

“MAKING DO” IN THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY: AN EXPLORATION
OF THE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
OF REFUGEES IN UTAH

by

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ABSTRACT

In this project, I explore the economic integration of refugees resettled in Utah. I argue that previous models of economic integration have been applied to research in a piecemeal fashion and a more comprehensive approach is warranted. To fill this gap, I outline a Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration composed of refugee ethnic origins, forms of capital, and the contexts of reception. This study analyzes the relationship of these dimensions to three markers of economic integration: labor market participation, adequate income, and two-way integration.

To ensure a comprehensive analysis of these dimensions I use a mixed methods research design involving the collection of quantitative data from closed-ended administrative forms, and qualitative data from the free-form text of case notes and from focus groups. I employed event history analysis to examine the association between the amount of time it takes to formally enter the labor market (i.e., find a job) and later to find a job with a livable wage. I also conducted textual analysis of the case notes and open-coded the transcripts from focus groups to identify central themes.

With these analyses, I investigate sociological issues surrounding migration, integration, and discrimination. I find that existing sociological theories of immigrant economic integration are applicable to refugees, but with an important caveat: piecemeal application of integration theories is inadequate for understanding refugee outcomes. The skills and training of refugees are frequently undervalued in the U.S. labor market. Forms

of capital theories often fail to explain this. However, ethnic origins are critical predictors of the economic integration of refugees. Refugee adherence to origin culture can contribute to conspicuous foreignness forming the basis for labor market discrimination. “Creative discrimination” is especially problematic for conspicuously Muslim refugees. More importantly, while two-way integration is an important goal, ethnoreligious discrimination is both an immediate contextual predictor and a potential future outcome, indicating possible cumulative causation. Finally, the analyses show that the factors influencing economic integration interact, change over time, and have different effects on different aspects of economic integration, indicating the need for a more exhaustive theoretical approach namely the Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Is the warmth of welcome for refugees waning in America? As forced migrants, refugees have historically been seen as legitimate migrants, deserving of aid. However, attitudes and policies are changing. President Trump's (2017) Executive Orders 13769 and 13780, entitled "Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States," banned immigrants and refugees from several predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States. During his first year as president, Trump also cut arrivals in half and pledged to cap arrivals at 45,000 refugees per year. While the U.S. resettles more refugees than any other country, it lags behind in resettlements relative to population size and the size of the economy. It also lags far behind countries neighboring refugee origin countries. Forced migrants "often [wait] for resettlement in a nearby country where they have taken temporary refuge," with some remaining permanently in the nearby country (Connor 2017b). The relative geographic proximity of Europe to several regions of refugee origin makes European nations especially common destinations for forced migrants. As a result, the Syrian refugee influx is overwhelming the resources of some governments, especially those closest to North Africa (Zavis and A. M. Simmons 2017). Moreover, the surge has prompted some countries to restrict admissions, even while others broaden their resettlement programs. Moreover, attitudes

toward refugees have become decidedly restrictionist, especially toward Muslim refugees. For example, in a recent speech, Hungary's Prime Minister labeled Muslim refugees "Muslim invaders" (Huff Post 2018). More than half of the residents of Hungary, Poland, Greece, Italy, and France believe that "refugees will take away jobs and social benefits" (Wike, Stokes, and K. Simmons 2016). And, in eight countries surveyed by the Pew Research center, more than half of those surveyed "believe incoming refugees increase the likelihood of terrorism in their country" (ibid.) Despite the negative attitudes, 80 percent of Syrian asylum applications and 50 percent of all asylum applications to Europe are approved (Connor 2017a). However, labor market participation is often slow to occur, resulting in significant strain on public resources and a high incidence of poverty.

Because such a small portion of the world's refugees are given the opportunity to resettle in a new country, it is important to ensure that resettlement leads to self-sufficiency rather than marginalization. Ideally, a refugee's personal characteristics, cultural background, education, and language skills predict the speed and effectiveness of their acculturation and economic outcomes. However, education and employment credentials are often not transferable to the U.S. In addition, contexts of reception can mitigate the migrants' abilities to deploy their skills in the receiving community's labor market. Some scholars even argue that "one of the key determinants of refugee incorporation into host societies is the attitude of the local population" (Kibreab 1999:395). The ongoing exodus of Syrian refugees, in conjunction with the rise of neo-conservative political actors (Wike et al. 2016), has stimulated strong negative sentiments toward Muslim refugees and a generalized fear of all immigrants and refugees (Esses et

al. 2008; Murray and Marx 2013). Yet, the mass migration of African asylum seekers and the high death toll of those traveling by sea call attention to the desperate circumstances prompting flight and the question of a human right to asylum. Given these circumstances, it is more important than ever that we understand refugee pathways to economic and social integration.¹

The characteristics of both refugee and immigrant populations have shifted dramatically over the course of American history. Through the mid-1900s the vast majority of immigrants came from European nations. In the second half of the twentieth century migration patterns shifted to include immigrants and refugees from Asia, Africa, South America, and more recently, the Middle East. The characteristics of these new migrants differ dramatically from those of the earlier European migrants, which has created new challenges for the process of integration. Early European migrants were somewhat culturally similar to U.S. citizens and typically had similar levels of education and work experience. While they were certainly viewed with mistrust and experienced prejudicial attitudes, their assimilation was somewhat easier due to their racial similarities with the host population. Contemporary refugees arriving in the U.S. exhibit a significant amount of heterogeneity in their levels of education and employment histories. Among the largest ethnic groups arriving in Utah, refugees from Iran and Iraq have high levels of

¹ While the economic integration of immigrants has been explored in great depth, much of the existing research lumps refugees in with voluntary migrants, despite the fact that they are distinct both conceptually and practically. First, owing to their “well-founded fear of persecution” refugees have a legal status which affords them access to a different set of services and benefits than voluntary migrants. Second, in addition to having suffered traumatic experiences, many refugees also have experienced interrupted education and limited employment, placing them at a greater disadvantage in the U.S. labor market than both voluntary migrants and native-born residents (R. Allen 2009).

education, while refugees from Burma, Bhutan, and Somalia tend to have very low levels of education (Refugee Processing Center 2012). Moreover, there is a great deal of cultural diversity among modern refugees, with some refugees originating from regions that are culturally similar to the U.S. while others are from highly dissimilar cultures. Cultural differences, while difficult to capture, may disrupt refugee adaptation.

Early theories of immigrant adaptation outlined an idealized process whereby migrants progressed toward full assimilation, or melding into the host culture (Gordon 1964; Park 1914). However, more recent scholars note that full assimilation of immigrants and refugees, when it occurs, does not typically occur in first-generation migrants (Gordon 1964; Portes and Rumbaut 2001), although, some level of cultural adaptation and participation—or integration—into the host economy is common in the first generation. It is important to note, however, that the degree and rapidity of adaptation and integration vary depending on the refugee's characteristics, the availability of economic and social opportunities, and socio-cultural context. The prodigious exodus of Syrian refugees in recent years has provoked contentious debate and produced a spike in anti-immigrant attitudes (Ahmed 2014; Arnold 2015; Facchini, Mayda, and Mendola 2013) as well as a rise in support for far-right political parties and xenophobic policies (Fetzer 2000; Golder 2003; Rydgren 2007; 2008). Further fueling antirefugee attitudes in the U.S., President Trump has characterized refugees as terrorists posing threats to national security in public speeches and in Executive Order 13780 (Section 1, Paragraph H). Despite these negative characterizations and the growing fear of refugees, most Utah residents express opposition to policies limiting refugee arrivals (Burr 2017). Utah has traditionally been a welcoming location for refugees, but the

community is not immune to antirefugee rhetoric, and residents are divided over whether entry should be restricted for Muslim refugees (ibid.). Given the potential for the current trends of hostility toward refugees to drive social policy and negatively impact refugee social and economic integration, it is critically important to understand how refugees are received in their resettlement destinations, and how the contexts of reception affect trajectories toward economic wellbeing.

The literature on immigrant adaptation, in general, and economic adaptation, in particular, discusses pathways to economic well-being using the term *economic integration* (Ager and Strang 2008; Castles et al. 2001; Favell 1998; Korac 2003; see for example: Kuhlman 1991; Robinson 1998; 1999; Sigona 2005). In this dissertation, I define successful economic integration such that it involves participation in the U.S. economy that results in reduced economic vulnerability and precariousness, and progress toward sustainable self-sufficiency. In light of their potentially difficult paths to economic self-sufficiency, it is important to gauge the skills and potential barriers faced by recently resettled refugees. It is also important to test the relevance of theories of immigrant economic adaptation for the refugee experience. Consequently, my aim in this dissertation is to understand *what are refugees' prospects for self-sufficiency and why?* I also seek to comprehend which ethnic groups experience relatively smooth or easy transitions and which are more uneven, as well as which contexts of resettlement improve or hinder adaptation. I interrogate refugee self-sufficiency in the context of the state of Utah,² a key resettlement community, and new immigration destination. The insights

² The state of Utah is ideal for studying refugee integration for a number of reasons. First, Utah is home to refugees from nearly 60 different nations, making it an excellent setting for comparing across diverse ethnic groups. Second, Utah is

gained from this research implicate a shift toward a more comprehensive theory of economic integration, incorporating characteristics of refugee homeland experiences, their personal skills and barriers to employment, and host-related contextual factors. The findings also suggest the need for modified policies regarding the approaches taken in refugee resettlement and training programs.

Defining Refugees

Refugees comprise a particular category of migrants who share some things in common with voluntary migrants. The distinction between refugee and immigrant is often characterized by the degree of agency, or voluntary control, an individual has in deciding to migrate. However, both groups of migrants experience a lack of control of structural forces, whether economic or violence related. Further, some groups who flee violence, such as Columbian refugees and Palestinian refugees, are not designated as refugees by the United Nations, making them ineligible for asylum (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2011; 2016; 2017). Their migration options parallel those of economic and environmental migrants. Moreover, both types of migrants exhibit agency and some degree of control over their decision to migrate. Thus, to some extent, the refugee/immigrant distinction is an artificial one (Korac 2009; Kunz 1981; Long 2013; Nyers 2006). However, forced migrants differ from voluntary migrants in several important ways.

First, refugees have a legal status that provides them with access to a host of

representative of the average U.S. state in the number of refugees it resettles annually. Utah receives the median number of refugees per year.

government services, including cash and medical assistance, employment assistance, and subsidized training programs (Refugee Council USA 2017). The designation of refugee is a legal one, given to individuals or groups that meet the criteria. As currently applied the definition is a narrow one, excluding environmental refugees, economic refugees, and those fleeing fragile state regimes. However, the refugee definition is based on a notion of human rights that recognizes “the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries” (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 1951:2) and establishes a set of protections the receiving countries must offer. The United Nations defines a refugee as a person who,

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (14).

This definition creates a clear distinction between refugees and immigrants with regard to who has a legitimate claim to protection. As legitimate entrants, refugees are granted access to a variety of government services and provided with pathways to citizenship (R. Allen 2009; Haines 2010; Sales 2002). Immigrants who enter the U.S. with a work visa, student visa, family visa, etc. have varying degrees of access to government services. However, this access is quite limited compared with the services available to refugees. Moreover, immigrants who enter the U.S. without legal authorization have almost no access to services. Refugees, on the other hand, are eligible for federal cash assistance for up to eight months after arrival. They are also eligible for federal welfare benefits, Medicaid, food stamps, SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and subsidized housing. As ‘legitimized’ immigrants, refugees have access to the same education and employment

benefits as U.S. citizens. Also, nongovernmental agencies offer services including help applying for benefits, language training, counseling and case management, and assistance with employment searches. In contrast, immigrants must rely on their own financial, human, and social capital to become established, find work and integrate into American culture. In some locations, voluntary migrants encounter well-developed networks of co-ethnic immigrants who can assist them in their transition. In other locations, no such networks exist.

The second distinction between refugees and voluntary migrants lies in the fact that in addition to having suffered traumatic experiences, many refugees also have experienced interrupted education and limited employment, placing them at a greater disadvantage in the labor market than voluntary migrants and native-born residents (R. Allen 2009). For voluntary migrants, patterns of selectivity often reveal migrants who are more educated than the average citizen in their home country (Feliciano 2005). Refugee selectivity, on the other hand, is related to their membership in a minority group that is at risk (Betts 2010; Haines 2010; Richmond 1993; U.S. Department of Health Human Services 2014) and the “social force of pervasive flight attitudes” (see also Bakewell 2010; Korac 2009; Kunz 1973:206; Nyers 2006), but selectivity can vary based on country, era, and timing (Feliciano 2005; Kunz 1973). For example, initial flows of Iraqi refugees were comprised of members of the elite classes (Brown 2012). Despite the selectivity of the early Iraqi migrants, time spent in temporary asylum locations may have interrupted employment and education histories.

The legal designation of a person as a refugee allows resettlement agencies to provide services and benefits intended to offset this disadvantage. The refugee visa gives

those resettled in the U.S. the right to work in the U.S., access to 90 days of financial assistance through the refugee cash assistance program, eligibility for Medicaid, and access to a variety of state-run programs designed to assist with cultural adaptation, navigation of government services, and the search for employment. In contrast, legal permanent residents (i.e., green card holders) have access to the standard services available to U.S. citizens. The additional benefits available to refugees reflect their alternate pathway to residence.

Refugees' departures from their countries of origin are not legally classified as voluntary, and they typically make few or no preparations for life in a new country. However, they are considered "deserving" of additional services and benefits for two reasons (Zetter 2007). The first is humanitarian need. The second is that refugees undergo an extensive application process documenting that they are truly at risk and that they pose no threat to U.S. society. Thus, refugees are both similar to and distinct from voluntary migrants, and theories of assimilation and integration should be tested for applicability to refugees as a group of migrants distinct both conceptually and in praxis.

Resettlement Process and Goals

Once a refugee has fled their country of origin, they fall under the purview of the UNHCR. The UNHCR has several options for assisting refugee populations. The preferred option is to repatriate the refugees. However, this is typically not feasible. Alternatives include resettlement in adjacent countries or other countries in the same geographic region and resettlement in third countries like the United States. Fewer than 1

percent of all forced migrants receive the opportunity to resettle in a new country³ and 50 percent of those refugees are resettled in the U.S. Prior to 2017 the U.S. received between 60 and 70 thousand refugees each year from approximately 80 different countries. The state of Utah resettled just over one thousand of those individuals⁴ (U.S. Department of Health Human Services 2014). Though Utah's refugee population is much smaller than the refugee populations in California and New York, it is exceptionally diverse. Many states receive refugees from only one or two countries; Utah accepts refugees from any location, making it ideal for intergroup comparisons. Moreover, in recent years, those resettled in Utah have originated from such diverse locales as Vietnam, Bosnia, the Congo, and Afghanistan, with the top origins being Bhutan, Burma, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan.

The principal goals after resettlement in the U.S. are integration and self-sufficiency. Refugee social and economic adaptation have been a persistent subject of inquiry for immigration research. Existing literature examines how refugees' personal

³ Data obtained from the UNHCR's online data portal for Syria. http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php#_ga=1.90442330.1381615391.1457109837. The numbers are subject to change as UNHCR updates the numbers regularly.

⁴ Refugees are not usually able to choose where they are placed within the United States. The U.S. Department of State chooses the state and resettlement community with the help of nine domestic resettlement agencies. Prominent resettlement states typically have stable economies, strong labor markets, and established refugee communities. Resettlement agencies work with the department of state to "match the particular needs of each incoming refugee with the specific resources available in a local community" (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration 2012). Annual resettlement numbers range from a low of 7 in states like Arkansas and Mississippi to a high of 7,214 in Texas. The mean refugee resettlement per state for 2014 was 1,372 refugees, but this number is skewed by the exceptionally high arrival numbers for California and Texas. The median resettlement is 978 refugees, and Utah typically resettles slightly more than the median number of refugees (U.S. Department of Health Human Services 2014).

characteristics, cultural background, education, and language skills interact with contexts of reception to create different trajectories of social and economic integration. The refugees resettled in Utah come from roughly 60 different nations, and they arrive in Utah with greatly varying skills and life experiences. Some speak English; others do not. Some are educated and have held good jobs in their country of origin; others have had little or no education and minimal job experience in their former homes. Some come from relatively modern regions of the world; others have never seen a microwave oven and have never had electricity in their homes. These disparate backgrounds can create very distinct (even divergent) trajectories for economic and social integration into American society relative both to refugees with different backgrounds and to voluntary migrants (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Moreover, while refugees with marketable skills and knowledge may experience rapid upward economic progress, the limited skills and cultural knowledge possessed by others can make self-sufficiency⁵ especially difficult to achieve (Bloch 2002; Lamba 2003).

Purpose

The broad aim of this study is to understand *what are refugees' prospects for successful economic integration and why?* Ideally, a refugee's personal characteristics, cultural background, education, and language skills predict the speed and effectiveness of their acculturation and economic outcomes. However, contexts of reception can condition the effectiveness of these skills and characteristics (Kibreab 1999:395).

⁵ I discuss the various meanings of self-sufficiency as a concept in Chapter II and explore some statistics related to each in Chapter IV.

While the economic integration of immigrants has been explored in great depth, much of the existing research fails to distinguish between refugees and voluntary migrants, despite the fact that they are distinct both conceptually and practically. The preponderance of existing research engages theoretical models of economic integration that emphasize the intersection of forms of capital and social contexts, but often fail to include crucial predictors related to refugee ethnic origins and their knowledge of the destination culture.

Prior theoretical models, such as Nee and Sander's *Forms of Capital Model* (2001), emphasize the role of traditional skills and training, as well as the use of social ties and the benefit of financial assets in procuring higher status employment. However, the model fails to address the predictive value of immigrants' countries of origin and the contexts of the receiving community (Portes and Böröcz 1989). Hein's *Ethnic Origins Theory* addresses the former, noting the importance of cultural factors, homeland political history, and homeland ethnic politics (Hein 2006). However, the model fails to address most forms of capital and the context of reception in resettlement destinations. Theories around *Modes of Incorporation*, addressed by a number of scholars (e.g., Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2003; Kibreab 1999; Lanphier 2009; Portes and Rumbaut 2006), emphasize the role of "governmental policy, public opinion, labor market demand and pre-existing ethnic communities" (Portes and Böröcz 1989:620), but incorporate forms of capital with varying degrees of thoroughness, and rarely address ethnic origins. Finally, and most importantly, an exhaustive approach to operationalizing economic integration, while recommended by Kuhlman and other theorists, is rarely undertaken (Kuhlman 1991; Potocky-Tripodi 2003).

Although the above models address many critical components of economic integration, these components have yet to be comprehensively applied to forced migration research. The theoretical model I present in this dissertation draws from previous models but specifies a more comprehensive theoretical and analytical approach. This *Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration* investigates the ethnic origins of refugees (Hein 2006), their forms of capital (Nee and Sanders 2001) and the mitigating effects of social and economic context (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). I analyze the relationship of these dimensions to three markers of economic integration: labor market participation, adequate income, and two-way integration.

To craft a truly holistic model with *sui generis* properties, I also draw insights from the *Capabilities Approach* (Sen 1999) and *Complexity Theory* (Byrne 1998; Walby 2007). Based on these theories I argue that integration is interactive and evolving, and a refugee's real capabilities to succeed in their new environment stem from an intersection of their histories, their personal characteristics, the opportunities available to them, and the social and economic contexts.

I use a mixed methods approach to test the applicability of the *Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration* to the economic outcomes of refugees in the state of Utah. Since the research question is broad and directed at all refugee groups a quantitative approach with a large sample from a variety of ethnic groups is warranted. In addition, previous research points to the need for a holistic approach. However, since those quantitative data may not contain the detail demanded by a holistic approach, qualitative data are also necessary. Employing a mixed methods approach is a pragmatic solution to the conflicting demands of this study's research aims (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010).

Significance

The intellectual merit of this study comes in the form of three specific theoretical and empirical contributions: a new model of refugee economic integration, the introduction of an innovative measure of cultural distance applicable to refugee scholarship, the creation of a detailed database of refugees in Utah. First, the *Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration* presented in Chapter II combines and builds upon elements of previous theories. However, many of these prior theories have not been systematically tested for their relevance to refugees as distinct from voluntary migrants. In addition, the model combines elements in a new way, incorporating multiple measures of economic integration, both objective and subjective. The results of analyses based on this model offer new insights about traditional forms of economic integration, such as labor market participation and the acquisition of a livable wage. The study also offers insights into the state of two-way integration, highlighting the continued presence of employment discrimination despite antidiscrimination legislation.

Second, while previous research has investigated forms of capital as key predictors, analysis of cultural capital has been weak, often using English-speaking ability as a proxy. Yet, in the earliest years after resettlement, English-speaking ability is a reflection of prior education rather than acculturation. This study assesses two aspects of culture relevant to refugee economic integration: cultural distance between the refugee's country of origin and the U.S., and individual deficits of employment-related cultural capital. The former is a new, multidimensional measure of the differences between the attitudes and values prevalent in a refugee's homeland and those of the U.S. New attitudes and values are arguably much more difficult to adapt to than cultural

practices, and as the model tests show, they are also more important in the labor market. The latter measure assesses employment barriers related to limited knowledge of employment specific norms and practices.

Third, to create a set of data capable of being used for such a comprehensive analysis of refugee economic integration I employ a unique method of quantitative data collection—extraction of data from administrative forms supplemented with information coded from the free-form text of service provider case notes. This method of database construction generated perhaps one of the most richly detailed refugee databases available for academic study.

Finally, while the study is restricted to a single state, Utah, is an ideal “pilot” state for a number of reasons. First, Utah accepts refugees from any location making it ideal for comparing outcomes across a broad swath of refugee ethnic groups. Second, the number of refugees resettled in Utah falls just slightly above the national average, which allows reasonably sized samples to be drawn and potentially improves overall representativeness. Third, Utah offers a rich mix of positive and negative contexts of reception for refugees from a broad variety of backgrounds. On the positive side, Utah’s population is predominantly Mormon.⁶ The religion promotes an ethic of service and humanitarian aid to those in need. On the negative side, the politically conservative climate in Utah may also contribute to xenophobic sentiments. Finally, Utah’s economy is remarkably diverse and stable, making studies based there less susceptible to

⁶ Formally known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a.k.a. the LDS church)

exogenous economic shocks.⁷

Beyond this study's theoretical and methodological contributions, this study has tremendous significance for refugee service providers. Findings will be reported to both service providers and refugee participants, and recommendations will be offered. In conclusion, with approximately 1,200 refugees immigrating to Utah each year, successful economic integration is crucial for a growing number of individuals. Moreover, each individual success reduces the strain on limited State resources and contributes a thriving Utah economy. By better understanding the factors that shape the early economic integration experiences of refugees in Utah, we will be better equipped to promote sustainable self-sufficiency after resettlement.

Organization of Dissertation

The dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter II puts this study into context, by reviewing the extant literature on assimilation and economic integration. It also reviews research into specific factors contributing to economic integration including forms of capital and social contexts. The chapter concludes by presenting a *Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration*. Chapter III presents the research design, describing my mixed methods approach to testing the holistic model. Chapter IV summarizes the characteristics of the refugees included in the study. Chapter V uses quantitative analytical methods to investigate the how ethnic origins, forms of capital, and the Utah context affect the amount of time it takes for refugees in Utah integrate into the local

⁷ In addition, any findings related to temporal economic shifts will be conservative estimates of the actual relationship, which bolsters the strength of those findings.

economy. The chapter analyzes two markers of economic integration: formally entering the labor market (by finding a job) and finding a job that pays a livable wage. Chapter VI scrutinizes qualitative data gleaned from the free-form text of service provider case notes and focus groups with Somali refugees. It delves more deeply into the refugee employment experience, addressing questions raised by the quantitative analysis and highlighting new themes. This chapter explores two-way integration, cultural difference, and intersectionality as they relate to the refugee employment experience. Chapter VII is a concluding chapter that unites the three previous chapters, coalescing the quantitative and qualitative findings and summarizing the theoretical and practical implications.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In the United States finding adequate employment is partially contingent upon the education, skills, and previous work experience of the applicant. However, during the recent economic recession many highly skilled workers failed to find employment. The prospects for job seekers with low skill levels and limited experience were dismal. And, the disadvantage was compounded for non-native job seekers such as refugees.

Since the principal goals after resettlement in the U.S. are integration and self-sufficiency, it is important to understand how both researchers and service providers define these concepts. Adaptation and integration are understood in a variety of ways. Political and governmental actors typically discuss their expectations for immigrants to learn the local language and adapt to cultural norms. They also expect progression toward economic self-sufficiency. In contrast, scholars and service providers discuss integration in terms of the modes, or types, of integration and the degree, using terms such as acculturation, adaptation, assimilation, incorporation, and integration to describe this cornucopia of processes.

