks or groups which support refugee families. Canadian policy-studies have shown that community-driven approaches provide added value to refugee resettlement including improved refugee labor market integration, self-sufficiency and opportunities to build meaningful relationships between refugees and receiving communities (Fratzke 2017). Specifically, this data on refugee economic outcomes have consistently shown that privately sponsored refugees find employment more quickly, receive more income from work, and are less likely to use public benefits than government-supported refugees (Ottawa: IRCC, 2016). Additionally, Fratzke proposes that sponsorship can also serve as a way to build social connections and acceptance between refugees and their new neighbors (Fratzke 2017). While Canada has empirically demonstrated the effectiveness of sponsorship, the United States' casework and co-sponsorship resettlement models have not been thoroughly accessed.

Most academic articles concerning co-sponsorship of refugees in the United States, therefore, center on the informal role of churches and religious groups. With domestic and international networks, a wide volunteer base and an organizational charity structure, religious groups are valuable partners and institutions of community-based refugee sponsorship.

According to Ives et al (2009):

In communities across the US, churches, synagogues and other religious groups have been among the most consistent supporters of refugee resettlement by engaging in refugee co-sponsorship. Their durability in communities is an asset for refugee resettlement agencies. Large congregations that co-sponsor refugee arrivals can often be relied upon to do so over and over again (Ives et al, 593, 2009).

Historically, faith-based organizations (FBOs) have provided a significant amount of social service in the United States (Wineburg 1992). The breadth of activity in which FBOs

engage includes education, services for immigrants and refugees, employment support, and advocacy. In a study conducted by Cnaan et al (2004), researchers found that the average annual social service replacement value of an average Philadelphia congregation is estimated at \$117,852.72. While this study was solely based on Philadelphia, it underscores the immense amount of additional funding and resources that churches can provide to communities. Given the extent of congregational involvement and sheer volume of congregations in America (estimates range from 250,000 to 400,000), congregations serve as an indispensable channel for social service.

In relation to refugees, congregation members provide a number of volunteer roles and responsibilities including, but not limited to: furnishing apartments, buying groceries and clothes, transporting parents to work, enrolling children in school and providing information for government services (Ives et al 2009). In addition to this material assistance, congregational co-sponsorship provides refugees with long-lasting resettlement relationships. These relationships and interactions with the local community are vital to refugees' resettlement outcomes and integration. In a study analyzing refugees in Richmond, Virginia, researchers found how Richmond religious organizations and sponsors have provided an exceptional amount of critical support for refugees during their initial resettlement phase (Breslow et al 1997). In turn, refugees in Richmond contributed a great deal to the greater Richmond community not only in social and cultural, but also in economic terms.

In effect, religion motivates and sustains volunteers as a method of exploring and expressing their own faith (Wineburg 1992, Nawyn 2016 and Eby et al 2011). Boezeman and Ellemers (2008) noted that volunteers engaged in service delivery exhibited higher levels of normative commitment than employees in for-profit organizations. Baumeister and Leary (1995)

also contend that volunteering offers more opportunities than paid work to deepen resettlement relationships and commitment. In asking participants about their roles in refugee resettlement, community members responded that their role was “exhausting” and sometimes “never-ending” (McCallum, 960, 2018). This level of commitment, thus enables volunteers to conform better to refugees’ needs outside of a demanding 90-day time period.

Volunteers’ connections to the community allow refugees to become better integrated into the host society. This social capital may provide refugees opportunities to attain better employment and English-speaking skills compared to volags’ traditional case-management approach. To an extent, refugee co-sponsorship overcomes two of the main obstacles of casework resettlement: lack of funding and resources and the 90-day time limit. United States community co-sponsorship, therefore, may provide refugees with longer-term commitment, additional sources of financial and social capital. Additionally, this co-sponsorship approach allows community members to become more involved in refugee resettlement, perhaps promoting acceptance and tolerance of new populations.

Evidence and Theories of Refugee Integration

Scholars largely disagree over determinants of refugee integration. For instance, Ager and Strang (2008) propose that refugees achieve integration via a ten-part framework which includes many interacting factors such as employment, housing, education, health, citizenship/rights and social connection, to name a few. While this approach is more holistic, other scholars emphasize the role of certain factors in determining long-term refugee integration outcomes. Specifically, refugee integration literature disputes the roles of economic mobility and social integration. Economic mobility is defined broadly as the ability of an individual, family or group to improve their economic status. Not surprisingly, the United States’ capitalist economy

emphasizes the importance of migrant economic independence and contribution. Therefore, welfare usage, employment and income-level constitutes perhaps the most researched area of refugee integration. Conversely, linguistic, educational, and psycho-social refugee integration outcomes remain less studied. Prior to assessing these areas of post-migration, I will briefly assess some of the challenges associated with collecting and analyzing refugee data.

Challenges of Refugee Data

Most current information on refugee integration is largely drawn from Census Bureau data, primarily the decennial census and the annual American Community Survey (ACS) (Bernstein, 2018, 10). Researchers also rely on other national surveys such as the New Immigrant Survey and Annual Survey of Refugees or administrative information from databases such as the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS) (Bernstein, 2018, 10). Indeed, collecting refugee data is not easy given the vulnerable status of refugees, their small population and geographic dispersion, and diversity in terms of language and demographic background (Bernstein, 2018, 10). While these national and administrative sources offer large refugee samples, they do not always address local policies or nuances of refugee resettlement.

Overall, however, recent research has found that over time, refugees integrate in the United States in terms of economic well-being. However, integration information concerning English proficiency and educational attainment varies widely based upon country of origin, age of arrival, gender and educational background (Bernstein, 2018, 10). Unfortunately, the Census does not measure factors such as refugee social capital, community involvement or health (Bernstein, 2018, 10). Below, available evidence concerning refugee integration is organized into two different categories: (1) economic and (2) linguistic, education and psycho-social outcomes.

Economic Outcomes

Economically, several studies found that upon arriving, refugees were more likely to receive public welfare than native-born Americans; however, their reliance on benefits decrease as their time in the United States increases (Capps et al 2015, Kerwin 2018; Bernstein and DuBois 2018). Despite initial costs, Evans and Fitzgerald (2017) also find that refugee contributions outweigh public benefits usage. This is partially due to the fact that finds that 77 percent of refugees are of working-age (25 to 64), as compared to 50 percent of the native-born population (NAE 2017). Compared to native-born American men, refugee men have higher labor participation rates, which increase over time in the United States (Kerwin 2018 and Bernstein and Dubois 2018). Refugee women participate in the labor force at a rate as high as native-born women (Capps et al 2015). Clearly, refugees economically revitalize and contribute to their communities. This revitalization and contribution can also be seen in refugees' increasing incomes with more time in the United States. On average, income increases with more time in the United States with median incomes \$31,000 higher for long-term (20 years) refugees (Capps et al 2015). That being said, refugees' median wages rise with more time in the United States, but remain lower than native-born wages even for refugees with 20 years in the country (Evans and Fitzgerald 2017).

While refugees are integrating economically, Fix, Hooper, and Zong (2017) find that underemployment is a very critical issue for several refugee groups interviewed. That is, refugees tend to get jobs that are not full-time or reflective of their training, education or financial needs. Specifically, half of Iraqi (48 percent), Cuban (44 percent), and Burmese (40 percent) refugees are underemployed compared to 18 percent of the native born population (Fix Hooper and Zong 2017). The U.S. resettlement program's emphasis on getting refugees jobs

quickly and on a tight budgets may leave very little room for finding higher-quality jobs.

Unfortunately, the US Census does not track evolving job acquisition; therefore, many policymakers do not consider refugee underemployment.

Linguistic, educational and psycho-social outcomes

Kerwin (2018) finds that refugees bring linguistic diversity to the United States which can promote competitiveness and security. From the 1980s to 19902, the number of refugee nationalities rose steadily, as refugees come from an average of 66 different countries annually. While refugees gain English proficiency with time in the United States, fifty-eight percent of refugees with more than 20 years of U.S. residence remained Limited English proficient (Capps et al 2015 and Bernstein and Dubois 2018). The lack of literacy in a first language impedes English-language acquisition (Capps et al 2015). This is especially true for refugees whose languages are not written, but oral, including groups such as Somali-Bantu or Sgaw Karen speakers. Overall, language acquisition continues to be a pervasive and understudied issue in refugee employment, integration and resettlement literature.

Educationally, adult refugees are just as likely as U.S. natives to hold at least a bachelor's degree (Fix et al 2017). That being said, levels of educational attainment differ between refugee groups. For instance, 60 percent of refugee men and women from Russia, Iran and Ukraine hold bachelor's degrees (Capps et al). Comparatively, 42 percent of men and 56 percent of women from Bhutan have not completed high school (Capps et al 2015). Because education is a predictor of successful integration and income, this puts a number of refugee populations at a disadvantage.

In addition to linguistic and educational outcomes, refugee's psycho-social adaptation, which focuses on the influence of post-migration factors on refugee mental well-being, is also a

necessary framework for understanding refugee integration. Many journal articles focused on the psycho-social acculturation of Vietnamese refugees finds that post-settlement adjustment (employment, linguistic abilities) have a positive effect on refugee psycho-social integration (Kim 2015, Birman Tran 2008, Ngo 2001; Nicassio 1983). For instance, Ngo (2001) and Nicassio (1983) found that English language use moderated the positive relationship between pre migration traumatic experiences and higher depression. Conversely, lack of English-speaking skills was associated with higher anxiety and depression for refugees (Birman and Tran 2008; Nicassio 1983). Furthermore, in a study evaluating mental health outcomes among Latino and Asian refugees in the United States, Kim (2015) found that refugees who were not in the labor force were significantly associated with mood disorders. Overall, all of these articles find that post-resettlement traumas such as underemployment and/or lack of English-speaking skills are significantly associated with refugee psychosocial health and integration.

Social Capital Theory and Refugee Integration

In these studies, employment has been consistently identified as a factor associated with meeting members of the host society, developing linguistic skills and promoting a sense self-reliance and belonging (Bloch 1999 and Tomlinson and Egan 2002). Nonetheless, many of the above studies do not recognize the interdependent and interacting nature of economic mobility and social integration. In fact, Fratzke (2017) is one of the few studies which demonstrates this important relationship in Canada. Social integration refers to the process during which newcomers or minorities are incorporated into the social structures of the host society. In resettlement, refugees' social links are ruptured and newcomers must forge new connections within their communities. Social capital, or the focus on social relations providing productive benefits, is integral to successful refugee integration and outcomes.

Social capital is a term that has been intermittently referenced prior and during the early 20th century, but popularized in the 1990s. Alex de Tocqueville (1805-1859) was a French diplomat famous for his work *Democracy in America*. In *Democracy for America*, Tocqueville describes how the level of social participation (social capital) in America society facilitated equality across socio-economic boundaries. L.J Hanifan, a school reformer during the Progressive era, is credited for officially coining the term “social capital” in an article regarding social support for rural schools. Later in the twentieth century, Glenn Loury (1977) provided the first generally recognized application of the concept to explain economic performance more clearly. Sociologists James Coleman and Barry Wellman and Scott Wortley adopted Glenn Loury’s definition in developing and popularizing the concept (Castle 2002). Bourdieu (1985) also discusses this concept and viewed it as a durable social network that enables individuals to gain access to resources. The most modern application of the theory, however, is credited to Robert Putnam, an American academic of political science. In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Putnam surveys the deterioration of social capital or connection between Americans since the 1950s. According to Putnam and his followers, social capital is a key component to building and maintain democracy, or civic engagement. Putnam also suggests how changes in social policy, technology and equality affect social capital, and emphasizes the importance of discovering how Americans can reverse the deterioration of social capital.

Migrant, and refugee social capital can be broken into three different frameworks: bonding, bridging and linking capital. Bonding capital refers to the various ways refugees develop relationships within their ethnic groups (Xin, 233, 2018). Bridging capital refers to the ways in which refugees adopted to their resettlement countries by reaching out to people with a

different ethnic background (Xin, 234, 2018). Finally, linking capital refers to the way groups and people are brought together in a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are brought together (Xin, 234, 2018). Indeed, all three of these social capital frameworks are useful in understanding how refugees utilize social networking to attain employment, ESL or educational opportunities.

Surprisingly, however, there are very few articles on the effect of social capital on refugee integration in the United States. However, Lamba and Krahn (2003) found that in Canada, refugees possessed extensive stocks of social capital, even though most were also severely lacking in financial capital and many could not use their human capital to obtain satisfactory employment (Lamba and Krahn 2003). Additionally, Xin (2018) found that in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom that refugees were highly engaged in their own ethnic communities through their immediate family members, friends and relatives, ethnic churches, community interest groups, community and social events and Facebook. Lamba's study along with others revealed a strong relationship between refugees' stocks of bonding (intra-ethnic) social capital and the quality of their employment (Lamba and Krahn 2003 and Breslow et al 2000). In contrast, Breslow et al (2000) focuses on showing the extent to which refugees' extra-familial connections play in obtaining refugee employment. Different from Lamba and Fratzke's analyses, this study demonstrates how refugees' social relationships within *their own* communities may facilitate economic integration. This does not account for how refugees' co-sponsorship relationships, or bridging social capital, influences their integration.

Not only does social capital factor into refugees' personal connections, but United States' volag caseworker's ability to provide opportunities for refugees. Using economic modeling and International Rescue Committee (IRC) data, Beaman (2012) finds that the number of social

network members resettled in the same year or one year prior leads to the deterioration of refugee employment outcomes. Therefore, the increase and accessibility of casework volunteers' social capital networks correlates with refugees' employment opportunities. In relation to Beaman's findings, scholars have found that host community organizations, such as congregations, restore refugees' social ties that have been disrupted through resettlement (Ives et al. 2010; Eby et al 2011; Breslow et al. 1997). These studies also found that the integration of congregations in their communities can provide opportunities of employment, language training and for refugees. Therefore, the literature would suggest that the size and strength of refugee social capital is associated with refugee resettlement and integration outcomes.

While researchers understand how refugees' personal characteristics (i.e. age, literacy, education-level) influence integration outcomes, there is limited information about how different resettlement models influence outcomes. Though migration scholars greatly discuss post-migration factors and social capital, there also exists a gap when it comes to the application of social capital theory to casework volunteers, community sponsorship organizations and private volunteering networks. As discussed, the later two models of resettlement are historically relevant in the United States given congregations' long-standing involvement in refugee resettlement. Due to the informal and local nature of religious congregations, the main location of refugee co-sponsorship, there exists very little or sporadic data assessing this model's influence on integration outcomes. This thesis intends to fill this gap by illuminating the role of social capital networks in refugee casework volunteers, congregational co-sponsorship, and private volunteer networks in the greater Hartford area. By assessing the social networks within these resettlement models, I will assess refugees' how refugees' are acculturating within their

communities. Furthermore, I will address how these models affect and reinforce refugees' disparate opportunities for integration.

Methodological Overview

To assess the relationship different resettlement models and refugee economic, linguistic and social outcomes, I conducted a total of twenty-three interviews with case-managers, employees, volunteers and Syrian refugees in the Greater Hartford area. These interviews were semi-structured and averaged one hour and twelve minutes in length. I chose to focus on Syrian refugees for two main reasons: (1) their first-wave immigration status and, (2) their past and current political status in Connecticut, and the United States. First-wave immigration refers to migrants who arrive in a new country with a little or no members of their country of origin preceding them. This is important for my research question which addresses how the co-sponsorship model bridges refugee social capital and, supposedly, better integration outcomes.

In 2016 and early 2017, Syrian refugees arrived in large numbers to the United States due to humanitarian and political factors (See Page 27: "Timeline of Syrian Refugee Crisis"). During this time period, the Obama Administration attempted to prioritize Syrian refugees early in Obama's second term, as it became clear that Assad's regime was attacking civilians (Lind 2018). But because of concerns about carefully vetting refugees to ensure that no terrorist group members snuck into the US, it took until the last couple of years of Obama's presidency for Syrian refugee admissions to the US to increase (Lind 2018). After the 2016 Paris Attacks by ISIS militants, dozens of US governors, including Indiana Republican Mike Pence, ordered state agencies to halt resettlement activities (Hackel 2016). In response, Connecticut's governor, Democrat Dannel Malloy stepped up to counter his colleagues by committing to accept Indiana's diverted refugee population (Hackel 2016). Indeed, Connecticut played a crucial role in

maintaining the Obama Administration's state capacity in accepting and resettling Syrian refugees.

Upon arrival, Syrians had few pre-existing ethnic connections and had to forge new relationships with Americans and their fellow refugees during their resettlement. Politically, Syrian refugees have endured differing security clearances, travel policies and legal criteria to enter the United States. Specifically, President Trump's travel bans and executive orders have currently disallowed affected Syrians (among some other Muslim refugees) to resettle in the United States. Given these policies, I was interested in assessing how this particular refugee group is faring two to three years after their arrival. In total, I conducted interviews, in Arabic, with seven Syrian families in the Greater Hartford Area. Heba Karkar, a high-school aged Syrian refugee, assisted me with the translation and interpretation of the refugee interviews. Heba also provided me with interview connections and helpful advice in constructing my interview guide.

Greater Hartford provides a unique opportunity to analyze how three different resettlement models influence refugee outcomes. Two main refugee resettlement volags operate in Hartford, using a case management and co-sponsorship approach, respectively. Additionally, since 2017, volunteers from the Hartford suburbs have also initiated informal, but highly active, private sponsorships, allowing me to investigate how this novel approach to resettlement influences outcomes. Furthermore, Hartford Area mosques, partially affiliated with Catholic Charities, have been largely involved with private volunteering with newly-arrived Syrian refugees. Nonetheless, the majority of my interviews centered around individuals associated with Catholic Charities and Integrated Refugee and Immigration Services (IRIS). Catholic Charities is the largest resettlement agency in the Greater Hartford area and adheres to a traditional case-management approach in resettling refugees. In other words, a case-manager is assigned to each

refugee family case and assists them in their first ninety days of resettlement. While Catholic Charities has a five-year contract with families, it is particularly involved in the family's first few months in the United States. IRIS also resettles refugees with special immigration visas (SIVs) in this way, but they have also popularized their co-sponsorship model in the state of Connecticut. Specifically, IRIS partners with mostly faith-based congregations to resettle its refugees. Therefore, many case-management tasks are delegated to volunteers.

Lastly, three out of the twenty-two interviews also focused on these private volunteers who assisted Catholic Charities refugee families. These three volunteers, and their respective private-sponsorship partnerships were not affiliated with either Catholic Charities or IRIS, but provided extensive services in an unofficial volunteer capacity. By comparing Catholic Charities, IRIS, and private sponsorship networks, I will assess the opinions, approaches and responsibilities of case-workers, employees, volunteers, with an eye to making policy recommendations for more effective refugee resettlement process. Tables 0.1 describes the employees, refugees, and volunteers associated with each model.

Before proceeding to the analysis, it is worth mentioning several factors that limit my ability to draw generalizations from Hartford's experience to understanding refugee resettlement more broadly. First, Hartford area co-sponsorship groups may receive "easier" refugee families because IRIS case-managers and professionals handle high-need cases. "Easier" may refer to families who do not have severe medical issues or disabilities, extreme trauma or illiteracy in the Arabic language, or other major resettlement complications. Indeed, there may be some selection-bias in the co-sponsorship families interviewed compared to Catholic Charities families. Regardless of need-level, Catholic Charities' caseworkers resettle and manage all the cases they receive making this pool's experiences more diverse. Therefore, the outcomes I assess

in my methodology may be particular to Hartford area's volags case selection practices. Second, Miriam (pseudonym), a local advocate for refugee rights, plays a varying role in all of the families I interviewed. Miriam has dedicated her life to assisting refugees' in their resettlement, and her informal volunteer network, Refugee Advocacy Services (RAS), is involved with more than 86 refugee families in Connecticut. Miriam's expertise, goals and overarching impact in the Greater Hartford Area refugee resettlement is not externally valid to all co-sponsorship, case-management nor private volunteer networks in the United States. Despite these caveats, the variation found in Hartford between case-management, co-sponsorship, and private sponsorship innovation, makes examination of this worthwhile and potentially revealing about how different resettlement approaches shape refugees' varying outcomes.

Table 0.1: Twenty-three interviews conducted across three models of refugee resettlement

| Case-Management Model (Catholic Charities) | Co-Sponsorship (IRIS) | Private Sponsorship (WHOKE and Forward CT) |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Case-Managers</p> <p>Catholic Charities Case-Manager 1(Current)* Catholic Charities Case-Manager 2 (Current) Catholic Charities Case Manager 3 (Current) Catholic Charities Case Manager 4 (Former) Catholic Charities Case Manager 5 (Former)</p> | <p>Case-Managers and Employees</p> <p>IRIS Case-Manager 1* IRIS Employee/Case-Manager 2 IRIS Employee/Case-Manager 3</p> | <p>Refugee Families</p> <p>Catholic Charities Refugee Family 1 (Forward CT) Catholic Charities Refugee Family 2 (WHOKE)</p> |
| <p>Refugee Families (No private sponsorship)</p> <p>Catholic Charities Refugee Family 1 Catholic Charities Refugee Family 2 Total Interviews: 7</p> | <p>Refugee Families</p> <p>IRIS Refugee Family 1 Saint James/John Group** IRIS Refugee Family 2 Beth Al Temple/Westminster Presbyterian IRIS Refugee Family 3 Manchester Unitarian Universalist</p> <p>Volunteers</p> <p>Co-Sponsorship Volunteer 1 (Private Volunteer) *** Saint James/John Group Co-Sponsorship Volunteer 2 (Private Volunteer) Saint James/John Group Co-Sponsorship Volunteer 3 (Private Volunteer) Saint James/John Group Co-Sponsorship Volunteer 4 (No private volunteering) Beth Al Temple/Westminster Presbyterian Co-Sponsorship Volunteer 5 (No private volunteering) Manchester Unitarian Universalist</p> <p>Total Interviews: 11</p> | <p>Private</p> <p>WHOKE Volunteer 1 Forward CT Volunteer 1 Berlin-Avon Mosque Association (BAMA) Volunteer 1 Total Interviews: 5</p> |

*I have demarcated current and former Catholic Charities caseworkers.

**This is the co-sponsorship congregation each refugee family and volunteer is part of.

*** Some IRIS co-sponsorship volunteers were involved in private volunteering outside their respective family.

Outline of Thesis By Chapter

To test how different models of refugee resettlement affect refugee integration outcomes, I conduct two types of analysis. In chapter 1, I trace the history of refugee resettlement in Connecticut to see how state officials, resettlement agencies and volunteers are involved in facilitating refugee integration. For this analysis, I analyze demographic data in the Hartford area, journalistic sources, and Hartford area grant/commission reports. I find that Catholic Charities, the Hartford area's main case-management agency, has received criticism for its refugee involvement. Meanwhile, IRIS, the Hartford area's co-sponsorship agency, has been praised for its innovative resettlement model. Nonetheless, I begin to find that the relocation of refugees by means of private sponsorship contributes to municipal inequities between Hartford and West Hartford.

Second, I conduct a case study of all three models of refugee resettlement (case-management, community and private sponsorship) in the Hartford Area. The information for this case-study is generated from the twenty-three interviews I conducted with case-managers, volunteers, and Syrian refugees (see above). In Chapter 2, I discuss how Catholic Charities (case-management model) and IRIS (co-sponsorship model) institutionally function in resettling refugees. In other words, I examine the role of the agencies' case-managers and employees in overseeing their resettlement operations. It is important to note that I do not address the private-sponsorship model in this section because the volunteers work independently with no formal or agency oversight. I find that Catholic Charities and IRIS's approaches to refugee resettlement are vastly different, and that Catholic Charities is disregarding federal regulations concerning refugee housing. In Chapter 3, I discuss my interview findings in relation to volunteers associated with community and private sponsorship models. I find that volunteers' involvement

with refugee families vastly differs from participating in one co-sponsorship group to re-locating more than twenty Catholic Charities families to West Hartford. I also find that many co-sponsorship group volunteers assisted private sponsorship networks in becoming involved with specific refugee families. In Chapter 4, I interview the Syrian refugee families who have been involved in all three models of resettlement. I find that families resettled by Catholic Charities faced various challenges within their first months in the United States. Furthermore, Catholic Charities families who received additional private sponsorship assistance obtained better economic, linguistic and social integration outcomes than those who did not. Comparatively, IRIS families emphasized and praised the intense assistance they received upon arrival. Overall, the findings suggest that the IRIS families were better equipped with employment, tutoring, transportation, and housing resources than their Catholic Charities counterparts. This information will be explained further in depth in Chapter 4, along with several tables illustrating the relationship between social connection and families' integration outcomes.

CHAPTER 1: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN THE HARTFORD AREA

“I was proud that they’d come to the United States and Connecticut.”

- Dannel P. Malloy, former governor of Connecticut, November 19, 2015

In November 2015, then Connecticut Governor, Dannel Malloy announced that Connecticut would accept a Syrian family who was rejected from resettling in Indiana. This family, a married couple and their 5-year old son, had waited three years to resettle in the United States from Jordan. They were scheduled to arrive in Indianapolis, but were diverted when Pence ordered state agencies to halt resettlement activities after the deadly attacks in Paris. Malloy’s statements reflected Connecticut’s welcoming response to Syrian refugees unable to resettle in other parts of the United States. In fact, in 2016 Connecticut accepted more than eight-hundred refugees, which equates to 22 refugees per 100,000 residents. This is significantly greater than Connecticut’s average refugee per capita of 12 refugees per 100,000 citizens, from 2010 to 2019. By analyzing Connecticut’s history of resettlement, we can better understand the current role of its current resettlement policies, stakeholders, and volag organizations. In turn, these factors will allow us to assess how Connecticut’s different resettlement models shape refugee integration outcomes.

The chapter, therefore, will begin with an examination of Connecticut’s refugee coordinators and officials, grant-matching system and refugee integration policy and initiatives. This analysis will allow for the identification of Connecticut’s overall statewide effectiveness in refugee resettlement. Next, I will address the history and influence of Integration Refugee and Immigration Services (IRIS) and Hartford Catholic Charities (HCC) on refugee resettlement and integration outcomes. Finally, this historical, as well as organizational resettlement information, will be incorporated into a demographic analysis of the three municipalities that comprise my study: Hartford, West Hartford, and New Britain. The demographic analysis will address issues

of resource accessibility and resettlement initiatives within the racially and socioeconomically diverse municipalities of the Greater Hartford Area.

Connecticut's Refugee Resettlement, Officials and Policy

Since 2010, Connecticut has played a relatively minor role in refugee resettlement compared to other New England states (See Graph 1.1). Although Connecticut's refugee arrivals are only second to Massachusetts, Connecticut has resettled the least amount of refugees on a per capita basis. Even Rhode Island, which is almost five times smaller than Connecticut, has resettled more refugees per 100,000 residents. Nationally, there is an average of 18 refugees per 100,000 citizens, which is larger than Connecticut's refugee-to-citizen ratio. The majority of Connecticut's refugees arriving between FY 2010 and 2019 have been resettled in the cities of Hartford and New Haven. Cities such as Bridgeport, Derby and New Britain also play a substantial role, accepting a total of 645 refugee arrivals since FY 2010. According to a 2006 report by the Brookings Institute, approximately 1.6 million refugees between 1983 and 2004 have been resettled into large and medium-sized metropolitan areas (cities and suburbs) across the United States.¹ In this study, medium-sized cities are defined as "metropolitan areas with less than one million population but more than 250,000 people."² While all of Connecticut's cities are smaller than 250,000 people, 88% of the refugees were resettled in urban cities with over 100,000 residents.³

¹ Audrey Singer and Jill H. Wilson, "From 'There' to 'Here': Refugee Resettlement in Metropolitan America, *The Brookings Institute*, September 2006, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/from-there-to-here-refugee-resettlement-in-metropolitan-america/>.

² Ibid, Audrey Singer and Jill H. Wilson.

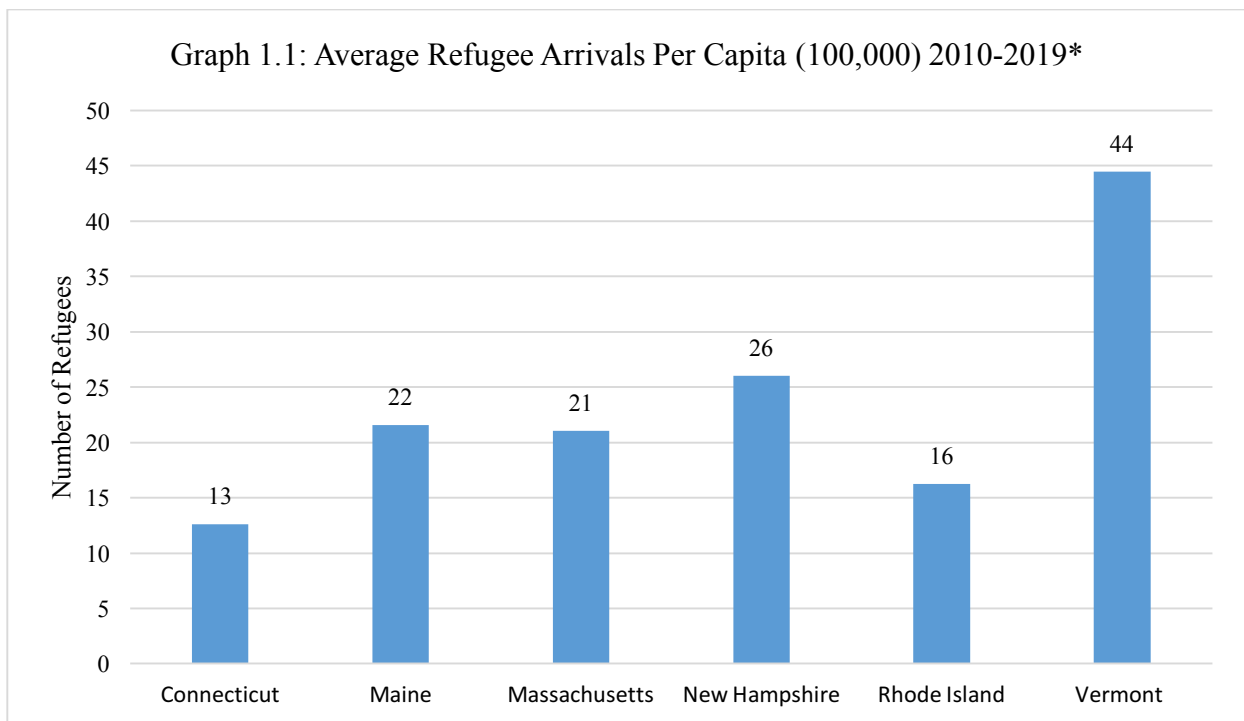
³ This data was collected from the Worldwide Refugee Processing Center (WRAPS) for Connecticut's refugee arrivals for FY 2010 to 2018 (November 30, 2018). I organized refugee nationalities by destination or cities/towns and calculated municipalities arrivals over this time period.

Table 1.1: Refugees Resettled in New England States, Since 2010

| State | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019* | Total |
|---------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Connecticut | 606 | 447 | 434 | 547 | 503 | 519 | 819 | 421 | 156 | 57 | 4,509 |
| Maine | 303 | 197 | 203 | 360 | 361 | 425 | 607 | 274 | 62 | 75 | 2,867 |
| Massachusetts | 1,931 | 1,548 | 1,541 | 1,830 | 1,797 | 1,688 | 1,734 | 1,037 | 464 | 198 | 13,768 |
| New Hampshire | 303 | 517 | 363 | 379 | 322 | 446 | 515 | 306 | 162 | 110 | 3,423 |
| Rhode Island | 243 | 157 | 130 | 171 | 163 | 185 | 337 | 191 | 86 | 48 | 1,711 |
| Vermont | 299 | 361 | 350 | 322 | 308 | 312 | 386 | 229 | 133 | 84 | 2,784 |
| Total | 3,685 | 3,227 | 3,021 | 3,609 | 3,454 | 3,575 | 4,398 | 2,458 | 1,063 | 572 | 29,062 |

Source: Worldwide Refugee Admission Processing System (WRAPS)

*Through March 31, 2019



Source: Worldwide Refugee Admission Processing System (WRAPS) and Census Data (2010)

*For 2019, the most up-to-date count on refugee arrivals is through March 31, 2019.

Timeline of the Syrian Refugee Crisis

Early 1500s-1918: Syrian was part of the **Ottoman Empire** for about 400 years.

1918-1946: A period of French colonial rule which ended with **Syrian independence**.

1963: The **Ba'ath party** took over the government, installing a socialist and secular regime. The new government persecuted dissenters, instituted land reform and nationalized banks.

1970: The Minister of Defense, **Hafez al-Assad**, seized power and in 1971 declared himself president. He created a new legislature and rigged elections to maintain his power and the **Ba'ath party**. Assad belonged to the **Alawite sector of Islam**, and his policies favored members of this group. During the Assad regime, dissent was heavily suppressed.

2000: After **30 years** of rule, Hafez al-Assad died and his son **Bashar al-Assad** remains in power today. Under Al-Assad, authority under one person and one party (Ba'ath Party) continued. Political repression and government corruption did not end, however, and most Syrians continued to feel oppressed.

2011: Uprising began as peaceful protests after the government arrested and allegedly tortured school children who wrote **anti-government graffiti** on a wall in **Daraa**. Perhaps inspired by **Arab Spring** movements in Egypt and Tunisia, Syrian protestors began calling for **democratic reforms**. In response to these demands, the Syrian government began arresting, beating, torturing and killing dissenters. By June 2011, an estimated **1,400 people had been killed and over 10,000 arrested by the Assad government**.

2013: Over **1,000 individual rebel brigades** were fighting the Syrian government. Involvement by outside parties in rebel fighting, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria [**ISIS**], have complicated Syria's situation. Countries such as **Iran, Russia, and the Lebanese Shi'a Muslim** political/military group have supported the **Syrian government**.

Since 2011, more than **400,000 people** have been **killed** and millions driven from their homes. It is estimated that **6.5 million people**, half of Syria's population, are **internally displaced** within the country. In neighboring countries (i.e. Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt), **3 million Syrians** are registered as **refugees**. In total, more than **5.6 million Syrians** have fled the country as **refugees**.

Sources: "Refugees from Syria." *CAL Cultural Orientation Resource Center*. November 2014: 1-15.

"Syria: Events of 2017." *Human Rights Watch*. November 8, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/world->

For the past eight years, Connecticut's largest refugee groups have been (in order) from Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, Burma, and Somalia.⁴ In 2016, with the U.S. increasing its refugee acceptances by about twenty percent, Connecticut resettled a record

⁴ Refugee Processing Center (WRAPS Database). Interactive Reporting. "Arrivals by Destination and Nationality." Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, Migration. Office of Admissions- Refugee Processing Center: Refugee Arrivals Fiscal Year as of 30-November-2018.

number of 897 refugees. Of these 897 refugees, 367 arrived from Syria, indicative of the United States' increased role in the Syrian refugee crisis (see "Timeline of the Syrian Refugee Crisis").⁵

In Connecticut, the Office of Community Services and Department of Social Services (DSS) is responsible for distributing federal funds related to the resettlement of refugees in Connecticut.⁶ DSS disburses Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), refugee cash assistance (RCA), medical assistance programs, reception and placement grants, and monitors resettlement activity throughout the state.⁷ DSS contracts with five resettlement agencies to provide case management, employment assistance, and other support services to resettled refugees, specifically.⁸

- 1. Catholic Charities, Refugee and Immigration Services**
2. International Institute of CT, Inc
- 3. Episcopal Social Services (dba) Integrated Refugee & Immigration Services (IRIS)**
4. Jewish Federation of CT, Inc
5. Connecticut Coalition of Mutual Assistance Association, Inc.

Connecticut is one of thirty-two states and the District of Columbia that administers RCA and related "self-sufficiency programs" such as employment services, ESL programming, case management and other refugee support through the state-administration model.⁹ In the State-

⁵ Refugee Processing Center (WRAPS Database). Interactive Reporting. "Arrivals by Destination and Nationality." Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, Migration. Office of Admissions- Refugee Processing Center: Refugee Arrivals Fiscal Year as of 30-November-2018.

⁶ "Refugee Assistance Program." Connecticut's Official Website. 2018. <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Economic-Security/Refugee-Assistance-Program>.

⁷ Ibid, "Refugee Assistance Program." <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/Economic-Security/Refugee-Assistance-Program>.

⁸ Andrew Bolger, "Refugee Processing and Settlement," *Office of Legislative Research for Connecticut General Assembly*, May 30, 2018, <https://www.cga.ct.gov/olr/rptsbytopic.asp?olrYear=2018&olrTopic=ALL>.

⁹ Bethany Boland and Angela Gaffney, "Understanding the Intersection Between TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance Services: Findings from a Survey of State Refugee Coordinators," *Abt Associates*, September 2017, <https://www.abtassociates.com/insights/publications/report/how-do-states-assist-refugees-with-tanf-and-refugee-cash-assistance>, 4.

Administered Model, both TANF and RCA are always administered by state public assistance agencies.¹⁰ This program is unlike the Wilson-Fish Model in which TANF is typically administered by state agencies and RCA is administered through both resettlement or state agencies.¹¹

In accordance to these resources, each state in the United States, except Wyoming, has a state refugee coordinator (SRC) who oversees the design, implementation and coordination of refugee services.¹² Federal law requires ORR to consult at least quarterly with the refugee state coordinator and health coordinator about the intended distribution and placement of refugees.¹³ Generally, the ORR requires the refugee state and health coordinators to; (1) ensure that refugees are not resettled in densely populated refugee areas; (2) provide mechanisms for resettlement agency representatives to meet at least quarterly with state and local government representation; and (3) account for the proportion of refugee and comparable entrants in the population in the area. Overall, however, the main role of SRC and their office is to promote coordination among resettlement agencies and streamline services statewide. Due to the number of agencies involved in the resettlement process, however, communication often presents hindrances to refugee integration.

In Connecticut, the state coordinator is Charles Anderson and the state refugee health coordinator is Allison Stratton. Surprisingly, the information of many states' refugee coordinators, including Connecticut's, are not readily available or transparent on state refugee

¹⁰ Bethany Boland and Angela Gaffney, "Understanding the Intersection Between TANF and Refugee Cash Assistance Services: Findings from a Survey of State Refugee Coordinators," *Abt Associates*, September 2017, <https://www.abtassociates.com/insights/publications/report/how-do-states-assist-refugees-with-tanf-and-refugee-cash-assistance>, 5.

¹¹ *Ibid*, Bethany Boland and Angela Gaffney, 5.

¹² *Ibid*, Bethany Boland and Angela Gaffney, 5.

websites. However, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) provides a list and information for each state's refugee coordinators. On the Connecticut State Website, information pertaining to Charles Anderson lies in contractual reports (2016-2019) with Catholic Charities and Episcopal Social Services. Essentially, these reports detail these resettlement agencies scope of services and responsibilities, contract performance, budget, reports, and program-specific and agency-specific sections. Other than these two reports, however, there is seldom information on Anderson's duties or involvement in refugee resettlement. Allison Stratton's position is somewhat more present on Connecticut's website as a key figure in the state's department of Public Health. Nonetheless, her position related to refugee health is not as apparent except for a 2015 CLAS Standards slideshow outlining linguistically appropriate services for refugees and immigrants in Connecticut.¹⁴ By conducting internet searches, there is even less if any information about these two refugee officials. It appears publicly, at least, that refugee resettlement coordination may be lacking in Connecticut.

In the past, Connecticut has had difficulty managing relations between its refugee state coordinators and resettlement agencies in Hartford, the state's largest refugee arrival destination. In 2005, an informal committee, the Hartford Refugee Resettlement Committee (HRRJC), was formed to address issues arising from the resettlement of refugees in Hartford, Connecticut.¹⁵ Major stakeholders participating in the Committee included but were not limited to: Catholic Charities, Hartford Public Schools, the Department of Health and Human Services, the United

¹⁴ Allison Stratton (DPH CLAS Standards Coordinator), "CLAS Standards 101, or An Introduction to the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care," January 30, 2015, https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and_Agencies/DPH/dph/hems/health_equity/CLAS101WEBBASEDBASIC20150130pdf.pdf?la=en.

¹⁵ Gerald Brown and Mary Deiss Brown, "Refugee Resettlement in Hartford, Connecticut: Coordination of Services and Development of Resources," This report is prepared through a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving received by the Hartford Refugee Resettlement Joint Commitment, December 8, 2008, http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/wsd/immigrants/refugee_resettlement_in_Htfd.pdf, 2.

Liberian Association and the Somali and Somali-Bantu communities in Hartford.¹⁶ The report calls for a greater empowerment of the state refugee coordinator's office through effectively staffing and restructuring the State Refugee Coordinator's Office.¹⁷ At the time, Connecticut's state refugee coordinator, David Frascarelli, dedicated only 60% of his time to refugee matters as a single person in the Office.¹⁸ In addition to increased staffing at the Coordinator's Office, the Hartford Resettlement Joint Commitment criticized the inability of the Coordinator to conduct quarterly meetings with all interested agencies, public and private.¹⁹ Furthermore, the report adds that once the State Coordinator's Office establishes inclusive meetings, agencies and providers should work together to become knowledgeable about existing programs and funding.²⁰ With federal refugee resources now dwindling, reassessment of the state collaboration between Hartford's largest resettlement agencies, Hartford Catholic Charities (HCC) and Integrated Refugee and Immigration Service (IRIS) is necessary. By tracing the organizational history of HCC and IRIS, we can further evaluate the effectiveness of models of refugee resettlement in the Greater Hartford area.

Hartford Catholic Charities and Integrated Refugee and Integration Services

Hartford Catholic Charities (HCC) was founded as a family and children's human services agency under the Archdiocese of Hartford in 1920.²¹ HCC is an affiliate of Catholic

¹⁶ Gerald Brown and Mary Deiss Brown, "Refugee Resettlement in Hartford, Connecticut: Coordination of Services and Development of Resources," This report is prepared through a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving received by the Hartford Refugee Resettlement Joint Commitment, December 8, 2008, http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/wsd/immigrants/refugee_resettlement_in_Htfd.pdf, 2.

¹⁷ Ibid, Gerald Brown and Mary Deiss Brown, 2.

¹⁸ Ibid, Gerald Brown and Mary Deiss Brown, 2.

¹⁹ Ibid, Gerald Brown and Mary Deiss Brown, 2.

²⁰ Services and Development of Resources," This report is prepared through a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving received by the Hartford Refugee Resettlement Joint Commitment, December 8, 2008, http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/wsd/immigrants/refugee_resettlement_in_Htfd.pdf, 3.

²¹ "Who We Are & Our History," *Catholic Charities: Archdiocese of Hartford*. 2008-2015. <https://ccaoh.org/about-us/who-we-are-our-history/>

Charities USA, which was founded in 1910 at the Catholic University of America to assist the poor.²² Today, HCC provides a number of social services related to adoption, behavioral health, early childhood education, ESL classes, family violence education, Hispanic elderly services and pregnancy counseling.²³ Also, as a local affiliate of the national United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services (USBCC), HCC assists in refugee resettlement. HCC states on its website that it offers, “Linguistically and culturally appropriate comprehensive resettlement services designed to facilitate the refugee/asylee acculturation in the United States.” Indeed, HCC has resettled over 6,000 refugees in the Hartford area since its inception in 1975.²⁴ Utilizing a case-management model of refugee resettlement, HCC provides social caseworkers to each refugee family or individuals to provide assistance in their acculturation. Catholic Charities refugees have been resettled from Somalia, Uganda, Burma, Iraq, Russia, Tunisia, Sudan, Cuba, Syria, Nepal and Afghanistan. For a long time, HCC had the largest refugee resettlement office in the state, comprised of a staff of twenty professional, who are fluent in 27 different languages.²⁵ In FY 2017, HCC resettled 84 refugees in the Hartford and “provided continued support to hundreds of other refugees resettled in prior years.”²⁶ Furthermore, HCC has offered employment skill development and supportive services to refugees seeking jobs and professional work. HCC’s Migration, Refugee and Immigration Services Employment department reports an employment rate of 75% within the first four months of a refugee’s arrival.

²² “Our History,” *Catholic Charities USA*, <https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/about-us/history/>

²³ Ibid, “Our History.”

²⁴ “Migration, Refugee and Immigration Programs,” *Catholic Charities: Archdiocese of Hartford*, 2008-2015, <https://ccaoh.org/services-and-programs/migration-refugee-and-immigration-services/migration-refugee-and-immigration-programs/>.

²⁵ Ibid, “Migration, Refugee and Immigration Programs.”

²⁶ 2018 Annual Report, *Catholic Charities*, 2018, https://ccaoh.org/pdfs/CatholicCharities_AnnualReport.pdf.

HCC's CEO is Marek Kukula who oversees the agency's operations and involvement in the Greater Hartford area. At HCC, there has been considerable CEO turnover for the last fifteen years: Rosa Alma Senatore (2003-2011), Lois Nesci (2011-2015) and the current CEO, Marek Kukula (2015 to present). HCC also has a number of senior leaders in charge of its programs including Paula Mann-Agnew, the current Director of Migration, Refugee and Immigration Services.²⁷ Despite available administrative information on the HCC website, there is seldom news publicity or media coverage of HCC's role of refugee resettlement in the greater Hartford area. Searching for both Kukula and Mann-Agnew online, there is a very limited media presence of both individuals. In a few *Hartford Courant* articles, Mann-Agnew is mentioned as a director of HCC, but as a whole there are very few recent news articles addressing HCC's refugee operations.

While the media's coverage of HCC's was limited, there were several articles discussing the weakness of HCC's refugee resettlement program from 2004-2006. The first article published by the *New York Times* discusses the traumatic resettlement of Somali-Bantu and Liberian refugees in Hartford. Sister Dorothy Strelchun, a HCC caseworker, describes how resettling these refugee groups is more complicated than any groups in past decade.²⁸ One 2006 article titled, "Refugees Protest Their Resettlement," published by the *Hartford Courant* discusses the shortcomings of HCC.²⁹ The Ahmed family, refugees from Somalia who arrived in Hartford in 2004, stated that, "they received little help from Catholic Charities- the agency that is charged with helping refugees resettle here." In May 2006, the refugees gathered in front of the

²⁷ "Migration, Refugee and Immigration Services," *Catholic Charities: Archdiocese of Hartford*, <https://ccaoh.org/services-and-programs/migration-refugee-and-immigration-services/>.

²⁸ Adam Bowles, "Settling In, Restlessly," *The New York Times*, January 2, 2005, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/02/nyregion/settling-in-restlessly.html>.

²⁹ Elizabeth Hamilton, "Refugees Protest Their Resettlement," *The Hartford Courant*, May 18, 2006, <https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-xpm-2006-05-18-0605180672-story.html?>

Catholic Charities office on Asylum Avenue in Hartford along with organizers from Hartford Rally Together (HART), to protest the refugees' treatment.³⁰ Refugees from Somalia, Liberia and Bosnia and elsewhere complained that they had been forced to live in vermin and rat-infested apartments, have received little or no job training, and have waited as long as eight months to be enrolled in school.³¹ In a separate article published by the *Hartford News* (reprinted by the Hartford Public Library), it states that in 2006 refugees and HART leaders demanded that Catholic Charities improve services for refugees and show how it allocates the funding it receives for refugee resettlement.³²

Surprisingly, HCC's public response to these 2006 refugee protests was quite limited. Reverend John P. Gatzak, spokesman for the Archdiocese of Hartford published a press release defending the program and stated: "The job of resettlement is a difficult one for the refugees and those who are assisting them." The executive director of HCC at the time, Rosa Alma Senatore, did not respond formally to this public outcry. From these protests, the Hartford Refugee Resettlement Committee (HRRJC) emerged to address issues arising from the resettlement of refugees in Hartford by HCC. While HCC expressed its concern about continuing responsibilities for refugees resettled after four months in this memo, HRRJC responded: "Catholic Charities should be urged to view referrals to the Refugee Assistance Center not as a termination of its services and as an abdication of its role as the resettlement agency, but rather as a supplement to their on-going in-house services."³³ In other words, according to the report

³⁰ Elizabeth Hamilton, "Refugees Protest Their Resettlement," *The Hartford Courant*, May 18, 2006, <https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-xpm-2006-05-18-0605180672-story.html?>

³¹ Ibid, Elizabeth Hamilton.