Economic self-sufficiency is only one aspect of refugee integration. The concept of self-sufficiency is similarly diverse. The U.S. government treats self-sufficiency as a

goal where nonreliance on public assistance programs is the result. If we are ultimately concerned with economic well-being and reduced vulnerability, I would argue that a more appropriate goal is the acquisition of a job with a livable wage. This cannot occur without first participating in and later integrating into the host economy. At its most basic, economic integration involves participation in the economy. Over time, a more complex form of integration may occur where adaptation by the refugee is complemented with adaptation by the host society, such that discrimination is reduced and reasonable accommodations of refugee cultures and practices are common (Ager and Strang 2008; Castles, M. J. Miller, and Ammendola 2005; Nee and Sanders 2001). However, the degree, rapidity, and modes of adaptation and integration vary depending on the refugee's characteristics, the availability of economic and social opportunities, and the socio-cultural context.

What follows is an exposition of the extant literature on assimilation and integration as currently applied to both refugees and immigrants. In reviewing this literature, I will highlight the areas where refugees have yet to be investigated as distinct from immigrants. The subsequent sections also review the literature discussing the individual and contextual factors influencing economic integration, such as individual forms of capital (relevant skills and barriers) and the social and economic conditions in the receiving community. In the process of summarizing this literature, I will outline a holistic theory of economic integration that builds on existing scholarship.

Refugee Assimilation and Integration

Much of the existing research into the adaptation of immigrants after migration to the U.S. emphasizes a series of adaptive stages (Gordon 1964; Park 1914; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). These stages are not proscriptive; rather they are ideal-typical descriptions of some common progressions toward full assimilation and the American notion of the melting pot. Park (1914) argued that assimilation progresses in four stages “moving from contact to conflict to accommodation, culminating in assimilation” (155). Other scholars see the stages as moving from contact, where migrants simply begin participating in some aspects of society, including the economy to acculturation, where immigrants learn the language and learn cultural rules, eventually adopting many of these practices (Alba and Nee 1997; Gordon 1964). In subsequent stages immigrants are integrated into the economy and other major social institutions and structures (Gordon 1964; Nee and Sanders 2001), and are progressing toward economic well-being (Kuhlman 1991). In the final stages, we see the beginning of two-way integration such that the receiving society begins to adapt to and accept the migrants (Strang and Ager 2010). In the next section I explain the various theories of assimilation and integration in greater depth.

Models of Assimilation and Integration

Early literature on immigrant adaptation and incorporation focused on assimilation. However, most of the research focused solely on immigrants. On the rare occasion where research includes refugees, scholars have failed to distinguish their incorporation pathways from those of voluntary migrants. As a result, I present a mostly

chronological look at assimilation and integration theory, after which I discuss a pivotal refugee-focused study of economic integration. This study highlights how the distinctive experiences of refugees might impact economic integration.

Researchers in the early to mid-twentieth century defined assimilation as a non-uniform process of intergroup interactions and adaptation that results in some degree of incorporation of new ethnic groups into mainstream society (Gordon 1964; Park 1914). In the vernacular, assimilation is often described using a ‘melting pot’ metaphor that suggests that a diverse group of immigrants and citizens blend (or melt) into an amalgamated American. Two theorists of assimilation are important to mention. In his foundational work on racial assimilation in the United States, Robert Park noted two distinct meanings of assimilation: “to make like” and “to take up and incorporate” (Park 1914:606). While he did not anticipate social homogeneity as the end-result of assimilation, rather a ‘cosmopolitan’ multiculturalism, he did predict that immigrants would adopt the host’s “language, characteristic attitudes, and modes of behavior” (ibid.), and eventually come to identify as members of the host nation. Park emphasized the *process* of assimilation. He argued that the process is a result of repeated and increasingly complex interactions and interdependencies between immigrant and native-born individuals (Kivisto 2004). Eventually, a complete merging into the host culture is expected, though it may take several generations.

Drawing on the work of Park, Gordon investigated assimilation and the process of becoming American by examining “the nature of group life itself within a large, industrialized, urban nation composed of a heterogeneous population” (Gordon 1964:3). He describes the process as composed of seven stages, or types. These include

acculturation, structural assimilation, marital assimilation, identificational assimilation, attitude receptional assimilation (absence of prejudice), behavior receptional assimilation (absence of discrimination), and civic assimilation. While many scholars accuse Gordon of being teleological and stage-bound, his stages can occur in many different orders and with many different speeds (71). Figure 1 highlights how variable these stages can be. However, he Gordon notes that acculturation is one of the earlier/easier processes, and that structural assimilation can be more difficult. “Once structural assimilation has occurred, . . . all of the other types of assimilation will naturally follow” (81). Critics of this school of thought saw weaknesses in three key areas: the teleological nature of the stages, the neglect of structural elements in integration, and the inattention to generational timeframes.

The first critique, that this early work was teleological, stems from the fact that both Park and Gordon outline stages that, even when they occur in different orders, eventually lead to a specific form of assimilation. Subsequent scholars highlight alternate patterns of social integration. These include multiculturalism (Alba and Nee 1997), segmented assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut 2001), and incorporation without two-way integration (Castles et al. 2005).

Second, assimilation theory was grounded in an earlier historical era, specifically the early 1900s, and later used to try to make sense of contemporary migration patterns and issues. Portes (1997) argues that much of this early theory was flawed as it relied on “stereotypical characterizations of immigrant groups” (800). Also, the legal concept of refugee did not begin to form until the 1950s, so early assimilation theory did not take this group into consideration. A more significant flaw was the “persistent focus on

relatively superficial aspects of the process of adaptation” (800). Specifically, Portes notes a neglect of structural forces in favor of an emphasis on “language, cultural habits, and spatial patterns” (800). Portes and Bach (1985) rectify this oversight by examining the social capital of Cuban immigrants and refugees. They found that strong social networks of fellow Cubans in the migration destination both drive migration and assist with adaptation after migration. Moreover, those who lack the cultural knowledge and employment skills in their new home can often find work within the Cuban community (Wilson and Portes 1980). These enclave economies support some aspects of assimilation, such as structural assimilation, while, at times, slowing others, such as comprehensive acculturation, marital assimilation, and identificational assimilation (R. Allen 2009; Hagan 1998). These studies adeptly addressed many of the earlier weaknesses in assimilation theory.

Finally, critics argue that researchers should pay more attention to the multigenerational aspects of assimilation. While both Park and Gordon note that the timeframe for assimilation varies widely, even spanning generations, they do little more than mention the possibility. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) rectify this by specifically studying second-generation immigrants. They find that the process of assimilation varies so dramatically because “both the immigrant population and the host society are heterogeneous,” and while assimilation might be useful as a broad concept it has little predictive power because “the process is subject to too many contingencies” (45). Contingencies such as individual characteristics and histories, the social context of the receiving society (including whether a co-ethnic community is present), and their family support structure combine to create a variety of outcomes. Portes and Zhou call these

diverse second-generation outcomes segmented assimilation (Portes and Zhou 1993). Assimilation, for the second generation, may be *selective*, i.e., upward assimilation reflecting Park and Gordon's vision, *consonant*, mostly upward with minor jolts of downward assimilation, or *dissonant*, predominantly downward assimilation. These pathways assume that full assimilation rarely, if ever, occurs in the first generation, but first-generation experiences and progress affect the potential outcomes of the second generation. In their discussion of segmented assimilation Portes and Rumbaut identify several modes of incorporation, which are contextual factors that facilitate or impede assimilation, such as governmental reception, social reception, and the presence of co-ethnic communities.

The above critiques spawned a profusion of research spelling out the intricacies of immigrant adaptation and integration. They also gave rise to an abundance of new terms describing the various ways that immigrants become a part of society. Table 1 summarizes a few key terms.

The concept of integration was introduced in the early 1990s and is a commonly used alternative to the term assimilation. The rise in the use of this term in social research parallels the increasing inclusion of refugees in the study of how immigrants become a part of society (Ager and Strang 2008; Castles et al. 2001; Favell 1998; Korac 2003; see for example: Kuhlman 1991; Robinson 1998; 1999; Sigona 2005). However, these studies apply the same theories of integration to refugees as they do to voluntary migrants. To date, none has tested whether a unique theory should be applied to this distinct group.

Integration differs from assimilation in that it maintains that “the migrants

maintain their own identity, yet become part of the host society to the extent that host population and refugees can live together in an acceptable way” (Kuhlman 1991:6). However, beyond this distinction, Ager and Strang (2008:167) argue that there is no single accepted definition of integration. Instead, they assert that integration occurs across many domains, including employment, housing, education, and health. In their view, successful integration occurs across many domains.⁸ Castles et al. offer some further clarification of the term, specifying that it is a “two-way process” requiring “adaption on the part of the newcomer but also by the host society” (2001:11). In a more recent, comprehensive study of how immigrants become part of society, Castles, de Haas, and Miller (2005) examine multiple domains of integration. However, they prefer the term incorporation over integration, as it is more neutral, and does not “imply a specific idea of where the process should lead” (265). This is appropriate for their study as the domains they examine span the migration process, employment and economics, culture, social inequality (race and gender), policy, and civic engagement (political participation).

In this study, I focus on one domain of integration: economic integration. In contrast to Castles et al., I prefer the term integration precisely because it implies “a specific idea of where the process should lead,” it should lead to economic well-being, broadly defined. Economic integration involves participation in the economic aspects of the host society where ‘economic’ refers to “those aspects of social life having to do with attaining material welfare through the optimal allocation of resources which are scarce and alternatively applicable” (8). Successful economic integration involves engagement

⁸ In a similar vein, Phillimore and Goodson examine the inverse: social exclusion across multiple domains (2006).

in the U.S. economy that results in a reduction of vulnerability and precariousness and progresses toward sustainable self-sufficiency and economic well-being.

Economic Integration

Migration scholars and practitioners define economic integration in a variety of ways, each hinting at a broader conception of assimilation or integration. Operational definitions of economic assimilation found in the research include labor market participation, income level, occupational prestige, occupational mobility, and some consider immigrant satisfaction with their occupation or income. However, there is debate over whether entrepreneurship, participation in ethnic economies, or working in a bad job constitutes economic integration. The drawback to using unidimensional measurements stems from the fact that the factors that improve the likelihood of one measure may have a different effect on other measures (Potocky-Tripodi 2003).

One of the first scholars to articulate a clear, multidimensional theory of economic integration and to relate it to broader conceptions of assimilation is Tom Kuhlman. He argues that:

If refugees are able to participate in the host economy in ways commensurate with their skills and compatible with their cultural values; if they attain a standard of living which satisfies culturally determined minimum requirements (standard of living is taken here as meaning not only income from economic activities, but also access to amenities such as housing, public utilities, health services, and education.); if the socio-cultural change they undergo permits them to maintain an identity of their own and to adjust psychologically to their new situation; if standards of living and economic opportunities for members of the host society have not deteriorated due to the influx of refugees; if friction between host population and refugees is not worse than within the host population itself; and if the refugees do not encounter more discrimination than exists between groups previously settled within the host society: then refugees are truly integrated (Kuhlman 1991:16).

Few researchers take such a comprehensive approach. A multitude of studies focus solely

on labor market participation or solely on income. However, a few examine more than one marker of economic integration. Even Potoki-Tripodi, who explicitly tests Kuhlman's causal framework, only analyzes employment status and wage (Potocky-Tripodi 2003). To date, no studies have examined all four dimensions and examinations of standard of living (outside simple measures of income level) are rare. However, as the fourth item implies, economic integration is inextricable from the other forms of integration. Kuhlman's four criteria for assessing economic integration include:

(1) adequate participation in the economy; (2) an income which allows an acceptable standard of living; (3) access equal to that of the host population to those goods and services to which access is not determined solely by income levels; (4) the impact of refugees on the host society having been such that, on balance, the position of the various socio-economic categories within the indigenous population with respect to criteria (1), (2) and (3) has not deteriorated" (1991:16).

Adequate participation in the economy, commonly referred to as labor market participation, is typically measured by assessing employment status (i.e., whether the migrant is currently employed) (Kanas and van Tubergen 2009). This type of measure is more often used for refugees than immigrants due to the host government's desire to get new arrivals off of cash assistance as soon as possible (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Haines 2010). However, it is also assessed for voluntary migrants since research has shown the immigrants tend to have longer periods of unemployment than similarly qualified native-born individuals (Kanas and van Tubergen 2009). Unfortunately, researchers typically measure labor market participation at one point in time, providing little insight into the longer-term processes of economic adaptation and assimilation, and few, if any, studies track labor market participation longitudinally.

More often, researchers assess economic integration by analyzing the income of immigrants. This measure begins to address Kuhlman's second criterion, an acceptable

standard of living, but fails to capture it fully.⁹ Scholars have studied of the income of immigrants both cross-sectionally (Berman, Lang, and Siniver 2003; Chiswick 1978; Chiswick and P. W. Miller 2008) and longitudinally (Borjas 1995; Butcher and DiNardo 2002) with income measured as annual, monthly, weekly or hourly wages. A handful of studies assess whether immigrant incomes are converging with or diverging from incomes of the native-born. However, most research fails to address whether the income received is sufficient to allow “an acceptable standard of living” (Kuhlman 1991:16).

The literature addressing job quality and occupational prestige takes a first step toward examining immigrants’ standard of living. In the U.S. labor market, approximately one in seven jobs is characterized by “bad” job characteristics, such as low wages, no benefits, and no pension (Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson 2000). Furthermore, precarious work such as part-time work, temporary work, and contract work is becoming more frequent and is more closely associated with bad job characteristics (ibid.). In their study of migration, Castles et al. (2005) describe the demand side of the contemporary labor market and the shift toward precarious work. They note that migrants are more vulnerable to these shifts than native-born residents. In addition, negative social contexts of reception, coupled with skill deficits, and cultural difference, make refugees significantly more likely to work in precarious employment arrangements than native-born citizens (Darity and Mason 1998; Nee and Sanders 2001; Waldinger and Lichter 2003). In addition, several studies found that refugees have more and longer periods of unemployment and have less prestigious occupations in addition to lower earnings

⁹ Kuhlman notes that it is crucial for researchers to operationally define “an acceptable standard of living” if they wish to assess the phenomenon.

(Kanas and van Tubergen 2009; Samuel 1984).

A few researchers attempt to capture job quality using a multidimensional measure of economic integration that includes an assessment of occupational prestige (Samuel 1984; Werbner 1999). Among quantitative studies, multidimensional measures, especially those that include a discussion of occupational prestige, have offered the best picture of economic assimilation. These studies hint at the economic success of migrants, both in a concrete sense and relative to the host population. However, these studies fail to explicitly discuss whether these measures capture Kuhlman's second criterion. One goal of this study is to explicitly investigate these criteria.

Migration scholars seldom address Kuhlman's third criterion. When addressed, it is captured in studies of discrimination, but it has not yet been examined in studies of economic integration. Both the third and fourth criteria address changes in the receiving community, and sociological researchers have not yet included this dimension. However, as Strang and Ager (2010) note the European Council on Refugees and Exiles has been emphasizing the importance of "reciprocal" or two-way integration for more than a decade. While the authors acknowledge that the concept of two-way integration implies that the host population and the refugee groups are homogeneous groups, they suggest viewing integration as a gradual and multidimensional process where "immigrants change society at the same time as they integrate into it" (Strang and Ager 2010:602).

Case studies, such as Portes and Bach's (1985) investigation of Cuban refugee communities and Gold's comparison of Soviet Jews and Vietnamese refugee communities in California, offer more nuanced assessments of economic adaptation. Portes and Bach look at enclave employment and find that it impedes mainstream labor

market work, which has more opportunities for occupational mobility. Gold emphasizes the strategies different groups use to respond to the contexts of their social and economic reception. Both studies note the diversity of strategies employed by immigrants in pursuit of economic integration and they argue that unidimensional perspectives on assimilation are insufficient for understanding these complex processes. Like Kuhlman, they maintain that labor market participation, precariousness of employment, income and the acquisition of an adequate wage, occupational prestige, occupational mobility, and even job satisfaction should be evaluated when assessing economic integration. To fully investigate the multiple dimensions of economic integration and explore the nuances of all four criteria a mixed methods approach is warranted.

Now that we understand how the extant literature conceptualizes and assesses economic integration it is important to examine those factors that contribute to economic integration in its many dimensions. The next section explores the different factors that contribute to divergent pathways of economic integration.

Pathways to Economic Integration

Because such a small portion of the world's refugees are given the opportunity to resettle in a new country, it is important to ensure that resettlement leads to self-sufficiency rather than marginalization. Research suggests that several forms of capital—human, cultural, social, and symbolic—act as supply-side assets, enabling economic integration, while the conditions and needs of the local economy act as the demand-side, determining employment opportunities, and social contexts of reception determine the actual accessibility of those opportunities. In the sections that follow, I outline the

literature describing the role of these forms of capital and contextual factors in economic integration, after which, I outline a Holistic Model of Economic Integration.

Human Capital

Human capital is the most widely studied of the capitals vis-à-vis economic assimilation. Even when it is not the focus of the research, it is included as a ‘control.’ This is most probably because human capital is fundamentally embedded in labor market practices. Human capital is defined as the resources *in* people that have the potential to increase future income (G. S. Becker 1964). In essence, a résumé is a laundry list of a job applicant’s human capital. Investments that increase human capital typically include education, job-training, skill improvement and work experience. These investments are expected to improve labor market outcomes for immigrant and native-born workers alike.

In a 2000 study, Friedberg found that the value of human capital, both education and labor market experience, are context dependent and may have limited transferability. Skills and educational attainment may have more symbolic value in an immigrant’s nation of origin (Friedberg 2000). Upon further investigation, this study found that the returns to foreign and host elementary education were equal, but returns to secondary and higher levels of education diverged sharply. A number of other studies also found lower returns to foreign education relative to education in the host country, with causes ranging from credential devaluation to nontransferability of credentials (Kanas and van Tubergen 2009; Li 2008). However, Li found that “only immigrant men and women of visible minority background suffer an earnings penalty” (2008:306), lending credence to Reitz and Sklar’s hypothesis about the disadvantage of conspicuous ‘foreignness’ (1997).

In the case of refugees, the disparity in returns to education and experience is even greater than it is for voluntary migrants (Connor 2010). First, though there is enormous diversity in the human capital of refugees, many contemporary refugee groups have lower levels of transferable education than their immigrant counterparts. Second, they often lack documentation of their accomplishments (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Bloch 2002; Lamba 2003; Waxman 2001). Despite this, human capital remains one of the strongest predictors of refugee wages (Potocky-Tripodi 2001; 2003).

One additional form of human capital that is particularly relevant to the economic assimilation of immigrants and refugees is English proficiency. Fluency in spoken English has a strong effect on the labor market outcomes of both refugees and immigrants (Bloch 2002; Chiswick 1991; Potocky-Tripodi 2003). However, in comparable studies of Hebrew fluency in Israel, it was found that “fluency had almost no effect on wage growth in the low-skill occupations” (Berman et al. 2003:266). In contrast, high-skill occupations saw a significant wage improvement for both gains in Hebrew proficiency and fluency (ibid.). Thus, while language proficiency may not be crucial for the early employment of low-skill refugees and immigrants, its importance grows as they strive for occupational mobility.

The acquisition of the language of the host country depends on participation in mainstream labor market and social institutions where interaction with the native-born population is frequent (Beiser and Hou 2000; van Tubergen and Kalmijn 2009). Consequently, female immigrants and refugees are often at a greater disadvantage than their male counterparts due to their lower rates of labor market participation. Moreover, female refugees are more isolated than female voluntary migrants in part due to their

lower rates of employment (Beiser and Hou 2000) . Female immigrants are more likely than female refugees to work as domestics. This work reduces isolation and provides exposure to and interaction with local language speakers, giving the workers the opportunity to gain language skills that female refugees lack. Unlike their voluntary migrant counterparts, female refugees are unlikely to work as domestics and owing to their poor language skills they are more likely to associate almost exclusively with their co-ethnic community. Furthermore, exclusive co-ethnic socializing and ethnic enclave employment both tend to hinder language acquisition limiting the future employment prospects of immigrants and refugees.

Social Networks and Social Capital

Because human capital acquired in foreign markets is less beneficial, and the return to human capital investments for refugees is significantly lower than for immigrants, many refugees, like their voluntary immigrant counterparts, seek to offset their disadvantages by relying on their co-ethnic social networks. Migration research contains extensive discussion of social capital and its effect on both migration and assimilation. Social capital is found in networks of social relations and is the “aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to... membership in a group” (Bourdieu 1986:51) which can provide members with information, credit, credentials, and material assets to assist in their economic assimilation.

When considering general assimilation and economic adaptation, scholars typically discuss the social capital found in family ties, co-ethnic communities, ethnic enclave economies, and ethnic religious organizations. Research documents how each of

these provide refugees and immigrants with access to information and social support (Connor 2011; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Wilson and Portes 1980). Several scholars find that immigrants and refugees use their network ties to compensate for their lack of human capital (Beaman 2012; Coleman 1988; Menjívar 2000). However, they note that the different types of social connections have distinct effects on integration in general and economic integration in particular. For example, Portes and Zhou find that family structure and close ties matter for the assimilation pattern of second-generation immigrants, with those who have strong supportive family structures experiencing upward assimilation trajectories (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Likewise, co-ethnic community networks can ease the initial entry and adaptation process, but over time, the usefulness of these ties diverges for men and women (R. Allen 2009; Hagan 1998). And, if the co-ethnic community lacks resources, as in the case of the Salvadoran community in California, these networks may be ineffective substitutes for the lack of human capital and government-sponsored social programs (Menjívar 2000).

Immigrant enclaves may provide employment opportunities for newly arrived members of the ethnic group or may provide the more established migrants with sources of credit and other collective resources that help them start businesses (Portes and Bach 1985). Religious communities can also provide connections to the broader host community. Similar religious beliefs bridge ethnic and native congregations, while outreach programs engage the larger community on a more secular basis (Warner and Wittner 1998).

Unfortunately, the social capital found in co-ethnic communities, ethnic enclave economies, and ethnically-based religious organizations can be constraining, limiting

opportunities for language acquisition and reinforcing cultural norms that may contrast with those of the broader U.S. culture. Women, in particular, can be disadvantaged by restrictive gender norms (Hagan 1998). Co-ethnic communities reinforce traditional gender norms found in the country of origin, while gendered occupational structures in the host community provide a structure for reinforcing restrictive gender norms and reducing women's external social networks (ibid.). In addition, some ethnic norms, such as dress codes, increase conspicuous foreignness and may restrict the types of jobs an immigrant can accept (R. Allen 2009). For example, Muslim Somali women often could not work in manufacturing positions since their hijabs would violate safety protocols (ibid.). These studies also show that women's participation in co-ethnic social networks reduces their earnings. Women who find jobs within their ethnic enclaves may lack the opportunity for occupational mobility, while those who use their co-ethnic ties to find jobs outside the community may receive more limited information, restricted to information about "gender-appropriate" job opportunities. Thus, while social capital may function as a safety net for both males and females, long-term reliance can be detrimental to females (R. Allen 2009; Hagan 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994), and may hamper males' move into the host labor market (Portes and Bach 1985; Wilson and Portes 1980).

Cultural Capital and Ethnic Origins

The next factor contributing to refugee capabilities and economic adaption is cultural capital. "Cultural capital concerns forms of cultural knowledge, competences [sic] or dispositions" (Bourdieu 1993:7) which, for our purposes, can help individuals gain access to institutions and professions and prevent them from violating the social

norms of the host culture. Zhou and Bankston, in their study of Vietnamese families, stress that “ethnicity is not simply an ascribed category; it is an identity rooted in distinctive patterns of social relationships” (Zhou and Bankston 1998:230). Those relationships often impose cultural norms that are in direct conflict with the cultural norms of the host society. Zhou and Bankston describe parental behaviors, such as corporal punishment, that were commonplace in Vietnam, but inappropriate and even illegal in the U.S. They also describe clashing culture norms around gender roles. However, this group has few cultural conflicts in the labor market. Other ethnic groups are not so fortunate in this regard. In their *Utah Refugee Needs Assessment*, Daniels and Belton (2015) discuss how refugees lack cultural ‘literacy’ in several key areas related to employment. Some refugees did not know they needed a formal job to earn money, others did not know how to find jobs, and language barriers often created obstacles to communicating on the job. Similarly, immigrants and refugees may lack knowledge of appropriate office behavior, speech patterns, and dress codes. For this group, cultural training may be essential if they are to experience any degree of success in the labor market.