³² Andy Hart, "Plight of Refugees Continues Here," *The Hartford News* (Reprinted by the Hartford Public Library), May 24-31 2006, http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/documents/immigrants/htfd_news_052406.asp.

³³ Gerald Brown and Mary Deiss Brown, "Refugee Resettlement in Hartford, Connecticut: Coordination of Services and Development of Resources," This report is prepared through a grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving received by the Hartford Refugee Resettlement Joint Commitment, December 8, 2008, http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/wsd/immigrants/refugee_resettlement_in_Htfd.pdf, 8.

by HRRJC, HCC *should be* responsible for continued support of its refugees after its contractual three to four months of federal services. Indeed, this criticism of casework resettlement has drawn Connecticut's attention to more innovative approaches to refugee resettlement.

In contrast to HCC, Integrated Refugee and Integration Service (IRIS) is a co- sponsorship resettlement organization which receives assistance from a mix of professionals and community volunteers. In total, IRIS has welcomed more than 5,000 refugees to Connecticut since 1982.³⁴ In 1982, the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut (now the Episcopal Church in Connecticut) created the Diocesan Refugee Services Committee (DRSC).³⁵ Initially, the DRSC was interested in exploring whether Connecticut parishes would be interested in welcoming and resettling Southeast refugee families after the Vietnam conflict.³⁶ The Diocesan Refugee Committee became the Interfaith Refugee Ministry (IRM) in 1990, and moved its headquarters to its present location in New Haven in 1995.³⁷ About twelve years later, the Interfaith Refugee Ministry formally became IRIS-Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services.³⁸ In 2014, after 30 years as a program of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, IRIS became an independent resettlement organization.³⁹ IRIS's innovative approach to refugee resettlement moves community volunteers into the social services sector. In theory, the aim of this model is to provide continued support for its refugees until self-sufficiency is fully achieved, which often continues outside a four-month case-management timeline. Indeed, IRIS takes advantage of the United States' long-standing faith-based resettlement model, in which congregations assist families.

³⁴ "History," *Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services*, 2018. <http://www.irisct.org/history/>.

³⁵ Ibid, "History."

³⁶ Ibid, "History."

³⁷ Ibid, "History."

³⁸ Ibid, "History."

³⁹ Ibid, "History."

To sponsor a refugee family through IRIS, individuals must create a core group of at least three members who must complete the IRIS co-sponsorship training.⁴⁰ In total, the resettlement team must have at least 10 organized members (with clearly defined roles and responsibilities) who must be able to volunteer a total of 40 hours a week (e.g. 4 hours/person).⁴¹ For the most part, religious congregations become involved in co-sponsorship given their available volunteers and pooled resources. It is required that the resettlement team must raise \$4,000-\$7,000 for up to the 6 months of rental assistance and other initial resettlement costs and provide documentation of adequate funds.⁴² In addition to funding, the resettlement team must prove they can secure housing in two weeks notice, prepare a fully-furnished apartment and advise refugees on local rental markets, DSS, ESOL, health care, and employment opportunities.⁴³ Once a group has fulfilled all of these responsibilities, it receives a “green light” from IRIS. In 2016, IRIS received about several arrival notices per month; therefore, it usually did not take more than two months to match groups with families.⁴⁴ In 2018, with limited refugee arrivals, however, it can take many months to match a refugee with a co-sponsorship group. Nonetheless, once an arrival notice for a family arrives, IRIS shares the case information (names, ages, gender, language, education, nationality, religion, health issues and employment background) with the groups and asks for two days for the group to give a confirmation of co-sponsorship.⁴⁵

In the first month of resettlement, the family must go to IRIS’s headquarters in New Haven nine times for IRIS cultural orientation and resettlement education (CORE) and refugee

⁴⁰ “Community Co-sponsorship Program: Manual for Refugee Resettlement,” *Integrated Refugee and Immigrants Services* (July 2016 edition), <http://www.irisct.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CO-SPONSORSHIP-MANUAL-JULY-2016.pdf>, 5

⁴¹ Ibid, “Community Co-sponsorship Program: Manual for Refugee Resettlement,” 5

⁴² Ibid, “Community Co-sponsorship Program: Manual for Refugee Resettlement,” 5.

⁴³ Ibid, “Community Co-Sponsorship Program: Manual for Refugee Resettlement,” 5.

⁴⁴ Ibid, “Community Co-Sponsorship Program: Manual for Refugee Resettlement,” 5.

⁴⁵ “Community Co-sponsorship Program: Manual for Refugee Resettlement,” 5.

health assessments (RHAs).⁴⁶ Once the family has received cultural orientation and health assessments, IRIS immediately provides linguistic programming and job training. The employment and education services director, Will Kneerim states, “The Mantra of the program is self-sufficiency- helping families find jobs is all-important.”⁴⁷ According to Kneerim, 70 percent of the refugees find jobs within four months and 90 percent find jobs in six months.⁴⁸ Often, highly educated refugees with little English speaking skills find themselves working in factories, restaurant kitchens or other low wage jobs. To assist refugees in language acquisition, IRIS provides free English classes for adults every weekday morning and offers information about other ESL programming throughout the state.⁴⁹ Staff and volunteers also make sure older children are enrolled in school and provide an after-school tutoring program.⁵⁰

IRIS’s Executive Director is Christopher George, who has spent most of his professional life living in and working on the Middle East. Before returning to Connecticut in 2004, he had worked seven years in the West Bank and the Gaza strip.⁵¹ Unlike, HCC’s CEO, Chris George has a considerable internet and social media presence. After searching “Chris George IRIS,” I found that George and the organization have about seven full pages of news articles, photos and social media links (i.e LinkedIn and Twitter). News coverage ranged from local *Hartford Courant* and *Connecticut Mirror* articles to NPR Weekend Edition podcasts and even an *Atlantic* op-ed. In addition to IRIS’ local and national publicity, the organization’s website contains

⁴⁶“Community Co-sponsorship Program: Manual for Refugee Resettlement,” *Integrated Refugee and Immigrants Services* (July 2016 edition), <http://www.irisct.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/CO-SPONSORSHIP-MANUAL-JULY-2016.pdf>,” 7.

⁴⁷ Peggy Kalb, “Putting out the welcome mat for refugees: A New Haven nonprofit helps refugees feel at home, and get on their feet,” *Yale Alumni Magazine*, April 2016, <https://yalealumimagazine.com/articles/4257-putting-out-the-welcome-mat-for-refugees>.

⁴⁸ Ibid, Peggy Kalb.

⁴⁹ Ibid, Peggy Kalb.

⁵⁰ Ibid, “Peggy Kalb.”

⁵¹ Alex Chituc, “Taking Refuge,” *The New Journal*, September 8, 2012, <http://www.thenewjournalat Yale.com/2012/09/taking-refuge/>.

detailed biographies and information for each of its employees. Compared to the HCC, IRIS' resettlement operations are much more transparent due to its community-based model.

IRIS's model has received national attention from a number of policy interest groups. Matthew La Corte, an immigration policy analyst at the Niskanen Center, a libertarian think-tank in Washington, relates IRIS to a Reagan-era model that lasted from 1987 to 1993. Reagan's model was a federal initiative in which private, sponsoring organizations agreed to provide more basic needs until a refugee became self-sufficient.⁵² Anne Richard, Assistant Secretary of the PRM department from 2011-2017 stated in 2016, "We are open to a pilot program [similar to IRIS]. We don't have enough time in the Obama administration to design and introduce a private sponsorship program in the U.S., but it could be done in this [2017] fiscal year." Unfortunately, Donald Trump has expressed no interest in this policy model and continues to dismantle United States refugee operations.

Along with policy officials, refugees and community-members have praised IRIS' mission and initiatives in the Greater Hartford Area. Hewad Jhan Hewat, an Afghani refugee, persecuted by Taliban terrorist groups, arrived Connecticut in 2008.⁵³ At a Yale-IRIS refugee workshop this fall, Hewat mentioned that it was difficult to adjust to life in the United States, but that he was thankful and grateful for IRIS' support.⁵⁴ Specifically, he states: "IRIS is like my family. I miss my father and my mother. But when I feel like I have to visit them, I see members of IRIS, and I feel like I saw my father, my grandmother, or my mother."⁵⁵

⁵² Deborah Amos, "For Syrian Refugees in Connecticut, A Helping Hand From Private Volunteers," *NPR*, October 30, 2016, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/10/30/499509208/for-syrian-refugees-in-connecticut-a-helping-hand-from-private-volunteers>.

⁵³ Meera Shoaib, "IRIS workshop sheds light on immigration policy, advocacy," *Yale News*, October 3, 2018, <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/10/03/iris-workshop-sheds-light-on-immigration-policy-advocacy/>.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Meera Shoaib

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, Meera Shoaib.

Jhan Hewat is one of many refugees IRIS has resettled and assisted over the last decade. Ms. Dunn, a panelist at a Newtown IRIS event and a member of IPRR, a community faith-based organization which works with IRIS recalls that assisting refugees with their resettlement has been the “highlight of her life.” Having helped two refugee families from the Congo, Ms. Dunn is fascinated by the courage and entrepreneurial spirit of refugees.⁵⁶ Indeed, IRIS has become quite popular with more than fifty groups around Connecticut- churches, mosques, synagogues and even a book group- have asked to partner with IRIS in resettling refugees in their own communities.

Racial relations and resettlement in Hartford and its surrounding municipalities

Between HCC and IRIS, more than 4,000 refugees have been resettled in Connecticut over the last 10 years.⁵⁷ More than a third of these refugees, have been resettled by Catholic Charities within the city of Hartford.⁵⁸ Co-sponsorship and private sponsorship refugees have been settled in or relocated to surrounding suburbs, particularly West Hartford and the nearby city of New Britain. In addition to the role of differing resettlement models in shaping refugee outcomes, refugees’ town of settlement plays an important role in integration outcomes. Moreover, these two factors are linked. Prospects for socioeconomic mobility differ across towns, and co-sponsorship and private-sponsorship refugees are more likely to reside in towns with more opportunities.

⁵⁶ Meera Shoaib, “IRIS workshop sheds light on immigration policy, advocacy,” *Yale News*, October 3, 2018, <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2018/10/03/iris-workshop-sheds-light-on-immigration-policy-advocacy/>.

⁵⁷ Refugee Processing Center (WRAPS Database). Interactive Reporting. “Arrivals by Destination and Nationality.” Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, Migration. Office of Admissions- Refugee Processing Center: Refugee Arrivals Fiscal Year as of 30-November-2018.

⁵⁸ Ibid, “Refugee Processing Center (WRAPS Database).

Table 1.2 Demographic Composition of New Britain, Hartford, and West Hartford

| | New Britain | Hartford | West Hartford |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| White | 34,919 | 19,765 | 47,307 |
| Hispanic | 26,934 | 54,185 | 6,192 |
| Black or African-American | 7,982 | 44,223 | 3,624 |
| American Indian and Alaska Native | 99 | 309 | 58 |
| Asian | 1,672 | 3,347 | 4,623 |
| Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 16 | 27 | 15 |
| Other | 1,584 | 2,919 | 1,449 |
| Total Population | 73,206 | 124,775 | 63,268 |

Source: *Census Data (2010)*

These three municipalities (Hartford, West Hartford, and New Britain) compose the metropolitan region of Greater Hartford which also includes municipalities such as Bloomfield, Avon, Farmington, Simsbury, Bristol, Manchester, and East Hartford. While these towns and cities comprise “Greater Hartford,” there are major racial, socio-economic and educational differences within these communities. For one, the city of Hartford is 81% non-white, minority, whereas West Hartford is almost 74% non-Hispanic white (see Table 1.2). In Hartford, the median household income from 2016 was \$36,005 and its overall poverty rate was 32%- about 2.5 times greater than the national average (12.3%).⁵⁹ Furthermore, New Britain’s racial population is about half minority, and the poverty rate was 22%- 10 percentage points greater than the national average.⁶⁰ In West Hartford, the 2016 poverty rate was only 8% with a median household income of \$91,875.⁶¹ Furthermore, West Hartford’s population was about 75% white. Indeed, these three municipalities are reflective of Connecticut’s striking racial and socioeconomic disparities. For instance, the average household income of Connecticut’s richest 1

⁵⁹ “Quick Facts: Hartford city, Connecticut,” *The United States Census Bureau (2013-2017)*, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/hartfordcityconnecticut>.

⁶⁰ Data USA: New Britain, Connecticut.” <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/new-britain-ct/>.

⁶¹ “Data USA: West Hartford,” <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/west-hartford-ct/#heritage>.

percent is nearly 43 times what the bottom 99 percent earns.⁶² Only the state of New York has a greater income inequality ratio, and in no other state does the top 1 percent's earnings match those of Connecticut's richest households in communities such as West Hartford, Avon and Greenwich.⁶³

The racial and socioeconomic disparities between Hartford and its surrounding municipalities leads to differences in housing, employment, transportation and education accessibility. For instance, in 1996, the landmark *Sheff v. O'Neill* decision found that racial isolation in Hartford public schools violated children's constitutional rights to an equal education.⁶⁴ While this case aimed to improve the distribution of education resources, in Connecticut, today, the state still places two-thirds of its black and Hispanic public school students in segregated and low-income institutions.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Connecticut's state achievement gap between low-income and middle-class/wealthy students is the largest in the United States.⁶⁶ In standardized tests developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, more than 80 percent of Connecticut's richest towns surpassed the minimum standards for English in the 2014-15 school year.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, seventy percent of the poor towns failed to meet these standards.⁶⁸ With the majority of ESL and special education students in Hartford's public schools, not its magnet institutions, educational resources are stretched for

⁶² Keith M. Phaneuf, "Already deep in debt, Connecticut struggles with extremes of wealth and income," *The Connecticut Mirror*, May 29, 2018, <https://ctmirror.org/2018/05/29/already-deep-debt-connecticut-struggles-extremes-wealth-income/>.

⁶³ Ibid, Keith M. Phaneuf.

⁶⁴ "Sheff v. O'Neill," *ACLU*, March, 11, 2014, <https://www.aclu.org/cases/sheff-v-oneill>.

⁶⁵ Lincoln Caplan, "Two Connecticut school systems, for the rich and poor," *The New Yorker*, September 14, 2016, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/two-connecticut-school-districts-for-the-rich-and-poor>.

⁶⁶ Ibid, Lincoln Caplan.

⁶⁷ Ibid, Lincoln Caplan.

⁶⁸ Ibid, Lincoln Caplan.

these curricula.⁶⁹ For newly-arriving refugee students, ESL classes and programming are essential to social and economic mobility. Refugees resettled in Hartford and attending its neighborhood schools, therefore, may have limited accessibility to linguistic opportunities. This is just one example of how municipal resources or lack thereof, can contribute to diverse refugee integration outcomes and resettlement experiences in the Greater Hartford area.

Small, post-industrial cities, such as Hartford, are where many refugees have their experiences with American culture, lifestyle and U.S. institutions. Similar to some immigrants, refugees are forced out of their home country and must live in often dangerous transitory camps and cities. Many refugees also deal with profound trauma and uncertainty in their international resettlement. These experiences shape refugee perceptions of their initial U.S. resettlement placements and sometimes American society, as a whole. In her 2013 ethnographic study, Janet Bauer, a scholar of Muslim migration, describes refugee interactions within Hartford's multiracial landscape. Bauer's research focuses on a large group of refugees (i.e. Kurds, Somali-Bantu, Kosovar-Albanians, Cubans) to map diverse cultural spaces in the Hartford metro area.⁷⁰ She explains, "Estimated to be about 4% of the state's residents, and increasingly from Muslim countries, refugees are not the largest groups of newcomers."⁷¹ To an extent, Connecticut's small population of refugees tends to "blend in" within urban municipalities composed of large foreign-born populations and minority residents. This is certainly true with Hartford, which has become increasingly a majority-minority city with predominately white contiguous suburbs and

⁶⁹ Jacqueline Rabe Thomas and Jake Kara, "The State of CT's Public Schools in Charts," *CT Mirror*, September 28, 2017, <https://ctmirror.org/2017/09/28/the-state-of-cts-public-schools-in-charts/>.

⁷⁰ Janet Bauer, "A Metro Immigrant Gateway: Refugees in the Hartford Borderlands," in *Confronting Urban legacy: rediscovering Hartford and New England's forgotten cities*, ed. Xiangming Chen and Nick Bacon, 145-168 (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 146.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, Janet Bauer, 147.

black and Latino neighborhoods in the center.⁷² Consequently, Bauer finds that refugee newcomers often culturally assimilate into the landscape paved by their Latino neighbors, co-workers and classmates in Hartford. Interviewing Muslim refugees and Hispanic residents in their place of work, researchers discovered a transnational interest in telenovelas, Spanish language-television dramas.⁷³ In addition, at Bulkeley High School in Hartford, Bauer found that Bosnian teenagers absorbed American culture largely through the language and hip-hop styles of their Hispanic classmates.⁷⁴ Along Park Street and New Britain Avenue, Cubans, Kosovars, Albanians and Somalis have integrated their businesses as hairdressers, tax preparers, restaurateurs, ethnic-based shop owners, and video store owners alongside their host-community minority counterparts.⁷⁵ Many policy studies have shown that refugees highly contribute to their local communities by opening businesses and bringing new ideas, culture, cuisine, entertainment and much more. In Hartford, this blend of ethnic and cultural identities has been important for sustaining and revitalizing refugee and minority communities. In majority-white towns such as West Hartford, refugees also provide human and cultural capital, but to what extent should this expertise be spread to already socioeconomically privileged communities?

While Bauer's ethnographic accounts showcase insightful interactions between refugees and Hartford community members, there is some difficulty in resettling refugees within its urban-metro area. For one, with Hartford's increasing foreign-born population, there has been competition for job opportunities within proximity of refugee housing.⁷⁶ This has drawn Hartford refugees to minimum-wage factory and production jobs that have moved out of the city

⁷² Janet Bauer, "A Metro Immigrant Gateway: Refugees in the Hartford Borderlands," in *Confronting Urban legacy: rediscovering Hartford and New England's forgotten cities*, ed. Xiangming Chen and Nick Bacon, 145-168 (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 148.

⁷³ Ibid, Janet Bauer, 151.

⁷⁴ Ibid, Janet Bauer, 151.

⁷⁵ Ibid, Janet Bauer, 153.

⁷⁶ Ibid, Janet Bauer, 152.

to surrounding suburbs.⁷⁷ With Hartford's unreliable public transportation system, refugees have limited accessibility to distant low-skill leveled jobs. Recalling similar economic challenges, Mawar Al Ansari, who fled Syria with his family in 2012, describes how in Hartford, he did not have a job or a car.⁷⁸ In addition, his teenage children were struggling to learn English and assimilate into Hartford's student body. Dealing with "constant banging" on their Rockwood Street apartment in Hartford, the Al-Ansari family relocated to neighboring suburbs with Miriam's assistance. Interestingly, Bauer recounts how many refugees "learned" from their Latino/black co-workers to not "take the bus at night" or "walk around in certain areas of Hartford."⁷⁹

While crime in Hartford is higher than surrounding suburbs, refugee perceptions of this racialized issue can be a mix of real, learned and imagined experiences. In addition to the Al Ansari's, the Alassafs, another Hartford resettled Syrian refugee family, found a superior West Hartford apartment and resources through RAS.⁸⁰ Miriam explains, "the reality is that some resettlement organizations, which help bring refugee families to America, are only able to provide a few months of support for a family to get on their feet."⁸¹ Paula Mann-Agnew a director of social programs at Hartford Catholic Charities (HCC), which resettles the majority of its refugees in Hartford, defends its case-management model: "When we are able to set them up, we're settling them up in a way that they can be self-sufficient and pay their rent, they have

⁷⁷ Janet Bauer, "A Metro Immigrant Gateway: Refugees in the Hartford Borderlands," in *Confronting Urban legacy: rediscovering Hartford and New England's forgotten cities*, ed. Xiangming Chen and Nick Bacon, 145-168 (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2013), 150.

⁷⁸ Charles Paullin, "From Syria with hope: Organizations helping refugee family with transition," *New Britain Herald*, June 11, 2017, <http://www.newbritainherald.com/NBH-General+News/287845/from-syria-with-hope-organizations-helping-refugee-family-with-transition>

⁷⁹ Ibid, Janet Bauer, 157.

⁸⁰ Matthew Broderick, "Starting Over: Volunteers Help Syrian Refugee Family Find a New Home in West Hartford," *The Hartford Courant*, July 1, 2017, <https://www.courant.com/hartford-magazine/hc-syrian-refugee-family-west-hartford-20170701-story.html>.

⁸¹ Ibid, Matthew Broderick.

enough money to do what they need to do, they don't end up homeless...it is never going to be our intention to put them in a place they can't afford.”⁸²

Indeed, Connecticut's co-sponsorship agencies such as IRIS and some of its informal/private volunteer networks (i.e. RAS) have contributed to this residential segregation of resettlement. Because co-sponsorship groups are required to raise substantial money, upper-middle class, suburbanites have been disproportionately involved in refugee resettlement. By placing refugees within their communities, suburban co-sponsorship groups can coordinate more effectively, yet perpetuate municipal inequality. Other private volunteer networks have purposefully relocated refugee families from Hartford to surrounding suburbs. Many of these “relocated families” receive ongoing support and connections made through RAS and ForwardCT, another private-sponsorship coalition, to make ends meet.⁸³ In fact, nearly thirty volunteers have been involved with helping a single family meet a range of needs including: in-home ESL tutoring, furniture donation and consistent transportation to ESL classes, grocery stores and job interviews.⁸⁴

To an extent, the “visibility” of refugee populations and community advocacy in majority-white suburbs has led to many people becoming directly involved in co-sponsorship. Nonetheless, it seems that refugee over-subsidization in suburban towns has reinforced Connecticut's segregated municipalities and resources. Indeed, HCC's less-immersive approach in Hartford seems to have been less impactful and more isolating for refugee newcomers. That being said, it is difficult to ignore the ways that refugees and minority populations have reshaped

⁸² “From Syria with hope: Organizations helping refugee family with transition,” *New Britain Herald*, June 11, 2017, <http://www.newbritainherald.com/NBH-General+News/287845/from-syria-with-hope-organizations-helping-refugee-family-with-transition>

⁸³ Matthew Broderick, “Starting Over: Volunteers Help Syrian Refugee Family Find a New Home in West Hartford,” *The Hartford Courant*, July 1, 2017, <https://www.courant.com/hartford-magazine/hc-syrian-refugee-family-west-hartford-20170701-story.html>.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, Matthew Broderick.

and invigorated Hartford's cultural, political and economic landscape. The deeply structural factors which shape different models of resettlement, pose important questions regarding accessibility to municipal resources, integration outcomes, and community revitalization. In the next section, interviews assessing the role of case-management, community, and private sponsorship networks will provide a full picture of the complexities of refugee resettlement and integration in the Greater Hartford area.