Since cultural capital is acquired slowly, over a long period of social inculcation, the national origin of refugees and immigrants tends to be the most significant contributor to initial stocks of cultural capital. Indeed, national origin has an important effect on nearly all types of capital to be discussed here.

In Hein’s formulation of a theory of ethnic origins, he describes a conglomeration of national origin factors that contribute to an immigrant’s “particular conception of societal membership” and influence his or her adaptation in a new country (2006:31).

Based on his study of Cambodian and Hmong refugees in four U.S. states he formulates an ethnic-origins hypothesis that identifies cultures, homeland histories, and politics, in combination, as producing a significant effect on adaptation. Culture includes religious values such as the degree of individualism or collectivism in spiritual aspirations, and kinship norms. Homeland histories capture the nature of nation-state formation and the level of subordination, equality, and dominance found in national institutions. Politics includes political cleavage and the salience of inter- and intraethnic conflict over power. (Paraphrased from Table 2.3 32). Hein argues that, “[t]o interpret host society patterns of diversity, immigrants draw upon pre-existing conceptualizations of social relations and peoplehood” (40). Their backgrounds shape their “responses to new identities and inequalities” (227), which in turn, shape interactions with the native-born population and affect economic outcomes.

Unfortunately, culture is notoriously difficult to measure and is seldom included in quantitative research. Schwartz notes that

[t]he usefulness of culture as an explanatory variable depends upon our ability to ‘unpackage’ the culture concept. In order to do this, it is best to view ‘culture as a complex, multidimensional structure rather than as a simple categorical variable’ (Clark, 1987, p. 461) and to array cultures along interpretable dimensions (Schwartz 1994:85).

Schwartz, Minkov, Inglehart, and others have all contributed to research investigating these “interpretable dimensions.” However, one study devised what may be the quintessential typology of cultural dimensions. Hofstede et al. note that “values, more than practices, are the stable element in culture,” as such they assert, “comparative research on culture starts from the measurement of values” (G. Hofstede, G. J. Hofstede, and Minkov 2010:28). Their research measured corporate cultures based on the values expressed by members of the corporation. They compared those cultures across 26

nations in their original 1980 study and expanded through subsequent studies to include 107 countries. The dimensions of culture they devised based on these studies reflect the relationship of individuals to authority, the relationship between the individual and society, the individual's concept of masculinity and femininity, degrees of uncertainty avoidance, the individual's long or short-term orientation, and tendencies toward indulgence or restraint. What is interesting for studies of refugee integration is the fact that these authors found patterns of cross-national variation in these dimensions. Unfortunately, their study centered on corporations and their measure has not yet been modified for a more general comparison of national cultures. However, their work outlines a prototype of cultural dimensions that might offer a way to evaluate the impacts of ethnic origins and cultural difference (or deficits of cultural capital) in quantitative refugee research.

Symbolic Capital, Statuses, and Intersectionality

The final form of capital that affects economic adaptation is symbolic capital. Symbolic capital, "commonly called prestige, reputation, fame, etc." is related to various properties of an individual, whether ascribed or acquired, so long as the value of these properties is "perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu 1991:230). I will use the term to describe the (often negative) value of race, gender, and sexuality for refugee and immigrant assimilation.¹⁰ Since many individuals experience multiple intersecting

¹⁰ While Bourdieu does not apply the symbolic capital to race or gender or sexuality, his analysis does include gender and occasionally race when discussing the power that arises from inequalities in symbolic capital. For him they are the examples of no or low symbolic capital.

statuses that disadvantage them in the workplace, intersectionality is also important to understand if we hope to understand the effect of these statuses on economic integration. In the sections that follow I will first review the literature on race and gender vis-à-vis economic integration, and then address studies of intersectionality.

The effect of race on economic outcomes has received considerable attention. Given that the racial composition of refugees and immigrants has shifted in recent decades, the potential detrimental effect of certain racial characteristics on labor market outcomes is important to consider. A number of studies have found a detrimental effect of racial minority status. Darity and Mason find strong evidence that race and gender-based discrimination persist in both hiring practices and wage levels, but they anticipate that this will gradually decrease (Darity and Mason 1998). Reitz and Sklar find that “racial minority immigrants pay a cost for their minority status in reduced occupational status and earnings” but that this cost is not related to the retention of visible ethnic or cultural practices, but to skin color alone (Reitz and Sklar 1997:269).

Two other studies confirm the effect of a ‘color cost’ in the labor market, but note that the disadvantage is stronger for darker skinned individuals and begins to disappear for light-skinned persons (Goldsmith, Hamilton, and Darity 2006; Lee and Bean 2004). However, most studies of immigrant economic adaptation do not discuss race. Instead, they emphasize the ethnic origins of the immigrant.

In a pioneering study entitled, *How the Other Half Works: Immigration and the Social Organization of Labor*, Waldinger and Lichter discuss the presence of prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. The authors note that managerial preferences more often reflect perceptions of various groups’ “suitability for subordination” (Waldinger

and Lichter 2003:143) than personal prejudices. Employers want people who have the requisite skill and learn quickly, but since the workplace is inherently social, they also want people who are friendly, deferential, and cooperative. Unfortunately, “employers do not always know which personal traits and experiences best predict job performance” (150). Thus, they resort to network relations of ‘good’ employees to eliminate uncertainty, and they often ascribe certain traits and stereotypes to entire nativity groups. In addition, refugees and immigrants are often willing-workers, making them desirable employees for low-skill positions. While race is not the only factor at play in their study, Waldinger and Lichter show how race interacts with managerial needs in producing ethnic niches in low-skill jobs.

A second potentially disadvantaging status for refugees is gender. Many refugees and immigrants come from nations with strong patriarchal norms. While settling in the U.S. may offer some women a greater degree of freedom than they had previously experienced, their experiences in their home country may have left them with fewer marketable skills than their male counterparts (Beiser and Hou 2000). Moreover, they continue to perform ‘women’s work’ for the family and may not be able to accept standard, full-time employment (Wong 2000). Conflict often arises within the family as women attempt to help the family adapt economically and socially, which can lead to renegotiation of roles or to family fragmentation (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Refugee women typically find employment in the U.S. in low-skill occupations, including manufacturing, food production, and hotel housekeeping (R. Allen 2009; Bloch 2002). Overall, refugee women experience lower levels of employment, lower wages, and higher

rates of employment in precarious positions¹¹ (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Cranford, Vosko, and Zukewich 2003; Hagan 1998).

Like other social actors, many refugees experience multiple intersecting disadvantageous statuses, such as race, gender, disability, sexuality, social class, and religion. Indeed, the refugee status itself is one of many statuses that position individuals vis-à-vis others in society. Moreover, it is a complex status, simultaneously providing advantages and disempowering the individual.¹² This disempowerment is most visible in the work of voluntary agencies. Often the refugee experience is pathologized and treated as something to be fixed (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2003). Aid organizations operate within a rationalized institutional framework that attempts to provide neutral and impartial access to assistance and resources. In the process, refugees are stripped of their individuality. And, though most voluntary agencies express the goal of empowering refugees, trainings are often demeaning and the service providers' 'honest' discussions of the barriers preventing achievement of some goals (their presentation of the 'reality' of life in the host community) can be disheartening (Tomlinson and Egan 2002).

While scholars often conceptualize the many disempowering statuses experienced by refugees as distinct, intersectionality theories assert multiple disempowering statuses can't be reduced to single axes that can be added together when more than one is present. Crenshaw describes the intersectionality of various "axes of power" thusly:

¹¹ Precarious positions include informal labor, atypical contractual arrangements, short-term jobs, part-time jobs, 'flexible' work, jobs without benefits, and jobs with poor working conditions.

¹² For a full discussion of the disempowering nature of the refugee status see (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2003; Harrell-Bond 1999; Nyers 2006; Tomlinson and Egan 2002).

Intersectionality, is a conceptualization of the problem that attempts to capture both the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more axes of subordination. It specifically addresses the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create background inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes—and the like (Crenshaw 2014:17).

In this framework, a person with multiple, disempowering statuses may experience them as single influential status in some circumstances and as integrated categories in others.

In essence, categories are distinct *and* additive *and* multiplicative *and* integrated depending on the circumstances. For example, a black Muslim woman might sometimes experience discrimination or some other disadvantage based on her religion alone. At other times, she might experience disadvantage based on her race and gender. At other times, she might experience the three statuses as integrated—intertwined and inseparable.

Intersectionality has been extensively researched in relation to identity (Crenshaw 1991; Settles 2006). A person's identity, when they are members of multiple social groups (e.g., race, gender, sexuality), is typically an integration of their multiple categories of membership (Bowleg 2008; Crenshaw 1991; Settles 2006). However, a number of researchers found that people often prioritize one identity (Bowleg 2008). Bowleg in her exploration of the methods best suited to intersectionality research found that people rank their identity categories specifically because the researchers asked them to. When open-ended questions were asked, people responded by listing a hybridized identity (*ibid.*).

The strand of intersectionality that has confirmed prioritization statuses is the strand focusing on discrimination and inequality. While scholars frequently characterize discrimination as being based on an intersection of statuses, there is evidence that “[d]iscriminatory practices are, indeed, sometimes based on only one social status, and

individuals who perceive discrimination in many cases give salience to one particular social status when making sense of their experiences” (Harnois 2014:483). It is possible that when structures are in place to formally reduce one form of discrimination the person only perceives discrimination based on one or more of their other statuses. In other words, they experience discrimination based on the most conspicuous and least protected status.

Despite the importance of intersectionality for analyzing the co-occurrence of multiple disadvantageous statuses, the notion of intersectionality has not yet been applied to the understanding the effect of multiple intersecting disadvantageous statuses of refugees and immigrants. However, Bürkner called for migration studies to adopt an intersectional approach, arguing that such an approach increases the explanatory power of migration research by limiting the use of essentialist categories of gender, age, and race; and reductionist categories of culture, ethnic communities, and appearance (2011). Intersection approaches have also not yet been applied to the field of work and employment relations (McBride, Hebson, and Holgate 2015). In sum, intersectionality is an important theoretical tool for analyzing the complexity of symbolic capital and its inverse, disempowering social statuses.

Context

Ideally, a refugee’s education, work experience, and language and other skills determine economic outcomes. However, contexts of reception can condition the effectiveness of their forms of capital. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) argue that two overarching contextual factors affect trajectories of economic integration: timing of

arrival and context of reception. Timing of arrival is important because immigrants arriving at different times face different economic conditions. During economic crises such as the recent recession, immigrants and refugees experience particularly difficult reception in the labor market (Castles et al. 2005). Arrival during troubling economic periods has an even more dramatic negative effect on economic trajectories. Åslund and Rooth's study of migrants in Sweden found that "initial exposure to high local unemployment has a clear [negative] impact on earnings and employment for at least ten years" (Åslund and Rooth 2007:424). A form of path dependency develops as a result of initially poor economic prospects due to skill losses caused by gaps in employment, and due to the tendency of "employers to use past unemployment as an indicator of low productivity" (423). The findings of this study indicate that while current economic conditions have an effect on employment prospects, the conditions at the time of initial arrival have a stronger and longer-lasting effect.

Portes and Rumbaut discuss contexts of reception in terms of three distinct modes: governmental, societal and communal (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). For Portes and Rumbaut governmental reception relates to policies of admittance.

Favorable reception [is] accorded to groups composed of legal refugees and asylees; neutral reception to groups of legal immigrants; hostile reception to groups suspected to harbor large numbers of unauthorized immigrants or being involved in the drug trade, becoming targets of deportation by U.S. immigrant authorities (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:51).

In today's political climate hostile reception might also be extended to groups suspected of being involved with terrorist organizations. In Portes and Rumbaut's original schema, all refugees would experience favorable governmental reception. However, in light of recent political events, including President Trump's travel ban, several refugee groups might be described as experiencing neutral or even hostile

reception (Roberts et al. 2017). A few have offered alternative methods of capturing governmental reception. Lanphier (2009), for example, looks at volumes of refugee flows and classifies national resettlement programs as emphasizing employment or culture. He argues that different configurations of assistance, such as sponsorship, voluntary agencies, and the availability of acculturation classes play out differently depending on the volume of refugee flows and the government's resettlement goals.

Societal reception, in Portes and Rumbaut's schema, relates to the presence of prejudicial attitudes. In their classification, "[p]rejudiced reception [is] accorded to nonwhite immigrants and to those with perceived involvement in the drug trade; neutral to groups defined as mostly white" (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:51). However, subsequent research has investigated the role of attitudes using direct measures of attitudes toward refugees and immigrants. Hume and Hardwick tested this theory as it applied to three groups of refugees resettled Portland, Oregon (2005). The authors found that positive attitudes of voluntary agencies and community leaders had a positive effect on economic adaptation, while discrimination and negative attitudes had a negative effect. They also observed that positive policy contexts encouraged positive attitudes on the part of institutional leaders. Moreover, social contexts of reception can vary based on conditions of exit¹³ and global political trends. The recent mass exodus of Syrian refugees in conjunction with the rise of neoconservative political actors has stimulated strong negative sentiments toward Muslim refugees (Esses et al. 2008; Murray and Marx 2013; Pedersen, Watt, and Hansen 2006; Schweitzer et al. 2011). Similarly, Kibreab found that

¹³ These conditions are discussed more extensively by Kuhlman and tested by Potoki-Tripodi (2001; 2003).

“one of the key determinants of refugee incorporation into host societies is the attitude of the local population” (Kibreab 1999:395).

Communal reception, for Portes and Rumbaut, relates to the characteristics of the co-ethnic community, specifically the concentration. They defined “concentrated ethnic communities” as “those that have large and highly visible concentration in at least one metropolitan area” (Portes and Rumbaut 2001:51). They also classify the dominant occupational status of the community as poor, working class, entrepreneurial or professional. For example, they classify Vietnamese immigrants as entrepreneurial and concentrated, while they classify Filipino migrants as professional and dispersed. In the U.S., refugees are resettled in metropolitan areas, and nearly all could be classified as concentrated. For refugees, a better method of assessing the co-ethnic community and its effect on economic and social integration might be to examine the size and degree of organization of co-ethnic associations (Brown 2012).

Finally, one scholar emphasized that the above contextual factors are not independent in their effects on immigrant integration. Kibreab (1999) found that refugee incorporation into the host society is a product of the interaction between the causes of migration, attitudes of reception, government policy and economic opportunity.

Putting It All Together: Refugee Capabilities

Structural and other circumstances that interfere with a refugee's ability to use his or her employment-related skills in the labor market are effectively reducing what Sen describes as their ‘real capabilities.’ Sen and Nussbaum’s capabilities approach is a perspective that asserts that well-being derives from conditions that enhance the ability of

individuals to help themselves. It is based on the notion that “[w]hat people can positively achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social powers, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives” (Sen 1999:5). Thus, refugees experience the benefit of resources, opportunities, and freedoms, but also the disadvantage of individual and societal barriers that interact to promote or hinder the achievement of various forms of well-being.

While capabilities have been extensively examined in relation to the economic and human development of nations, they have not yet been applied to issues of integration after migration. Moreover, the capabilities approach demands a *sui generis* approach that integrates a broad set of social context and individual factors more comprehensively than is typical for integration research. The perspective is added here, not to discredit existing integration scholarship, but to re-emphasize the need for a holistic approach, especially when studying refugees.

The capabilities approach argues that what a person is “able to do and to be” is powerfully influenced by social context. In the terminology of the migration literature, the combined elements of capabilities include forms of capital (Sen’s resources), social context (Sen’s opportunities and freedom), and the absence of prejudice and discrimination that accompanies two-way integration (Sen’s freedom). The model I present asserts refugees’ functional abilities and individual barriers, summarized as forms of capital, and the social context intersect in a nonlinear, co-evolutionary fashion that shapes employment prospects and achievements (Byrne 1998; Walby 2007).

A Holistic Model of Economic Integration

Now that we have an understanding of what is meant by integration in general, and economic integration in particular, and we have reviewed the factors known to affect integration trajectories we can draft a full model of economic integration. The historical development of integration theory points in the direction of a holistic model. Indeed Kuhlman has made great strides in drafting a comprehensive model. However, as he notes, he is uncertain that some aspects of his model are exhaustive. More importantly, his model has not yet been empirically tested in its complete form. The model I present here draws from four influential models of integration: Hein's *Ethnic Origins* model (2006), Nee and Sanders *Forms of Capital* model (2001), Portes and Rumbaut's *Modes of Incorporation* theory (2001), and Kuhlman's *Model of Refugee Integration* (1991).

Hein's *Ethnic Origins* theory specifies that origin cultures, homeland histories and politics shape integration patterns. He conceptualizes origin cultures as religious values and kinship norms. Homeland histories are characteristics of nation-state formation and the resultant "level of subordination, equality, and dominance in national institutions" (Hein 2006:32). In this model, Hein pays a lot of attention to culture, but other forms of capital are neglected, as are most contextual factors. Discrimination in employment, potentially a marker of social reception, is instead analyzed as an outcome. However, since their focus is on social adaptation, no other markers of economic integration are investigated.

The *Forms of Capital* model emphasizes the importance of social connections, human-cultural capital, and financial resources for transition to occupations with desirable statuses and income levels. These forms of capital shape whether immigrants

find employment in the ethnic economy or the mainstream economy, which in turn, contributes to the type and status of the occupations they attain (Nee and Sanders 2001).

Portes and Rumbaut's *Modes of Incorporation* asserts that immigrant human and social capital are the most beneficial in favorable economic contexts. In addition, favorable governmental, social, and communal reception improve immigrants' prospects for upward rather than downward economic integration (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Finally, Kuhlman's *Model of Refugee Integration* (shown in Figure 2) arguably the most comprehensive of the models, and the only model specific to refugees, adds a focus on two types of conditions in the host country: social-economic conditions and policies. While Kuhlman's model pays little attention to ethnic origins, he incorporates flight-related factors, including the political causes of flight. Though he notes that there is no typology that adequately measures the phenomena. One of Kuhlman's most important contributions is his multidimensional set of criteria for economic integration.

The holistic model I present here adds to previous models in several ways. First, it recommends a more comprehensive assessment of the forms of capital. This model separates cultural capital from human capital. I also include two distinct cultural components: culture of origin and individual-level cultural capital.¹⁴ Second, the model adds symbolic capital and intersectional disadvantage. Third, recognizing the complexity of phenomena that can combine to create refugee capabilities, the model articulates a

¹⁴ I do this by introducing a testable measure of cultural distance that captures the difference between refugee origin culture and U.S. culture. Cultural distance acts as a simultaneous marker of Hein's cultural dimension of ethnic origins with a marker of difference that may act as a deficit rather than capital in the labor market. Second, I address individual cultural differences specific to the domain of employment.

complex system of interactions between refugee histories and characteristics and the conditions of the host society. Fourth, the model assumes that these factors intersect in a nonlinear, co-evolutionary fashion that shapes employment prospects and achievements, which require temporal analytical components (Byrne 1998; Walby 2007). Fifth, the model requires a multidimensional approach to evaluating economic integration. It also adds occupational status and prestige to Kuhlman's recommended markers of economic integration. A visual representation of the model is shown in Figure 3 below.

While the holistic model of economic integration draws from the four models outlined above, it augments these models with several new features (a comparison of model features is shown in Table 2), including a new approach to the treatment of culture, the inclusion of symbolic capital, a *sui generis* emphasis, and a modified approach to capturing the multidimensional nature of economic integration. In essence, the model provides a framework for assessing refugees' real *capabilities* with regard to economic integration.

The broad hypotheses that follow from this model draw relationships between ethnic origins, forms of capital, and host-related contextual factors and three markers of economic integration—formal employment, adequate income, and the absence of discrimination.¹⁵ While I did not craft formal hypotheses around the model relationships shown in Table 2, they are an essential part of the model, driving its comprehensiveness. As such they are used to specify the design of the analytical models. The general hypotheses are shown in Table 3.

¹⁵ Data on the fourth marker, a non-negative impact on the host society, are currently unavailable for the state of Utah.

Conclusions

The impact of various forms of capital (human, cultural, symbolic, and social) and social contexts on assimilation and economic integration remain persistent topics in immigration research (R. Allen 2009; Borjas 1995; Castles et al. 2005; Chiswick 1997; Nee and Sanders 2001). However, due to the lack of detailed, representative refugee data, many questions remain about how ethnic origin and different forms of capital intersect with one another and with social contexts, and how these three dimensions contribute to refugee adjustment and integration after resettlement. In the next chapter I describe the methods I used to gather data sufficient to conduct a holistic analysis of refugee economic integration.

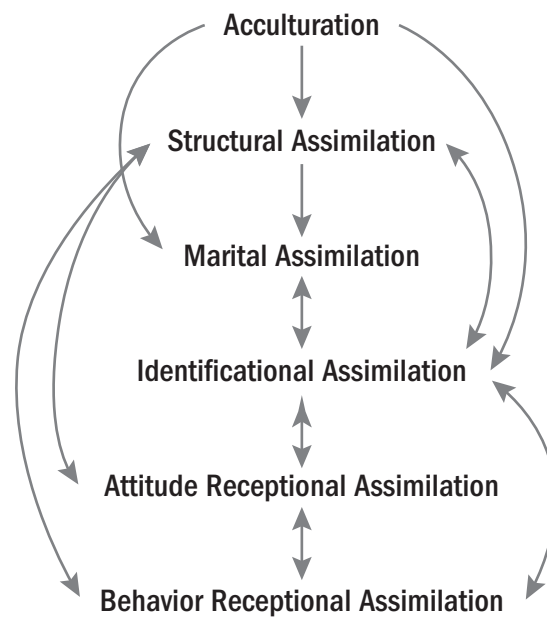


Figure 1. Assimilation Pathways

Table 1. Key Terms

Term	Relations with Other Groups	Maintenance of Cultural Identity	One- or Two-sided	End Goal
Assimilation	Y	N	One	Absorption
Segmented Assimilation	Maybe	Maybe	One	Absorption
Integration	Y	Y	Two	2-way Adaptation
Multiculturalism	Y	Y	Two	Conformity
Incorporation	Y	Y	Two	None

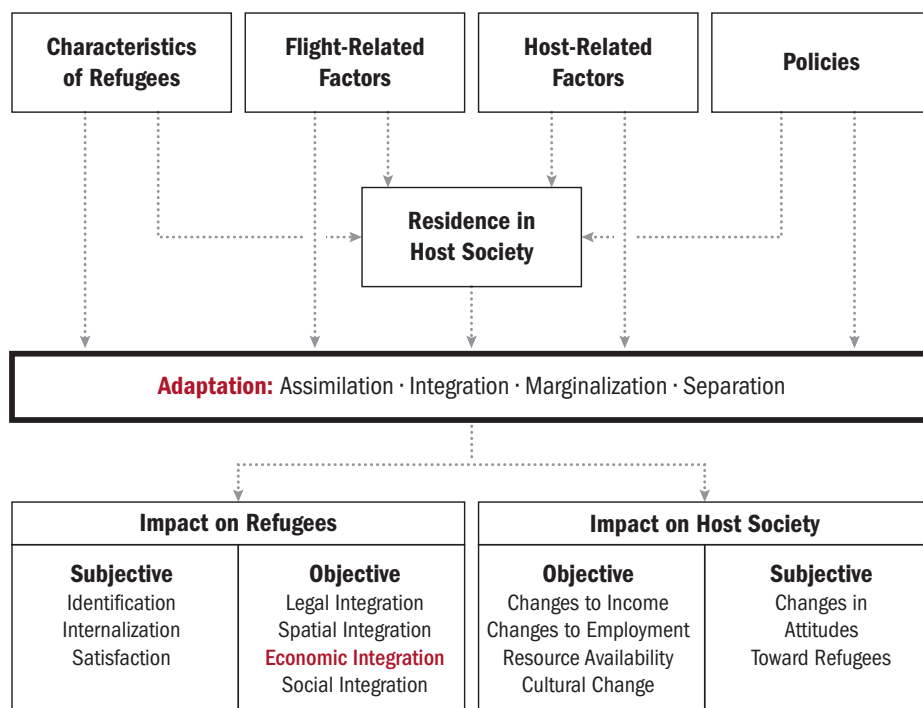


Figure 2. Kuhlman's Model of Refugee Integration

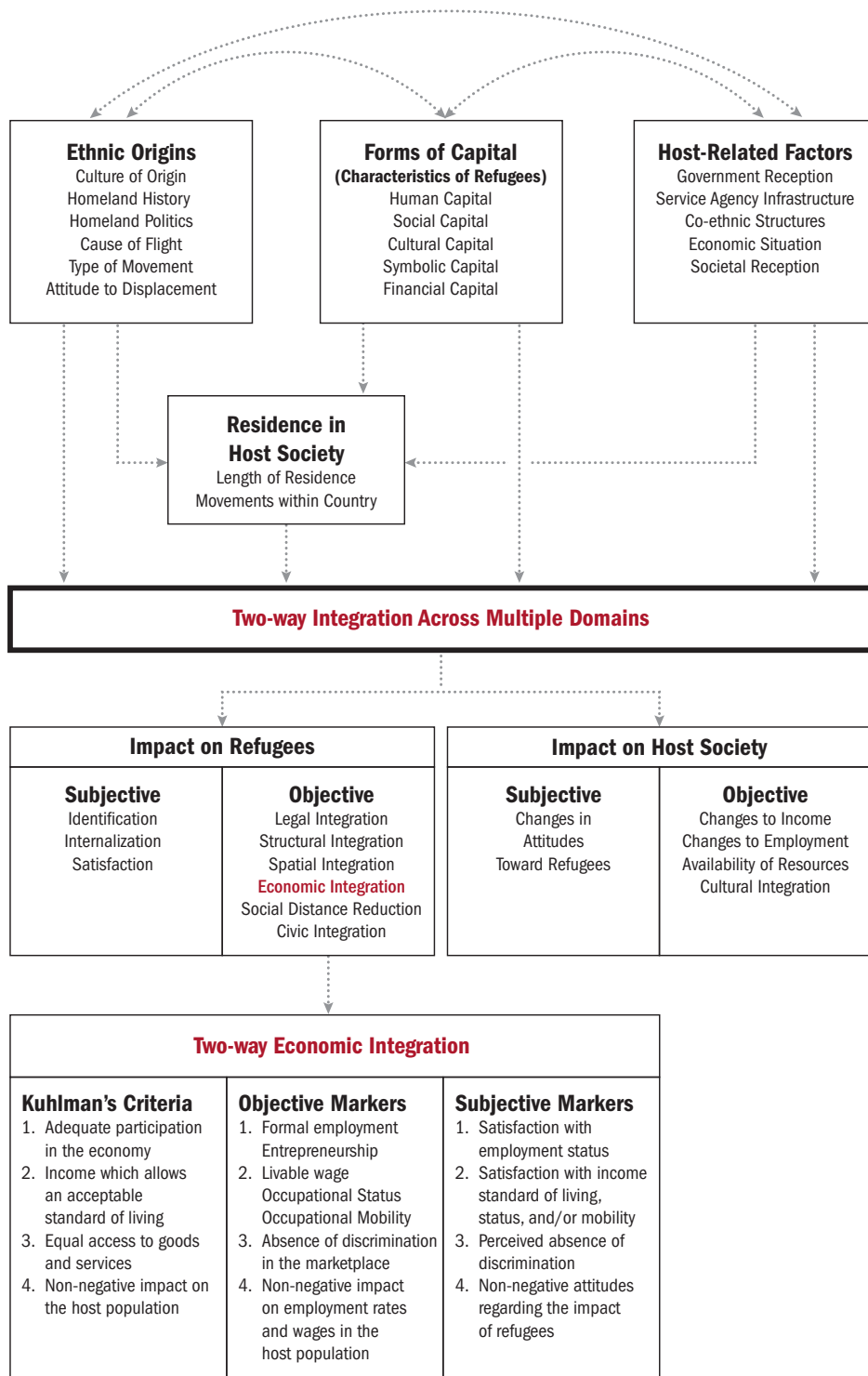


Figure 3. A Holistic Model of Economic Integration

Table 2. Model Comparisons

	ETHNIC ORIG.	FORMS CAPITAL	MODES INCorp.	KULMAN	HOLISTIC
ETHNIC ORIGINS					
Origin Culture	X			^c	X
Homeland Histories	X				X
Politics	X			^d	X
FORMS OF CAPITAL					
Human Capital		X	X	X	X
Social Capital		X	X	^e	X
Cultural Capital	X	^a			X
Symbolic Capital				^f	X
Financial Capital				X	
CONTEXT					
Economic Context			X	X	X
Governmental Reception		X	X	X	X
Social Reception			X	X	X
Communal		X	X	X	X
MODEL RELATIONSHIPS					
Predictors Interact		X		X	X
Relationships Change over Time					X
Different Effect on Diff. DVs [†]			X	X	X
ECONOMIC INTEGRATION					
Formal Employment		X	X	X	X
Adequate Income		^b	X	X	X
Occupational Status/Prestige					X
Absence of Discrimination	X			X	X
Non-negative Societal Impact				X	X

[†] Different predictors have distinct effects on the separate markers of economic integration.

^a Grouped with human capital; assessed as membership in an association with co-ethnics.

^b Typology of employment ranked by desirability which *might* parallel wage increases.

^c Uses ethnicity as a proxy for homeland culture.

^d Suggests using causes of flight and other flight-related factors, but notes there is no systematic tool available to capture causes of flight.

^e Treats availability of family and co-ethnic support networks as a feature of the community rather than a characteristic of the individual refugee.

^f Includes sex among demographic characteristics.

Table 3. Model Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Markers of Economic Integration
H1: The ethnic origins of refugees resettled in Utah affects their economic integration.	Formal Employment Adequate Income Absence of Discrimination
H2: The forms of capital possessed by refugees affect their economic integration.	
H3: Host-related contextual factors affect refugees' economic integration.	

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

Overview

Testing a Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration requires data describing refugee ethnic origins; their personal stores of human, social, cultural, and symbolic capital; and contexts of reception in their resettlement destination. Such an approach requires three types of data: (1) origin data, (2) refugee data (3) destination data. While origin and destination data are easily acquired, sufficiently detailed refugee data are more difficult to obtain. To acquire refugee data with adequate detail, I used a mixed methods research design involving the collection of quantitative data from closed-ended administrative forms and qualitative data from the free-form text of case notes and from focus groups.

Why Mixed Methods

Mixed methods approaches are designed to combine the elements of one method with elements of another, counterbalancing the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another (Axinn and Pearce 2006; Pearce 2002; Sieber 1973; Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010). For example, surveys have the advantage of being easily standardized and administered to large swaths of the target population, but they rarely provide richly

detailed information. Semistructured interviews and participant observation provide an abundance of detail but are less easily standardized, and typically depict only a small subset of the refugee population. Historical and archival data offer a comprehensive picture of a phenomenon, whether cross-sectional or over time, but standardization and level of detail may fluctuate. Combined methodologies potentially provide the advantages of multiple approaches, while mitigating the weaknesses. Moreover, Axinn and Pearce argue that

[v]arying the data collection approach can (1) provide information from one approach that was not identified in an alternative approach; (2) reduce non-sampling error by providing redundant information from multiple sources; and (3) ensure that a potential bias coming from one particular approach is not replicated in alternative approaches (2006:1).

The overarching goal of this study is to understand *what are refugees' prospects for self-sufficiency in Utah and why?* Since it is a broad question directed at all refugee groups a quantitative approach with a large sample from a variety of ethnic groups is warranted. As discussed in the prior chapter, previous research points to the need for a holistic approach. However, since quantitative data may not contain the rich detail demanded by a holistic approach, qualitative data are also necessary. Employing a mixed methods approach is a pragmatic solution to the conflicting requirements of this study's research aims (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2010). In addition, incorporating a less structured form of data may allow new insights to arise. As a result, this study employs three methods: quantitative analysis of administrative data, qualitative analysis of the text of case notes, and qualitative analysis of focus groups.

Research Design

Data Sources

The data for this study come from three principal sources: (1) closed-ended administrative forms from the Refugee and Immigrant Center at the Asian Association of Utah (RIC-AAU), (2) open-ended/free-form text of *Case Notes* from the RIC-AAU, (3) focus groups with Somali refugees. The quantitative analyses primarily use data from the first source, with dates and supplemental information drawn from the second. The qualitative analyses interrogate the data from the second and third sources.

Quantitative Data and Method

The Refugee Employment Database

The data for the quantitative portion of this study come from the RIC-AAU's case files for refugees who sought employment assistance in the state of Utah. While most states resettle refugees from only a handful of countries, the state of Utah resettles refugees from nearly 60 different countries making it ideal for studying and comparing refugees from a broad array of national origins. Moreover, the state has a single organization—the RIC-AAU—that administers the Federal funds for refugee employment assistance. The refugees in the database represent approximately 55 percent of the adult refugees resettled in Utah.

The data collected by the RIC-AAU contain a great deal more detail than most survey data. However, raw administrative data can be messy, difficult to work with, and incomplete. To convert these data into a format useful for quantitative analysis, I began by compiling the agency's monthly reports into a single data file. These reports contain

the name, gender, nationality, and date of arrival in the U.S. for each refugee served in a given month. They also include the date when the refugee initiated the job search, the date when he or she found a job, and information about the position obtained and the employer including wage level and benefits. This compilation of monthly reports formed the backbone of the database. Next, data from the administrative forms used for *Intake*, *Individual Employment Assessment*, *Family Self-Sufficiency*, the *Employment Plan*, and *Case Notes* were extracted and compiled into a database for analysis. Most of the quantitative variables were extracted from closed-ended questions on the administrative forms. However, some crucial information was only recorded in longer blocks of free-form text found in case notes. I extracted these data by reading and coding the *Case Notes* documents. Samples of the administrative forms and a description of the data entry and coding process can be found in Appendix A. This data entry process resulted in a recursive analytical approach entailing preliminary qualitative analysis, followed by quantitative analysis, and then another round of qualitative analysis. The resulting quantitative data include a broad range of information capturing multiple aspects of human, economic, social, and cultural capital. To quantitatively test the holistic model of economic integration I combine the individual-level data documenting the forms of capital with data from a variety of other sources. Table 4 lists sources supplying data for ethnic origins, forms of capital, and the resettlement context.

Analytical Sample

The quantitative analysis interrogates employment data for a sample of 938 refugees from 37 nations, aged 18 and older, who sought employment-search assistance

with the RIC-AAU in three different time periods: before the Great Recession (2007), during the recession (2009), and after the recession (2012). Many refugees engaged in multiple job searches during the study time frame. As a result, the analysis includes 1,338 observations and spans multiple years for more than half of the refugees in the sample. Sampling weights were applied to normalize the observed individuals to the total population of refugees over the age of 18 who were resettled in Utah each year.¹⁶

Analytical Approach

In order to quantitatively test the relevance of ethnic origins, forms of capital, and the Utah context in the timeline of a refugee's economic integration I use event history analysis, specifically Cox proportional hazards models for repeated events. I use these models to examine the association between the amount of time it takes to formally enter the labor market (i.e., find a job) and later to find a job with a livable wage and different forms of capital and social contexts. I describe the analytical method and its application in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Qualitative Research Design

Design of Textual Analysis

The process of collecting and understanding the qualitative data occurred in the following overlapping stages: meetings with service providers, preliminary analysis of

¹⁶ I used data from the Refugee Processing Center (RPC) in Washington, D.C., detailing the number of refugees arriving in Utah between 2000 and 2011, to construct sampling weights. A detailed description of the method of construction can be found in Chapter IV.

case note text during quantitative data entry, additional meetings with service providers, extensive analysis of the text of case notes, and collection and analysis of focus group data.

In the earliest stage, I met regularly with the executive director of the Asian Association of Utah, the organization that houses the Refugee and Immigrant Center which is responsible for providing federally supported employment assistance to refugees in the state of Utah. During these meetings, the director checked on the progress of data entry and offered his insights regarding refugee employment. We met a total of nine times. During these meetings, the director repeatedly discussed three areas of difficulty. He noted that many refugees experience difficulty either obtaining or retaining a job due to their lack of knowledge of employment-specific social norms, including norms of timeliness, dress codes, and communication. He also raised the issue of religious constraints, typically related to the Muslim religion, which could be problematic for some jobs. For example, the dress code prohibiting women of some denominations from wearing pants was a safety hazard for some manufacturing jobs. Finally, he noted that the gender norms held by some refugees made it uncomfortable for those refugee men to work for female bosses or even shake hands with women. As a result of these conversations, I began to code the mention of employment-specific cultural capital deficits, religiously-based employment constraints, and gender-related issues for inclusion in the quantitative dataset. Some mentions were found in the administrative forms, but the majority resided in the free-form text of the case notes.

During the process of quantitative data entry, I became familiar with case notes and some of the narratives around the employment search process as told in the words of

refugee caseworkers. Because the *Employment Assessment* form contained sections capturing religious, cultural, and other constraints, I read the case notes primarily for dates related to employment searches and hiring and for references to the use of social networks. However, my perusal of the case notes during the database construction led me to realize that many instances of religious constraints were described in the case notes, but left off the constraints section of the employment forms. As such, religious constraints might not be consistently documented in the quantitative database. Instead, they are likely to be underreported. Moreover, I had ten years of case notes available, but record-keeping on the closed-ended employment forms was sporadic during the early years. Together, these factors led me to believe that I should analyze the case notes qualitatively around three themes: employment-specific cultural capital, religiously-based employment constraints, and gender-related issues.

Finally, the case notes describe the job search from the perspective of the caseworker. While I noticed an occasional tone of “privilege” in the text, it was generally in the context of informing clients about agency policies or enforcing those policies. Because I had become familiar with those policies during my many meetings with the director I did not initially consider this as a theme of its own. However, feminist theory apprises us that the position of those who create data shapes the nature of the data and the type of knowledge created (Harding 1991). As such, it is important to situate knowledge relative to the symbolic positions of the knowledge creators and the subjects of that knowledge (Giametta 2017; Harding 1991; Rose 1997). More importantly, research into volunteers and staff at a homeless shelter found that these service workers construct identities that create symbolic boundaries (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Zerubavel 1996)

between themselves and the people they serve (Rogers 2017). Rogers found that “the volunteers and employees at the shelter . . . distanced themselves through the construction of a moral identity and utilized physical and rhetorical boundaries to position themselves against the ‘immoral’ homeless that they served” (Rogers 2017:232). In order to situate the perspectives of refugee caseworkers and to discern whether refugee caseworkers engaged in a similar boundary work, I analyzed the case notes for examples of positionality and boundary creation.

While some refugee caseworkers are white, educated, native-born Americans, others are former refugees whose educational credentials were either gleaned in the U.S. or recertified in the U.S., and who have extensive experience living and working in the U.S. Due to the caseworkers’ positions of relative privilege I also wanted to understand refugee perspectives on these and similar interactions, in addition to their perceptions of the process of economic integration. To pursue this last goal, I began meeting with ethnic associations to learn more about their communities and arrange focus groups.

Focus Group Design

A focus group is “a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher. In essence, it is the researcher’s interest that provides the focus, whereas the data themselves come from the group interaction” (Morgan 1997:6). Focus groups are used to collect data on perceptions and opinions, or in other words, “how people feel or think about an issue, idea, product, or service” (Krueger and Casey 2000: 2). One advantage of focus groups is that the interactions that occur in group discussions provide cross-stimulation of ideas and memories, which can increase

the volume of information collected (Krueger and Casey 2014; Van Manen 1990). This occurs because people respond to and build upon the comments made by others in the group (Hardon, Hodgkin, and Fresle 2004). However, it is important for the moderator to guide the discussion in such a way that a group mentality does not overtake the discussion, and unique perspectives can be heard.

The focus group method is preferable to interviews in this particular case as I am interested in accessing the opinions and perceptions of informants. My own position as a volunteer with the RIC-AAU shaped my perspective and the types of questions I asked.¹⁷ According to Krueger and Casey, this approach allows the informants “ample opportunity to comment, to explain, and to share experiences and attitudes” and to control the shape and direction of the conversation (2000:3). Allowing a more fluid discussion, such as those created in a focus group context will allow unanticipated information to surface and reduce researcher bias since the focus group places the flow of information under the primary control of the informants rather than the interviewer (Rice 1931).¹⁸

Intended Participants

The intention of the focus groups was two-fold: first, to gain the perspective of refugees and second, to better understand the unexpected patterns observed in the

¹⁷ In the case of refugees resettled in Salt Lake City, the case notes contain the perspective of caseworkers and voluntary agencies, and the administrative forms (from which the quantitative data are extracted) follow a closed-ended, or semiclosed ended, question-and-answer format subject to the preconceptions of the form creator. As part of the research process I familiarized myself with these forms and the perspectives of the voluntary agencies, and thus my preconceived ideas were influenced by these agencies.

¹⁸ Quoted in Krueger and Casey (2000:3).

quantitative analysis. To accomplish these tasks, I chose potential ethnic groups from the largest groups of refugees currently resettled in Utah. The six refugee groups with the largest resettlement numbers in the past decade include refugees from Bhutan, Burma, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan. As a result, I limited the potential focus groups to those six nationalities. I chose first to conduct focus groups with Somali refugees in order to investigate employment issues related to both race and religion. Placing the comments of these informants into perspective would ideally involve comparisons with groups of similar racial and religious composition to the Somali group, as well as with groups of a different composition. This would allow insights into the effects of race, separate from those of religion. Table 5 highlights the ideal comparative structure. One limitation of this study is that I was only able to gain access to members of the Somali refugee population during the data collection period.¹⁹ In future studies, the comparative structure outlined below would be recommended.

Characteristics of Somali Refugees

There are a number of characteristics of Somali refugees that make them an ideal starting point for the study of refugee employment in Utah. First, the Somali population belongs to a conservative sect within the Muslim religion. Not only do they adhere to a strict set of religious practices, they are also conspicuously Muslim in their manner of dress. The women wear ankle-length dresses and are forbidden from wearing pants. In addition, their hair must be completely covered by their hijabs. As a predominantly black

¹⁹ I describe the successful approaches I took to recruiting the Somali group as well as the unsuccessful attempts to recruit other ethnic groups in the “Recruitment” section below.

and Muslim ethnic group, the Somali population faces multiple intersecting disadvantages in the U.S. labor market. For women, this may be compounded by their “conspicuously foreign” attire (Reitz and Sklar 1997:269).

A second feature of the Somali population that makes them an ideal group to study is their gender and familial norms. The family is an important source of both identity and security for Somalis. While the Somali culture is patriarchal, the political organization is quite democratic. In Somalia, local political councils are typically all male, but they are also highly egalitarian, valuing all voices, “sometimes to the point of anarchy” (Putman and Noor 1993:13). In the U.S., ethnic leadership councils are mixed gender, yet they remain egalitarian. Moreover, Somali women are integral to the economic well-being of the household, and in the U.S. that means they seek to be active in the labor market. Finally, the enduring civil war ravaged the Somali education system. The educational background of Somali men and women is limited and often nonexistent. While there are some differences in the education levels of men and women, these differences are minor (Abdi 1998). The majority of Somali refugees have less than a high-school education.

Composition of Focus Groups

Focus groups are typically regarded as the most effective when the groups are ‘homogeneous’ “in terms of age, sex, socio-economic status, etc. since this facilitates open discussion. In mixed groups considerations of status and hierarchy can affect the discussions” (Hardon et al. 2004). In refugee research, it is also common to pursue ethnic and racial homogeneity in focus groups (Coyne 1997; Nderu 2005; Tiedje et al. 2014).

People say what they really think and feel, i.e., self-disclose, when they feel comfortable, and they feel comfortable when they are surrounded by people who are similar to themselves (Creswell 2009; Hardon et al. 2004). Previous research has indicated that in heterogeneous groups, participants of lower social status will defer to the voices of those who have higher status, and their thoughts will not be captured by the researcher (Carey 1998; Krueger 2002). As a result, I set out to organize focus groups composed of refugees who were similar in terms of gender, English speaking ability, level of education, and duration of residence in the U.S. In the recruitment procedures detailed below I describe how I used a multistage recruitment process to arrange focus groups that were as homogenous as possible. The result was that I conducted focus groups with two groups of Somalis, one of which was composed of community leaders who were better educated and had been in the U.S. for a longer period of time. The other group comprised members of the community who were less educated and more recent arrivals to the U.S. Unfortunately, both groups were mixed gender groups.

Recruitment

The process of recruiting for the Somali focus groups occurred in two stages. Using community leaders to enlist focus group participants is a common practice in focus group research (Hardon et al. 2004). In the first stage of recruitment I made email contact with refugee service organizations briefly describing the research project and requesting a meeting. Five of the organizations were organizations that serve all refugee groups. The remaining nine were organizations serving a specific group of refugees. For the Somali focus groups, four of the organizations I contacted were Somali ethnic associations, two

were organizations serving African refugees, and one was an organization serving Muslim refugees in Salt Lake. In the initial email, I requested assistance from the ethnic associations with publicizing the study and recruiting participants. When a representative of an association responded, and requested additional information or expressed interest in the study, I sent them a copy of the recruitment flyer and made arrangements to meet in person.²⁰ I had intended for willing associations to post the recruitment flyer, mention the study to potential participants, and maintain a contact list of interested potential participants. However, since most of the ethnic associations do not have offices where members of their community can walk in and receive services, this approach proved to be unfeasible.

The modified recruitment procedure involved meeting with a leader of an association and beginning to build a relationship with them, after which they introduced me to other community leaders. The continued process of relationship building was essential to meeting an expanded network of community leaders. At this point, if the community leaders agreed to help with recruitment, they took one of two paths. Either they continued to make community introductions, or they helped to arrange the focus groups, acting as intermediary between me and members of their community.

For the Somali groups the modified recruitment procedure was successful. However, this procedure failed to elicit meetings with critical organizations in the Sudanese, Iranian, and Iraqi populations. I received no response to most emails. The two that responded declined to meet. After working with the Somali group, I surmise that the nonresponse was a result of two factors. First, many of the ethnic agencies have few

²⁰ A copy of the recruitment email and flyer can be found in Appendix B.

resources and leaders are using personal phone and email addresses for association business because the association itself has no dedicated phone or email. It is likely that emails from unfamiliar persons are easily lost, overlooked, or ignored. Second, without a “broker” to introduce me to a member of the community, impersonal emails are likely to be ignored, while phone calls and personal introductions are more likely to receive a more positive response.

The Somali focus groups were organized after making contact with two organizations, both of which worked with a variety of refugee ethnic groups: University Neighborhood Partners (UNP) and Salt Lake American Muslim. UNP introduced me to a committee of leaders from several ethnic associations, including the Somali Community Self-Management Agency. The other introduced me to additional leaders of the same Somali organization, and assisted with organizing the first focus group. The first focus group was a mixed gender focus group with leaders of the community who had been in the U.S. for at least four years, spoke passable English, and had more extensive work experience in the U.S. The second focus group, organized after building greater rapport with members of the Somali Community Self-Management Agency, was also a mixed gender group composed of community members who had been in the U.S. for less than four years, spoke poor or no English, and had little or no work experience in the U.S.

Building rapport with members of the community. While service providers from two voluntary agencies were instrumental in connecting me with the leaders of the Somali community, it was still necessary to build trust with the community leaders and to make connections and build rapport with members of the community. This occurred in a somewhat organic fashion. After learning about a Functional English class offered for

members of the Somali community I asked if I could observe the class. I later began to volunteer as a tutor for the remedial class. Volunteering with this class allowed me to meet more members of the community, helped build friendships and trust, and enabled the eventual conduct of the second focus group. The second focus group was composed of members of the community who had been in the U.S. for a shorter period of time, had limited educational backgrounds, spoke English relatively poorly, and had more limited work experience in the U.S. The extended interaction with members of the community also helped me understand some of the social norms and communication dynamics present in the Somali culture.

As a white, female, non-Muslim, English-speaking volunteer for the English classes I was frequently an outsider to the animated conversations that took place in Somali. Halima, one of the community leaders who speaks English very well, was instrumental in explaining many of these interactions. She had been in the U.S. for 15 years and seen Americans misunderstand Somali interactions, so she generously tried to put me at ease by explaining body language, communication patterns, and features of the culture that I didn't understand. For my part as a volunteer, I researched and brought resources for learning the alphabet that were geared toward adults and used culturally relevant examples and images. Not only did this act engender good will and build additional rapport with the community leaders, this gave the students the opportunity to teach me more about their culture and language. These informal interactions helped me parse Somali communication patterns and the social norms that presented during the conduct of the focus groups.

Focus Group Procedures and Logistics

Language, translation, and informed consent. The dominant language spoken by members of the Somali community in the Salt Lake greater metropolitan area is Somali, with some members of the community also speaking Arabic. All participants in the Somali focus groups spoke and understood at least a small amount of English. However, skill levels varied. In addition, many of the participants were not literate in either their native language or in English. As a result, translators were necessary for some aspects of the process.