CHAPTER 2: Catholic Charities and IRIS Case-Managers and Employees

Catholic Charities Case-Managers

When a Catholic Charities (CC) refugee family resettles in Connecticut, they receive expensive loans for plane tickets, collect their baggage at JFK, and meet their case-manager at the airport terminal. For the next three months, the case-manager's human capital, cultural understanding, and social connections are crucially important for refugee self-sufficiency. This individual is expected to teach refugees' the insides-and-outs of the American welfare system, the English language, and the intricacies of the job market- all within a ninety-day time period. Given this federal timeframe, the case-management model is highly reliant on the efficacy of a single case-manager in achieving these daunting tasks. The community and private sponsorship models, in comparison, operate under a longer, less-regulated time period, with several committed volunteers. In addition to their time, the volunteers provide refugees with connections to jobs, housing ESL classes, and educational opportunities, among other resources. While CC case-managers also assist refugees with these areas, their caseload, and contractually-obligated deadlines, and tasks, may compromise their ability to bridge social capital for refugee families.

To assess Catholic Charities' case-management model, I conducted three, one-hour long interviews with Catholic Charities (CC) case-managers. Among the CC case-managers, I interviewed three currently employed individuals, and two individuals who were former Catholic Charities employees. Indeed, Hartford Catholic Charities has undergone substantial restructuring and case-manager overhaul due to President Trump's lowered refugee ceiling. During the 2016-2017 period, a former CC case-manager explained to me, "There were 10 of us resettling about ten families a month, and now there are only three case-managers." As of now, Catholic Charities is resettling no refugees, but is contractually obligated to assist its resettled refugees for

up to five years. By interviewing not only current, but former caseworkers, I can assess the organization's refugee resettlement initiatives over the last five years. With the current case-managers, I was unable to record or ask specific questions related to issues the organization had confronted. Candidly, I was told that I could only conduct the interview if I was not recording their conversation. The former case-managers, on the other hand, were much more open in terms of information and allowed me to record our conversation.

Notably, the caseworkers were a diverse group, many refugees, who have dealt with the resettlement experience themselves. Out of the five caseworkers I interviewed, four were refugees or asylees who came through Catholic Charities. Furthermore, the one native-born case-manager held previous professional roles at Catholic Charities. Case Manager 4, a refugee, explained, "We know how they feel. That's why they [Catholic Charities] chose some case managers who are refugees, who went through the process." Combined, the case managers speak over six different languages- Arabic, French, Jamaican-Patwa, Burmese, and several different Central African dialects. Strategically, it seems Catholic Charities has prioritized hiring case-managers who can culturally and linguistically relate to their refugee clientele in Hartford. Furthermore, it seems that Catholic Charities' largely hires internal refugee clientele and professionals as case-managers.

Case Managers' Roles and Approaches to Refugee Resettlement

When interviewing case managers about their roles and responsibilities, I received different responses from current and former employees. Interestingly, the current case-managers provided less anecdotal examples of their experiences and referred to their more technical duties during the first month of a refugees' arrival. First, the case managers discussed how they are required to pick up their clients from the airport and bring them to an apartment with a

culturally-appropriate meal. The next day, the case managers go shopping with the refugees and bring them to Catholic Charities for an in-take meeting. At this meeting, case managers and their respective refugees discuss their respective rights, responsibilities and goals. After this meeting, case managers assist their refugees with school enrollment, medical assessments, ESL, social services, job placement, and other critical tasks. After the first month, however, case-managers explained how they are only required to conduct a single 30-day check-in with their refugee clientele to ensure proper transition. After three months elapses, case-managers are still contractually connected to their clientele, but they work with refugees less intensively.

While current case-managers described this first-month resettlement in a structured manner, former case-managers provided a different image. Specifically, former case-managers described the lack of notification Catholic Charities receives for incoming refugees. Sometimes, case-managers were not notified of incoming refugees until the day of their arrival. Consequently, many of Catholic Charities' refugee clients were temporarily placed into motels or hotels for several days before their housing was secured. When housing became available, Catholic Charities apartments were not fully-furnished, and refugees used their federal welcome money to purchase easily-donated items. Case Manager 4 explains, "Sometimes we have donations, so instead of taking their money to buy things, some of them are lucky." Based on these accounts, Catholic Charities is violating federal standards which require volag case-managers to take refugees to an apartment:

"Which has basic furnishings, appliances, climate-appropriate clothing, and some of the food typical of the refugee's culture."⁸⁵

⁸⁵ "Planning of Refugees' Arrival in the United States." *U.S. Department of State: The Reception and Placement Program*. <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/receptionplacement/>.

Furthermore, case-managers discussed refugees' disappointment with their housing placements. Specifically, how Syrian refugees' expectations of "big apartments or houses" fell short of what Catholic Charities offered. For employment, case-managers explained how they initially placed refugees in jobs that paid for their family's expenses. In many circumstances, these jobs did not match the refugees skillset or background, but their level of English proficiency. In turn, case-managers described scenarios in which they had to "force" their refugees to attend ESL classes, in order to "better themselves" and assimilate. Indeed, former case-managers provided a chaotic and somewhat coercive description of their first-month experiences- a sharp contrast from current case-managers' idealized version.

Combined, however, both past and current Catholic Charities case-managers described their "tough-love" and hardened approach towards refugee self-sufficiency. In other words, case-managers explained how they limited their assistance with refugees' needs to prepare refugees for independence. Case-Manger 1 characterized this case-manager approach as "discharge from day one." Instead of scheduling a medical appointment for refugees, for example, case-managers would make refugees call the doctor and find transportation to the office. To practice, case-managers would "role-play" with the refugees about what to say on their phone calls. In this way, case-managers could provide refugees with practice and feedback concerning real-life" scenarios. In interviews with former case-workers, "discharge from day one" was characterized as a "basic needs approach" in which Catholic Charities provides refugees with basic needs (i.e. jobs, housing, social services), but refugees must "help themselves." To an extent, this approach reflects case-managers concerns with "over-indulging" refugees to the point where they become dependent. That being said, refugees arrive in the United States with little to no information about American healthcare, government services, or laws. In addition, most case-management

agencies like Catholic Charities, legally provide refugees' services for only three to six months. Therefore, there are already strict and clear timelines concerning case-manager detachment from their clientele. It seems that current case-manager' approach of "Discharge from Day 1" led to her somewhat idealized perceptions of refugee integration in Hartford.

Views on Refugee Integration

Similar to their description of refugees' first-month, former and current case-managers opinions diverged regarding refugee integration. To begin, current case-workers spent considerable interview time discussing their clients' "success stories." For instance, they relayed how a lot of their refugee clients are now accountants, doctors and lawyers. For about fifteen minutes, one case-worker discussed how her former refugee client was attending the Julliard School of Music in New York. While these refugee accounts were meaningful, these CC case-workers dodged difficult questions related to refugees' current challenges in learning English, accessing resources or well-paying, benefited income. In general terms, however, current caseworkers addressed the importance of employment and housing in facilitating integration into American society. If refugees' income and housing are stable, then their stress in the United States is reduced. Due to Connecticut's high cost of living, therefore, case-managers explained how they often pair different refugee individuals together. These individuals do not arrive with families, but are what Catholic Charities calls "solo cases." In addition to housing and income, Case-Manager 2 emphasized the importance of English education: "Without language refugees can't function." Case Manager 2 exemplified this point by describing how refugees must effectively communicate with doctors and receptionists to schedule their medical appointments. Furthermore, current case-managers described the difficulty of matching refugees' background

to employment opportunities, without basic English-skills. While refugees are “former engineers or doctors,” these newcomers must “start from new” making integration difficult.

Compared to current case managers, former case-managers described refugee integration mainly in terms of psycho-social well-being instead of technical integration terms. Case-Manager 4 emphasized that “welcoming people is very important” and a case-manager’s job requires the ability to do “more.” For instance, when case-managers pick up refugees from the airport, they must “cope” with and facilitate their emotional arrival. Case-Manager 4 describes that when picking up refugees from the airport some case-managers are “too professional” and unreceptive to refugees’ well-being. Dealing with post-traumatic stress from displacement, living refugee camps and travelling to the United States, refugees are in psychologically vulnerable position when they arrive. In addition to securing English speaking-skills, employment and housing, former case-managers emphasize how case managers should be there when refugees need emotional support. Indeed, the former caseworkers’ emphasis on refugee mental health contradicts Catholic Charities “basic needs” approach. As stated above, the ability for case managers to “do more” outside of what is legally obligated, is crucial for refugee integration. While refugees can live in an apartment, go to work, or bring their kids to school, their feelings of acceptance, social connection or inclusion within a society are also important indicators of integration. With Catholic Charities doing the bare minimum, or even less of what is federally required, refugee clients are set-back in their integration.

Challenges Facing Catholic Charities

In the interviews conducted, two resettlement issues appeared most salient for case-managers: (1) Donald Trump’s refugee ceiling and, (2) housing in the city of Hartford. In regard to the former, case-managers thoroughly discussed how lowered refugee admissions have

affected their operations. As of now, there are only three case-managers working at Catholic Charities who are assisting clients who they are obligated to through five-year USBC and ORR grants. Furthermore, Catholic Charities is receiving no clients for FY 2019. Certainly, this is a large difference from the 300 to 400 refugees Catholic Charities' was handling in 2016. For instance, former Case Manager 4 describes how in 2016 and 2017, she had upwards of six to ten new refugee families a month. Despite Catholic Charities' curtailed funding and lay-offs, current case managers explained how refugees are enduring the greatest impact, not the office. Current and former case managers alike emphasized the Trump Administration's inhumanity and lack of empathy towards humanitarian crises. Due to Catholic Charities large staff turnover and lack of arrivals, the Refugee and Migration program has refocused its efforts on assisting asylees in Hartford. In this way, Catholic Charities can continue assisting their resettled refugees, but also support humanitarian issues in a tangible way.

While all of the Catholic Charities case managers discussed national refugee policy, former case managers emphasized housing as one of the organization's largest challenges. Interestingly, current case-managers veered away from discussing Catholic Charities specific issues with refugee housing, a service area in which the organization has received substantial criticism. When I interviewed former case-workers, however, they detailed Catholic Charities' hyper-reliance on exploitative landlords for refugee housing. In particular, Case Manager 4 described how Hartford landlords would not perform maintenance within the apartments, but "come to collect the rent" at the end of the month. Specifically, when refugee complained of rats lack of heating, and water leaks, landlords would not address these issues. Consequently, refugees would complain to their case-managers, and case-managers would turn to supervisors, yet Catholic Charities seemed to remain complacent in the problem. In addition to lack of

maintenance, former case managers explained how refugees were placed in overcrowded apartments. In one scenario, a refugee family of six was placed into a small apartment with only two bed-rooms, in which the wife and daughters slept in the kitchen for extra space. Unbelievably, one former case-manager discussed this same two-bedroom scenario, but with a group of ten individual refugees.

While Catholic Charities' may be trying to mitigate refugee rental expenses, this level of overcrowding is unlawful and dangerous. According to Connecticut law, landlords must provide refugee tenants a clean apartment with functional plumbing and heating services.⁸⁶ In addition, Hartford local housing, health and fire codes stipulate that landlords must ensure that pest problems are dealt with, and the overcrowding of tenants does not occur.⁸⁷ Based upon these accounts, Catholic Charities has ignored landlords legal responsibilities and state and local housing laws. Certainly, overcrowding and apartment cleanliness is not an issue specific to Catholic Charities refugees, but people living in urban poverty. Nonetheless, refugees are the contractual responsibility of Catholic Charities, which receives financial remuneration to ensure their resettlement. Using refugee welcome money, case managers knowingly make security deposits for poorly-managed and unsuitable apartments. In many scenarios, if refugees relocate to surrounding towns and cities in their first three months, their security deposits and limited federal funding are lost. In other words, the security deposits for case-managers' unsuitable housing, for which refugees have no input, deprives refugees of their federally allotted welcome money.

⁸⁶ *"Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants in Connecticut,"* State of Connecticut Judicial Branch Superior Court (Form JDP-HM-31 Revised 8/2017). <https://www.jud.ct.gov/Publications/hm031.pdf>

⁸⁷ *"Hartford Housing Code,"* <http://www.hartford.gov/dds-code/232-development-services/2292-enf-housingcodeenf>.

While affordable housing is an issue in Hartford, case managers must do a better job at assessing the up-keep of apartments and landlords' intentions. Case Manager 4 explains how it is difficult for refugees to feel welcomed in the United States if they are placed into a "dirty apartment." Indeed, the quality of housing is an important factor for refugee well-being and integration outcomes. Between current and former CC case-managers, the latter were more effective in relaying Catholic Charities' resettlement operations. While current caseworkers provided me with technical details of their duties, they did not extensively address resettlement issues (i.e. housing) for which Catholic Charities has received criticism from refugees, community-members and local advocates. Conversely, former case managers provided me with the anecdotal information missing from current employees' accounts. Overall, the case-managers' description of Catholic Charities' resettlement model emphasized the lack of coordination, oversight and legally-required assistance that refugees are supposed to receive within their first 90 days.

IRIS Case-Managers and Employees

Co-sponsorship, unlike Catholic Charities' case-management model, provides refugees with many volunteers for whom to receive assistance. Furthermore, volunteers' combined time commitment and resources allow IRIS case-managers and professionals' to be less directly involved with their co-sponsored clients. Institutionally, therefore, IRIS functions quite differently than its Catholic Charities counterpart. While IRIS volunteers have less training than professional IRIS case-managers, their commitment and volunteering purposes provide refugees with increased resources, social connections and attention- all challenges of the case-management model. The interconnectedness of the co-sponsorship group, in consequence, provides refugees with employment, ESL, and social opportunities, unavailable via the case-

management model. Compared to solely having one case-manger, a co-sponsorship group provide multiple points of advocacy and service.

To assess IRIS institutional framework, I interviewed three current employees at Integration Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS). The employees included one Reception and Placement (R & P) caseworker, and two directors of case-management and co-sponsorship. In comparison to the Catholic Charities case-managers, the IRIS employees' professional roles were much more compartmentalized. In other words, IRIS had employees who specifically assisted with different areas of refugee resettlement such as housing, energy assistance, job placement and social service support. Furthermore, case-management oversight of co-sponsored refugees was less involved compared to IRIS's R & P refugees who were mainly Afghanis or Iraqis with Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) along with "special refugee cases." Indeed, IRIS' resettlement of SIV refugees more closely resembled Catholic Charities' case-management procedure for all its refugees.

Similar to Catholic Charities, most of IRIS' SIV refugees were resettled in New Haven within close proximity to IRIS' headquarters. In addition, the case-manager I interviewed had a refugee background himself, similar to the majority of Catholic Charities' case-managers. Specifically, he was an SIV refugee who came to the United States with advanced linguistic skills in English, but also in his native Afghan languages of Daari and Pashtu. Meanwhile, the directors of Case-Management and Co-Sponsorship along with assorted IRIS personal, oversaw the co-sponsorship group's resettlement of refugees across Connecticut. This loose structure of oversight is characteristic of the co-sponsorship model, which delegates case-management responsibilities to community volunteers. Unlike the R & P case-manager, these two IRIS employees were native-born, white Americans. Given the employees' different roles, skills and

backgrounds, I will assess IRIS' R & P and co-sponsorship case-management separately in the following sections.

IRIS Case-Managers and Employees' Roles and Approaches to Refugee Resettlement

IRIS' (R & P) case-manager explained his ninety-day involvement with mostly SIV refugees, along with several "typical" refugee families who "come from African countries, Arabic countries, from Syria and Iraq. Different from families with basic "refugee" status, SIV holders were often interpreters for American armed forces in the Middle East. The case-manager explained: "They [the SIV refugees] had to be very vigilant and careful where they were going [in the Middle East] because of their background." Consequently, many of the SIV refugees came to the United States with intense post-traumatic stress, and major disabilities and physical injuries. For instance, the case-manager described how he dealt with large families "whose children and parents had been burned from explosions and killed." Similar to Catholic Charities, he was required to secure the refugees' apartment, provide basic furnishing and a culturally appropriate meal, and assist the refugees' in paying their rent with federally allotted welcome money.

When the refugees arrived, the case-manager met them at the airport, and "hit the ground" with necessary tasks to complete including social security and welfare enrollment, health assessments and vaccinations, and job placement services. In terms of acculturation, the case-manager described how he assisted the refugees in learning to "take the the bus, manage their money, supervise the kids, and make an appointment." Fittingly, he characterized this three-month period as a mechanism to "build their life from zero" and attain "self-sufficiency." To ensure, self-sufficiency, yet provide a support mechanism, the case-manager explained how IRIS "had an open-door policy" to address refugees' issues in their first months. Despite this

accessibility, the case-manager described how he required his families to “make an appointment” because of his large caseload. In this way, his refugees could take steps towards “self-sufficiency” in scheduling an appointment and addressing crucially important matters instead of discussing concerns in a “random and disorderly way.”

Contractually, the case-manager explained how he supervised the family for ninety days and conducted an in-take 24-hours after arrival, and a 30-day meeting with the refugees to ensure their progress towards self-sufficiency. At the in-take meeting, in particular, IRIS employees described refugees and case-managers’ rights and legal obligations in the resettlement process. After thirty days elapsed, the family was given to IRIS’ post-R & P department. He explained how in post-R & P, refugees would receive assistance with employment, apply for green cards, citizenship and receive any additional assistance. Interestingly, the case-manager argued how IRIS’ approach was less overwhelming for employees because of the organization’s “term of reference.” For instance, in other resettlement agencies, he explains: “There is some confusion with what the case-manager needs to do with moving the furniture, furnishing the apartment, and all the other things you need to do as a case-manager.” At IRIS, however, there are different departments that have their specific responsibilities such as “housing and donations” which furnishes and sets up the apartment. Consequently, the case-manager describes how he could work on achieving refugees’ goals instead of just “completing or checking the box,” which is often overwhelming for employees in other agencies.

In comparison to the R & P case-manager, the IRIS case-management and co-sponsor directors were more indirectly involved with refugees’ resettlement during the ninety days. The Director of Case Management explained how “her work was more behind the scenes in terms of planning and administrative oversight, supporting the staff, helping to make the decision, but

IRIS caseworkers worked pretty autonomously.” Furthermore, she only becomes involved when clients have “major financial difficulties” or there’s a “compliance issue with a refugee service plan.” Day-to-day, however, she is involved with budgeting and paperwork regarding clients and their respective case-workers or co-sponsorship groups. Alternatively, the Director of Co-Sponsorship was more involved in recruiting, training and preparing co-sponsorship groups to resettle incoming refugee families. Before confirming and training a co-sponsorship group, IRS ensures that groups have raised enough money volunteers, interpreters, and resources to provide for a refugee family. Simultaneously, IRIS staff would determine if refugee cases were “good” for co-sponsorship, meaning refugees did not have familial connections in Connecticut towns or high needs.

Once a group is given the “green light,” the Director of Co-Sponsorship would conduct a single all-day training at IRIS for the co-sponsorship group’s leaders consisting of IRIS staff presentations about refugee mental health, employment ESL resources, and case-management, among other important areas. When a co-sponsorship group received a refugee family, the Director of Co-Sponsorship would meet with the groups’ leaders to discuss any of the family members’ major health issues, conditions or disabilities. Furthermore, he visited and checked-in with the co-sponsorship group and family within their first ten days in the United States. Interestingly, the Director of Co-Sponsorship described the group’s leaders as “case-managers” who would help him complete the paperwork that he would otherwise do himself. Indeed, this reliability on co-sponsorship members contributed to IRIS’ capacity to resettle 530 refugees during 2016 to 2017. Despite IRIS’ trust in its co-sponsorship groups, he explained how “the nationals [volags] get nervous” about entrusting so much responsibility in volunteers. IRIS, he described, operates in “good faith” that its co-sponsorship groups will follow its guidelines and

timeline for resettling refugees. In fact, IRIS' co-sponsorship timeline is one-year, in which the Director of Co-Sponsorship or other caseworkers, are required to check-in after three, six and one-year. After one-year, IRIS expects the co-sponsorship group to detach themselves from their case-management role with the family.

Both the Directors of Case-Management and Co-Sponsorship held similar beliefs to one another concerning refugee self-sufficiency and approaches to resettlement. First, they emphasized the importance of community support and involvement in IRIS' organization and initiatives. The Director of Case-Management explained: "For various reasons, a lot of other agencies are more inward looking. They see volunteers as trouble-makers because they demand so much attention, ask questions and sometimes don't really know what they're talking about." At IRIS, however, she described how that is "not our approach" and "we want people to get involved." With IRIS' recruitment of community volunteers, the agency was able to notify the State Department that Connecticut could accept more Syrian refugees in 2016. The Director of Case-Management added: "There are 48 co-sponsorship groups, that's 48 points of advocacy across the state." With these points of advocacy, refugees can access social support, networking and resources to facilitate their integration. Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of "educating the public" to allow people to understand, welcome and assist refugees in their adaptation to the United States. While both professionals were supportive of IRIS' community-based model, they also underlined the importance of promoting refugee self-sufficiency.

The Director of Case-Management, stated: "It [refugee resettlement] has to be a partnership. You need to help yourself, you know as much as we [IRIS] want to help you [refugees]." In other words, refugees must be willing to work hard to attain employment and English proficiency, the United States Resettlement Program's two major goals. Consequently,

she explained how IRIS prioritizes finding employment over all else because the “quicker they work, the fewer public benefits they will need.” Despite these federal policy pressures, the Director of Case Management described how IRIS wants to “teach people to do things, so they can do it themselves, but we don’t force people to do it themselves.” Furthermore, she explains how this balance of support and self-sufficiency is complicated, but serves as a tool for facilitating refugee integration.

In comparison, the Director of Co-Sponsorship’s approach to self-sufficiency was more intertwined with the co-sponsorship group and their respective families. Specifically, he addressed the issue of co-sponsorship group’s continued subsidization of families or “over-giving” to the refugee families. When groups continue to finance their families, he describes, it is much harder to detach themselves when they run out of money. Furthermore, this “approach” is not promoting refugee economic independence or self-sufficiency. With this everlasting support, “refugees cannot push themselves to assess resources” an indicator of self-sufficiency and independence.

Views on Refugee Integration

Taken together, the R & P case-manager, and two IRIS Directors held that English proficiency/ESL and employment were the most important indicators of refugee integration. The IRIS employees also emphasized the interconnection between ESL and employment. The case-manager explains: “You [the refugee] must not be dependent on the department of social services and speak the language so you can interact with Americans.” Without language, “refugees are isolated from the society and adjustment does not happen, or it will happen in a very slow pace.” In the R & P program, the case-manager emphasized that IRIS offers a “Parents Literacy Program” which offers daycare, and at-night English classes. Furthermore, it is particularly

geared towards “mothers coming from a Middle Eastern country, who are completely illiterate with little kids.” In relation to co-sponsorship, the Directors emphasized how the co-sponsorship group deals with refugee job placement and ESL acquisition. The Co-Sponsorship Director, however, reiterated the importance of co-sponsors in securing refugee attendance in local adult-ESL, not just in-group tutoring.

Besides employment and English, the IRIS employees mentioned financial literacy, good housing, transportation, and social support as important resources for refugee integration. Ultimately, the Director of Co-Sponsorship elaborated: “Integration...refers to refugees being able to get around and access resources.” Moreover, it is important for “refugees to have friends” or social support to assist them in accessing these resources. Specifically, she explained how IRIS offers some wellness activities such as “sewing, exercise, yoga, soccer and gardening” so that refugees can do an activity but also interact with others. In addition, IRIS offered cultural-companion programming, which matches volunteers with clients and is mostly for those refugees without social or co-sponsorship support. The IRIS director described how most of these psychosocial wellness activities are organized within the co-sponsorship group.

Based off these interpretations of integration, the IRIS employees assessed the acculturation challenges refugees are still facing. The R & P case-manager, for instance, described how Middle Eastern female refugees are still struggling to integrate: “these special immigrant visa holders, all of them came from Afghanistan, most of them are coming from the country side. Back home, the females are badly isolated, socially.” Therefore, female Afghani SIV refugees are often “illiterate back home, and they haven’t gone to school.” With small children, it is difficult for this small population to “confidently work on their English.” Indeed, the case-manager relays how the IRIS’ Cultural Companion program was geared towards

allowing Americans and Afghan women to engage in reciprocal learning and acculturation. In contrast, he reports that both men and women from urban Afghanistan, are highly-educated, thus rapidly acculturating in the United States.