At the beginning of each focus group I briefly explained the purpose of the study. In accordance with the Institutional Review Board's recommendations for delivering consent to groups that speak limited to no English, I verbally explained a simplified version of the longer consent document. I instructed participants to complete a short survey before the focus group; translators were on hand to assist as necessary.²¹ I also explained that by completing and returning the survey they were consenting to participate in the focus group. Finally, I explained that participation was voluntary and that they could end their participation at any time, or choose not to answer any survey or focus group question.

²¹ Translators were instructed to read the preliminary survey to participants without clarifying or embellishing. They were also instructed to document the responses exactly as stated. During the focus groups translators were asked to translate short words or phrases without clarifying or embellishing as the need arose. It was anticipated that occasionally participants might switch to commenting in Somali if they had difficulty explaining their experiences and opinions in English. Translators were instructed to translate these comments word for word, without clarifying, embellishing, or commenting. Because, translators were present to translate informants' comments immediately during the focus groups, translation of focus group transcriptions was unnecessary.

Participant compensation. Following the focus group each participant was compensated for their time and participation. In keeping with recommendations from previous qualitative researchers, compensation should be substantial enough to demonstrate that their participation was valued. However, compensation should not be so high as to incentivize people to participate who would otherwise resist participation or encourage participation and misleading statements from people with no experience around the research topic (Head 2009). Refugee service providers informed me that refugee research participants in the Salt Lake area typically receive between 15 and 25 dollars for their participation. I opted to compensate participants in the amount of 20 dollars.

Questions/procedures. The focus groups were structured around a series of question tapping five main themes related to employment and overall economic integration: culture, income and self-sufficiency, networks of social support, occupational prestige, and gender norms. I began with simple questions designed to get to know the participants and initiate conversations. From these opening questions, I transitioned into asking questions designed to get at the cultural capital and adaptation of refugees and how this affects their employment, income, and occupational mobility. All questions were open-ended starting points intended to stimulate discussion. The questioning route used to initiate discussion is shown in Appendix C.

Analytical Approach

The case-note data include case notes for 4,178 individuals spanning from 2002 to 2014. In addition to the administrative forms contained in each refugee's file, each

individual's file includes a document containing the caseworker's free-form notes on their case. I became familiar with the case notes during the data entry process for the quantitative database. At a minimum, the case notes represent a chronological record of the caseworker's communication and meetings with the refugee, the purpose of communication or meeting, and a record of all jobs for which they applied. When hired, the case notes also contain an embedded form documenting the company, the position, wage, benefits and hours. In the more detailed case notes, service providers summarize information contained in the administrative forms, and take notes on the nature of communication and interactions, noting personal characteristics, communication style, and understanding of cultural norms that might help or hinder employment. These more detailed case notes often contain information that was omitted from administrative forms. Case notes are based on the service providers' direct interactions and observations but do not contain the refugee's perspective.²²

Due to the volume of case note documents, it was impractical to hand code each file. Instead, I used qualitative data analysis software (NVivo) to assess the frequency of keywords and phrases related to the themes of interest. The search results highlighted the keyword or phrase in each document, and displayed it in context. I read through each of the highlighted sections to ensure that the document contained a valid example of the concept in question, and then added all the documents with a valid result to a themed category or set of categories. In the process of reading and validating the results I typically discovered several alternate keywords and phrases. As a result, I used a process

²² The exception to this is when caseworkers quote notable things the refugee said during their interactions or in emails.

called “in vivo” coding, where I repeated the search process with the new permutations of the search terms found “live” in the text, adding each new result to the broader category. I also discovered a handful of new subcategories that generated new searches and a handful of new themes. Finally, I found the frequencies and calculated the percentages of refugees whose case notes documented the particular concept.

Since there were fewer documents derived from meetings with service providers and from focus groups I was able to take a more inductive approach to analyzing that data, following a grounded theory approach (Strauss and Corbin 1994). My analysis of these documents proceeded in four stages. First, I transcribed the focus groups and my notes, combining them into a single dataset. Second, I open-coded the documents. Open coding is a process of labeling concepts, developing categories and establishing the parameters of those categories. Several concepts were also in vivo coded. Third, I audited the coding to ensure internal consistency. Finally, I identified sections of text that exemplified the central themes.

Conclusion

The mixed methods approach outlined in this chapter was designed to analyze refugee economic integration in a holistic fashion. This method allows me to investigate the issue from multiple directions, triangulating findings to expand insights, improve reliability, and enhance generalizability. I anticipate that the methods will improve the robustness of findings by providing redundant information, offer additional insights and explanations for employment outcomes that might not be gleaned from a single approach, and reduce potential bias. Previous research lacked sufficiently detailed and

representative refugee data to conduct analyses from such a holistic perspective. In the next chapter I start to craft a picture of refugee economic integration in the state of Utah. Chapter IV explores the Utah context and looks at the resources and opportunities available to refugees, as well as their individual histories, personal characteristics, and immediate barriers to economic integration.

Table 4. Quantitative Data Sources

Dimension	Data Source
ETHNIC ORIGINS	
Cultural Distance–Index of Attitudes	World Values Survey (Waves 1 through 6) (World Values Survey 2009)
Cultural Distance–Index of Practices	The World Bank Development Indicators (The World Bank 2013), United Nations Statistics Division, EveryCulture.com
Polity Type	POLITY IV (Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers 2013)
Political Discrimination Index	Minorities at Risk (Minorities at Risk Project 2009)
FORMS OF CAPITAL	
Human Capital	RIC-AAU <i>Individual Employment Assessment Form</i>
Cultural Capital	RIC-AAU <i>Individual Employment Assessment Form, Case Notes</i>
Social Capital	RIC-AAU <i>Case Notes</i>
Symbolic Capital	RIC-AAU <i>Intake Form</i>
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	
Attitudes Toward Immigrants	PEW Political Surveys: 2007, 2009, 2012 (Pew Research Center 2013)
Utah Annual Poverty Rates	2010 Decennial Census (United States Census Bureau 2010); American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2010-2014 (United States Census Bureau 2014)
Utah Annual Employment Rates	U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Department of Labor 2014a; 2014b)

Table 5. Ideal Comparative Structure of Focus Groups

Composition	Refugee Group		
	Somali	Sudanese	Iranian or Iraqi
Race: Black	Yes	Yes	No
Religion: Muslim	Yes	No	Yes

CHAPTER IV

REFUGEES IN THE UTAH LABOR MARKET

Overview

Given that only one percent of the world's refugees are resettled in new countries it is important to ensure that resettlement leads to self-sufficiency rather than marginalization. After resettlement in the U.S., the Department of State places the refugees with one of nine resettlement agencies. While these agencies and the services they offer vary from state to state, all are tasked with providing new arrivals with essential services during the first 30 to 90 days after arrival. This includes providing “food, housing, clothing, employment services,²³ follow-up medical care, and other necessary services” during the early resettlement period (Refugee Council USA 2017). Many agencies also provide longer-term services such as translation, counseling, vocational training, and English literacy classes with the intention of bolstering the human and cultural capital of newly resettled refugees (Tyeklar 2016). Despite this assistance, many refugees are ill-prepared for the U.S. labor market, making prospects for self-sufficiency remote.

The state of Utah is unique in that it accepts refugees from any nation of origin.

²³ Employment services are provided for the first five years after arrival and are funded by the federal Targeted Assistance Grant (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/programs/targeted-assistance/about>).

The refugees resettled in Utah come from nearly 60 different nations, and they arrive in Utah with widely varying levels of human, cultural, social, and symbolic capital, as well as extremely diverse life experiences. Some speak excellent English, while others speak none. Some have professional and graduate-level degrees, while others have had no formal education. Some held high-status jobs in their country of origin, while others had minimal or no job experience in their former countries. And, while some refugees come from relatively modern regions of the world, others come from underdeveloped regions and may have spent many years in refugee camps without electricity, sanitation, or running water. As noted in the previous chapter these disparate skill sets and backgrounds can create divergent trajectories of economic and social integration into U.S. society (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Refugees who lack employment-related skills or have limited cultural knowledge may face an extremely difficult journey to self-sufficiency (Bloch 2002; Lamba 2003). In light of the potentially difficult path to economic self-sufficiency, it is important to gauge the skills and potential barriers faced by refugees resettled in Utah. Consequently, this chapter explores the questions: How prepared are refugees for the Utah labor market, and how favorable are the social and economic conditions in Utah?

To investigate this and other questions related to refugee economic integration, this study examines quantitative data for refugees in the state of Utah as well as data from service provider case notes, interviews with service providers, and focus groups with refugees. The quantitative data are described in detail in the section that follows.

A Brief Profile of Refugees in the Study

Quantitative Sample

A total of 938 refugees from 37 different nations are included in the quantitative database. All participants are aged 18 and older and sought employment-search assistance with the RIC-AAU at least once during three different periods of interest: before the Great Recession (2007), during the recession (2009), and after the recession (2012). I analyze data for the entire employment search history of any refugee who sought employment assistance during any of those time periods.

On average, the refugees who sought employment assistance during one of the three periods of interest make up 55 percent of all refugees resettled in Utah in a given year. However, the percentage is higher during the recession (64 percent), and slightly lower before and after the recession (percentages range from 39 to 54), while the gender breakdown of refugees in the database parallels the distribution in the total population of refugees resettled in Utah. However, there some differences in the distribution of refugees based on age, education, and English-speaking ability. To compensate for this and the fact that the refugees in the sample self-selected into the study by seeking assistance with employment, I used data from the Refugee Processing Center (RPC) in Washington, D.C. to create sampling weights for the quantitative analysis. The weights normalize the sample based on arrival date and the distribution of gender, age, education, and English-speaking ability in the total population of refugees resettled in Utah.²⁴

²⁴ I describe the RPC data and my method of constructing of the sampling weights in greater detail in Chapter IV.

Qualitative Sample

Summary Information for Textual Data

Textual data found in the case notes were analyzed for 4,178 refugees spanning a ten-year period from 2003 to 2013. This sample represents 75 percent of the total population of refugees resettled in Utah. Forty-three percent of the refugees documented in the case note data are women and 57 percent are men. The national origin of refugees in the case notes was quite diverse. However, 70 percent of the refugees come from the six top nations sending refugees to Utah with 13 percent of the case notes belonging to Bhutanese, 14 percent to Burmese, 10 percent to Iranian, 7 percent to Iraqi, 16 percent to Somali, and 10 percent to Sudanese refugees.

Summary Statistics for Focus Group Informants

The first focus group consisted of eight leaders of the Somali community in Salt Lake City served by the Somali Community Self-Management Agency. Six of the participants were women and two were men. The age of the participants ranged from 34 to 60, with an average age of 49. In this group participants had lived in the U.S. an average of 15 years and had lived in Utah an average of 12 years. Among this group, most had some education. Only one of the community leaders had no formal education. Three had some education but had not completed high school, three others completed high school, and one completed an undergraduate college degree. Nearly all had experience applying for and working at multiple jobs since coming to the U.S. And, as members of the board of the Somali Community Self-Management Agency, all had experience helping more recent arrivals in the Somali community understand Utah

society and local culture, navigate social services, and enter the Utah labor market. This group was uniquely positioned to provide a perspective on how the labor market experiences of refugees evolve over time. They were also privy to the experiences of other refugees and could potentially contribute information on the experiences of Somali refugees who were not present for the focus groups.

The second focus group consisted of seven women and three men who were more recently arrived members of the Somali community. This group ranged in age from 31 to 67, with an average age of 48. In this group participants had lived in Utah (and the U.S.) an average of two years, a decade less than the members of the first focus group. This group was also less educated than the prior focus group. Six of the participants had no formal education, and four had less than a high school education. None of these participants had completed high school or earned higher degrees. At least one participant in this group had not yet acquired a job in the U.S. Six others had only worked in a subsidized employment training program hosted at the Humanitarian Center or Deseret Industries.²⁵ Only three had worked in traditional jobs (though two had only worked for temporary agencies), and only one of those three had held more than one job since arriving in the U.S. This group was intimately familiar with the difficulty of finding work for recent arrivals.

In the sections that follow I describe the refugees included in quantitative portion

²⁵ The subsidized employment training program is reserved for refugees who need the most assistance, specifically those who have poor or no English-speaking ability, no education, and limited or no formal employment experience in their home country. The program involves four hours of paid employment and training followed by four hours of paid English language training. Clients can complete up to 12 months with the Humanitarian Center and 12 months with Deseret Industries.

of the study in terms of ethnic origins, forms of capital, and contexts of reception.

Ethnic Origins of Refugees

The refugees in the study come from 37 different nations of origin (shown in Table 6). A refugee's ethnic origins influence how they interpret and adapt to their new destination. To capture ethnic origins Hein (2006) argues that researchers should consider culture, homeland histories, and politics. I summarize each of these dimensions below.

Cultural Distance

In order to measure the cultural differences between the U.S. and a refugee's nation of origin it is important to establish a valid measure of culture. However, culture is difficult to measure and seldom included in quantitative research, though there have been several attempts (G. Hofstede et al. 2010; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Minkov 2007; Schwartz 1994). Hein (2006) argues that culture includes religious values, the degree of individualism or collectivism, and kinship norms. However, other scholars argue that differences in cultural practices and lifestyle are more important for migrants (Babiker, Cox, and P. M. Miller 1980; Ward and Kennedy 1999). And, while differences in cultural practices may affect a refugee's psychological outlook, they are relatively easy to modify. In contrast, differences in cultural values are deeply ingrained and more difficult to modify (G. Hofstede et al. 2010). As such, these may wield more influence over refugee employment outcomes.

The most promising approach for broad-based cultural comparisons matching Hein's value-oriented notion of culture is the Hofstede et al. study comparing IBM's

business culture across nations. While their study centered on corporations their thorough examination of the characteristics of countries at the high and low ends of each of six cultural dimensions set the stage for a more general comparison of cultures. Their dimensions of culture—entitled power distance, collectivism versus individualism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, indulgence versus restraint—capture the relationship of individuals to authority, the relationship between the individual and society, the rigidity or fluidity of gender roles, degrees of anxiety and uncertainty avoidance, the individual's past or future orientation, and tendencies toward indulgence or restraint (G. Hofstede et al. 2010). In the sections that follow, I describe each of the six dimensions discussed by Hofstede et al., and present my operationalization of the dimensions using the WVS.²⁶

Power Distance

The Power-Distance dimension of culture proposed by Hofstede et al. measures inequality of power within organizations or societies. They define power distance as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (G. Hofstede et al. 2010:61). Because Hofstede et al. studied the organizational culture of IBM, all of their questions reflect the presence and acceptance of authority and power in the workplace. However, they also describe the general characteristics of high and low power-distance societies with respect to general norms, family, school, and health care. They describe

²⁶ Appendix C shows a comparison of the survey items used in the Hofstede et al. IBM study and the survey items from the WVS used for my operationalization of the six dimensions.

societies with high power distance as both expecting and desiring inequalities between people, with less powerful people polarized between preferring dependence and rejecting it. In these societies parents believe obedience, respect for elders, and respect for authority are important traits for children to learn. In addition, children are expected to support their parents as they age. In the realm of education, societies with high power distance view teachers as authority figures. Students are expected to respect and show deference to teachers while teachers are expected to take initiative. To recreate this measure in a form that is applicable to cross-national cultural comparisons rather than workplace comparisons I used questions from the World Values Survey that capture the overarching concept of *Power Distance* (G. Hofstede et al. 2010; World Values Survey 2009). The variables used to construct this modified measure include: respect for authority, autonomy, political action, and income inequality. I combined these variables into a power distance dimension that ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating qualities associated with high power distance and 1 indicating low power distance.

Collectivism Versus Individualism

The collectivism versus individualism dimension proposed by Hofstede et al. measures cohesion and collaboration within organizations or societies. They define the two poles of the dimension as follows: “Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism, as its opposite, pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning

loyalty” (G. Hofstede et al. 2010:92). They describe societies with high collectivism as valuing extended families and other in-groups, harmony, patriotism, obedience, and respect for parents, while societies with high individualism value independence, forthrightness, personal time, freedom, and personal challenge. I combined 8 variables into a dimension that ranges from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating qualities associated with collectivism, and 1 indicating individualism.

Masculinity Versus Femininity

The masculinity versus femininity dimension presented by Hofstede et al. measures the degree to which gender roles are distinct and patriarchal, as opposed to overlapping. They define the masculine and feminine poles of this dimension as follows:

A society is called *masculine* when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called *feminine* when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (G. Hofstede et al. 2010:140).

They further describe masculine societies as those where the standard pattern is that the father earns, and the mother cares; men should be assertive, ambitious, and tough; women’s ambition is directed toward men’s success; men and women study different subjects; and challenge, earnings, recognition, and advancement are important. In contrast, feminine societies value gender equity, relationships, and the quality of life.

While the masculinity versus femininity dimension presented by Hofstede et al. is very specific to a business environment, the concept is easily captured using questions from the WVS. In fact, Inglehart and Norris constructed a comparable measure using the WVS. They designed and tested an index assessing attitudes about gender norms for their

cross-national study of cultural change (Inglehart and Norris 2003). All questions were recoded so that a low score indicates patriarchal gender attitudes and a high score indicates equitable gender attitudes. The five variables were then combined to create the masculinity versus femininity index.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Hofstede et al. propose an uncertainty avoidance dimension which measures societal anxiety about unknown and unforeseen circumstances. They define uncertainty avoidance as “The extent to which members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations” (G. Hofstede et al. 2010:191). They define societies with strong uncertainty avoidance as places with high levels of stress and anxiety, where people are highly worried about health and money, and many people are unhappy. In addition, people feel the need to be busy and work hard, and have an emotional need for rules, even ineffective ones. Uncertainty avoidance often manifests in a “hesitancy toward new products and technologies,” ethnic prejudice, intolerance of immigrants, and restriction of citizen protests (G. Hofstede et al. 2010). Several items in the WVS adeptly represent these concepts. The variables I used to create the uncertainty avoidance item are described in Appendix C. The final index scores range from 0 to 1 with 0 indicating qualities associated with collectivism and 1 indicating individualism.

Long-Term Orientation

The long-term orientation dimension proposed by Hofstede et al. measures societal anxiety about unknown and unforeseen circumstances. “Long-term orientation

stands for the fostering of virtues oriented toward future rewards—in particular, perseverance and thrift. Short-term orientation stands for the fostering of virtues related to the past and present—in particular, respect for tradition, preservation of “face,” and fulfilling social obligations” (G. Hofstede et al. 2010:239). They find that societies with high long-term orientation value thrift, perseverance, adaptiveness, and the “willingness to subordinate oneself for a purpose” (2010:243). In addition, societies with a long-term orientation tend to believe that disagreement is not bad, and that what is good and evil depends on the circumstances. Hofstede et al. tested several items in the WVS for their ability to capture long-term orientation. They found four items that are both conceptually similar to their definition and have a strong correlation with their long-term orientation dimension (2010:253). The WVS items capture the importance of service, the importance of thrift, pride in one’s nationality, and the need for clear guidelines differentiating good and evil. I then combined them into the long-term orientation dimension with scores ranging from 0 to 1, with 0 indicating weak long-term orientation and 5 indicating strong long-term orientation.

Indulgence Versus Restraint

The indulgence versus restraint dimension described by Hofstede et al. measures the importance of happiness, leisure, and living a satisfying life. They define indulgence versus restraint as “Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms” (G. Hofstede et al. 2010:281). They find that indulgent

societies have high percentages of happy people who feel “in control” of their lives, and people in those societies value leisure, freedom, and friends. Unlike the other measures designed by Hofstede et al., this measure uses questions from the WVS that assess happiness, life control, and leisure. I rescaled the items to range from 1 to 5 and combined them into the long-term orientation dimension with scores ranging from 0 to 1 with 0 indicating restraint and 5 indicating indulgence.

The Cultural Distance Index

The final cultural distance measure is designed to assess the difference between the socio-cultural traits and practices of the U.S. and the refugee’s country of origin on the six dimensions of culture discussed above. It is measured as the sum of the differences between the dimensional scores for the refugee’s country of origin and the U.S.²⁷ It ranges from 0 to 6, where 0 indicates that the cultural values of the country of origin don’t differ from the U.S. on any of the dimensions and 6 indicates that the country differs completely on all six dimensions. One potential pitfall in this approach is that refugees belonged to discriminated minority groups in their home countries. As such, their cultural values may not reflect the overall culture of the nation. To check this, I compared the average cultural distance scores of minority and majority groups in each refugee country. Only two countries exhibited statistically significant differences between majority and minority. However, coding of minority groups was inconsistent. Some countries used racial categories to indicate minorities, while others listed ethnic groups.

²⁷ I calculated absolute value of the difference between the index score for the U.S. and the refugee’s country of origin for each of the six dimensions. The sum of these differences is the value of the cultural distance measure for that country.

Overall, there were no statistically significant differences between majority and minority cultural values. However, this is an area of investigation that warrants greater study as better data become available.

The cultural distance scores for the countries in this study range between 1.1 and 4.74. Regional averages are shown in Figure 4. The lowest social distance score is found in Mexico with a score of 1.10,²⁸ while Pakistan exhibits the highest social distance score with a value of 4.74.²⁹ The average cultural distance score for refugees in Utah is 3.08 with a standard deviation of 0.27. In addition, there are statistically significant differences between geographic regions ($F = 345.39$; $p = 0.00$). In bivariate correlations, cultural distance is not associated with the amount of time it takes to find a first job. Yet, cultural distance has a statistically significant correlation with the amount of time it takes to find a job with a livable wage. Surprisingly, high levels of cultural distance correlate with a shorter time between arrival and the acquisition of a livable wage. This may be an artifact of the regional differences in education. For example, cultural distance is high in countries like Iraq and Russia, where education levels are also high. I will explore this relationship and a number of possible interactions between cultural difference and other predictors in the multivariate models I present in Chapter V.

²⁸ Among non-refugee-sending countries, England has the lowest cultural distance score at 0.18. Australia, Canada and France also exhibit very low cultural distance scores at 0.46, 0.40, and 0.50 respectively.

²⁹ The highest cultural distance score among non-refugee-sending countries is found in Egypt with a score of 5.92, followed closely by Saudi Arabia with a score of 5.59.

Homeland Histories

Homeland histories, according to Hein (2006), reflect the history and structure of the nation-state, especially the level of subordination, equality, and dominance in national institutions. Hein's concept captures the nature of authority in the structure of government. It parallels classification of governments into polity types used by Marshall et al., which reflect the governments' "authority patterns" (Marshall et al. 2013:1). Their classification system "focuses specifically on the more or less institutionalized authority patterns that characterize the most formal class of polities, that is, states operating within the world's state system" (ibid.). I use the polity classifications designed by Marshall et al. to capture some of the features of homeland history. The polity types range from autocratic to democratic. "In mature form, autocracies sharply restrict or suppress competitive political participation. Their chief executives are chosen in a regularized process of selection within the political elite, and once in office they exercise power with few institutional constraints" (Marshall et al. 2013:15). Democracy, on the other hand, comprises three elements.

One is the presence of institutions and procedures through which citizens can express effective preferences about alternative policies and leaders. Second is the existence of institutionalized constraints on the exercise of power by the executive. Third is the guarantee of civil liberties to all citizens in their daily lives and in acts of political participation (ibid.).

Marshall et al. created the polity scores from an index of items gauging autocracy and democracy. Scores range from -10, indicating a strongly autocratic polity, to +10, indicating a strongly democratic polity. The polity types of refugee origin countries range from -10 to +9 with an average of 4.34 and a standard deviation of 5.15. The most autocratic countries in the study include Bhutan (-10), North Korea (-10), and Iraqi (-9), while the most democratic countries include Chile (+9), Mexico (+8), and Columbia (+7).

In pairwise correlations, originating from a democratic country is positively correlated with both labor market participation and securing a livable wage, and the correlations are statistically significant ($p < .05$). However, the correlations are very small—.04 for labor market participation and .09 for securing a livable wage. In Chapter V, this relationship will be evaluated to see whether it remains after controlling for other relevant factors.

Politics

The final component of ethnic origins assesses the political situation in a refugee's home country. For Hein (2006), politics includes political cleavage and the salience of inter- and intraethnic conflict over power. To assess this component of ethnic origins I used the political discrimination index from the Minorities at Risk data set. This variable captures political discrimination against minority groups. The political discrimination index ranges from 0 to 4, where 0 indicates "No discrimination," 1 indicates, "Neglect/Remedial policies," 2 indicates "Neglect/No remedial policies," 3 indicates "Social exclusion/Neutral policy," and 4 "Exclusion/Repressive policy." The mean political discrimination score for refugee origin countries is 2.18. Burma shows the highest political discrimination score while Afghanistan and Iraq show the lowest scores. Like polity type, political discrimination has a very small, but statistically significant correlation with labor market participation and the acquisition of a livable wage.

Forms of Capital and Economic Integration

Human Capital

While many depictions portray all refugees as poor, persecuted and uneducated, there is a great deal of diversity of human capital among them. In general, refugees from Iran and Iraq have high levels of education, while refugees from Burma, Bhutan and Somalia tend to have very low levels of education (U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration 2012). Previous research emphasizes the importance of human capital for labor market participation, wage level, and job satisfaction. Specifically, existing research highlights the role of education, proficiency in English, and experience in the host labor market (Bloch 2002; Lamba 2003; Potocky-Tripodi 2001). Traditional employment research also stresses the importance of previous occupation and training (J. Allen and Velden 2001; G. S. Becker 1964; Blundell et al. 1999).

For this study, the human capital variables include education, English speaking ability, the status of the refugee's profession prior to resettlement, and U.S. work experience.³⁰ Education is measured in seven categories: None, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Some College, College Degree: Bachelor's Degree, and Professional Degree/Graduate School. Ability in spoken English is gauged using a 4-item scale that ranges from "None" to "Good." The socio-economic status of the refugee's occupation prior to arrival in the U.S. is coded on a scale ranging from 0 to 100 using the

³⁰ A number of additional human capital variables reflecting employment abilities, skills, and training were also tested in the multivariate models and found insignificant. These variables include the ability to interview in English without a translator, physical and mental health, and computer skills.

Nam-Powers-Boyd index of occupational status (Nam and Boyd 2004), where 0 is low occupational status and 100 is high occupational status. Finally, U.S. work experience is measured as the number of months the refugee has worked since arriving in the U.S.

Placement in a subsidized work-training program might also provide human capital. The program offers eight hours of pay for four hours of work and four hours of English language classes. Individuals who are placed in this program typically have a very thin employment history, both prior to arrival in the U.S. and since arriving. They also have poor or no proficiency in English. In addition, participants may have low cultural knowledge, particularly with regard to employment norms. The work portion of the day includes training with regard to normative workplace dress, speech, and behavior as well as skills training. Because the program lasts a full year, there is often a waiting list to be considered for the program. Since positions are highly desired by refugee job seekers with limited language skills, caseworkers must prioritize the neediest cases for referral to the program. I use a binary measure that indicates prior participation in a subsidized work-training program.

In general, the human capital of refugees is lower than that of the native-born Utah population. Nineteen percent of the refugees in the sample have no education. Similarly, 8 percent speak no English and 22 percent speak English poorly. In contrast 87 percent of the host population have a high school education or higher, and 97 percent speak English “very well” (United States Census Bureau 2014). In addition, there are statistically significant differences in the level of education, English speaking ability, and prearrival occupational status of male and female refugees that may exacerbate the gender differences in average wage and the time it takes to find a job with a livable wage

(see Figures 5 and 6).

Work history and occupational experience are key components of any job candidate's qualifications. Yet, not only do many refugees lack documentation of their work histories prior to arrival in the U.S., many have little or no experience working the types of jobs present in the U.S. labor market. Ten percent of the refugees in this study report that their previous profession was farming, typically subsistence farming. Few of these refugees have the opportunity to apply their skills in paid employment in agriculture in Utah. Within the sample, 7.5 percent of the refugees worked in construction or construction related jobs prior to arriving in the U.S. Roughly 11 percent worked as teachers prior to arriving in the U.S. Unfortunately, teaching positions in the U.S. require more years of education and require test-based certifications, making it difficult for refugees to acquire teaching positions after resettlement in the U.S. Most other clients report working in entry-level, low-skill positions or indicate that they have no prior work experience. Only a small percentage (3 percent) of the refugees in the sample report having worked as engineers, architects, lawyers, or medical professionals prior to arrival in the U.S. On average, the status of the refugees' prearrival occupations is 31.81 with a standard deviation of 26.48.³¹ Sixty-eight percent of the refugees in the sample experience a decline in occupational status. Occupational status is a measure of the

³¹ Based on the Nam-Powers-Boyd occupational status rankings from 1 to 100. Food preparation and serving occupations can have occupational statuses ranging from 1 to 8. Housekeeping and maid positions have a status of 11 and janitorial positions have a status of 17. General construction work has a status of 21, and construction workers who perform skilled labor or work with heavy equipment have statuses that range from 35 to 58. The occupational status of farmers and farm workers is only 4. In contrast, physicians and surgeons have an occupational status of 100, lawyers a status of 99, and scientists and engineers have statuses ranging from 94 to 97.

average educational requirements and average income of a given occupation that ranks occupations on a scale ranging from 1 to 100 (Nam and Boyd 2004). Occupational prestige is a measure similar to that of occupational status that also captures the broader social perceptions of the value of an occupation (Treiman 1977). In other words, it captures whether the position is respected or admired by others and to what degree. Like occupational status, occupational prestige is measured on a scale ranging from 1 to 100. The average occupational prestige of the preresettlement occupations of refugees in the sample is 35.61 with a standard deviation of 19.03. Sixty-five percent of the refugees in the sample experience a decline in occupational prestige after resettlement in Utah.

In addition to work experience in their country of origin, work experience in the U.S. may exert an effect on refugees' labor market participation and their prospects for attaining a livable wage. On average, the refugees who are entering the labor market for the first time in Utah have just over six months of previous U.S. work experience. Typically, the U.S. work experience of job seekers who are new to the labor market consists of participation in a subsidized work-training program. On average, refugees who found their first job paying a livable wage began their job search with nine months of U.S. work experience, but there is a substantial amount of variation in that number.³² U.S. work experience for those who found a job with a livable wage ranges from no previous experience, to four years of U.S. work experience.

Many of the early jobs obtained by a refugee are low- or no-skill jobs, and additional work experience during the first few years in the U.S. may not dramatically improve labor market outcomes. Bivariate correlations between U.S. work experience

³² The mean number of months is 9.15 and the standard deviation is 11.97.

and the time it takes to obtain a first job are very low and not statistically significant. However, duration of U.S. work experience has a moderately strong and statistically significant correlation with the amount of time between arrival in the U.S. and the acquisition of a livable wage ($r = 0.59$; $p < 0.05$). This relationship will be explored in greater depth in the multivariate models I present in Chapter IV.

Social Networks and Social Capital

The economic prospects of refugees are often improved when they engage their social capital (R. Allen 2009; Lamba 2003; Potocky-Tripodi 2004). Indeed, social capital may even partially offset deficits of human capital. Social capital is found in networks of social relations that can provide members with information, credit, credentials and material assets to assist in their economic integration. These networks of social relations can take the form of friendship and acquaintance networks, family ties, religious ties, professional networks, and membership in voluntary associations. Yet, the type of network ties that have proven to be most effective for improving employment prospects are what Granovetter calls “weak ties.” He notes that “the strength of a tie” is determined by a combination of things, including “the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (Granovetter 1973:1361). The social ties that refugees use to find employment include strong ties such as family, friends, as well as the moderate and weak ties found in ethnic associations and refugee service agencies, respectively.

The Utah Refugee Database lists the social ties that refugees mentioned using for their job search. This is operationalized in two ways, first as a count of the types of social

ties used by the refugee in their job search, and second, as binary categorical variables for each type of social network used. Most refugees in the sample did not report using their social networks to aid them in their job search. Networks may also be underreported because caseworkers did not start routinely asking about this until 2012. Only 21.6 percent used their social networks for their job search, and only 1 percent used more than one network tie to assist in their job search. Bivariate correlations show that the use of these reported forms of social capital are not associated with entering the labor market. However, use of social capital correlates with a shorter time between arrival in the U.S. and finding a job with a livable wage. This relationship is the likely reason behind the Utah Refugee Services Office's efforts to create ethnic associations and networks where there are currently weak or nonexistent networks of support (Brown 2012).

Cultural Capital

Cultural capital, in the words of Bourdieu, is the “forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions” (Bourdieu 1993:7) that help individuals navigate institutions and help prevent them from violating the social norms of the host culture. Among refugee service providers, employment specific cultural capital is considered a form of “literacy” (Daniels and Belton 2015). In a 2015 Refugee Needs Assessment, Daniels and Belton report that several themes arose around employment literacy in interviews with employers of refugees, several of which relate to employment specific cultural capital. Commonly reported cultural misunderstandings surrounded personal hygiene, authority, interpersonal conflicts, and gender roles. Daniels and Belton also found that “[i]n some cases, employers felt that refugees lacked a basic knowledge of

workplace culture and struggled to understand the supervision and authority, work schedules, and the structure of a normal work day” (Daniels and Belton 2015:77).

All refugees arrive in the U.S. with cultural capital, yet in this new context their cultural capital may not align with that of U.S. society. This misalignment may be the source of many of the misunderstandings reported by employers. And, since cultural capital is acquired slowly, instilled over a long period time, the ethnic origins of refugees are likely the most substantial contributor to cultural misunderstandings in the labor market. In the *Case Notes* and in interviews service providers reported misunderstandings in the workplace relating to timeliness, absenteeism, appropriate communication with managers, and other issues related to workplace communication. As such, some mode of measuring the difference between U.S. culture and the culture of a refugee’s nation of origin would be invaluable to the analysis of refugee economic integration. Moreover, this type of measure of cultural difference could prove more generally useful in studies of immigrant integration.

For the quantitative portion of the study, I include variables for several types of cultural capital that might affect a refugee’s job search. These include indicators for individual cultural barriers as well as culture of origin. I capture individual deficits of cultural capital using several binary variables that reflect religious and cultural barriers, deficits of employment-related cultural knowledge, and the presence of hygiene issues. While the *Individual Employment Assessment Form* includes the item “Identify any SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS, and/or CULTURAL ISSUES that may impact employment options,” prompting caseworkers to ask about religious and other cultural barriers, a lack of employment-related cultural knowledge is often only documented in the *Case Notes*

after a refugee has obtained a job and only if the deficit has caused problems for them at the job. As a result, this cultural barrier is likely under-reported. Similarly, issues with hygiene are documented only when the refugee's case manager notices hygiene practices they believe will create issues in the work place or when the refugee's hygiene practices have already caused problems in the work place. Thus, hygiene issues may also be inconsistently reported. Fewer than 3 percent of the refugees in the sample are described as having hygiene issues.

With regard to religious practices, 22 percent of refugees reported religious practices that might be barriers to employment in some industries. In total, 15 percent of Utah refugees reported that they can't work with pork or alcohol due to their religious beliefs, and an additional 5 percent reported that their religious beliefs require that they wear a hijab (scarf) and can't wear pants.

Many service agencies offer workshops to improve refugees' cultural readiness for employment. Workshops typically address workplace norms such as timeliness, appropriate dress, proper hygiene, and appropriate workplace communication.

Symbolic Capital, Statuses, and Intersectionality

The final form of capital that affects the economic prospects of refugees is symbolic capital. Symbolic capital, or "prestige, reputation, fame, etc." is related to various properties of an individual, such as the status associated with membership in certain social groups (e.g., race, gender, sexuality) (Bourdieu 1991:230). The group memberships that may be relevant to the economic integration of refugees in Utah include such variables as race, gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliation, as each carries

a disadvantaged status in the Utah labor market. And, many refugees experience an intersection of memberships, belonging to multiple disadvantaged social groups (Bowleg 2008; Crenshaw 1991; Settles 2006). While the administrative forms document a refugee's gender and nation of origin, full information on race and ethnicity are not tracked. Further, religion is only documented if it creates a potential employment barrier. As such, religious affiliation can only be determined for a small subset of the sample. As a result of this incomplete information, only one disadvantaged status is available for analysis in the quantitative data: gender. However, I also constructed a race variable based on the dominant racial phenotype for the refugee's nation of origin. The statistics and analysis based on this variable should be interpreted with caution as it is not a definitive measure of the refugee's race.

As a potentially disadvantaging status, it is important to look at gender differences in both labor market outcomes. Forty-four percent of the refugees in the sample are female. On average, it takes refugee women 27 days longer to find a first job than it takes refugee men, and the difference is statistically significant ($t = 3.65$; $p = 0.00$). The difference is even larger when we look at the amount of time it takes to find a job with a livable wage. On average, it takes refugee women 63 days longer than refugee men to find a job with a livable wage after the initiation of a job search. When examined over time, men consistently find jobs faster than women. However, the size of the difference fluctuates. During the Great Recession men continued to find jobs faster than women, and the gap between men's and women's job search durations grew. This is surprising because male-dominated industries like construction lost more jobs than female dominated or gender-neutral industries during this time (Nasiripour 2017; U.S.

Department of Labor 2014a; 2014b). In addition, the first jobs acquired by refugees are typically low- or no-skill jobs requiring minimal human capital, meaning that men and women should obtain those jobs with nearly equal speed. Yet, despite the losses of traditionally male jobs during this time period, refugee men found jobs faster than refugee women. This disparity speaks to the ubiquitous nature of gender as a disadvantaged status in the Utah labor market. In fact, Utah ranks as one of the worst states for all women on several markers of economic well-being, including wage, managerial positions, and family leave (Hess and Williams 2014). The labor market disadvantage is even greater for nonwhite women, and, as Reitz and Sklar suggest, it may also be greater for women who are “conspicuously foreign” (1997).

The average wages of refugee women are also lower than the average wages of refugee men. Despite the prevalence of entry-level positions among refugees in Utah, refugee men make an average of \$0.81 more per hour than refugee women. The wage disparity for refugee’s first jobs in Utah, at \$0.54, is smaller than the disparity for all jobs but the difference remains statistically significant. Some of the gap between refugee men’s and women’s labor market outcomes might be due to gender differences in human capital. As noted in the previous sections, refugee women have lower average levels of education and lower proficiency in English than refugee men. I will explore the effect of gender after controlling for other forms of capital in the multivariate models I present in the next chapter. I will also investigate whether gender interacts with any of these other predictors of economic wellbeing.

Contexts of Reception

The social and economic context of the host society powerfully shapes labor market outcomes. In fact, context has the potential to mitigate the effects of individual characteristics and forms of capital. Kibreab theorized that the integration of migrants is determined by the interaction between the causes of migration, attitudes of reception, government policy and economic opportunity (Hume and Hardwick 2005; Kibreab 1999). In the case of refugees the causes of migration and government policy do not vary. Refugees migrated due to a well-founded fear of persecution, and government policy dictates that refugees are eligible for a number of types of public assistance. However, attitudes of reception and economic opportunity can vary dramatically, molding labor market outcomes.

Attitudes of reception are measured as the percent of Utah residents who have negative attitudes toward immigrants.³³ The data come from Political Surveys from multiple different years conducted by the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press. The attitudes question reads: “Here are some pairs of statements. Please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views — even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is... Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents [OR] Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care.” Response options included 1 “Statement #1,” 2 “Statement #2,” or 3 “Neither/both equally” (if volunteered). The immigrant attitudes variable is measured as the percent of Utah

³³ While data documenting attitudes toward refugees would be preferable, most major social surveys have not yet begun including questions specific to refugees. As a result, I am using attitudes about immigrants as a proxy measure.

respondents who chose statement 2.

In general, prior to the Great Recession 25.71 percent of respondents listed statement 2, i.e., displayed negative attitudes. During the Recession, a much larger percentage of Utah respondents, 72.22 percent, exhibited negative attitudes toward immigrants. After the recession, the percentage of people with negative attitudes toward immigrants decline to between 50 and 53 percent. These trends indicate that the very attitudes that might affect refugee employment outcomes are also affected by the prevailing economic context. Moreover, negative attitudes toward immigrants correlate with a longer duration between arrival and the achievement of a livable wage ($r = .24$; $p < 0.05$).

For this study, I evaluate economic opportunity using two variables: the statewide unemployment rate for the year of the job search, and the statewide poverty rate for the year of the job search.

At the state level, economic opportunity consists of a strong labor market, characterized by low levels of unemployment, and appropriately high wages. I capture state-level economic opportunity with state unemployment and poverty rates. In the course of the recession that began in late 2008 and extended into mid-2009, Utah experienced reduced per capita incomes and inflated poverty and unemployment rates. And, while poverty rates have steadily increased since the early 2000s, unemployment rates parallel the national economic trends, spiking in the aftermath of the recession. During the time period covered by this study the average Utah per capita income was \$37,877, and an average of 11.4 percent of Utah residents lived in poverty. Unemployment rates ranged from a low of 2.5 percent in 2007 to a high of 7.8 percent in 2010. The average rate of unemployment over the time period covered by this study was

5.3 percent. In bivariate correlations poverty shows no association with the amount of time it takes to find a first job or a job with a livable wage. However, high levels of unemployment correlate with a longer time before refugees find a first job ($r = .19$; $p < 0.05$). Surprisingly, unemployment rates have an inverse correlation with the amount of time it takes to find a livable wage. In other words, higher rates of unemployment correlate with shorter durations between arrival in the U.S. and finding a job with a livable wage. This correlation may be the result of not controlling for poverty, which potentially induces job seekers to find a job more rapidly, even if it involves accepting a temporary, seasonal, or otherwise less desirable job when it offers a livable wage. I investigate the relationship between unemployment and labor market outcomes in greater depth with the multivariate and interacted models presented in Chapter V.

The Economic Integration of Utah Refugees

In the migration literature, economic integration has been defined in a variety of ways ranging from simple labor market participation to sufficient income and job satisfaction. Kuhlman's definition stands out for its comprehensive approach. His definition includes four components: 1) labor market participation; 2) adequate income; 3) equal access to goods and services relative to the host population;³⁴ and 4) a non-negative impact on the host society (Kuhlman 1991:16).

A timeline of refugee economic behavior after resettlement would show initial labor market participation as the first stage of economic integration. The achievement of an adequate income typically occurs in positions received after the first job. Equality of

³⁴ Gordon would equate this with the absence of discrimination (1964).

access and the absence of discrimination it implies is a contextual factor that may occur simultaneously with labor market participation and adequate income or it may follow them as two-way integration progresses (Gordon 1964). Finally, a non-negative impact on the host society is best assessed in a longer time frame, to allow short-term fluctuations to be shaped into longer term trends; however, a handful of labor market conditions may offer preliminary indications. I address labor market participation and adequate income in the quantitative analysis. The qualitative analysis addresses the equality of access and the absence of discrimination.

In practice, economic integration and self-sufficiency have been measured in a variety of ways. The U.S. government defines self-sufficiency as nonreliance on public assistance as a result of labor market participation. The first marker of progress toward an adequate income is the acquisition of a job with a wage above the state poverty threshold. However, a wage above the poverty threshold is not necessarily sufficient to cover all basic needs. In 2004, Glasmeier created a *living wage* measure as an alternative to the current minimum wage. Her measure uses “market-based approach that draws upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family’s likely minimum food, child care, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g., clothing, personal care items, etc.) costs” and estimates are updated annually (Glasmeier 2012). Glasmeier’s work emphasizes the fleeting nature of economic opportunity, and the impact that changing economic contexts have on the wages of the working poor (Glasmeier 2006). However, Glasmeier’s estimates have only existed since 2004, and social service agencies were setting livable wage goals for their clients for many decades prior to 2004.

In the state of Utah, an adequate wage for self-sufficiency is set at 200 percent of the Utah poverty threshold. Refugee service agencies have followed the state's lead in using 200 percent of the poverty threshold as the wage goal for their clients. In most years, this state threshold is higher than Glasmeier's living wage estimate. As such, it represents an advance from simply covering one's expenses toward long-term self-sufficiency. One state has defined a wage goal that could afford long-term self-sufficiency, or what they term *durable self-sufficiency*. Massachusetts' threshold for durable self-sufficiency is set at 450 percent of the state's poverty level (Tyeklar 2016).

All of the above measures are examined in the statistics summarizing the Utah refugee population. However, following Kuhlman's definition, the multivariate analyses presented in Chapter IV use two measures of economic integration: initial labor market participation and the acquisition of a livable wage as defined by the government and voluntary social service organizations in the state of Utah.

Initial labor market participation is measured as the amount of time it takes to find a first job. Because it may take a little bit of time after resettlement before a refugee is ready to begin looking for employment, labor market participation is measured as the amount of time it takes to find a first job after initiating a job search. Refugees are encouraged by resettlement agencies to begin looking for a job almost immediately since the duration of financial assistance is quite limited. As a result, most refugees begin searching for a job within a couple of weeks of arrival. The acquisition of a livable wage is measured as the amount of time it takes to find a job with a livable wage. In order to assess prospects for self-sufficiency as a long-term project after resettlement, the duration is measured as the amount of time between arrival in the U.S. and the acquisition of a

wage that is 200 percent of the Utah poverty threshold. However, the trajectory toward long-term self-sufficiency can be irregular for refugees, characterized by job changes or loss. This is especially true during periods of economic downturn and high unemployment. As a result, I analyze data for three general time periods: before, during, and after the recession. I also examine declines in economic wellbeing.

The data show that roughly 65 percent of all refugee job searches resulted in a hire. In addition, 57 percent of refugees found a job during their first job search. Many of those who did not find a job suspended their job search while participating in a subsidized work-training program (34.67 percent). Others ceased looking for a job due to health issues, child care issues, or moving to another state. Unfortunately, only 9 percent of all job searches, including repeated searches by the same person, resulted in a livable wage.

Using the government goal for self-sufficiency—receiving no public assistance—87 percent of the refugees in the sample met the standard for self-sufficiency. When using the state poverty threshold as a marker of economic wellbeing, the data show that 99.85 percent of refugees received jobs with hourly wages above the state poverty threshold. However, not all of those jobs offered full-time hours. Only 74.1 percent of Utah refugees found fulltime jobs with hourly wages above the state poverty level. Using a more realistic standard of self-sufficiency, the Glasmeier/MIT Living Wage, the data show that only 31 percent of refugees in the sample found a job with an hourly wage above the living wage and only 24.5 percent found a full-time job with an hourly wage above the Glasmeier/MIT Living Wage. Overall, the data show that very few Utah refugees who searched for employment found jobs with a livable wage that is 200 percent

of the Utah poverty level. While 13.5 percent of the refugees in the sample acquired a job with a wage at or above 200 percent of the poverty level, only 8.7 percent found a full-time job at that wage level. While there are no statistically significant gender differences in the percent of refugees who do not receive public assistance and those who have a wage above the poverty level, there are statistically significant differences in the percentages of refugee men and women who receive a livable wage, regardless of the measure used. Using Glasmeier/MIT Living Wage, 23 percent of refugee women and 40 percent of refugee men achieved this standard in a full-time position. Using 200 percent of the poverty threshold as the standard for full-time jobs, only 6 percent of refugee women and 16 percent of refugee men achieved this level of self-sufficiency.

Summary

In general, the refugees in this study possess lower levels of human capital than members of the host population. In addition, many face deficits of cultural capital; experience multiple, intersecting, disadvantaged statuses; and possess limited social networks, making successful economic integration especially difficult. And, even when a refugee possesses a great deal of human and cultural capital, a poor economic climate can reduce the benefit of skills, training, and cultural knowledge, and increase the detrimental effects of disadvantaged statuses. Moreover, these factors interact, often coevolving over time. In order to fully understand the capability of refugees to deploy their forms of capital to their complete potential in the Utah labor market, and test the relevance of traditional integration theory for refugees, I employ a series of multivariate event history models. I present these models in the chapter that follows.

Table 6. National Origins of Refugees in the Sample (percent of sample shown).