In general, refugee education-level has been a hindrance to integration in the co-sponsorship groups. The Director of Co-Sponsorship elaborated how “If you have a large family and they’re living in a really expensive area and they don’t speak English, and the guy was like a laborer and doesn’t read that’s very challenging.” Indeed, he admits how the Syrian refugee population had been “less-educated” than people originally thought. Given IRIS’ surge of Syrian refugee arrivals in 2016, “people were resettled all over the place” and in areas of Connecticut that were “too remote and isolated.” This remoteness and isolation, in consequence, has compromised refugees’ ability to access sustainable resources. The Director of Case-Management also reiterated the importance of refugees’ having reliable transportation whether that is a bus or car, to “move efficiently.” Without fully considering municipalities’ cost of living, educational system or public amenities, some refugees’ have struggled to integrate into American society. Despite these challenges, the Director of Co-Sponsorship credits Syrian refugees for “being robust, gritty people” who want to “make things work and not back away.” Refugee personality and disposition, he explains, also plays a crucial role in refugees’ attaining ESL, and educational and employment opportunities.

Challenges Facing IRIS

Similar to Catholic Charities, IRIS discussed its pressing challenges in terms of national policy. Specifically, the Director of Case-Management described how President Trump’s lowered refugee ceiling, travel bans and executive orders have led to IRIS’ downsizing its operations. Unlike Catholic Charities, IRIS is still resettling refugees, and has a steady stream of

incoming SIV refugees. Nonetheless the “one-hundred or more rule,” which stipulates that if an affiliate receives less than one-hundred refugees in less than a year, it will not be allowed to resettle refugees, has been enforced upon Catholic Charities. Consequently, IRIS is now receiving Catholic Charities clients, which include a large amount of Congolese and Afghan refugees. Promoting the co-sponsorship model to potential congregations, however, has been difficult. Interestingly, the Director of Co-Sponsorship explains how many groups “assume” that the United States is not receiving refugees given the Trump Administration’s immigration policies. Consequently, IRIS’ community outreach and public relations role has become somewhat complicated. Meanwhile, the Director of Case-Management explained how IRIS has dealt with never-ending uncertainty in relation to the “one hundred or more rule.” This uncertainty, she explains, makes it difficult for IRIS staff to operate in an effective manner.

Together, Catholic Charities’ and IRIS’ institutional framework differ on the basis of organization, resources, and oversight. Organizationally, Catholic Charities’ has a single group of caseworkers, which handles *all* of the refugees’ needs within their first ninety-days. While IRIS’ R&P caseworkers also work with refugees within this ninety-day period, their responsibilities are not all-encompassing. At IRIS, departments focusing on specific areas of resettlement assistance such as housing and donations, and energy assistance, mitigate the caseworker’s responsibilities. Therefore, IRIS R&P caseworkers can focus more on refugee employment, and English proficiency, instead of immediate needs such as housing and furnishing. IRIS co-sponsorship program offers community-based more resources than Catholic Charities’ case-management model. For about a year, volunteers are highly involved in the resettlement and adaptation of a refugee family who they assist with employment, healthcare, education, and English among other areas. Conversely, a single case-manager at Catholic

Charities handles the needs of many refugee families within a three months. In terms of oversight, IRIS's R&P case-managers, and Catholic Charities' typical case-managers have similar oversight roles. Both are required to conduct mandatory, and periodic "check-ins" and assist refugees with different areas of integration. The approach of Catholic Charities, however, is much more detached than IRIS, which promotes an "open door policy" instead of "discharge from day 1." Moreover, in IRIS co-sponsorship, case-managers are mostly uninvolved in the group's day-to-day activities. To an extent, IRIS volunteers become their own "case-managers" who assist refugees in recreating their lives in America.

CHAPTER 3: THE VOLUNTEERS

The Co-Sponsorship Model and Volunteer Networking

While refugee admissions have lowered, IRIS co-sponsors, along with other Connecticut private volunteer networks, have played crucial roles in welcoming, resettling, and assisting refugees. Indeed, advocacy and acceptance have been principal tenets for volunteers' involvement in IRIS' co-sponsorship model. Accordingly, IRIS' model encourages community members to become involved with refugees, thus recruiting and committing volunteers to their resettlement. As members of local host communities, volunteers play an important role in effective long-term refugee resettlement and integration. From taking refugee children to soccer practice to enrolling parents in Driver's Education classes, volunteers are intimately involved with their family's daily tasks, goals and resettlement challenges. This level of commitment, in turn, improves refugee economic, linguistic, and social integration outcomes.

In total, I interviewed six co-sponsorship volunteers belonging to three different groups: Saint James/Saint Johns, Beth El Temple and Westminster Presbyterian and Manchester Unitarian Universalist. Four out of the six IRIS co-sponsorship volunteers were involved with private volunteering and projects outside of their refugee family. Four out of six of the volunteers were members of Saint James Episcopal Church in West Hartford, which co-sponsored a Syrian family in 2016. The other volunteers became involved with refugees via Beth El Temple and Westminster Presbyterian Church, an interfaith IRIS co-sponsorship group based in West Hartford. All six volunteers, however were mostly white highly-educated, upper middle-class white women (with the exception of one male volunteer). The reasons for the volunteers' involvement were multiple and included academic/professional interest, retirement projects, ESL teaching experience, Middle Eastern cultural identity, and Jewish refugee background. One of

the women involved with the Saint James/Saint John’s co-sponsorship group was Miriam who later became an important activist for many refugees in the greater Hartford Area. Linguistically, Miriam was the only co-sponsorship volunteer who spoke Arabic. Nonetheless, two of the women spoke other languages (i.e. Russian and Italian) and spent considerable time studying abroad in different cultures. All of the women were interconnected through their refugee involvement and advocacy in the Greater Hartford area.

Table 3.1: Co-Sponsor Volunteers and their their Religious Congregations

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| <p>Saint James and Saint John’s Episcopal Church Group, West Hartford,</p> <p>Volunteer 1, Private-Sponsorship</p> <p>Volunteer 2, Private Sponsorship</p> <p>Volunteer 3, (Miriam*- pseudonym for volunteer involved with 80+ families) Private Sponsorship</p> <p>Volunteer 4, No Private Sponsorship</p> <p>Beth al Temple and Westminster Presbyterian Group, West Hartford,</p> <p>Volunteer 5, Private-Sponsorship</p> <p>Unitarian Universalist Church, Manchester</p> <p>Volunteer 6, No Private Sponsorship</p> |
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Co-Sponsors’ Roles and Approaches to Refugee Resettlement

In all three co-sponsorship groups, the volunteers expressed the intensity of working with their refugee family upon their arrival to the United States. Prior to the refugees’ arrival, the co-sponsorship groups were organized by committees, or groups of volunteers centered on different refugee projects (i.e. children’s school enrollment, vaccinations, bus transportation). The committees centered around themes of health, employment, social service determination education, and general acculturation. These co-sponsorship groups secured apartments in West

Hartford and Manchester, and raised money to fund their family's expenses. Although the co-sponsorship group organized committees, volunteers described how when the refugees arrived, it was "all hands on deck." That being said, in the Saint James/Johns co-sponsorship group, three of the four co-chairmen of the co-sponsorship committee were on vacation when the refugees arrived. Miriam described: "The two rectors from Saint James/John's co-sponsorship were on vacation and all the second-level people that I had put in line for transportation, taking the kids to school, donating, health issues, all that stuff, they were not available." Indeed, Volunteer 1 described how she had not been involved in the first couple months because her family was on vacation. In the first few months, the co-sponsorship group was focused on securing the family's social security cards, DSS benefits and health appointments. Volunteer 2 described these tasks as a "trial by fire," which many of the volunteers in the co-sponsorship group could not handle. Consequently, after the first six months, the majority of the co-sponsorship groups had dismantled leaving tasks to its most devoted members. Or, alternatively, some members were more highly involved leaving less work for others. This restructuring of involvement, nonetheless, resulted in smaller, more close-knit volunteering with the Saint Johns/James family.

After the first six months of resettlement, all of the co-sponsorship volunteers described how they readjusted their approaches in assisting the refugee families. Given the enormity of co-sponsors' tasks, some volunteers focused on fostering refugee independence in completing tasks. In the Saint James/John co-sponsorship group, Volunteer 2 described how she would solely assist refugees with ESL-related tasks. Furthermore, if a refugee asked her to complete a major task outside of her ESL/education role, she would tell the refugees to contact other volunteers. Alternatively, in the Beth El Temple/Westminster Presbyterian group, Volunteer 5 describes: "They're a little bit dependent on me because I help them tremendously with a lot of things."

Offering a generational approach to the Saint James/John group responsibilities, Volunteer 4 described how he and other retired men assisted the refugee father with learning English five days a week. Likewise, Volunteer 6, in the Manchester group, described how her retirement allowed her to assist the family during the day when other volunteers were at work.

Despite volunteers mixed roles and approaches towards self-sufficiency, the co-sponsorship group was readily-available to fulfill the family's major needs. In one scenario, a Volunteer 2 described how "she had dropped her family plans to assist the family with an urgent medical need." Furthermore, Volunteer 1 described her odd balancing act between her own children and refugee children's school events and activities. In the Saint James/John group, this need-based approach has currently manifested into assisting families with sporadic projects such as social service redetermination, airfare loan budgeting and repayment and employment change. While the all-encompassing, the volunteers' intense commitment to the refugee families' has benefited the refugees' integration outcomes and independence. Volunteer 5 explained: "It's sad I only see them once every few weeks. Now they just text me questions." As of now, the volunteers described how their acculturation roles have become nuanced and focused on refugees' long-term goals.

Views on Refugee Integration

Describing their experiences working with refugees, the volunteers thoroughly addressed the achievements and challenges to refugees' integration. Two of the volunteers emphasized the importance of the social service sector in facilitating refugee integration. Specifically, Volunteer 2 emphasized the importance of Husky (Medicaid) in covering the refugees' extensive medical and dental procedures. She explained how it was her "mission" to make refugees' cognizant of how "lucky" they are to have this social service resource. While some volunteers' emphasized

the importance of refugee social services, a couple of the women were deeply critical of the American welfare system. For instance, Volunteer 1 stated: Social service systems are so flawed, so inadequate, and so I personally, I was shocked by how bad it was.” Consequently, all of the volunteers underlined the importance of the co-sponsorship group in assisting refugees’ in navigating the social service sector.

In general, volunteers also highlighted the importance of social connection in improving refugee employment prospects and ESL/educational improvement. Volunteer 4 reiterated this point: “You see how the most successful families, were resettled by really resource-based, kind of connected volunteers.” Indeed, in the Saint James/John co-sponsorship group, volunteers utilized their networks to assist the refugee father in obtaining a manufacturing job, which matched his Syrian professional experience. Linguistically, volunteers 1 and 4 described how their family’s English acquisition was dependent on the co-sponsorship group’s stream of private tutors and availability/transportation. Specifically, the group’s commitment to driving refugees to ESL classes or organizing tutoring lessons improved refugees’ English-speaking skills. Furthermore, all of the volunteers discussed the ineffectiveness of Catholic Charities in providing refugees with integration resources, services and social networks. Indeed, the Catholic Charities families’ lack of resources is what motivated volunteers to become involved in assisting Connecticut refugees on a larger-scale.

While the volunteers emphasized the refugees’ integration achievements, they acknowledged continuing integration challenges for refugees in Connecticut. In terms of refugee employment, Volunteers 2 and 4 underlined the families’ vulnerability of being “working-poor.” Specifically, volunteer 2 explained how refugees were often “one-paycheck” away from an “economic crisis” or not being able to pay expenses. Even when refugees had stable fully-

benefited jobs, their salaries often fell below the federal poverty level. While the volunteers discussed how many refugee women desired to work, they explained how expensive daycare/childcare stifled their plans.

Culturally, volunteers also explained how refugees' ideas of financial planning and decision-making often differed from Americans. Volunteer 2, for instance, explained her frustrations with one family "buying an expensive \$30,000 car." Although she supported the family's decision to buy a car, she explained how "other volunteers" may wonder why this family is continuing to receive social services. She also explained how many refugee families' ideals of economic integration fundamentally differed from that of volunteers. Being forced to leave their homes, some refugees had much higher standards of living in Syria. Volunteer 2 attributed the refugee's struggles to Connecticut's lack of affordable housing for the urban poor and refugee individuals. She explained: "It's very hard to find good housing, or cheap housing for refugees." Indeed, refugees' initial lack of credit and employment history makes it difficult for landlords to rent their apartments. Consequently, by being resettled in poorer municipalities, refugees' housing costs are lowered, yet their access to educational and employment opportunities are hindered. The combined inaccessibility of good housing, employment, and educational resources complicates refugees' resettlement regardless of being resettled by IRIS or Catholic Charities. Having networked co-sponsorship groups, however, as the volunteers emphasized, improves refugees' social mobility.

Challenges of Co-Sponsorship

In discussing their co-sponsorship roles and responsibilities, the volunteers addressed two major concerns: (1) volunteer turnover and cultural misunderstanding (2) and lack of IRIS training and oversight. In the Saint James/John co-sponsorship group, Volunteer 2 explained how

“in the beginning there were 82 co-sponsorship volunteers” signed up to assist their refugee family. Quickly, Volunteer 2 and 4 elaborated how their co-sponsorship group’s volunteer network began to “fizzle out.” For many individuals, fully dedicating to assisting refugee families is a time commitment they cannot make with their families, professional roles and personal activities. Volunteer 4 explained: “the *women* involved with assisting refugees can do a lot and are maybe a little bit obsessive and really passionate because a lot of people just can’t handle all the chaos.” That being said, she emphasized how all of these women volunteers (including herself) have children, professions and are politically active. Interestingly, Volunteer 4 also questioned the gendered dynamic of refugee assistance by pointing out how the male volunteers had mostly detached themselves in her co-sponsorship group. While she was unsure why this exactly is, she emphasized the importance of volunteers being able to multi-task responsibilities, a task she claimed that “women are better with.”

In addition to issues of volunteer detachment, Volunteer 1 explained the issue of “bottle-necking” in the Saint James/John co-sponsorship group. Specifically, she explained how many volunteers would rely on Miriam to communicate with the family because of her impressive bi-cultural and bi-lingual skills. Miriam’s volunteer involvement with many refugee families, however, made it difficult for her to always respond to the Saint James/John family. Furthermore, Volunteer 1 explained how “so few people are willing, or feel comfortable...being with the family on a weekly basis.” Despite Volunteer 1’s lack of Arabic-speaking skills, she was able to effectively communicate and develop a personal relationship with the family. Consequently, she exclaimed how many volunteers began relying on her to communicate with the family even though she had the exact “linguistic skill-set” as everyone else.

Furthermore, some volunteers were “quick to judge” refugee families based on their cultural differences. For instance, Volunteer 1 explained how ESL tutors often made cultural criticisms of the family’s childcare. In one scenario, a volunteer complained about the time of the day that the family was bathing their children. Similarly, Volunteer 6, in the Manchester Unitarian Universalist Church, described how she was also a “mediator” between cultural conflicts which arose between volunteers and the refugee family. Interestingly, Volunteer 1 suggesting this “bottle-neck effect” and cultural misunderstanding resonated from the difficulty of communicating between congregational volunteers. She explains, “I very much operate in a professional realm, I use Google Docs...many elderly church-goers do not even use email.” In fact, the communicative gap within the co-sponsorship group made her “appreciative” of how religious leaders coordinate with and strengthen their religious communities.

Given the enormity of the co-sponsorship group’s tasks, all of the volunteers explained how IRIS could have been more involved and helpful in their family’s resettlement. In the Saint James/John’s co-sponsorship group, for instance, Volunteer 1 described how volunteers were concerned with some of the refugee family’s personal and mental health issues. “At the end of their rope,” the volunteers contacted their family’s IRIS case-manager for assistance in handling this difficult situation. Instead of offering constructive advice, the IRIS caseworker sharply criticized Volunteer 1, telling her that “interacting with the family several times a week” was creating a situation of “co-dependency.” Indeed, Volunteer 1 explained how the meeting was “very upsetting” and provided no mechanisms to resolve situation. Furthermore, both Volunteer 1 and 4 described how IRIS had provided the group with limited pre and post-arrival training in light of their enormous resettlement task. Volunteer 4 explains: “IRIS wasn’t that helpful. Once they got them here, they provided us with very little, support and guidance.” Specifically, the

caseworkers assigned to both co-sponsorship groups “made two visits to the home and after six months they were gone.” While IRIS’ delegation of tasks to co-sponsorship groups allowed the organization to resettle more families from 2016 to 2017, co-sponsorship groups were left with very little assistance in their resettlement task.

Private Volunteering and Refugee Activism

Outside of their co-sponsorship groups, four of the volunteers (all women) have become highly involved in refugee resettlement in the Greater Hartford Area. These women privately volunteer in three, overlapping areas: (1) networking with, and recruiting volunteers to assist refugees (2) providing direct assistance to needy families (3), and securing housing and relocating refugee families. The first area, networking with, and recruiting volunteers to assist families, refers to the women’s communication and outreach role. All four women were involved in this role in varying capacities. For instance, Volunteer 1 described how her strengths were best utilized in recruiting volunteers to assist Catholic Charities families. Unlike the IRIS co-sponsorship families, she explained how families resettled by Catholic Charities received very limited financial assistance, job opportunities, ESL instruction or psycho-social support. After learning about WHOKE and Forward CT, two politically-active women’s groups focused on migrant/refugee issues, she decided to connect them with Catholic Charities families. In this way, the families could receive additional resources unavailable through their Catholic Charities case-managers. Furthermore, Volunteer 2 explained how she also involved with the “volunteer management” of these “ad hoc, amorphous, amoeba-like groups.” Specifically, she applied IRIS’ co-sponsorship principles and committee-structure to organize these volunteer groups. Indeed, Volunteer 4 exclaimed how amazing these volunteer groups were and how “they had resources and networking beyond anything that I ever had.”

In relation to networking, Volunteer 4 explained how she has been involved in the “Refugee Advocacy” WhatsApp group, in which volunteers post information related to refugees across Connecticut. The volunteer listed the current messages in the group: “Let’s see, washing machine that’s broken, people need comforters and diapers, rugs, cribs, a truck to move furniture to a new home, somebody needs to have their electric bill paid.” In effect, this group-chat has been a forum for organizing and collaborating among volunteers across the state. All four women are members of this group-chat who assist these refugees, both directly and indirectly, by donating items, paying expenses, and providing transportation.

Besides the group-chat, two of the volunteers were directly involved with providing assistance to struggling refugee families. For instance, Volunteer 2 recalls how she helps about twenty-five Catholic Charities families with navigating the Department of Social Services (DSS). Interestingly, she described her role as a “second tier person” who assists refugees in social service redetermination when glitches in the DSS computer system “boot refugees off.” In this way, she ensures that refugees are receiving their Husky renewals, food stamps, and temporary cash assistance (TANF). Additionally, she has been helping some Catholic Charities families with specific projects such as securing social security benefits for an Autistic child, assisting refugee women in enrolling in community college, and negotiating parking tickets. Outside of these formal roles, she assists refugees sporadically with childcare, transportation and medical emergencies.

Along with Volunteer 2, Miriam has been heavily involved with more than eighty refugee families in Connecticut, New England and even the Middle East. Indeed, all of the volunteers described how Miriam has committed her life to assisting refugees in whatever capacity: housing, donations, tutoring, DSS, and advocacy services (among many other areas). During our

interview, Miriam described how her volunteering has operated under her organization, Refugee Advocacy Services (RAS). RAS, which means “head” in Arabic, is her refugee volunteer organization for which she plans to secure a 501 (C3), a non-profit documentation. In the future, Miriam hopes to expand RAS’ volunteering capacity and add a business sector, which involves the retail of Muslim women clothing. She explained: There’s so many women who want clothing, they want to go to the store, or they order something overseas and it gets here and it’s the wrong size. Miriam emphasized that her business motivation is to employ refugee women to work for \$15/hour (the ideal minimum wage). In this way, refugee women will be able to provide their families with additional income and economic independence.

Miriam, however, was the only volunteer directly involved with relocating refugee families and securing housing. Indeed, Miriam went into depth about her process of “finding families” who were resettled by both Catholic Charities and IRIS. In effect, much of Miriam’s “finding” entailed relocating the refugees’ from their Hartford housing to apartments in West Hartford. Miriam explained one scenario: “There was a four-person family living on a third-floor walk-up with no elevator, a pregnant mother, an energetic three-year-old son, and a little girl who has cerebral palsy and can’t walk three steps.” Enraged, she called the Catholic Charities case-manager and told them how the family’s situation was illegal under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In response, the Catholic Charities case-manager vaguely explained how they “would take care of it.” After waiting several weeks, Miriam rented a truck and hired several moving men to relocate the family. In another scenario, Miriam described how she moved a family from their Hartford apartment which “smelled like marijuana.” She expressed how she was concerned with the neighborhood’s criminal activity and did not want Syrian

families' teenage boys to become involved with dealing drugs. Whether or not this concern was well-founded, Miriam moved the family to an apartment in West Hartford.

Because of her relocation initiatives, Miriam explains how she has made a “name for herself” at Catholic Charities, and even at IRIS. Recently, Miriam staged a sit-in at Catholic Charities' Archbishop's office in response to the organizations' mistreatment of its refugee clients. Candidly, Miriam relayed her attitude about others' opinions regarding her relocation initiatives, “If you're with me great, if you're not with me just step aside.”

In contrast to Miriam, other volunteers have been hesitant to confront Catholic Charities. For instance, Volunteer 2 explains, “I never felt it necessary to call them [Catholic Charities] and see what they were doing. I didn't want to step on their toes.” Furthermore, Volunteer 1 expressed her reluctance with Miriam's crusade to relocate refugees to West Hartford. Specifically, she references the racial segregation and inequity of Hartford and West Hartford's resources. By relocating refugees, who are a “mechanism for community revitalization,” in her words, volunteers are depriving Hartford of crucial social and economic resources. As we can see, the volunteers work in accordance, but also in disagreement over different volunteering missions and objectives. Despite these challenges, the volunteers' collective actions have been immense in promoting large-scale refugee integration in the Greater Hartford area.

The Private Sponsors

Similar to IRIS co-sponsorship groups, grassroots private sponsorship groups, have become greatly involved in advancing refugee integration outcomes. Matching resettled refugees to volunteers, these private networks have assisted refugees in accessing employment, healthcare, education and ESL opportunities in the Hartford Area. In total, I interviewed three individuals involved with three informal private sponsorship networks: the Berlin-Avon Mosque

Association (BAMA), Forward CT and WHOKE. Similar to IRIS co-sponsorship groups, BAMA has a religious volunteer base and organizes through various Hartford-area Muslim congregations. That being said, BAMA has no co-sponsorship ties to IRIS and mainly assists needy refugee families associated with Catholic Charities. Indeed, religious beliefs have been motivators for BAMA volunteers' involvement in local refugee resettlement. Specifically, the BAMA volunteer explained how zakat, a charitable/religious tax and service, has propelled many mosque members to become involved with refugees in different capacities. Some members donate large sums of money to refugees whereas others spend time assisting refugee families. The BAMA volunteers described how mosque members "would take a few [Catholic Charities] families to be responsible for." In her interactions with refugees, the BAMA volunteer describes how she was "shocked" with the struggles of one Catholic Charities family whose members were all disabled. With little assistance from their Catholic Charities' case-manager, this BAMA volunteer was motivated to become involved with assisting families with disabilities.

Interestingly, Forward CT and WHOKE have no religious affiliation and are primarily composed of white, upper-middle class, politically-active women. After President Trump's election in 2016, both grassroots organizations mobilized to assist immigrants and refugees. Forward CT, an Avon-based advocacy group coalesced around migration issues, whereas WHOKE, an existent West Hartford women's group, decided to tackle this specific issue. Forward CT began assisting refugees by creating "care packages," which included important household items (i.e. cleaning supplies, toiletries etc). Meanwhile, WHOKE initially focused on petitioning West Hartford officials to become a sanctuary city, a municipality which limits their cooperation with national immigration enforcement policies. After unsuccessfully presenting a petition to West Hartford's Mayor and Chief of Police, WHOKE looked for other ways to assist

migrants. After networking with various co-sponsorship volunteers, both Forward CT and WHOKE became connected with a few Catholic Charities refugee families.

While academic literature suggests that refugee social capital is mainly tied to religious congregations, these two secular networks have assisted refugee families by providing housing, donations, employment, and transportation (Ives et 2012; Eby et al. 2011). The WHOKE volunteer explains her frustration with religious-based resettlement, “Everything was via churches and...through the mosque, so there’s a lot of atheists here and we’re unaffiliated, but politically active, and you’re [co-sponsorship groups] missing an opportunity to use our energy.” Although Forward CT and WHOKE are non-denominational, the private sponsors had their own personal reasons for assisting refugees. The Forward CT private sponsor explains how her Jewish background made her empathetic to the war occurring in Syria. She explains, “You know what if nobody helped us, or my people during the Holocaust...if you don’t step up who’s going to help right now?” Similarly, the WHOKE private sponsor describes relates her experience as a Russian-Jewish refugee in the 1970s as one of her main motivations to help Syrian refugees.

Private Sponsors’ Roles and Approaches to Refugee Resettlement

Unlike the co-sponsorship groups, the private volunteer networks, with the exception of the Berlin Avon Mosque Association (BAMA), became involved with helping refugees after their first month in the United States. Indeed, BAMA had a close relationship with Catholic Charities case-managers in assisting refugee families in their first month of arrival. The BAMA volunteer explains how the refugees’ first month was “very tough” because they dealt with tragedies and post-traumatic stress. In addition, she explains how many of the families struggled because they did not how to write or read in Arabic, had no English language, transportation, social connection, and were placed in “bad areas” in Hartford. Specifically, the BAMA volunteer

explains how many of the Catholic Charities' Hartford apartments were full of mice and bed bugs. The mosques "had to fight" with Catholic Charities for them to return the refugees' security deposits on their initial apartments. She explains that the "tragedy was with the Catholic Charities not the IRIS families." In assisting refugees, the BAMA volunteer provided multifaceted support through monetary/furniture donations, Arabic translation services, ESL tutoring and navigation of the employment, healthcare and social service sectors.

While the BAMA volunteer explained how she was highly involved with refugees during their first months, her long-term approach in assisting the refugees evolved. She explains, "You become very close to the families, but at the same time, I kept my limit because the families depend on you with everything." Indeed, the BAMA volunteer was weary of situations of co-dependency in which the refugees will "not be pushing themselves to work, or pushing themselves to learn the language." Nonetheless, she elaborated that the refugees have her phone and with anything important she helps, though with some tasks such as transportation, she is attempting "to start letting go." Dealing with many refugees with disabilities, the BAMA volunteer described how their inability to work induced major challenges, so it is difficult for her to "let go completely." Interestingly, she described when she wants to leave, "something always pulls her back to stay." As we can see, this volunteer's personal relationships with several families complicate her ability to balance refugee needs while promoting self-sufficiency in an effective way.

Alongside the mosques, Forward CT and WHOKE became involved with Catholic Charities refugee families after their first month in the United States. In fact, Miriam and other co-sponsorship volunteers became aware of struggling Catholic Charities refugee families and put them in connection with both groups. Interestingly, both the Forward CT and WHOKE

volunteers explained how their relationship with refugees were centered on the “nuts and bolts” of their resettlement, as opposed to being a “cultural ambassador” for the families. For instance, the Forward CT volunteer explained how much of her work was helping the group’s refugee family navigate food stamps, pay electric bills, obtain a credit card, and schedule a driver’s test among other important tasks. For the WHOKE volunteer, she described how their first month of involvement was “putting out fires.” Unlike Forward CT, the WHOKE group worked with two different families and immediately began re-locating the families to West Hartford to access better apartments and public schools. With bed bugs and vermin, both refugee families expressed their discomfort living in their Hartford apartments. Simultaneously, the WHOKE volunteer addressed refugees’ medical appointments, social service redetermination and educational necessities. Given these demands, both the Forward CT and WHOKE volunteers characterized their first months as a demanding and chaotic time period.

In adjusting to the families’ needs, both groups attempted to create formal mechanisms to organize in assisting refugees. The Forward CT group received advice from IRIS co-sponsorship volunteers and created sub-groups within their volunteer network. The Forward CT volunteer described, “there was a job team that worked on the resume...there was the ESL team who helped with language...and there was the medical team which helped with appointments.” Likewise, in the WHOKE group, volunteers initially organized themselves by families and different medical, housing or employment commissions, which were all working on different projects. WHOKE also adapted this structure from other IRIS co-sponsorship volunteers and IRIS’ co-sponsorship manual. While the WHOKE volunteers had some success with this structure, the refugee families tended to reach out to certain volunteers, rather than always contacting the relevant committee leaders. Ultimately, the WHOKE volunteer described their

group as a “kind of loose, fluid rotation” in assisting refugees. By structuring their tasks, however, volunteers were able to more cohesively address refugees’ needs instead of constantly “putting out fires.”

After their first months of assistance, the WHOKE volunteer described how she attempted to promote refugee self-sufficiency at the micro-level. In one example, WHOKE volunteers promoted independence by providing refugees’ detailed directions on how to get to the doctor’s office, but not transporting them. Once at the doctor’s office, WHOKE volunteers would meet them, but refugees had to practice filling out medical history forms on their own. In this way, refugees could have opportunities to advocate for themselves and practice their English in real-life scenarios. The volunteer even described how she would “bargain” with refugees about completing certain tasks, so they could also practice their English. Despite these efforts, the volunteer described how other private sponsor volunteers sometimes interrupted these self-sufficiency steps. For instance, one private sponsor would give refugees rides to appointments or fill out their medical history forms, thus disrupting these self-sufficiency tasks. Indeed, WHOKE’s approach was sometimes at odds with Catholic Charities and other private sponsor’s approaches. The WHOKE volunteer explained how there are two extremes of refugee approaches: (1) Catholic Charities providing refugees with “no assistance whatsoever” (2) and, private sponsors immediately “patching” refugees’ needs. Specifically, she described how “playing whack-a-mole” with refugees’ reoccurring needs does not provide them with tools to solve their issues.

Compared to the WHOKE volunteer, the Forward CT volunteer provided fewer details about her approach to refugee self-sufficiency. Both women, however, emphasized the importance of providing refugees assistance past volags’ typical three-month resettlement period.

The Forward CT volunteer emphasized this point: “The model where you bring someone in and give them some help for a few months, and then you walk out the door does not work.” In addition, both women were critical of USRP’s goal of self-sufficiency. She explained how it is unrealistic to assume that refugees, let alone American citizens, can overcome such pervasive obstacles of financial stability and foreign language (English) proficiency in a 90-day time period. The CT Forward volunteer also elaborated that self-sufficiency varies with a family’s socioeconomic status, linguistic/educational background and social relationships.

Private Sponsors’ Views on Refugee Integration

Private sponsors’ views on refugee economic integration varied by family. Both the BAMA and WHOKE volunteers explained how refugees with medical ailments and disabilities are still economically struggling. Unfortunately, many of these refugees are unable to work and rely on public benefits to sustain their families. Despite these challenges, some refugee families have received substantial monetary assistance from BAMA. With a BAMA WhatsApp group, volunteers can post refugees’ electric bills, apartment rent and grocery needs. The BAMA volunteer explains: “When I post in the group people will give me the money or Venmo me.” In some scenarios, “people are very generous, like you ask for \$500, and you will receive maybe \$1,000 or \$2,000.” The trust among mosque volunteers that enables large donations has allowed struggling families to pay their bills. In addition to the BAMA WhatsApp group, some mosque volunteers are also members of the Refugee Volunteer Network (RVN) WhatsApp group. The RVS group connects volunteers who are loosely associated with local churches, temples and mosques in assisting different refugee families. The BAMA volunteer relayed how people will post in RVS to “collect quilts, diapers and [even] washing machines” for refugee families. In contrast to BAMA, the WHOKE volunteer described how her group often struggled to extract

funds from its members to assist their refugee families. Specifically, she stated: “If you do a fundraiser at a giant synagogue, a lot of old retirees, the pockets are deep so families got like a check for \$1,400.” While WHOKE did finance their families, they did not have the charitable backbone of a religious congregation. Nonetheless, the social capital of both BAMA and WHOKE provided refugees families with income to pay their expenses.

Similar to BAMA and WHOKE volunteers, the Forward CT volunteer emphasized the importance of social capital in facilitating their family’s economic integration. In particular, she stated how “the higher socioeconomic class of our volunteer base” made it easier for the group to network for jobs and cars for their family. Furthermore, the group “had access to things that potentially other people [volunteers] wouldn’t.” For example, Forward CT provided the father of their refugee family a job in a factory where one of the group’s volunteers is the CEO. While this refugee’s hard work and demeanor “got him the job,” the volunteer explained how the group “got his foot in the door.” In BAMA, as well, mosque volunteers’ employment connections have provided refugees with job opportunities. The BAMA volunteer explained: “[volunteers] know who has restaurants, and they’re willing to hire this person.” Indeed, private sponsors’ social connections have strengthened this family’s economic independence.

Private sponsors held different opinions on their families’ English proficiency and improvement. The BAMA volunteer explained that families often came with different levels of English. Nonetheless, families whose members have disabilities often “struggle to learn English.” Therefore, these individuals need assistance from BAMA volunteers to accomplish communicative tasks such as scheduling medical appointments or meeting with school teachers. Moreover, in the WHOKE group, the parents of both refugee families have been consistently attending ESL classes. In one of the families, the father is disabled and the mother is illiterate.

Despite these challenges, WOKE volunteers have driven the parents to their bi-weekly English classes. The WOKE volunteer described how ESL acquisition has been difficult, but both parents have substantially improved their English. In the Forward CT group, the volunteer describes how both parents are highly-skilled in English. With volunteer ESL tutors, Forward CT has dedicated substantial time and effort to their refugee families.

Challenges of Private Sponsorship

Despite the successes of their involvement, the private sponsors encountered several challenges in assisting refugees. The BAMA volunteer, for instance, explained how she conflicted with mosque volunteers and leaders over Catholic Charities. She explained how “mosque members do not understand how Catholic Charities’ case-managers’ housing placement and lack of involvement disadvantage their refugee clients. Interestingly, Catholic Charities works closely with the Berlin and Avon mosques to coordinate services and assistance for their refugee families. As a result, she has worked somewhat independently from BAMA to assist refugee families resettled in Hartford.

With WHOKE and Forward CT, both women addressed their groups’ lack of training and coordination. During the first month period, the WHOKE volunteer described how volunteers in her group “went rogue.” Initially, WHOKE decided to introduce its volunteers in a slow process as to not overwhelm the refugee family. One of the volunteers’ acquaintances, however, decided to invite the refugee family to their house. While this visit was well-intentioned, the refugee family had to be driven home after a traumatic experience with the woman’s large dogs. Indeed, the WHOKE volunteer explained how this event could have been avoided with more coordination and patience in the group. Meanwhile, the Forward CT volunteer elaborated how her group “had no training and we kind of just dove in... to do what we thought was right.”

Unlike the IRIS co-sponsorship members, both private sponsorship groups had no background checks, professional oversight or cultural orientation sessions. As we can see, the private sponsorship networks lacked some important resources and mechanisms for assisting refugee families. To some extent, the initial interaction of the private sponsors with the refugee families may have been somewhat distressing. Nonetheless, it is difficult to ignore how the private sponsorship groups' dedication and resources have substantially improved the refugee families' integration.

CHAPTER 4: REFUGEE PERSPECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

In order to have an understanding of the implications of different resettlement models, it is most important to hear the perspectives from those being directly affected- the refugees. How are refugees faring in terms of employment, income, healthcare accessibility, English acquisition, transportation, and social-well being among other integration areas? Too often in policy studies, the voices of those being studied are omitted from research. My goal, therefore, is to connect the refugees' resettlement perspectives to those of case-managers, employees, and volunteers. In the previous sections, CC and IRIS case-managers, employees, and volunteer networks have shaped the discourse surrounding models of refugee resettlement. Besides from the Catholic Charities case-managers, IRIS case-managers and co-sponsors, along with private volunteer networks expressed the benefits of a community-based approach to refugee resettlement. In this section, Hartford-area Syrian refugees will discuss their resettlement experiences and outcomes in relation to economic, linguistic and social integration. Structurally, this interview analysis will be divided by refugees resettled by Catholic Charities and IRIS. In this way, we can assess refugees' perspectives in relation to the case-management model, and private and community sponsorship models.

Catholic Charities Syrian Refugees

Catholic Charities' Syrian refugee families, like their case managers, are a diverse group consisting of different ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, linguistic and educational levels, skillsets, and life experiences. In Syria, the refugee families lived in urban cities such as Damascus, or rural country-side towns and villages. Arriving in 2016 and 2017, the refugees came to the United States after spending two to five years in refugee camps or cities in Jordan and Turkey. Three out of the four families are married couples with young children and/or

teenagers. The other family, consisted of two adult children and their elderly mother. Together, the average adult arrival age was forty-three, but ranged from age twenty-two to seventy-five. Refugees arrived in the United States with a number of technical/professional skillsets ranging from cooking specialty dishes to managing technological data. Linguistically, the four refugee families' English-speaking skills varied. In fact, some of the refugee families were illiterate in Arabic, or spoke other Middle Eastern languages such as Kurdish. Meanwhile, some families arrived with high school education, some understanding of English and even associate degrees. The families' disparate cultural and socioeconomic characteristics upon arrival to the United States shaped their Catholic Charities' resettlement experiences and integration outcomes.

Table 4.1: Catholic Charities Families Interviewed

| Catholic Charities Families |
|--|
| Family 1: Private-Sponsorship (Miriam/RAS and Forward CT) |
| Family 2: Private-Sponsorship (Miriam/RAS and WHOKE) |
| Family 3: No Private Sponsorship (Miriam/RAS) |
| Family 4: No Private-Sponsorship (Miriam/RAS) |

The First Month and Catholic Charities

Together, the four refugee families described their general lack of understanding of American society when they first arrived. Interestingly, some of the refugees described how their pre-arrival perceptions of the United States stemmed from popular movies such as the *Godfather* or the *Terminator*. Consequently, some of the refugees were concerned with the shootings and crimes depicted in American films when they arrived in Connecticut. Once in the United States, however, refugees described having to start everything over “from nothing.” Many of the

refugees described their lack of or limited of English-speaking skills and, therefore, their inability to communicate effectively. Their lack of communication and cultural knowledge limited their ability to advocate for resources from Catholic Charities case-managers. One of the families described how they “signed” a lease, despite the apartments’ unsuitability, because “when you come here you don’t know what to do or the law. So you’re just going to do what they ask for.” With little to no social networks in the United States, refugees had to learn how to navigate life in the City of Hartford.

Overall, the refugees were deeply critical of Catholic Charities’ caseworkers and approach to resettlement in Hartford. Candidly, two of the refugee families told me that their first three months with Catholic Charities were a “bad experience.” When refugees arrived, they were placed into apartments they characterized as “dirty” and infested with vermin. One refugee described her disappointment with these conditions, “They [refugees] can’t live with mice and flies.” Two refugee families expressed that “living in a dirty place” affected their ability to “look ahead” to their future. In addition to vermin, refugees criticized the inability of case-managers to gauge their family’s medical and personal housing needs. For instance, one refugee with major cardiac issues was upset that his case-manager placed his family in a third-floor apartment. In another scenario, two adult siblings (sister and brother) were placed in a small one-bedroom apartment with their elderly, and sickly mother. Consequently, these three adults were unable to arrange comfortable sleeping arrangements for their first three months.

Although refugees were mostly critical of their housing arrangements, they were also disappointed in their case-managers’ lack of welcoming and approachability. When refugees first arrived to the apartment, there was a lack of furnishing, culturally appropriate food items, or in one case, even heating in the middle of January. Again, this is a basic federal requirement for

resettlement volags.⁸⁸ To fulfill these components, case-managers eagerly took refugees' welcome money to buy food items, furniture and even a \$80 blanket to "keep warm" in the refugees' unheated apartment.

In terms of responsibilities, refugees described how case-managers assisted with their social service enrollment (i.e. food stamps, SNAP, Husky), social security registration, and children's school enrollment. Nonetheless, refugees emphasized that Catholic Charities "did what they had to do" because they were legally obligated to do so. When it came to assisting refugees with daily tasks, case-managers were often busy, hands-off or ineffectual with their clients. To elaborate this point, one refugee recalled phoning his case-manager for a ride to his doctor's appointment. In response, the case-manager told the refugee to "take the bus" and joined him in doing so. Eventually, however, both the case-manager and refugee got lost and had to walk two-miles in the August heat to reach the Doctor's office. Recovering from recent heart surgery, the refugee emphasized the hypocrisy in risking his own health in travelling to his medical appointment. While this case-manager seemed to be promoting refugee self-sufficiency, his method in doing so was convoluted and tedious. One refugee individual described this case-manager approach as "the blind leading the blind," which he argued "set his family back," not forward, in their acculturation.

Private Sponsorship and Integration Outcomes

Given case-managers' limited assistance, many refugee families were left in precarious economic positions after Catholic Charities' three-month resettlement period elapsed. In fact, many families lost welcome money through Catholic Charities' security deposits for unsuitable

⁸⁸ "Planning of Refugees' Arrival in the United States." *U.S. Department of State: The Reception and Placement Program*. <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/ra/receptionplacement/>.

apartments. Although some of the refugees had employment, the jobs paid minimum wage in restaurants and clothing factories. One refugee stated: “They [refugees] were working in the restaurant. They have families, children. Restaurants do not give too much in dollars.” Dealing with the demands of their jobs, many of the refugees attended adult ESL classes, but were limited from focusing on English due to the family’s immediate economic needs. Despite these struggles, the refugee families were quite resourceful and looked for ways to advocate on behalf of their positions.

For all the families, Miriam became the refugees’ main source of contact during their first months in the United States. The families described getting in contact with Miriam by meeting other Syrian refugee families in the Greater Hartford area. For instance, one individual stated: “We met other families who came as refugees here and they had communication with other people like Miriam.” While Miriam was a common contact, her level of involvement varied for each refugee family. In two out of the four families, Miriam assisted the refugees in relocating to West Hartford. In the other two families, Miriam encouraged housing relocation, but was not directly involved with moving the families. The refugees explained how Miriam told them their rights, and denounced Catholic Charities’ resettlement practices. In addition to relocation, Miriam assisted them by bringing refugees to appointments, jobs, and children’s events. Although Miriam is a common variable across all four families, only half received further assistance from private sponsorship groups. This inequity of private sponsorship coupled with the family’s socioeconomic background, directly influenced their integration outcomes.

Table 4.2: Catholic Charities, Private Sponsorship, and Refugee Integration Outcomes

| | Pre-Arrival | Private-Sponsorship | Social Capital | Employment | English* |
|-----------------|--------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Family 1 | Jordan (Arabic) | RAS (Miriam) Forward CT | Volunteers provided refugee father with employment contacts. | Husband/Father: Factory Worker. Wife/Mother: Homemaker. | Proficient English; Charter Oak Classes and private tutoring |
| Family 2 | Jordan (Arabic) | RAS (Miriam) WHOKE | Transportation networks to attend Literacy Volunteers ESL classes in Hartford. Employment networks for teenage son. | Both parents not working. Son: Working at Middle Eastern restaurant | Basic English; ESL classes at Literacy Volunteers Network (LNW). |
| Family 3 | Jordan (Arabic) | RAS (Miriam) | Miriam assisted family in relocating to West Hartford. | Brother: Data technician Sister: In-home hospice care. Mother: Not working. | Advanced English Adult ESL Classes |
| Family 4 | Turkey (Kurdish) | Some limited assistance from RAS (Miriam) | Very little social capital. Initial transportation networks. | Both parents not working. (Wife/Mother did work in textile factory). | Basic English Adult ESL Classes |

**For ESL, I only focused on adult language acquisition. Most of the children spoke English fluently.*

Families with Private Sponsorship

In addition to RAS, Refugee Family 2 received assistance from WHOKE, a West Hartford women’s group, and the other received assistance from Forward CT. The father described how WHOKE volunteers assisted in “getting the family out of Hartford” and into West Hartford for the schools. WHOKE volunteers also assisted the family’s teenage children with their homework and provided the man and his wife rides to the store, appointments and ESL classes. In terms of employment, the father had physical disabilities, and the wife held no work experience in Syria. Therefore, both parents were not working, and their teenage son currently holds a part-time job at Miriam’s Middle Eastern restaurant. Additionally, the refugees received some financial assistance from RAS and WHOKE given their lack of income and rental expenses in West Hartford.

Even two years after their arrival, this family continues to receive considerable assistance from WHOKE volunteers. With ESL and school work, the teenage children received substantial support from WHOKE volunteers. In fact, when I conducted the interview, one of the children

was working on Algebra homework with a WHOKE volunteer. Given the family's lack of transportation, volunteers also drive the parents to a specialty English class in Hartford, which is about thirty to twenty minutes away from the family's residence.

Since relocating to West Hartford, the family explained how they have become more involved in their community. Specifically, the children have become very involved with West Hartford's Hall High School and their friends. For instance, the children frequently meet with their friends to play soccer, attend school events, and "hang-out" in the West Hartford center. The family has also become friendly with other West Hartford Syrian families by caring for each other's kids, cooking together, and celebrating different holidays and events.

Indeed, Refugee Family 2's connection with RAS and WHOKE, has provided them with economic and ESL/educational opportunities that were not available through Catholic Charities, or in Hartford. In a better school system, both children plan on attending college to "assist their family in the future." Furthermore, the parents attribute much of their children's success to the school system and volunteers' commitment in their academics. While both parents are not highly-educated, their bi-weekly transportation to their Hartford ESL class has allowed them to improve their English speaking skills. The private volunteer's initial financial investment in the family, also allowed the family to move to West Hartford. Furthermore, the teenage son's job, provided via Miriam, has allowed the family to receive additional income. Certainly, much of this success is also contingent on the family's disposition and perseverance in adjusting to their arrival challenges. That being said, RAS and WHOKE's social capital and economic resources have further facilitated the family's success and integration.

Similar to WHOKE, Forward CT and RAS provided Refugee Family 1 with assistance relocating to West Hartford. Interestingly, this family explained how there were very few Syrian

refugee families in Hartford “because everybody moved.” While it has been two years since the family moved to West Hartford, Forward CT volunteers are still frequently in contact. For instance, the refugee mother explains how private volunteers recently took their sick son to Emergency Care. Meanwhile, the refugee father explained how Forward CT assisted him in receiving his current factory job, which has “better hours, benefits and pay” than his previous restaurant work. Furthermore, the refugee father was able to recruit other Syrian “friends” and provide them with better work for their families. Currently, he explains there are four Syrian refugees, including himself, working in this factory.

Although the wife is not working, she has been improving her English with Forward CT volunteers. Initially, she elaborated about how she regularly attended adult ESL classes, which “were not very good” through Charter Oak. When I asked her why, she explained that the classes only provided basic English instruction for beginner speakers. In other words, she received the same lessons of “What’s your name? How are you?” over and over again despite her improvement. With the private tutoring, however, the wife explained how the volunteers adapt to her improvement and included conversational activities in their lessons. Overall, she explains, this has been better for improving her English-speaking skills and communicative abilities.

In addition to employment and ESL, the family has become quite socially active in West Hartford. On a regular basis, the family attends their children’s school and extracurricular events such as teacher meetings, soccer games and swimming lessons. The family also attends mosque in Hartford and Avon, where they have become better acquainted with other Syrians in the area. Furthermore, the wife explained how she meets with other West Hartford Syrian women to watch their children. Recently, both parents also obtained their driver’s licenses and hope to travel more in Connecticut.