Africa	.37	Eastern Europe	.03
Burundi	7.51	Armenia	5.88
Cameroon	.40	Azerbaijan	5.88
Central African Republic	2.37	Russia	88.24
Republic of Congo	7.51	Latin America	.02
Democratic Republic of Congo	2.37	Chile	6.25
Eritrea	14.62	Colombia	6.25
Ethiopia	4.74	Cuba	56.25
Gambia	.40	Mexico	12.5
Guinea	.40	Peru	12.5
Kenya	.40	Venezuela	6.25
Liberia	1.58	Middle East/North Africa	.21
Rwanda	1.58	Afghanistan	5.76
Sierra Leone	.40	Iran	39.57
Somalia	42.69	Iraq	51.08
Sudan	13.04	Lebanon	0.72
Asia	.37	Pakistan	0.72
Bhutan	59.68	Palestine	1.44
Burma	38.74	Yemen	0.72
China	.40		
Nepal	.40		
North Korea	.40		
Sri Lanka	.40		

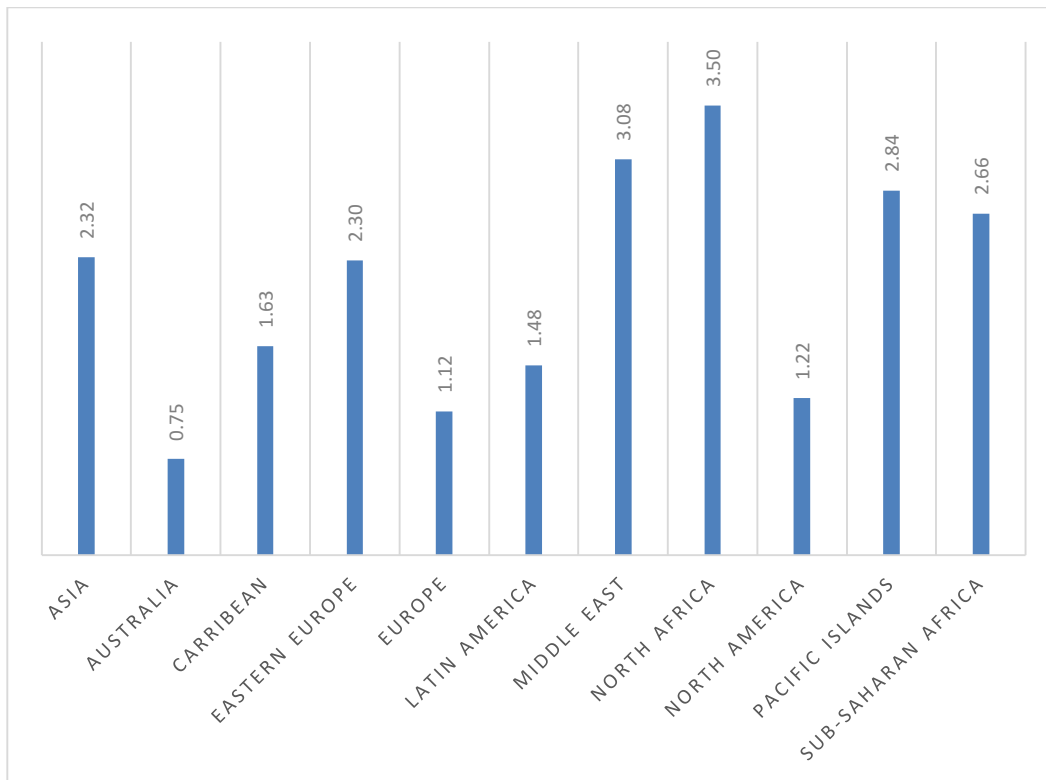


Figure 4. Average Regional Cultural Distance Scores

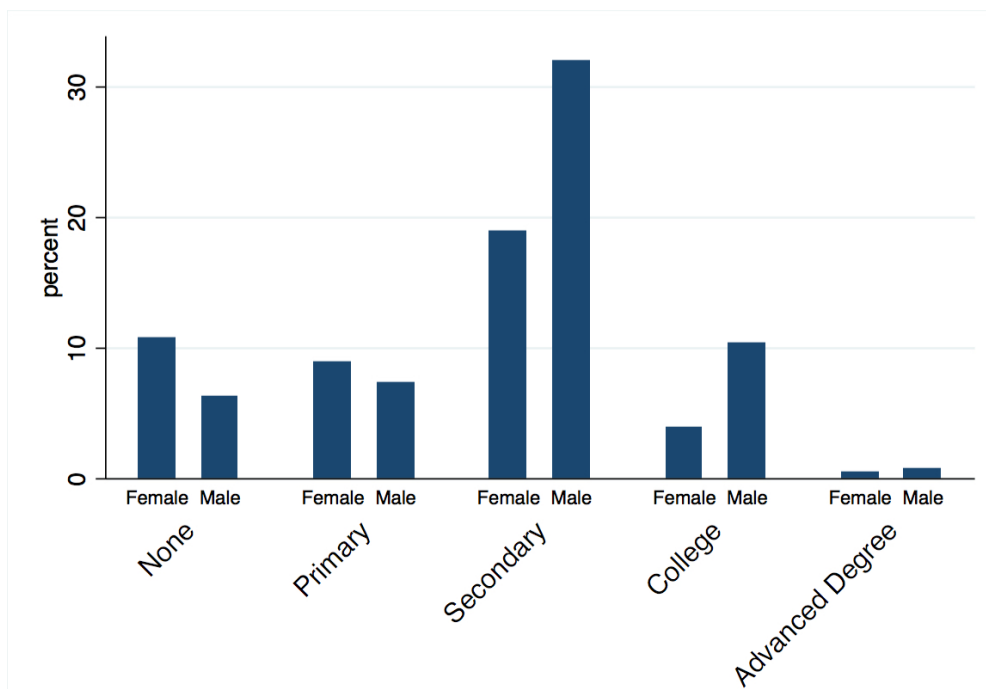


Figure 5. Education Levels by Gender

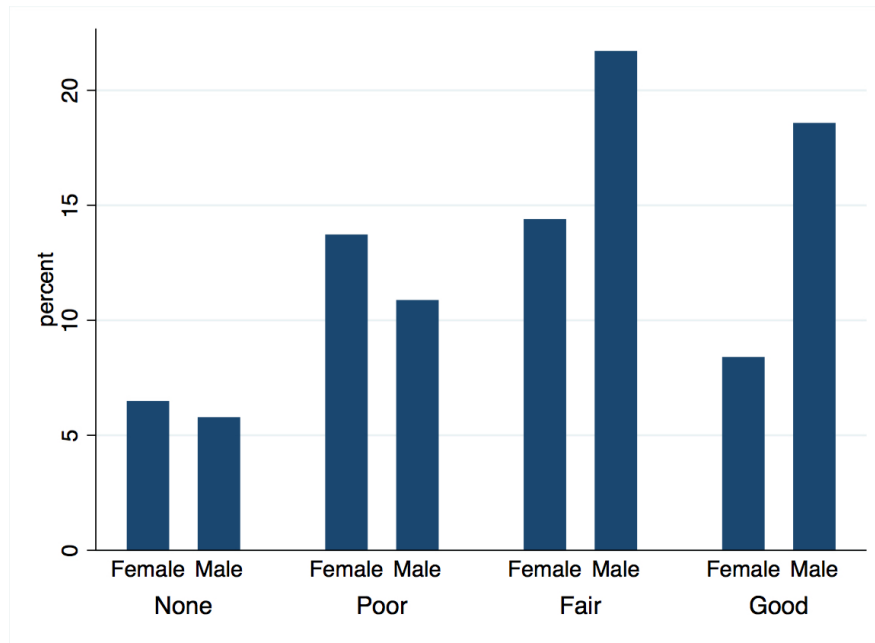


Figure 6. English-speaking Ability by Gender

CHAPTER V

REFUGEE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN UTAH

Overview

Considering what we know about the importance of education, skills, and previous work experience for entering the labor market, as well as the importance of cultural, symbolic, and social capital, how is it that refugees fare worse in the job market than similarly skilled members of the host society? The type of job that refugees apply for as their first job in the U.S. is typically a position that requires no skill-base. However, since these positions involve on-the-job training, some degree of English speaking ability is often essential. And, in general, the refugees in Utah possess lower levels of education and proficiency in English than members of the host population. In addition, many face extensive deficits of cultural capital due to both personal characteristics and their ethnic origins. And, many experience multiple, intersecting, disadvantaged statuses, such as being a black, Muslim woman. Finally, refugees often possess limited social networks, restricted to family, religious communities, and ethnic communities. Together these characteristics can make economic integration and self-sufficiency especially difficult to achieve. Furthermore, when a refugee possesses a great deal of human, cultural, social, and symbolic capital, negative social and economic contexts can still impede his or her opportunities to use their employment related skills in

the labor market, effectively reducing the benefit of skills, training, and cultural knowledge, and increasing the detrimental effects of disadvantaged statuses. Combined, these structural and other circumstances can limit a refugee's capability of effectively deploying their assets in the Utah labor market.

This chapter examines the quantitative data to explore the question: What individual and contextual factors affect the speed and quality of refugee economic integration? More specifically, *what individual characteristics and contextual factors affect the amount of time it takes to enter the labor market, the first step toward economic integration, after the initiation of a job search?* And, *what individual characteristics and contextual factors affect the amount of time it takes to find a job with a livable wage after resettlement?*

Because the factors that contribute to economic integration, both individual and contextual, interact and change over time, often coevolving, I test a holistic model of economic integration that incorporates the ethnic origins of refugees (Hein 2006), their forms of capital (Nee and Sanders 2001) and the mitigating effects of social and economic context (Hume and Hardwick 2005; Potocky-Tripodi 2001). I do this, in part, by treating the individual forms of capital and contextual factors as phenomena that are both discrete and interacting in the timeline of a refugee's economic experience in the U.S. The specific hypotheses that stem from this model are shown in Table 7.

In the sections that follow, I briefly describe the data and the analytical approach. I then test a series of nested models. Finally, I test models with interactions between the predictors. In testing a holistic model of economic integration, this study builds upon traditional theories of economic integration by emphasizing the *sui generis* nature of

integration, and by testing the applicability of traditional migration theories for the refugee's unique experience of economic integration.

Methods and Data

Data and Analytical Sample

The data for this portion of the study come from several sources. Individual level data come from the administrative files of the Refugee and Immigrant Center at the Asian Association of Utah (RIC-AAU). I supplement the individual refugee data with ethnic origins data from the World Values Survey (WVS), POLITY IV, and Minorities At Risk and with data summarizing the Utah context from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Community Surveys, and the Pew Political Surveys. (See Table 4 in Chapter III.) Finally, I used data from the Refugee Processing Center (RPC) in Washington, D.C., detailing the number of refugees arriving in Utah between 2000 and 2011, to construct sampling weights for this study. This dataset gave frequencies of Utah refugee arrivals subdivided by year of arrival, nation of origin, gender, age group, level of education, and English speaking ability. I constructed the sampling weights by calculating the proportion of all refugees over the age of 18 in each category. For example, I calculated the proportion of Burmese women arriving in 2005 who were aged 30 to 35, had only primary education, and spoke poor English. I used this proportion to adjust the proportion of that same group in the employment data.

The sample includes all refugees who sought employment during three time periods: before the Great Recession (2007), during the recession (2009), and after the recession (2012). The employment records for many refugees document multiple job

searches. Refugees who sought assistance during one of these years were tracked from time of their first assisted job search even if their first search occurred prior to the target year. Gaps in job search timelines are accounted for by tracking entry and exit dates. Each job search is a separate observation. As a result, the analysis includes 1,338 observations and spans multiple years for more than half of the 938 refugees in the sample. Sampling weights were applied to normalize the observed individuals to the total population of refugees over the age of 18 who were resettled in Utah each year.

Analytical Approach

In order to test the relevance of forms of capital and socio-economic context in the timeline of a refugee's U.S. employment history I use event history analysis, specifically Cox proportional hazards models for repeated events. I examine the association between the amount of time it takes find a first job and later to find a job with a livable wage and different forms of capital and social contexts. Event history "analysis is a collection of statistical methods that are used to describe, explain, or predict the occurrence and timing of events" (Allison 2010). Event history analysis models the length of time between "exposure" and "event" as the hazard of event occurrence. Model coefficients are hazard rates, and represent the "instantaneous rate of failure" (i.e., the likelihood of event occurrence at any given instant), while exponentiated coefficients represent hazard rate ratios and can be interpreted as multiplicative likelihoods (Cleves et al. 2010).

The data for event history analysis are essentially a longitudinal record, or timeline, of events that occur for individuals or groups. However, this type of data

“typically possess two features—censoring and time-varying explanatory variables—that create major problems for standard statistical procedures such as linear regression” (Allison 2014:1). Event history analysis, on the other hand, is specifically designed to deal with these issues. Censoring occurs when some individuals or groups do not experience the event, so the time from exposure to event can’t be measured. The exclusion of censored cases has been shown to produce tremendous biases in the estimates (Allison 2014; Cleves et al. 2010). Time-varying explanatory variables are predictors for which the hazard rate changes over time. While Cox models are semiparametric, making the assumption that the hazard of an event due to a particular predictive variable is constant over time (i.e., proportional), they offer simple techniques for estimating nonproportional hazards. In this study, refugees who acquire a job or a livable wage (i.e., experience the event) are considered to have “failed,” while those who did not acquire a job or a livable wage are considered “censored” (Cleves et al. 2010).

Event history analysis has several advantages over ordinary logistic regression methods for this type of data. First, if a person enters the study multiple times, or experiences multiple events logistic regression treats each person-event as independent.³⁵ Many of the refugees in the sample have experienced multiple job searches and placements. As a result, I used the *stset, id* function in Stata to identify individuals with multiple events and specify entry and exit times. Second, logistic models assume a Bernoulli distribution of predictors and the residual. However, it is not reasonable to expect event history data to have either normally distributed errors, particularly with

³⁵ Multilevel logistic regression can compensate for multiple person-events, but does not compensate well for censoring or time-varying covariates.

employment and health data, since many individuals have very short or very long times to the event, and there may be only a few falling in the middle range. Similarly, with ordinary least-squares regression using the time to an event as a continuous dependent variable, “[t]he assumed normality of time to an event is unreasonable for many events. It is unreasonable, for instance, if we are thinking about an event with an instantaneous risk of occurring that is constant over time” (Cleves et al. 2010:2).

The models presented below use a Cox proportional hazards model with time-varying covariates and robust standard errors. It is a Conditional Risk Set Model for Ordered Failure Events where individuals are identified and entry and exit times are specified to account for multiple job search “spells” with gaps (interval-truncation). I apply sampling weights to the data as a part of the *stset* specification in order to make the analysis and data more representative of the total Utah refugee job-seeking population.

Variables

Dependent Variables

In order to test multiple aspects of economic integration I use two principal dependent variables:³⁶ labor market participation and the acquisition of a job with a livable wage. In the language of event history analysis, the dependent variable is the time from exposure to event. Labor market participation is measured as the time between the initiation of a job search and the acquisition of the first job. The acquisition of a livable wage is measured as the amount of time it takes from arrival in the U.S. till finding a job

³⁶ I pursue the remaining indicators of economic integration through qualitative investigation. The qualitative analysis is presented in Chapter V.

with a wage at 200 percent of the Utah poverty threshold.^{37,38}

The data show that very few Utah refugees who searched for employment between 2007 and 2012 found jobs with livable wage (i.e., 200 percent of the Utah poverty level). And, while the human capital of each refugee plays a role in economic integration, gender, culture, and context may be more salient. Roughly 64 percent of all employment searches resulted in a hire. Of the 938 refugees in the study, only 58 found a job with a livable wage, and only 37 found full-time jobs with a livable wage.

Independent Variables

Following the holistic model of refugee economic integration, the individual level independent variables fall into one of three categories: ethnic origins, forms of capital, and social context.³⁹

³⁷ I use 200 percent of the poverty threshold rather than the MIT/Glasmeier Living Wage calculated for the Salt Lake Metropolitan area because the 200 percent poverty threshold is goal used by refugee service agencies and it is typically higher than the MIT/Glasmeier Living Wage (Glasmeier 2012).

³⁸ For comparison, I analyze two additional dependent variables in the uninteracted models, the time from arrival to nonreceipt of public assistance (the government standard of self-sufficiency) and the time from arrival to the acquisition of a living wage (using values from the MIT/Glasmeier Living Wage Calculator for the Salt Lake Metropolitan area (Glasmeier 2012)), which is typically a lower self-sufficiency standard than a 200 percent of the poverty threshold standard of self-sufficiency.

³⁹ A number of demographic variables were also tested, including marital status, single-parent status, second migrant status and current employment status, but were insignificant and not included in the final models.

Ethnic Origins

Hein's theory of ethnic origins asserts that culture, homeland histories, and politics collectively influence refugee integration (Hein 2006). For Hein, culture includes a variety of values related to such things as individualism and collectivism, spiritual aspirations, and kinship norms. To capture this component of ethnic origins I use using a cultural distance scale⁴⁰ based on the cultural dimensions designed by Hofstede et al. This scale measures differences in cultural values between the refugee's country of origin and the U.S. I also test a measure based on the cultural distance scale of Babiker et al. (1980). While cultural dimensions of Hofstede et al. tap broad cultural attitudes and values, such as the relationship of individuals to authority, individualism versus collectivism, and tendencies toward indulgence or restraint, Babiker's scale looks at practical differences, such as differences in climate, food, language, material comfort and family structure. For Hein, homeland histories reflect nature of nation-state formation and the level of subordination, equality, and dominance found in national institutions of a refugee's homeland. I use the polity classifications of Marshall et al. (2013) to encapsulate some of the features of homeland history. Politics includes political cleavage and the salience of inter- and intraethnic conflict over power. To capture this component of ethnic origins I used a variable capturing political discrimination against minority groups from the Minorities at Risk data set.

⁴⁰ The cultural distance variable is an index of the differences between the refugee's nation of origin and the U.S. measured as the total difference between the scores for the refugee's country and the U.S. on six dimensions of cultural distance. These measures are based on the cultural dimensions of Hofstede et al., but have been modified for use with World Values Survey data (G. Hofstede et al. 2010; World Values Survey 2009).

The refugees in the sample come from 37 different countries of origin. Some of these countries have very low cultural distance scores while others rank very high. For example, Mexico has a values-based cultural distance score of 1.13 and a practice-based score of 1.85, while Yemen has a values-based cultural distance score of 4.03 and a practice-based score of 6.28. However, the values and practice-based measures capture different aspects of culture and do not always correlate as neatly as in the cases of Yemen and Mexico. Sudan has a values-based cultural distance score that is only slightly lower than the mean, but its practice-based score is high, second only to Yemen. Overall, the correlation between these two measures of culture is only .05, but it is statistically significant ($p = .05$).

The polity types of refugee origin countries range from the highly autocratic in Bhutan and North Korea, to the highly democratic in several Latin American countries. And, polity type shows a moderate correlation with the political discrimination against minorities ($r = -.43$; $p < .05$).

Forms of Capital

The variables capturing the forms of capital are grouped into human, cultural, social, and symbolic capital. Human capital includes variables for education level (measured in years and as a categorical variable), English speaking ability (in four

categories),⁴¹ status of profession in country of origin,⁴² and amount of U.S. work experience. Cultural capital includes three binary variables capturing the presence of religious restrictions, deficits of employment related cultural capital, and hygiene issues. Social capital is a categorical variable measuring the type of social tie used, if any, during the job search. Categories include “none,” “family,” and “ethnic association ties.” Finally, symbolic capital includes gender and race.⁴³ The categories are based on the categories used by the current U.S. Census Bureau with one additional category: Middle Eastern and North African. The categories include Asian, Black, Hispanic, Middle Eastern and North African, and White.

In general, the human capital of refugees is lower than that of the mainstream Utah population. Twenty-eight percent of the refugees in the sample have no education. In addition, there are statistically significant differences between the level of education of men and women. On average the men in the study have 2.5 years more education than women. Similarly, 11 percent speak no English and 28 percent speak English poorly.

⁴¹ While many studies view proficiency in English as a measure of acculturation, it also speaks to the type and quality of education in the refugee’s country of origin. Refugees in the early stages of their resettlement in the U.S. often enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, whereas refugees who have already obtained a job and have some small level of structural integration typically improve their English via interaction with the host population. Since this study focuses on economic integration in the early time period after resettlement, English speaking ability is more likely a measure of the human capital the refugees brought with them, especially for refugees seeking their first job.

⁴² The status of the refugee’s previous profession is coded using the Nam-Powers-Boyd scale of occupational statuses.

⁴³ Models were also tested using country of origin as a dummy variable. Only a handful of countries exhibited significance. More importantly, several countries had too few refugees in the sample for the country dummies to provide a valid test.

And, in their home country, only 10 percent worked in professions such as teacher and registered nurse which have statuses above 80, and only 3 percent worked in professions such as architect or lawyer, which have statuses above 90. Moreover, more than 40 percent of the refugees have some deficit of cultural capital. Table 10 summarizes the independent variables capturing these forms of capital.

Contextual Factors

Even when a refugee possesses sufficient human, social, and cultural capital, a poor social or economic climate in the host community may negatively impact their prospects in the labor market. To capture the social context of reception I use data from the Pew Political Surveys assessing negative attitudes toward immigrants. Attitudes of reception are measured as the percent of Utah residents who have negative attitudes toward immigrants. The survey question asks: “Here are some pairs of statements. Please tell me whether the FIRST statement or the SECOND statement comes closer to your own views — even if neither is exactly right. The first pair is... Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents [OR] Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing, and health care.” Response options included 1 “Statement #1,” 2 “Statement #2,” or 3 “Neither/both equally” (if volunteered). The immigrant attitudes variable is measured as the percent of Utah respondents who chose statement 2.⁴⁴

Prior to the Great Recession 26 percent of respondents espoused negative attitudes. During the Recession, a much larger percentage of Utah respondents, 72

⁴⁴ In supplemental tests, I added the neutral category as it exhibited a low correlation with the negative category. It was insignificant in all models and removed from the analysis.

percent, exhibited negative attitudes toward immigrants. After the recession, the percentage of people with negative attitudes toward immigrants declined to between 50 and 53 percent.

To capture the economic context of reception I include the annual Utah poverty rate and the annual Utah unemployment rate. Poverty rate data were taken from the Decennial U.S. Census and 5-Year American Community Surveys. Utah's annual employment rates were drawn from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Department of Labor 2014a; 2014b). The average annual poverty rate between 2003 and 2013 was 11.5 percent. Prior to the recession 10 percent of the Utah population experienced poverty. This number rose to 10.5 percent during the recession, but was highest, at 13 percent in years following the recession. Similarly, 5 percent of Utah's population experienced unemployment prior to the recession. The number jumped to nearly 8 percent toward the end of the recession and averaged almost 7 percent in the years after the recession.

These recession-related negative economic consequences represent contexts of fewer opportunities for all residents, but the negative effect may be magnified for refugees who typically have fewer of the forms of capital beneficial in the labor market. In the models that follow I test the interactions of these and other factors.

Analysis and Results

In order to test the holistic model of economic integration I first modeled each dimension separately to determine whether the dimension exhibited simple associations with the dependent variable. I then tested all dimensions and added interactions. The results of the event history analysis testing a Holistic Model of Economic Integration

demonstrate that, with one exception, the forms of capital and the different facets of social and economic context are, indeed, associated with labor market outcomes.

However, their precise relationships are not straightforward. The effects of the different forms of capital and contextual factors differ depending on which measure of economic integration is being analyzed.

Ethnic Origins

In order to test Hein's (2006) tripartite concept of ethnic origins, I investigated the relationship between the two dependent variables—labor market participation and livable wage—and culture, homeland histories, and politics. In bivariate correlations, all three components correlate significantly with the amount of time it takes to secure a job.

However, all correlations are extremely small (less than 0.1). Interestingly, correlations with the amount of time it takes to acquire a living wage are stronger (but still quite weak), and the association with polity type is no longer significant. The bivariate correlations are shown in Table 11 below. When examining simple labor market participation, larger cultural distance index scores correlate with longer job searches. However, in the event history models neither culture variable is significant. Similarly, in bivariate correlations a more democratic polity type is associated with shorter job searches, yet polity type is not significant in the event history model. Surprisingly, in bivariate correlations, higher levels of political discrimination correlate with shorter job searches. But again, the variable is not significant in the event history model.

The livable wage models follow a similar pattern. The bivariate correlations indicate that there is a relationship between ethnic origins and securing a livable wage,

yet nearly all are insignificant in the event history models. Only distance in cultural attitudes is significant. Higher levels of this type of cultural distance are associated with a 2.3 times greater likelihood of finding a job at any given time after the job search, and thus, with a shorter job search. Overall, only cultural distance in attitudes is associated with more economic integration, and this is only true for finding a livable wage. In contrast, ethnic origins are not associated with labor market participation.

Forms of Capital

In refugee and immigration research, forms of capital, especially human capital and social capital, are the most studied predictors of economic integration (R. Allen 2009; Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Bloch 2002; Castles et al. 2005; Coleman 1988; Nee and Sanders 2001).

Human Capital

As expected based on the human capital scholarship, more years of education correlate with shorter durations between initiating a job search and securing a job. However the correlations are very small ($r = -0.06$; $p < 0.05$). But, surprisingly, years of education is not correlated with finding a livable wage. Even more surprising is the fact that, in one-way tests of analysis of variance, English speaking ability is not associated with either outcome. Finally, neither the status of a refugee's profession prior to arrival in the U.S. nor months of work experience in the U.S. correlated with labor market participation, but both exhibited significant correlations with the amount of time it takes to secure a job with a livable wage.