As we can see, Refugee Family 1's relationship with RAS and Forward CT has greatly facilitated their economic, linguistic and social integration. With the assistance of Forward CT, the father obtained employment with better benefits, hours and pay than his restaurant job provided by Catholic Charities. His position at this factory also allowed him to provide other Syrian refugees with this job, thus widening Forward CT's initial job placement. In terms of ESL, the wife has received substantial in-home private tutoring allowing her to rapidly improve her English. If she had continued receiving "basic instruction" from Charter Oak, her ESL progression may have stalled. In West Hartford, the family has been thriving and becoming more involved in their community through school events, religious congregation, and social interaction with other Syrian families. In the future, the parents have even considered opening a "small business" such as a gas station, grocery store, or food restaurant. Indeed, the family attributes its success and adaption to American society largely to Forward CT's post-resettlement assistance. The father stated, "Before we knew them [Forward CT], we have idea in our minds, American not as friendly, but not after we have that friendship with them."

Families With Limited Private Sponsorship

Despite the successes of Refugee Families 1 and 2, not all of the families receive this level of private assistance. The other two families I interviewed, Refugee Family 3 and 4, received some initial assistance from RAS/Miriam, but were largely left on their own to acculturate and adapt to the United States. Therefore, the refugees' socioeconomic skillsets and background were almost direct indicators of their integration outcomes. Refugee Family 3, a three-person family (two adult siblings and their mother), received assistance from Miriam in relocating to West Hartford from their one-bedroom Hartford apartment. Interestingly, the brother was highly-educated and works as a data technician in Connecticut, which was the same

job he held in Syria. Meanwhile, Miriam assisted the sister in obtaining an in-home hospice job assisting their elderly mother. Instead of hiring outside care-givers, the sister receives competitive income and benefits for taking care of their mother. Indeed, the siblings' level of employment are indicative of the family's higher socioeconomic status and educational/professional background. Therefore, both adult children, who are highly-educated, have been able to care for their mother, save their money and relocate (on their own) to a housing duplex in Newington.

In addition to employment, both siblings have rigorously worked to improve their English. The brother attended the same specialty Hartford ESL class as Family 2, but went about three to four times a week after work. With a car, he could attend as frequently as he pleased without relying on transportation from Miriam or private volunteers. After four months of ESL classes, he moved onto the advanced level. He explains, "Everyone was surprised when we came there that we have good English, and there were people that were American, with citizenship, and they didn't speak perfect English." Given the family's educational and socioeconomic background, they learned English quickly. In terms of social involvement and activities, the siblings are somewhat limited because of their mother, but the family is involved in "typical" weekend activities. For instance, on Friday, they attend mosque and on Saturday and Sunday they go shopping, eat at restaurants, and relax after working all week.

Compared to the other three families (even with private sponsorship), Family 3's socioeconomic background and composition is somewhat of an anomaly. Both siblings are unmarried and without children, so they can work full-time in high-level jobs to save their money. While they must care for their mother, the sister is compensated for doing so. Evidently, the son's higher education in Syria has allowed him to obtain a high-salary job and learn English

at a rapid pace. Although the family received initial assistance from Miriam in relocating to West Hartford, they have been largely independent since moving. Interestingly, the refugees' economic independence has influenced their perceptions of refugee identity. The brother told me, "We're just called refugees, but in real-life we're just like Americans...we work and pay taxes and live like other Americans." While this family has impressive integration outcomes, their success is not indicative of all refugee families without private assistance.

Refugee Family 4, unlike the other three families, still remains in their initial Hartford apartment. Interestingly, this Syrian family is Kurdish, therefore, their Arabic-speaking abilities are limited. While Miriam is in contact with the family, she did not assist in moving them to West Hartford. The father explained, "Not a lot of people helped us even though the people say that this is an unsafe area." Although Miriam assisted the family with transportation and other services, their last contact with her was over six months ago. In terms of employment, both parents are not working and rely on "the SNAP program and cash and food stamps." The father, is disabled and unable to work, and the mother is taking care of their year-old baby. While the mother initially worked in a Bloomfield clothing factory, the lack of affordable daycare has complicated her employment. The three older children, who attend Hartford public and magnet schools, are also not working.

As of now, their Catholic Charities case-manager is no longer providing direct care, but the father receives some health assistance from the organization. That being said, he explains how he receives very few updates from Catholic Charities and must take care of his own health. Specifically, he states, "If I wait for Catholic Charities to do everything for me, I will never move on." Therefore, the father makes frequent visits to Catholic Charities, which is a ten-minute walk from their apartment, to remind case-workers they are "still there." Linguistically,

the mother and father have been attending some adult ESL classes with childcare. The parents characterized the classes as helpful even though the English instructors do not have teaching certifications. The children, who attend school in Hartford, have quickly improved their English and sometimes assist their parents in translation. With the family's new car, they have been able to move around the area with ease. That being said, there are very few Syrian refugees in the Hartford area to connect with. The father states, "Around here there's no Syrian refugees, like a few years ago or a few months ago, there were some families but they all moved to West Hartford." The family knows other Kurdish families in Hartford, but they have not recently-arrived to the United States. In Hartford, the family are members of the Bosnian-American Islamic Cultural Center where they regularly attend mosque. On the weekends, the children do homework and the family goes shopping and spends time together.

Family 4, unlike the other three families, still faces substantial economic challenges. Dealing with disability and a newborn child, both parents have been unable to generate substantial income. In comparison to other Syrian families, the father states, "A lot of people get more help than my family...A lot of people are having a good life and we still need more help." Indeed, the family's private assistance has been very limited compared to Family 2, for instance, who also has two disabled/unemployed parents. Facing this inequity, both parents discussed how "the same people are getting more and more, so now other people [refugees] need to get the help." This theme of redistribution is important because it magnifies families' "randomized" yet completely unfair resettlement assignment. Why is it that some families receive more assistance from WHOKE, Miriam or Forward CT? Certainly, the existence of these refugee assistance networks are commendable; however, there are still refugee families who are struggling. Indeed, resettlement disparities and social capital play an essential role in refugee acculturation.

Refugee Criticisms of U.S. Refugee Resettlement

Based upon their resettlement experiences, the four Catholic Charities refugee families' expressed different opinions about the United States Refugee Resettlement Program (USRP). Interestingly, three out of four of the families referenced European models of resettlement when describing the United States' model. In fact, most of the families' had familial or personal connections to Syrian refugees in Europe or Canada. Refugee Family 1 and 3 expressed discontent with European countries' model of refugee incorporation. In countries such as Germany or Norway, refugees are subsidized by the government and learn English for a year, prior to employment. One individual from Refugee Family 1 explains, "Like they have to learn German if they want to work, but at the same time you won't be independent." Furthermore, in Refugee Family 3, one individual explained: "Middle Easterners like to be free" and in Europe "they just feed you and give you money with nothing to look forward to." The same individual explained that when he came "he didn't want to be dependent on DSS" and sought a full-time job for independence. It is important to consider that Family 1 and 3 are fairly self-sufficient in terms of employment, income and social services.

On the other hand, Family 4, who still lives in Hartford, argues that the United States should be re-modeled after Europe and Canada's Refugee Resettlement Program. Specifically, the father states, "It's [Canada and Europe] much better than here, and the families get more help." Instead of learning the host-country culture, the father explains how in the United States refugees must juggle work and learning English at the same time. It seems, therefore, that refugees' socioeconomic background and level of economic self-sufficiency in the United States appear to influence views of varying resettlement models.

In addition to referencing European/Canadian models of resettlement, some of the refugees mentioned their appreciation of America's multi-cultural identity. In the United States, compared to Jordan, Syrian refugees described how they were not as singled out for their status. Because of the United States' history of immigration and diversity, refugees do not feel their differences are as apparent. Nonetheless, in places like Europe, some refugees explain how they are more noticeable where everyone is a "typical German." One refugee individual, in Family 2, explained how in his experience, his mother and sister wearing a hijab does not affect their treatment. While he emphasizes that "racism exists in all the world," his family has felt welcomed in Connecticut. Surely, these perceptions may not be applicable to other parts of the United States or even Connecticut, however, some of the refugees describe how racial discrimination has not been an issue.

In terms of improving USRP, refugees were in less consensus. While the refugees agreed that Catholic Charities needs improvement, many were at odds about how much federal money and welfare resources refugees should receive. While Refugee Family 3 received relocation assistance from Miriam, they explained how "money was less important than psychological support" in the first month. Meanwhile, Refugee Family 1 conveyed the difficulty in balancing "making more money" while losing social service benefits. For Refugee Families 2 and 4, individuals expressed how welfare benefits and cash assistance has allowed their "family to survive" given their employment challenges.

In addition, families referenced specific concerns with the USRP based off their own experiences. For instance, an individual from Refugee Family 3 described how the United States' should make the green card process more transparent. In Jordan, he explains how his family faced the uncertainty of being "illegal," and in the United States they just wanted to know they

could stay. Meanwhile in Refugee Family 1, the father argued that the United States should provide refugees more job training to prepare them for employment. Interestingly, he explains that for his factory position, he had to learn the U.S. Metric System, and had not been prepared for this aspect of employment. Together, refugees had many nuanced criticisms of the USRP, which seemed to resonate with their individual experiences. While the families were in general agreement that the U.S. should “do more” for refugees, their policy recommendations addressed many different areas of integration.

IRIS Syrian Refugee Families

Compared to the Catholic Charities families, the IRIS refugee families’ resettlement experiences greatly differed in relation to community support and integration outcomes. Like the Catholic Charities families, however, the IRIS refugee families differed socioeconomically, linguistically and educationally. Between 2016 and 2017, all of the IRIS refugee families arrived after spending several years in Jordan. In addition, all three families were married and had young or teenage children. Together, the average adult arrival age was thirty-two ranging from age twenty-two to forty-one. The IRIS refugee families arrived in the United States with professional experience in manufacturing, restaurant management and education (among other areas). Unlike the Catholic Charities families, the adult IRIS refugees had no major health impediments or disabilities which compromised their workforce participation. Women’s employment varied by family with some wives managing their households, creating small business or working in professional daycare centers. Linguistically, all four of the refugee families arrived with little to no English-speaking skills. Moreover, the families’ educational background ranged from basic schooling, high school diplomas and even college/associate degrees. The IRIS families’ co-

sponsorship groups were composed of West Hartford and Manchester Christian and Jewish congregations.

Table 4.3: IRIS Co-Sponsored Refugee Families

| |
|---|
| <p>IRIS Co-Sponsored Refugee Families</p> <p>Saint James/ John Episcopal Church, West Hartford</p> <p>Family 1</p> <p>Unitarian Universalist Church, Manchester</p> <p>Family 2</p> <p>Beth Al Temple and Westminster Presbyterian, West Hartford</p> <p>Family 3</p> |
|---|

The First Month and IRIS

When the IRIS families arrived in the United States, they described how “they didn’t know anything when they arrived” including the English language, U.S. law, and American culture. For some families, this lack of knowledge coupled with the unpredictability of their future was emotionally distressing. The wife of Family 3 stated: “When we come in the car it was very hard. Me, my husband, everyone was crying.” Nonetheless, the refugee families emphasized how their co-sponsorship groups’ welcoming and support facilitated their transition. All of the refugee families arrived to a readily-prepared apartment and fully-stocked refrigerator with culturally appropriate food items. The parents of Family 2 also marveled at how the co-sponsorship group had provided each of their children with their own bed, space and toys. Together, all of the IRIS families’ described their first few months as “busy” with many co-sponsor volunteers checking in, assisting with social services, and providing English lessons.

Furthermore, the volunteers each assisted the family in a “specific way” by “helping the children with homework, searching for apartments, or finding jobs.” Despite these volunteer structures, refugees explained how they could rely on any member of their co-sponsorship group for assistance. Additionally, this assistance did not cease after the first three months (Catholic Charities’ contractual obligation), but gradually decreased as refugees’ became more economically self-sufficient. Past their first year in the United States, two out of the three IRIS families were still in consistent contact with their co-sponsorship group. In fact, the wife of Family 1 stated how “nothing has changed” and she still has contact with many of the volunteers’ in her co-sponsorship group. In the past week, she explained how volunteers had taken her children to the movies and ice-skating to celebrate their school’s winter break.

While the refugees’ co-sponsorship relationship was helpful, there were some misunderstandings between volunteers and the families. In Family 2, for instance, the wife explained: “The group which they had was well-meaning, but they didn’t understand things about culture shock and where we were coming from.” In this co-sponsorship group, the refugee parents explained how the volunteers’ decisions and approaches were sometimes one-sided. Similarly, parents in Family 1 elaborated how their group’s volunteers could have been more receptive to their goal in opening a small-business. The parents of Family 2 also explained how the group treated their volunteering as a “job” which depersonalized their resettlement experiences. Facing a number of external challenges, Family 2 began heavily relying on Miriam for emotional support during their first year. Overall, however, the refugee families were greatly appreciative for their co-sponsorship group’s dedication, financial support and assistance during their first month in the United States until present.

Interestingly, most of the IRIS refugees were generally unaware of IRIS' role in their resettlement. The wife from Family 1 exclaimed: "I don't really know what IRIS did for us...people helped us, not the organization." Compared to the Catholic Charities families, IRIS families were less familiar with the role of the organization given their lack of interaction with its caseworkers. Indeed, the majority of the caseworkers' resettlement tasks (i.e. obtaining social security cards, Husky Medicaid) were allocated to the co-sponsorship members. Additionally, the refugee families emphasized how they had very little contact with IRIS because of their towns' distance from its New Haven headquarters. Because of Family 2's particular circumstances, however, they were more involved with IRIS officials in relocating their housing. Initially, IRIS officials wanted to relocate the family to New Haven in close proximity to some of their relatives. Both parents, however, were extremely upset with the location and conditions of their apartment. They even stated: "We wanted to go back to Jordan rather than live like that." Furthermore, when Miriam intervened in the family's housing, conflict ensued with one of IRIS' caseworkers. Ultimately, the family relocated to West Hartford, but Miriam and the family's disagreement with IRIS complicated this process. Despite this one incident, families were generally detached or uninvolved with IRIS.

Co-Sponsorship Integration Outcomes

Table 4.4: Co-Sponsorship, Social Capital and Integration Outcomes

| | Pre-Arrival | Community and Private-Sponsorship | Social Capital | Employment | English* |
|-----------------|-------------|--|---|---|--|
| Family 1 | Jordan | Saint James/Saint John’s Episcopal Church | Volunteers provided employment connections for father’s current job. | Husband/Father: West Hartford Factory worker Wife/Mother: Homemaker. Did work at a daycare. | Proficient English; Charter Oak Classes and private tutoring |
| Family 2 | Jordan | Manchester Unitarian Universalist Miriam/RAS | Volunteers provided employment connections for both the mother and father’s current jobs. | Husband/Father: Janitorial work at West Hartford private school. Wife/Mother: Artist and catering/cooking business | Proficient English; Literacy Volunteers Network |
| Family 3 | Jordan | Beth Al Temple and | Volunteers provided the family with a new car and assisted in placing mother in advanced ESL classes. | Brother: Factory worker Mother: Homemaker. | Advanced English Adult ESL Classes |

**For English acquisition, I only focused on the adults because the children were fluent.*

While two of the Catholic Charities refugee families received outside support from private sponsorship groups (WHOKE and Forward CT), the IRIS families received assistance mostly from their co-sponsorship groups. In fact, two out of the three families received assistance with jobs and ESL solely within their co-sponsorship group. The other family received initial support from their Manchester co-sponsorship group, but now receives periodic assistance from Miriam. Nonetheless, all three co-sponsorship groups provided the refugee families rent money, donated cars, and funds to pay some of their bills and airfare expenses. In relation to employment, all three families expressed their content with their current jobs. Currently, the husbands of Family 1 and 3 hold manufacturing roles in two factories in West Hartford and Meriden. At the factories, both men receive “good pay and hours” which allow them to sustain their families. Interestingly, the husband from Family 1 explained how his work in the United States is much easier and more structured than in Syria. Previously, however, both men had worked in restaurant jobs, which were arranged through their co-sponsorship group. While the

men were grateful for their initial employment, the husband from Family 1 explained how working at a pizzeria did not “offer benefits” or match his professional background in Syria. Consequently, he reached out to members of his co-sponsorship for manufacturing job opportunities, one of which is his current job. In searching for their second jobs (in the factory), the husband from Family 3 tapped into their own resources and social capital. Specifically, he networked with his Syrian friend who received a factory job from the Forward CT private-sponsorship group. Through this connection, he obtained his current employment. In Family 2, the co-sponsorship group provided the husband his current position as a maintenance employee at a private school in West Hartford.

In two out of the three IRIS families, the wives held employment in childcare, cooking, and art. The wife from Family 1, while currently unemployed, worked in a daycare center when she first arrived in the United States. Furthermore, she explained how her co-sponsorship group assisted her in finding this job which matched her early childcare certification and credentials in Syria. In Family 3, the wife explained how she started her own Syrian food business outside Hartford Hospital, which operates once a week in warm weather. In addition to cooking, the wife is an artist who sells her charcoal works at local art shows. In all of the shows, she explains how her work “sells out” from all of her buyers. Unable to finish her high school education, the wife in Family 3 explained how she wanted to work like other “American women” and use her artistic skills, an area of school she had excelled in. With assistance from the family’s co-sponsorship group and Miriam, she has “made a name” for herself in the Connecticut art scene. As we can see, the co-sponsorship groups have bolstered refugees’ economic integration through financial support, professional experiences, and job networks.

Linguistically, the refugees' English improvement opportunities have varied by family. Across all three families, the husbands have mainly learned English in their workplace, not in a classroom setting. The husband in Family 1 states: "I learn English because I go to work. I have more practicing." In Family 1 and 3, both wives have in-depth ESL support and opportunities via local classes and private tutoring. In Family 1, the wife had in-home English lessons multiple times a week with tutors in the co-sponsorship group. Similar to the Catholic Charities families, she explained how private English tutoring has been more helpful because local ESL classes only emphasize the "basics." She also elaborated how her children have taught her a lot of English through their school activities and homework. In Family 3, on the other hand, the wife has been highly involved in ESL classes offered through Charter Oak, a local West Hartford school. Recently, she completed Charter Oak's highest English level class, and is planning to advance her English studies at Literacy Volunteers in Hartford. In addition, she explained how Literacy Volunteers provides daycare, and that she will be able to attend more frequently with her youngest child. In the future, she stated how she plans to pursue a GED and continue her education. Conversely, in Family 2, the wife has had less opportunity to pursue English because of her young children and familial commitments. Initially, she received English tutoring from co-sponsorship volunteers, but the Manchester group has largely detached due to the family's relocation to West Hartford. Despite her lack of formal lessons, she keeps a notebook where she writes and memorizes English words, phrases and verbs. During the day, she also spends times listening to "the radio, music and television" to improve her English comprehension and speaking abilities. With the exception of the wife of Family 2, the IRIS women have had many opportunities to practice and improve their English private tutoring and adult ESL classes.

Socially, all three IRIS families have become very involved in their communities. Similar to the Catholic Charities families, the refugees' discussed how they attended mosque, go to restaurants, relax, and meet with their Syrian friends on weekends. All the families, who have young or teenage children, attend their kids' school events, teacher meetings and activities. The wife of Family 2 even told me how her daughter's teacher called to tell her what an excellent student she is. The IRIS families, in particular, emphasized the interconnectedness of the Syrian refugee community in the greater Hartford area. For example, while interviewing Family 3, the parents told me how "tired they were" after attending a gathering at Family 1's house the night beforehand. In addition, the wife of Family 3 explained how her children interacted with many of the other Syrian children in West Hartford. Many of the Syrian refugee women are also very close and attend English classes together, watch each others' children and go out for coffee. The parents of Family 3 explained how in the beginning "they knew no one" and how now they have many friends through mosque, work and school. Indeed, car transportation and driver's licenses have been especially important for the social involvement of the Syrian families. In two of the three families, refugees received donated and fully-paid for vehicles from their co-sponsorship groups. In addition, they practiced driving in co-sponsors' cars to prepare for their license driving test. The generosity of these donations have enabled refugees to facilitate their family's transportation within West Hartford and surrounding towns.

Overall, the level of social connection, resources and expertise in the co-sponsorship group has facilitated IRIS refugees' integration into American society. All of the refugee families, even Family 2, emphasized how their group's assistance, generosity and kindness has positively impacted their acculturation. The wife in Refugee 3 broadly stated: "Now everything is easy." While the refugees certainly face daily challenges, the resourcefulness of the co-

sponsorship's volunteers has provided the families with mechanisms to overcome their financial, linguistic and personal obstacles. In Family 1, the husband described how he "could call anyone" and they would help his family. This level of trust, relationship-building and psycho-social support has further impacted refugees' perceptions of the United States Refugee Resettlement Program (USRP).

Refugee Criticisms of U.S Refugee Resettlement

Compared to the Catholic Charities families, the IRIS families had very few, if any complaints of the United States Refugee Resettlement Program (USRP). The husband of Refugee Family 3, for instance, stated:

"I think the school is good, the people, I don't see any problem. I live in the city of Jordan, I listen to a lot of the people, a lot of the people say they [the United States] don't like Arabic, Muslim, I come here I don't see this. I see a lot of people they help me."

All of the refugees underlined how grateful they were for the people and U.S. institutions who helped them in their resettlement. Similar to the comment above, most of the refugees emphasized how Americans were very welcoming and accepting of their families. The wife in Family 2 stated: "I wear hijab. I look different. Everyone smiles." Interestingly, two of the three refugee families explained how in the United States they were not marginalized as "refugees" like in Jordan, but were treated as Americans. In these interviews, the refugees praised the heterogeneity of American society compared to Europe. In France, for instance, the husband of Family 3, relayed how his brother's family felt discriminated against on a daily basis: "Some people don't like Muslims there." Although all the refugee families were appreciative of USRP, they addressed how President Trump's national policies have affected their family reunification. In Family 1, the wife discussed how her family and new-born nieces were still in Syria. Consequently, her family's separation from their Syrian relatives has been very emotionally

distressing. Despite the gravity of these situations, the refugees spent very little time discussing President Trump's travel bans and executive order.

Economically, the parents in Family 1 were critical of the United States' labor system, which underpays blue-collar, refugee workers. The wife explained: "Here, because you're a refugee, they give you less than you deserve." For this family, it has been difficult to pay rent, utility bills and expenses on a \$14/hour wage. Furthermore, she explained how her husband had been working in a factory since he was 9-years-old and should be better compensated for his experience. In Family 2, the wife also explained how she frequently worried about providing for the family with the parents' low-income. Both parents in Family 1 also emphasized how refugees "want to work...they don't want to take SNAP, they want to be more effective in their community." Therefore, the "United States or IRIS" should be more supporting of refugees in opening small businesses. In the future, the parents explained how they wanted to open a Syrian/Arabic food restaurant and grocery. In comparison to European countries like Germany, the wife explained how the United States' would be less committed in assisting them with this goal. While the family acknowledged the weaknesses of the U.S. labor sector, they were appreciative of their financial independence in the United States compared to Jordan. For instance, the husband explained how he worked "more than twelve hours a day in Jordan and couldn't spend time with his children." The wife also explained how she made only about \$100 USD a month for working in a salon. Taken together, the IRIS families' opinions of USRP were less critical than those of Catholic Charities. Economically, some of the IRIS families addressed the hardships of poverty and in starting business endeavors. Despite these obstacles, the IRIS families greatly asserted the effectiveness of the United States in their resettlement experience.

Clearly, the experiences, outcomes and opinions of Syrian refugees resettled by CC and IRIS greatly differ. CC refugees expressed the hardship of their first months, and lack of assistance from their case-managers. With the assistance of Miriam, and private-sponsorship groups, two of the CC families expressed how they were able to “move out” of Hartford and pursue a better life. Meanwhile, one of the CC families described how their lack of assistance, and volunteer networking, impeded their ability to access resources to improve their integration. Meanwhile, the IRIS families expressed their appreciation, and gratitude for the level of assistance they received in their first months. Consequently, the perspectives of IRIS refugees, and CC refugees with private sponsorship, related to employment, language acquisition, and social integration were generally more positive. Together, however, the CC and IRIS refugees outlined how the effectiveness of their resettlement did not lie in agencies, but in people, and their connections. In the words of the mother from CC Family 2, “Refugee resettlement requires a village.”

Conclusion

Since the 1970s and 1980s, voluntary religious organizations have been largely resettling refugees in cities across the United States. The United States Refugee Resettlement Program's main goals are refugee economic and linguistic integration, and consequently, self-sufficiency and independence in American society. To achieve these goals, most volag case-managers assist refugees for about three months, and expect them to learn the English-language, attain well-paying employment non-reliant on public benefits. While some refugees arrive to the United States with advanced degrees, English proficiency and professional expertise, this is certainly not applicable to all refugees. In fact, there is no "single refugee experience" as USRP would have us believe, but a range of experiences impacted by refugees' pre-arrival trauma and legal status, educational/linguistic level, familial composition, professional roles, and characteristics such as race, age, gender, sexual orientation and religion. In addition to refugees' individualistic characteristics, community involvement, sponsorship, and volunteering in their resettlement varies by municipality. Nonetheless, policy-makers and academics alike have largely ignored the refugee resettlement system from within, and how state and local volags, communities and grassroots coalitions assist newly-arriving Americans. Although we have been welcoming refugees under USRP for nearly forty years, policy-makers do not understand how different models of resettlement affects refugee outcomes.

In this thesis, I explored how community-driven approaches to refugee resettlement provide refugees with additional social capital compared to tradition case-management structures. Specifically, I analyzed how IRIS, a co-sponsorship organization versus Catholic Charities, a traditional case-management volag resettles and assists refugees with their economic, linguistic and social integration. While most refugee integration literature focuses on refugee

economic and linguistic integration, it does not assess the role of social connection in providing refugees' jobs, housing, financial assistance, and ESL and educational opportunities. Case-management resettlement, which relies on a single case-workers' ability to provide refugees with all of these integration resources within three-months, is less focused on bridging social connections. In contrast, my interview data suggests that the co-sponsorship model and private volunteering networks greatly improve refugees' *access* to better-paying jobs, ESL classes and tutoring, housing and educational systems. Despite the co-sponsorship model's success in refugee integration, it does not address inequities of refugee resettlement and municipal segregation in Connecticut. Policy-makers and refugee stakeholders, therefore, must create mechanisms which equalize the "playing field" of refugee resettlement.

Social Capital, Models of Resettlement, and Refugee Integration

Economic Integration

According to prominent academic literature, community-involvement positively affects refugee economic integration (Breslow et al 2017, Fratzke 2017, Ives et al 2010). In fact, Canadian data on refugee economic outcomes specifically shows that privately-sponsored refugees find employment more quickly, receive more income from work, and are less likely to use public benefits (Fratzke 2017). These benefits have been attributed to the fact that privately sponsored refugees receive a level of personalized attention that government-supported refugees do not. While the United States does not have a national private sponsorship program, refugees in this study certainly received access to better employment opportunities in IRIS co-sponsorship groups or private volunteer networks such as WOKE, RAS or Forward CT. In fact, all of the refugees' in the co-sponsorship groups, and several in the RAS and Forward CT attained employment opportunities via volunteer connections. Volunteers provided refugees with contact

information, interviews and opportunities to access better employment, benefits and income for their families.

In addition to employment, co-sponsorship and private volunteers assisted refugees with navigating the social service sector and welfare benefits. Routinely, volunteers advocated to the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) to reassess their families' financial situations and welfare eligibility. Past the case-management's traditional three-month period, community and privately sponsored refugees also received financial subsidization for rent, energy assistance and other household expenses. In fact, IRIS required groups to raise \$4,000-\$7,000 for up to six months of rental assistance in addition to refugees' federally allotted reception and placement money. This financial safety-net allowed refugees to work and save their money to pay for future purchases such as cars or better housing. Volunteers also described how they assisted refugees with their financial literacy and budgeting. To promote self-sufficiency and economic independence, many groups encouraged refugees to keep track of their housing costs, utilities, childcare, phone and Internet service, food bills, insurance and other expenses. While Catholic Charities case-managers assisted refugees with jobs, they were less focused on refugees' mobility within these jobs as opposed to their basic level of income. Catholic Charities' provided refugees with their federally allotted funds and welcome money to finance their expenses, but disbanded when funds ran dry.

Linguistic Integration

While less research focuses on community involvement and English acquisition, this study's community and private sponsorship groups provided refugees with flexible options, including adult classes and private volunteering. Several refugees enrolled in adult-ESL classes, while others opted for private tutoring because of its more individualistic approach. Private

tutoring allowed refugees to stay-at-home and be taught English in accordance to their own pace, schedule and goals. Given these groups' large volunteer-bases, scheduling daily private English lessons was more feasible. The refugees who enrolled in adult ESL classes were also transported during the first year by volunteers. Indeed, volunteers' time, dedication and transportation made teaching and bringing refugees to ESL classes more feasible. Although Catholic Charities promoted refugee ESL, refugees were required to "take their own initiative" in studying and learning the English. In fact, IRIS' case-management sector also emphasized how refugees were urged to take a job over learning English. Catholic Charities, and to some extent IRIS' "do it yourself" case-management approach, may reflect USRP's strict federal guidelines and time restrictions for volag organizations. In terms of formal English acquisition, as opposed to ESL accessibility, it is difficult to assess how models of resettlement affected refugee's ESL improvement due to families' differing socioeconomic and educational levels. Compared to Catholic Charities Family 4, who had no private sponsorship, it seems that families with co-sponsorship had more ESL options. It is likely that this accessibility to ESL options, to some extent, may affect, English learning and proficiency.

Refugee Resettlement Is Not An Equal Playing Field

In addition to economic and linguistic integration, community and private sponsorship groups provided refugees with a number of resources to facilitate their acculturation in the United States. Namely, these groups resettled refugees in the West Hartford area either initially or after relocating them from Hartford. IRIS employees, refugees and volunteers alike emphasized how the West Hartford's school system and public amenities, compared to Hartford, allowed refugees to thrive. Indeed, disparities of resources between West Hartford and Hartford have a long, racialized history of educational segregation, redlining, "white flight" and

discriminatory real estate practices. Consequently, Hartford's population is much smaller and is composed of a larger, much poorer minority-population than West Hartford. Resettled in Hartford by Catholic Charities, Syrian refugees encountered urban poverty and institutionalized racism head-on in their first-month of resettlement. Many of the refugees and volunteers alike emphasized how refugees' homes in Syria and Jordan were better than the "mice and vermin-infested" apartments in Hartford. They also emphasized how refugee children "were not learning English" in the Hartford Public School System because "everyone spoke Spanish."

Consequently, many community and private volunteers moved Catholic Charities families from Hartford to the West Hartford area. Currently, West Hartford has a thriving Syrian refugee community concentrated in apartment complexes along Farmington Avenue. A lot of these Syrian families are close friends who attend their children's school events, work together, celebrate holidays together and socialize on the weekends. Meanwhile, very few Syrian families remain in Hartford and the ones that do, explained how they were struggling to connect and integrate within their communities.

These structural and economic barriers between Hartford and West Hartford, however, demonstrate the importance of community involvement in refugee integration. Specifically, Hartford Catholic Charities case-managers' "Discharge from Day 1" motto is not a realistic approach for fostering refugee self-sufficiency in a three-month time period. This is especially true given the City of Hartford's segregated resources, employment, and educational opportunities. Because IRIS requires co-sponsorship groups to raise \$4,000-\$7,000, the organization mostly recruits upper-middle class suburbanites. This exclusive group of volunteers who have the privilege to dedicate time and money to refugee families become involved in IRIS'

“community” sponsorship. Consequently, co-sponsored refugees are mostly resettled in volunteers’ suburban towns such as West Hartford.

As this study suggests, volunteers’ social capital and connections promote refugee self-sufficiency. However, resettlement is not an equal playing field for refugees placed in Hartford by Catholic Charities case-managers, and in suburban towns, by IRIS resource-laden volunteers. Indeed, IRIS’ Director of Co-Sponsorship even attributes co-sponsorship group’s over-giving as a reinforcement inequality. He states: “Some co-sponsorship cannot bear the thought of a refugee family having to really bite the bullet and make do with what they have.” With more of IRIS’s “co-sponsor clients living in West Hartford than any other place,” he explains how the model does not typically attract groups from the “inner-cities” and that there is no co-sponsorship group based in Hartford. While the suburban distribution of refugees disadvantages Hartford, it is interesting to note that Syrian refugees’ arrival in West Hartford promotes local suburban integration. In other words, more diverse groups arriving in West Hartford adds to the town’s overbearing native-born, white, upper middle-class population. Despite this possible benefit, however, many volunteers expressed their concerns in moving refugees from Hartford. Provocatively, the WHOKE volunteer questioned: “Eighty percent of refugee problems are poverty problems. Am I going to adopt a family in the North End of Hartford? Just to do the same thing for them?” In other words, how is the United States’ assisting Americans living in poverty to achieve self-sufficiency? Why is it that the government, and community volunteers are only focusing on achieving *refugee* self-sufficiency?

In addition to highlighting municipal inequality, it seemed that some IRIS volunteers may be driven by some paternalistic intentions. For instance, IRIS Volunteer 4 explained how he was happy to be helping a family “escaping” the Middle East. While Syria is undergoing

humanitarian crisis, it is still one of the most culturally and historically-rich countries in the world. Furthermore, the Middle East expands from Egypt to Western Asia, an area which contains 18 different countries with their own ethnic, cultural, and political histories. Indeed, this generalizing viewpoint demonstrates the pervasiveness of some Americans' views of "barbarism" and "incivility" in non-Western countries. It is also important to address how USRP's warped notions of refugee "self-sufficiency" manifest into notions of "worthy citizenship" (Erickson 2012 and Ong 2003). Specifically, well-to-do, mostly-white volunteers who often assist, poor refugees using public benefits, reinforces a disparate power dynamic. Furthermore, this reliance on the "goodwill" of privileged volunteers with little accountability standards may not challenge ingrained attitudes about race, class, gender, culture and the state (Erickson, 2012, 174). This neoliberal volunteerism, along with municipal inequities of the co-sponsorship model, sustains disparate refugee integration outcomes. Catholic Charities and IRIS employees, case-managers, volunteers, and refugees, therefore, must address mechanisms to promote empower refugees' resettlement experiences in diverse communities.

Towards A More Equitable Model of Refugee Resettlement

Policy-makers may be able to promote municipal and structural equity in refugees' resettlement experiences through national co-sponsorship grants, Hartford-based refugee job and educational programming, empowerment of the state refugee coordinator's office and volag oversight mechanisms. By creating a federally financed co-sponsorship grant, case-management agencies, such as Hartford Catholic Charities may be able to receive funding to create their own co-sponsorship program. Instead of recruiting co-sponsorship groups from neighboring suburbs, HCC can use this money to help fund co-sponsorship groups in Hartford-based congregations. While it is not guaranteed this would work, it may allow for more municipal equity in refugee

resettlement. Furthermore, in Canada, the Blended Visa Office Referral Program (BVOR), a relatively new program, which matches refugees identified for resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with private sponsors, may serve as a model for municipal equity in refugee resettlement.⁸⁹ The BVOR program is similar to a federal co-sponsorship grant because it “blends” government and private support- which relieves the sponsor of the half of the first year’s financial support.⁹⁰ The reduced amount of money co-sponsorship groups must raise may allow for more economic diversity in the realm of community-sponsorship. On a city-level, Connecticut could contribute money into creating professional training programs for refugees in cities such as Hartford, New Haven or Bridgeport. In the interviews, many refugees expressed interest in opening small businesses. Perhaps, through job trainings based in these cities, refugees can pursue courses/licenses related to catering, financial management, and small business loans. In this way, refugees can pursue their small business interests while simultaneously learning about economic opportunities in Hartford. Initiatives such as this, may stir refugee entrepreneurial energy and economic revitalization in post-industrial cities such as Hartford.

Institutionally, both IRIS and Catholic Charities need additional state oversight mechanisms. Therefore, there must be more transparency within Connecticut’s Office of the Refugee Coordinator. Specifically, the Refugee Coordinator must become involved in reviewing refugee housing placement and landlord-case-manager relationships. Clearly, there has been very little oversight of this area for HCC refugees resettled in Hartford. Furthermore, IRIS co-sponsorship

⁸⁹ Sandeep Kumar Agrawal, “Canadian Refugee Sponsorship Programs: Experience of Syrian Refugees in Alberta, Canada,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* (December 6, 2018), 2, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0640-7>.

⁹⁰ Sandeep Kumar Agrawal, “Canadian Refugee Sponsorship Programs: Experience of Syrian Refugees in Alberta, Canada,” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* (December 6, 2018), 3, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-018-0640-7>.

volunteers should also receive equity training as part of their “green light process.” Through this training, volunteers can understand the structural elements of co-sponsorship resettlement including: paternalistic volunteering, socioeconomic/racial inequality in refugee residency, and mechanisms towards evening the playing field of refugee resettlement. In relation to Hartford Catholic Charities, it is necessary that the refugee state coordinator ensures that the organization is realizing all of its federal-mandated requirements related to refugee housing. It is completely unacceptable, and illegal, that Catholic Charities’ is not complying with federal standards related to the provision of an arrival-ready, clean and furnished apartment with culturally-appropriate food items. While all of these policy proposals require political support, they would begin to address the inequities associated with different models of refugee resettlement. In this way, the social capital and integration benefits of community and private sponsorship, may be equitably redistributed to refugees and municipalities. In an age of travel bans and humanitarian strife, it is crucial that policymakers make decisions grounded in the realities of refugees and their local communities. As one refugee participant put it: “We are all refugees in this life,” and it takes a “community to raise us up.”

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT
PBPL 498/ Senior Thesis Interview Information
Models of Refugee Resettlement in Greater Hartford

I, _____ (please print name) hereby consent to a research project, which consists of 12-18 interviews of approximately one hour that will ultimately be compiled with other interviews in an undergraduate senior thesis. Julia Tempesta, a senior at Trinity College, will use these interviews to understand the complexities of the United States' refugee resettlement program in the Hartford area.

Confidentiality

I understand that my participation in this study will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes in the context of Julia Tempesta's Public Policy senior thesis. I understand that my interview will be recorded and transcribed by the student doing the interview and he or she will replace my name before the thesis is formally published. The thesis reader will not know the names of the refugees/persons interviewed. The recording from the interview will be destroyed by the student at the end of the semester.

Benefits

The benefits of this project are that the interview participants have the opportunity to talk about their refugee resettlement experiences. This information will be used to offer policy analysis and recommendations to improve the United States Refugee Resettlement Program.

Risks

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study, but I understand that I should only share aspects of my life that I am comfortable sharing.

Voluntary

I understand that my participation in this project is completely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without any penalty.

Contact Information

If I have any questions regarding this project or wish to have further information, I am free to contact Julia Tempesta at (508) 250-2560 or jtempest@trincoll.edu.

Signature

Date

Appendix B: Syrian Refugee Interview Guide

Explain the informed consent form and have the informant sign a copy. S/he will keep a signed copy at the end of the interview.

Opening Script:

Thanks so much for agreeing to meet me and conduct this interview! Before we get started, I just want to let you know that your participation in this interview is completely up to you. With all these questions, share whatever you feel most comfortable with. At any point, we can stop if needed. Have a look at this form, and if you're willing, go ahead and sign it to indicate your voluntary participation. At the end, you can keep a copy of the form. In addition, I will be distributing the \$20 Visa Gift Card after the interview is completed.

Recording:

Read or paraphrase closely: I hope it's okay if I record the interview? It's an important part for coding and analyzing information for my thesis. Heba and I will be the only ones to hear the recording and I will destroy all files of it once my data analysis is complete. I also may jot some notes, just to help me keep track of ideas as we're talking. Will this work?

[If yes, start recording].

Read or paraphrase closely: My senior thesis examines the role of different models of refugee resettlement in the Greater Hartford area. So a lot of the questions I have for you today will discuss your own personal experiences and opinions regarding refugee resettlement in Hartford, its surrounding towns/cities, and in the United States.

Interviewer Notes:

My goal is to elicit a 5-8 minute response to each of the following questions. The response should try to be complete full answers and non-binary (yes or no). After the informant responds, I may probe or clarify certain things s/he mentioned to flesh out the answer. Because I want to try to get through all of the questions, while also respecting the informant's time, I will attempt to allot no more than 8 minutes per question.

Part I: First Month in the United States and Resettlement Organization

- 1. What was your first month in the United States like?**
 - a. Do not probe refugees to discuss their life in home country or Syria to prevent traumatic re-lived experiences. If refugees ask or begin to openly discuss their transition to the United States from their home country, explain that they can discuss whatever they feel comfortable with.

- 2. Which organizations and/or individuals assisted you during your few months in the United States?**
 - a. Probe by mentioning IRIS, Catholic Charities and these organizations' respective volunteers/caseworkers.

3. **What kinds of help did [organizations/individuals mentioned] provide during your first few months in the United States?**
 - a. Probe by mentioning children school enrollment, public benefit enlistment, jobs/training or ESL tutoring.
4. **These days, what kind of contact do you have with [organization/individuals mentioned]?**
 - a. **How often are you in contact with your [organization/individual]?**
 - i. **[If continued relationship] Can you give me an example of a recent time when you've needed help with something and tell me about who you called? Are there other times you call on X?**
 - ii. **[If not continued relationship] When you need help these days, who do you turn to, or what do you do? Can you give me an example?**
5. **Other than [organizations/individuals mentioned] were there any other individuals or organizations who helped you when you arrived?**
 - a. Probe this question by mentioning churches, other refugees, civic/cultural groups or neighbors.
6. **How do you feel about living in the United States today, as compared to how you felt in your first month here?**

Part II: Community Involvement and Integration

1. **What do you or your family members do for work or employment?**
 - a. **What type of relationships with people do you have at your place of work?**
 - i. **Probe:** Do you have a boss and/or co-workers you trust and can rely on? Do you have friends at your place of work?
 - b. **How does this job compare to past jobs, experience or education you had?**
 - i. **Probe:** Have you learned anything new in the job you currently have? Or, does this job require the same skillset as past jobs or work you have had?
2. **What opportunities have you had to practice or learn English?**
 - a. **When you arrived in the United States, did you speak any English?**
 - b. **Have you had the opportunity to take any formal English classes?**
 - i. **[If yes] What are these classes like?**
 1. **Probe:** Are these English classes more classroom or tutoring oriented? What other non-native English speakers (refugees, immigrants or mix) attend these classes? What are the English instructors like?
 - ii. **[If no, or mostly no] What resources or individuals have helped you improve your English since your arrival?**
3. **What kind of contact do you have with other families or individuals that live here in the Hartford area?**

4. **Outside of work and the home, are you involved in any activities or organizations?**
 - i. Probe this question by mentioning religious groups/congregations, civic organizations, sports/extracurricular activities.
 - a. **What is [organization] and its members like?**

Part III: Policy Recommendations and Final Questions

1. **What do you think the United States does well when it comes to refugee resettlement?**
 - a. Probe question by mentioning integration goals of refugee resettlement: employment and job preparation/training, English language proficiency, psychosocial well-being and educational attainment.
2. **What could the United States do better when it comes to resettling refugees?**
 - a. Probe this question by mentioning the same aspects as above (1A).
3. **When you think back about your experience of resettlement, is there anything that could have been done to make it easier for your family to adjust to life in the United States?**
 - a. Probe this question by connecting refugee responses to the questions above (1A and 2A) to their own experiences.
4. **Well, that is the end of my formal questions, is there anything else you'd like to add or circle back to in this interview?**
5. **Are there any refugee families I should talk to or who would be willing to share their experiences?**

Thank you so much for your time in completing this interview.

Here, I have a \$25 Amazon Gift Card for your participation. Again, thank you so much for making my research and thesis possible!

Appendix C: Caseworker/Volunteer Interview Guide

Caseworker/Volunteer Interview Guide

Explain the informed consent form and have the informant sign a copy. S/he will keep a signed copy at the end of the interview.

Opening Script:

Thanks so much for agreeing to meet me and conduct this interview! Before we get started, I just want to let you know that your participation in this interview is completely up to you. With all these questions, share whatever you feel most comfortable with. At any point, we can stop if needed. Have a look at this form, and if you're willing, go ahead and sign it to indicate your voluntary participation. At the end, you can keep a copy of the form.

Recording:

Read or paraphrase closely: I hope it's okay if I record the interview? It's an important part for coding and analyzing information for my thesis. Heba and I will be the only ones to hear the recording and I will destroy it once the assignment is complete. I also may jot some notes, just to help me keep track of ideas as we're talking. Will this work?

[If yes, start recording].

Read or paraphrase closely: My senior thesis examines the role of different models of refugee resettlement in the Greater Hartford area. So a lot of the questions I have for you today will discuss your own personal experiences and opinions regarding refugee resettlement in Hartford, its surrounding areas and the United States.

My goal is to elicit a 5-8 minute response to each of the following questions. The response should try to be complete, full answer and non-binary (yes or no). After the informant responds, I may probe or clarify certain things s/he mentioned to flesh out the answer. Because I want to try to get through all of the questions, while also respecting the informant's time, I will attempt to allot no more than 8 minutes per question.

Part I: Involvement and Refugee Resettlement Organizations

- 1. What brought you to working with refugees?**
 - i.** Probe this question by asking if work experience, education or experience brought individuals to work with refugees.
 - a.** Are you bi-lingual or know any Arabic?

Part II: Relationship with Refugees

- 1. Can you tell me about the refugee family or families that you work with?**
 - a.** [CASEWORKERS] Probe for how many families they are assigned and their degree to familiarity with each.

2. **What is/was your role with assisting refugees during their first couple months in the United States?**
 - a. **How would you characterize this time period for [caseworkers, volunteers and community members]?**

3. **In your experience working with refugees, how does the relationship change or stay the same after the first couple of months?**
 - a. **[CASEWORKER] How long do you stay in contact with your refugees you assist typically?**

4. **[FOR CASEWORKERS] Can you tell me a little about [IRIS, Catholic Charities or other community organizations'] approach to refugee resettlement?**
 - a. **Probe this question by asking for history, how organization is structured/run or participant's role in organization.**

5. **[FOR VOLUNTEERS] Can you tell me more about how your work with local refugees is organized or structured?**
 - a. **Probe this question by asking about the participant's role in the organization.**

6. **If you think for a moment of a refugee family you know that has been in the United States for more than one year, what kind of contact do you have with them on a weekly basis?**
 - a. **Can you give me an example of the last time you helped a family who has been here for more than a year?**

7. **In your opinion, what resources or services are more important for refugee integration into American society?**
 - a. **Probe this question by mentioning employment, English language, psychosocial well-being or community involvement**

8. **When you think about the refugee families who arrived in 2016-2017, how would you describe their adjustment to the United States?**
 - a. **What's going well?**
 - b. **What struggles remain?**

9. **At what point has a refugee family achieved independence?**
 - a. **When a family moves toward independence, how have you changed your approach to volunteering?**
 - i. **Probe this question by asking how the volunteer/caseworker/community member detaches or separates themselves from the refugee family.**

10. **When you think about your experience as a volunteer, is there anything you would change or do differently next time around?**
 - a. **Is there anything that would allow you to serve refugees more effectively?**

Part III: Policy Recommendations and Final Questions

- 1. What have you learned from working with refugees?**
- 2. What do you think the United States does well when it comes to refugee resettlement?**
- 3. What could the United States do better when it comes to resettling refugees?**
 - a. [If they mention Trump or any of his executive orders]: How does President Trump or national policies in general influence local or city level refugee resettlement?**
- 4. Well that's about it for my formal questions. Is there anything you want to add to or circle back to in this interview?**
- 5. Do you know anyone else who I should talk to or would be willing to share their experiences?**

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