In preliminary event history models, all human capital predictors except the status of a refugee's profession prior to arrival in the U.S. are significant predictors of labor market participation, while only education and U.S. work experience are significant predictors of securing a job with a livable wage. Additional years of education and better skill in spoken English are associated with a greater likelihood of finding a job, and additional years of education are associated with a greater likelihood of acquiring a livable wage. However, the effect may not be linear. An additional year of primary education may not have the same effect on employment as an additional year of high school or college. As a result, a categorical education variable was also tested and found relevant for inclusion in the main model. For both indicators of economic integration, more experience working in the U.S. is associated with a lower likelihood of finding a job. Those with greater work experience take longer to find jobs, both entry-level and jobs with a livable wage.

Social Networks and Social Capital

Social capital research asserts that refugees and immigrants who lack the human capital required in the U.S. job market may use their social ties to help them obtain employment (R. Allen 2009; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Potocky-Tripodi 2004). To test the potential effects of both strong and weak ties I included binary indicators for the use of family ties and the use of the weaker ties found in ethnic organizations. T-tests showed that the use of strong ties was associated with accelerated labor market participation, but was not associated with the acquisition of a livable wage, while the use of weak ties was not associated with either form of economic integration.

In preliminary models of social capital and economic integration family ties were associated with an increased likelihood of both labor market participation and obtaining a livable wage, while ethnic association ties were associated with neither outcome.

Cultural Capital

Theories of cultural capital predict that refugees and immigrants who understand the norms and practices of the host culture will experience greater success in labor market (Bourgois 2003; Daniels and Belton 2015; Hein 2006). I test two binary indicators of deficits in individual cultural capital: deficits of employment related social capital and cultural knowledge and religiously-based employment barriers. T-tests showed that both employment-related cultural capital deficits and religious barriers are associated with longer times between the initiation of a job search and obtaining a job. However, neither was associated with the acquisition of a livable wage.

In preliminary models, deficits of employment-related cultural capital were inexplicably associated with an increased likelihood of labor market participation, while religious barriers were not significant, and neither indicator of cultural capital was associated with the acquisition of a livable wage.

Symbolic Capital, Status, and Intersectionality

In the realm of symbolic capital and potentially disadvantaging statuses, two statuses were examined. First, the gender of the refugee was tested for its potential effect. Second, a regional proxy for race was tested. Finally, interactions between the two symbolic statuses were tested. T-tests showed that relative to being male, being female is

associated with slower labor market participation and slower acquisition of a livable wage. One-way tests of analysis of variance demonstrated that race is also associated with both measures of economic integration. Finally, intersected statuses were also significantly associated with both obtaining a job and securing a livable wage.

In preliminary event history models of symbolic capital being male is associated faster labor market participation and faster acquisition of a livable wage. And, while race has no relationship with labor market participation, relative to being white, being Asian or Black is associated with a lower likelihood of obtaining a livable wage. When intersected statuses were added to the labor market participation model race had no impact for men. However, for women, several racial categories had a negative effect. Being Asian, Black, or Middle Eastern reduced the likelihood of female refugees finding a job by 70 percent. Similarly, in the livable wage model race had no impact for males. For women being Black reduced the likelihood of obtaining a livable wage by 80 percent, while being Hispanic reduced the likelihood to almost zero. Relative to being a white woman or a man of any race, being a Hispanic woman is associated with a near zero probability of obtaining a livable wage.

Forms of Capital Model

The preliminary analyses confirmed that all of the forms hypothesized to influence economic integration correlate with one or both of the dependent variables. The complete *Forms of Capital Model* (shown in Table 12) includes all of the types of capital discussed above plus receipt of financial capital and participation in a work training program. Several variables were insignificant in all models and were removed from the

final models. These include status of the refugee's profession prior to migrating, race, and interactions between race and gender.

In the full Forms of Capital Model, human capital demonstrates an important relationship with both outcomes. Years of education has a positive relationship with both labor market participation and the acquisition of a livable wage. However, as anticipated, the effect is not linear. Primary and secondary education have no value, while higher levels of education are only significant for securing a livable wage. Thus, while education matters for acquiring a job with a livable wage it is not related to basic labor market participation. In contrast, English proficiency is crucial for labor market participation but is not associated with obtaining a livable wage.

Surprisingly, social capital is not associated with labor market participation, but, as expected, it has a positive relationship with finding a livable wage. Deficits of employment-related cultural capital are again associated with an increased likelihood of finding a job, but are not associated with securing a livable wage. And, religiously-based cultural barriers are not related to either outcome. Finally, while being female demonstrates a negative relationship with finding a job, it exhibits an even stronger negative relationship with earning a livable wage. However, race and interactions between race and gender were not significant and were eliminated from the final forms of capital model.

Overall, the model finds support for a complex relationship between a refugee's stores of the various forms of capital and their success in the Utah labor market, though many of the intricate relationships have yet to be untangled. Moreover, a refugee's ethnic origins may affect their stores of these forms of capital or moderate their effects. Finally,

even if a refugee possesses sufficient stores of these forms of capital, they may be unable to deploy them in contexts of a weak economy or antipathy toward immigrants.

Contexts of Reception

In keeping with the literature on destination effects for economic integration, I test two measures of economic context and one measure of social context. On the economic front, I evaluate Utah's annual unemployment and poverty rates. On the social front, I assess the role of negative attitudes toward immigrants. Correlations with the two dependent variables show that all three indicators are significantly associated with labor market participation. However, only the poverty rate and attitudes toward immigrants are significantly associated with securing a livable wage.

In preliminary event history models, all three contextual predictors are associated with refugee employment outcomes. As expected, negative social and economic contexts are associated with a lower likelihood of finding a job. However, only the Utah poverty rate is associated with finding a job with a livable wage.

Given the significant correlations and the results of preliminary bivariate event history models, it is notable that in the full contextual models none of the predictors is significant. Since these variables often co-occur I suspected that these results were indicative of multicollinearity issues. Tests of the variance inflation factors (VIF) confirmed this suspicion. Since unemployment rates exhibited the highest VIF, I tested the model without this variable. While we might expect that the unemployment rate would be the best predictor of employment outcomes, data are based on the number of people who file for unemployment. The data do not include individuals whose

unemployment benefits have run out.

The final results, shown in Table 13, somewhat parallel the findings from the correlations. A one-percentage point increase in the statewide poverty rate is associated with an 11 percent decrease in the likelihood of labor market participation and a 25 percent decrease in the likelihood of finding a job with a livable wage. In addition, a one-percentage point increase in negative attitudes toward immigrants is associated with a .8 percent decrease in the likelihood of labor market participation. Yet, negative attitudes toward immigrants have no relationship to the amount of time it takes refugees to obtain a livable wage. Thus, while economic context is associated with both forms of economic integration, social context only affects initial job acquisition.

The Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration

As the preliminary analysis and initial models of the three dimensions of the holistic model reveal, each dimension is, indeed, associated with one or both indicators of economic integration. Ethnic origins captured via distance in cultural attitudes are associated with obtaining a livable wage. Human, social, cultural, and symbolic capital are associated with both labor market participation and the acquisition of a livable wage. Context, captured via annual state poverty rates, is also associated with both measures of economic integration.

In the complete models (shown in Table 14), similar patterns of significance are found with one exception: ethnic origins are not significant predictors of either labor market participation or the acquisition of a livable wage.

Among the forms of capital, human capital in particular has a surprisingly varied

effect. Years of education performs as expected; additional years of education are associated with better labor market outcomes. Each additional year of education correlates with a 2.5 percent increase in the likelihood of finding a job, and a 7.3 percent increase in the likelihood of securing a job with a livable wage. In the human capital models, the categorical variable for education showed that none of the level of education was significant for labor market participation, and only the highest levels of education were associated with securing a livable wage. In the full model, relative to having no education, only college education was associated with improved probability of labor market participation, and only professional or graduate level education was associated with an improved likelihood of acquiring a livable wage.

In contrast to education, English speaking ability has a relatively uncomplicated relationship with labor market participation. Relative to speaking no English, speaking poor English multiplies the likelihood of finding a job by 1.6. The relative effect increases to 2.1 for refugees who speak fair English, and increases again to 2.3 for refugees who speak good English. Yet, proficiency in English appears unimportant for finding a job with a livable wage. One possible explanation for the mixed and sometimes nonexistent effects of education and proficiency in English is that the two indicators are often correlated. However, the variance inflation factors were within an acceptable range⁴⁵ and supplemental tests of interactions were insignificant.

The models included one final human capital variable relating to work experience: months of U.S. work experience. While prior U.S. work experience was

⁴⁵ Education vif: 5.34; English vifs—poor English: 4.36, fair English: 6.05, good English: 5.73.

positively associated with labor market participation during the first 14 days of a job search, the positive effect decreases over time after the first 14 days, and eventually exerts a negative influence if the job search is protracted. At any given time during the first two weeks of a job search, a one-month increase in U.S. work experience correlates with a 2 percent increase in the instantaneous likelihood of finding a job with a livable wage. This positive effect decreases by 5 percent per day as the job search continues. In contrast, the effect of prior work experience is proportional in its relationship with acquiring a livable wage, but the relationship is negative. Additional work experience has is associated with a decreased instantaneous likelihood of obtaining a livable wage.

With regard to social capital, the results of the full model somewhat parallel the results of the forms of capital model. The use of family connections, while only marginally significant for labor market participation in the forms of capital model, is significant for both forms of economic integration in the full model. However, the use of social ties to ethnic associations was not significant for either outcome. Thus, while strong ties appear to benefit Utah refugees, weak ties seem to have no effect. Previous research has shown that ethnic enclaves can have an isolating and ultimately detrimental effect on economic integration, and this result may reflect those findings (Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Previous research has also shown that the effect of social capital can differ for men and women (R. Allen 2009). Because the interaction between gender and social capital was not tested in these models, the true effect of social ties may have been suppressed.

In the full model, the relationship between cultural capital and economic integration differs for labor market participation and the acquisition of a livable wage.

Surprisingly, deficits of employment related cultural capital have a strong positive effect on labor market participation. However, the effect varies over time. After the first 14 days of the job search the presence of these deficits decreases this positive effect by a whopping 61 percent per day. This contradictory effect may be a result of the fact that the refugees with the largest deficits in cultural capital receive the most assistance from their caseworkers, especially at the beginning of the job search. They are also referred to more training programs. One other variable has a coefficient that supports this interpretation. Participation in a subsidized training program that simultaneously instructs refugees in a specific job skill, teaches employment specific cultural norms, and includes language instruction has a negative relationship with labor market participation and the acquisition of a livable wage. This may be a result of the fact that refugees leave the job market for a year while participating in the program. However, it may also reflect the fact the those who participate in these programs are both the neediest and least prepared for the Utah job market. Participation in one of these programs is associated with a 31 percent decrease in the likelihood of labor market participant, but the predicted effect is more severe for the acquisition of a livable wage. Participation reduces the likelihood of securing a job with a livable wage by 69 percent. We might expect a similar reduction for those with high deficits of multiple forms of capital. Surprisingly, employment-related deficits of cultural capital exhibited no relationship with finding job with a livable wage. One explanation might be that higher paying jobs are more tolerant of cultural differences. Unfortunately, this is impossible to test with the quantitative data.

The full model included only included gender as a measure of symbolic capital, as the proxy for race was not significant in any models. Gender exhibited no relationship

with the speed of labor market participation net of the other variables in the model. This is not entirely unexpected since the first jobs refugees acquire in Utah are low-skill positions with few physical requirements. Positions in food production, housekeeping and custodial, food service, and manufacturing involve on-the-job training which requires a modicum of proficiency in English, but these positions are otherwise nondiscriminating. In contrast, being male has a large positive association with the acquisition of a livable wage. In other words, the more prestigious the job, the more the status of being male is helpful.⁴⁶

Finally, several contextual factors were also evaluated. These context-related findings from this model mirror those of the Context Models in that unemployment is not significantly related to either dependent variable. The model diverges in that social context, measured as the percent of survey respondents holding negative attitudes toward immigrants, had no significant association with either measure of economic integration. Previous studies of attitudes toward immigrants found that negative attitudes are stronger during economic downturns (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010). Moreover, since the economic factors are usually interrelated, only one variable capturing social and economic context was incorporated in the final holistic models.

The holistic model exhibits support for the hypothesis that context plays an important role in the economic integration of refugees. Net of other variables, a higher poverty rate at the initiation of the job search is associated with a lower instantaneous

⁴⁶ Surprisingly, sex is the only demographic variable tested that showed a significant association with any measure of economic integration. Age, marital status, single-parenthood, and the number of children were insignificant in all preliminary tests. Physical health was also tested and found insignificant.

likelihood of finding a job, but the negative effect decreases over time. A higher poverty rate also reduces the likelihood of securing a livable wage, and the effect remains proportional over time. Notably, contextual factors and a refugee's preparedness for employment may interact with each other in generating the opportunity for economic integration. In order to sort out the many potentially interacting effects of the different forms of capital and contextual factors, I also tested a set of models with interactions. Unexpectedly, none of the interactions was significant.

Finally, to test the potential effect of ethnic origins and cultural capital on the efficaciousness of a refugee's skills and characteristics in the Utah labor market, I tested two interaction models. Three interactions exhibited a significant relationship with labor market participation: interactions between cultural distance in attitudes and both education and English proficiency were significant, as were interactions between the presence of religious barriers and gender. First, additional years of education reduced the negative effect of cultural distance. Second, relative to speaking no English, speaking poor English reduced the negative effect of cultural distance. Third, using family ties to find a job was not significantly associated with labor market participation for men, but had a significant negative association for women. Surprisingly, when it comes to labor market participation, employment-related cultural barriers were not significant. In contrast, cultural distance stemming from ethnic origins bore no association with obtaining a livable wage, while employment-related cultural barriers had a strong negative association that was reduced as English proficiency increased. Fourth, the presence of religiously-related cultural barriers had no effect on labor market participation for men, but had a strong negative effect for women.

Ultimately, these interacted models support the main findings and offer insight into the complexity of economic integration. Despite the fact that some components of the holistic model are not directly related to economic integration, the results of the interacted models reveal indirect relationships. In addition, they hint at directions for future exploration.

Discussion and Conclusions

The event history models presented above offer initial support for the Holistic Model of Economic Integration. While not all components of the model are significant on their own, nearly all were shown to play a role when interacted with other predictors in the model. Moreover, the models offer support for the changing effects of several variables over time. Together these findings support the *sui generis* approach outlined in the Holistic Model. The results of the individual hypotheses and tests for specific factors are shown in Table 15.

The general hypothesis about the importance of ethnic origins for economic integration was confirmed by the models. However, the effect of ethnic origins was not nearly as salient as expected. In fact, only one dimension of ethnic origins, culture, was significant in any of the models. And, in the cultural realm, the results were surprising. While previous research into the effects of culture on refugee economic integration has found that differences in cultural practices may cause anxiety and affect acculturation (Babiker et al. 1980; Ward and Kennedy 1993; Ward, Bochner, and Furnham 2005), cultural distance in practices had no association with economic integration. However, cultural distance in attitudes was significantly associated with labor market outcomes.

While a direct effect was only found in the Ethnic Origins model (with no forms of capital or contextual factors included), indirect effects were present in the full Holistic model. Cultural distance in attitudes interacts with both education and English speaking ability to influence labor market participation. This finding supports the assertion of Hofstede et al. that values and attitudes are the true measure of culture and cultural difference in the case of refugees. It also partially confirms ethnic origins hypothesis.

The Holistic Model also shows support all four hypotheses regarding the forms of capital. However, the relationships are quite complex. For example, while the human capital of each refugee plays a role in economic integration, its effect is not straightforward. While additional years of education are positively associated with both types of economic integration, the relationship may not be linear. When level of education is substituted for years of education we see that education level has no relationship with labor market participation, and only the highest levels of education have an effect on the acquisition of a livable wage. Moderate levels of education, paralleling the educational attainment of native-born job-seekers, offer refugees no advantage over having no education. One possible explanation is that most refugees lack documentation of their educational accomplishments, and internationally acquired college degrees are easier to verify than international primary and secondary education. In addition, previous research has shown that foreign education is devalued in the U.S. labor market (Kanas and van Tubergen 2009). English speaking ability exhibits the inverse relationship. It has a strong relationship with labor market participation, but no relationship with acquiring a livable wage. This may be a result of the fact that the first jobs refugees acquire in Utah are low-skill positions with few educational requirements. These positions typically

involve on-the-job training which requires the ability to understand and speak English with a moderate level of proficiency. Skilled and professional jobs, on the other hand, rely on previously acquired skills and knowledge, and may be more tolerant of limited English-speaking ability so long as the more essential occupational qualifications are met by the candidate. Finally, the duration of U.S. work experience has an unexpected relationship with the speed of economic integration. More U.S. work experience is associated with longer job searches. I expect that this reflects that as a refugee's work experience grows they often become more particular about the types of jobs they believe will improve their circumstances, whether economic or psychological. Despite the complexity of the relationships between the types of human capital and the different markers of economic integration, the models confirm the importance of human capital.

While existing theory predicts that social capital will have an important effect on job outcomes, but that weak ties will be more effective than strong ties, the results of the Holistic Models show the opposite relationship. Weak ties, captured by ties to ethnic associations, have no association with economic integration, while stronger ties, such as family connections, are significantly associated with both forms of economic integration. This suggests that refugees may be gleaning more useful employment information from close ties than from the formal organizations that actually possess more information. It may also indicate that the intimate knowledge shared between strong ties allows them to provide more targeted and skill-appropriate employment leads. And, despite the surprising effectiveness of strong ties, the model supports the social capital hypothesis.

The models employed two measures of cultural capital deficits to test the cultural capital hypothesis. First, employment-related deficits of cultural capital exhibit a

surprising positive relationship with labor market participation. However, obvious deficits in this area stimulate employment caseworkers to provide refugee clients with individual training and pre-employment workshops to offset the barrier. This may explain the surprising coefficient. The fact that the positive effect decreases rapidly after the first 14 days of the job search offers some support for this interpretation. In addition, employment-related cultural deficits show only an indirect association with livable wage acquisition. Second, religiously-based cultural barriers show only an indirect association with labor market participation and are not significantly associated with obtaining a livable wage. While the first result was the inverse of what was anticipated, the complex relationship of cultural capital to economic integration supports my argument that a holistic approach is necessary for understanding refugee economic integration.

Finally, the results find that only one contextual predictor is significantly associated with refugee economic integration. Due to multicollinearity between unemployment, poverty rates, and attitudes toward (Malhotra, Margalit, and Mo 2013), only the annual Utah poverty rate was significant in the final models. A high rate of poverty is negatively associated with labor market participation, but the negative association decreases over time. High poverty rates are also negatively associated with acquiring a livable wage, and the strength of the association remains stable over time. In an unexpected twist, the interacted models show that economic context does not interact with other factors in predicting economic integration. This result notwithstanding, the models offer strong support for the role of destination effects in producing economic outcomes.

On balance, these findings support a Holistic Model of refugee economic

integration. This is especially important because, while there is a great deal of research on the economic integration of voluntary migrants, refugees are conceptually and practically distinct, and to date, there is a lack of research on refugee economic integration that addresses the multiple and complex dimensions of refugee integration. Moreover, much of the existing research is not generalizable beyond a small agency or ethnic group.

While more work remains to be done to understand how the forms of capital interact with each other and with local contextual factors, this project represents a first step toward clarifying those relationships. In future research, the inclusion of additional states would improve the generalizability of this theory.

In conclusion, with approximately 1,000 refugees immigrating to Utah each year, successful economic integration is crucial for a growing number of individuals.

Furthermore, each individual success reduces the strain on limited state resources and contributes a thriving Utah economy. This portion of the study contributes to our understanding of the factors that promote the successful economic integration of refugees, but also raises some questions, such as why is the effect of education so minimal? And, why is there no effect for individual religiously-related cultural barriers, when service providers report this as a recurring issue for their clients? And, why does the effect of race disappear when controlling for other forms of capital? In order to provide a more holistic picture of economic integration, these and other questions are addressed in using qualitative methods in the next chapter.

Table 7. Model-based Hypotheses

Dimension	Hypothesis
ETHNIC ORIGINS	Ethnic origins that are very different from U.S. culture and society, measured as the cultural distance between the nation of origin and the U.S., will be negatively associated with economic integration.
FORMS OF CAPITAL	
Human Capital	Human capital, measured as education, skill in spoken English, job-training, and work experience, will have a positive association with economic integration.
Cultural Capital	Limited cultural capital, measured as individual cultural barriers, such as religious constraints, will negatively affect refugee economic integration.
Social Capital	Social capital, measured as the use of family or ethnic group social ties for the job search, will have a positive association with economic integration.
Symbolic Capital	Limited symbolic capital stemming from membership in one or more disadvantaged social statuses will be negatively associated with economic integration.
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS	
Social Context	Positive contexts of reception, measured as positive attitudes toward immigrants and refugees will be positively associated with economic integration.
Economic Context	Positive community-level opportunity structures, such as low rates of poverty and unemployment, will be positively associated with economic integration while negative opportunity structures will be negatively associated with economic integration.

Table 8. Summary Statistics—Dependent Variable

	% or Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max.
Job Acquisition (% of Obs.)				
No Job	35.58%			
Hired	64.42%			
Average Wage	9.07/hr	2.08	5.00/hr	25.00/hr
Livable Wage				
N	135			
Percent of People	6.18%			
Percent of Hires	14.39%			
Average Wage	12.71/hr	2.45	9.50/hr	25.00/hr
Time from Arrival to Hire (Yrs)				
Time to Hire (First Hire)	1.58	1.07	.07	4.99
Time to Hire (Living Wage)	1.79	1.20	.07	4.96

Table 9. Summary Statistics for Ethnic Origins

Dimension	Variable	Values	Statistics
Culture	Cultural Distance—Values	Range: 0 to 6 0 No cultural distance 6 High cultural distance	Range: 1.13 to 4.03 Mean: 2.37 Std. Dev.: .34
	Cultural Distance—Practices	Range: 0 to 10 0 No cultural distance 10 High cultural distance	Range: 1.43 to 6.28 Mean: 5.25 Std. Dev.: .76
Homeland Histories	Polity Type	Range: -10 to +10 -10 Autocratic +10 Democratic	Range: -10 to +9 Mean: -4.34 Std. Dev.: 5.15
Politics	Political Discrimination Index	Range: 0 to 4 0 No discrimination 1 Neglect/Remedial policies 2 Neglect/No remedial policies 3 Social exclusion/Neutral policy 4 Exclusion/Repressive policy	Range: 0 to 4 Mean: 2.18 Std. Dev.: 1.60

Table 10. Summary Statistics for Forms of Capital

	% or Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max.
Symbolic Capital				
Sex: Female				
Female	44.48%			
Male	55.52%			
Race				
Asian	40.12%			
Black	34.51%			
Hispanic	2.36%			
Middle Eastern	20.50%			
White	2.51%			
Human Capital				
Education (Years)	8.18	5.42	0	22
None	20.62%			
Primary	16.61%			
High School or Less	46.69%			
College	15.32%			
Professional/Graduate	1.77%			
English (Reference=None)				
None	10.90%			
Poor	27.54%			
Fair	32.55%			
Good	29.01%			
Status of Previous Profession	32.57	24.75	0	99
U.S. Work Experience (Months)	6.68	10.27	0	60
Cultural Capital (% with Barriers)				
Employment Related Barrier	13.99%			
Religious Restrictions	31.52%			
Hygiene Issues	6.11%			
Social Capital				
Family Network	16.37%			
Ethnic Group Network	1.49%			
Financial Capital				
In-Kind Assistance for Job	22.51%			
Multiple Forms				
Subsidized Training Program	50.67%			

Table 11. Ethnic Origins Models
(Exponentiated Coefficients Shown)

	Labor Mkt Partic. ^a	Livable Wage ^b
Bivariate Correlations		
Cultural Distance—Attitudes	0.0427*	0.1306*
Cultural Distance—Practices	0.0739*	0.1341*
Polity Type	-0.0418*	-0.0027
Political Discrimination Index	-0.0423*	-0.1291*
Event History Analysis		
Cultural Distance—Attitudes	1.039	2.320*
Cultural Distance—Practices	1.110	0.823
Polity Type	1.000	1.103
Political Discrimination Index	0.994	0.977
Model Statistics		
Subjects	861	861
Observations	1159	1159
Events	1036	174
BIC	8294.301	1266.388

^a Duration between the initiation of a search and the acquisition of a job.

^b Duration between arrival in the U.S. and the acquisition of a job with a wage at or above 200% of the Utah poverty threshold.

Table 12. Forms of Capital Models
(Exponentiated Coefficients Shown)

	Labor Mkt Partic. ^a		Livable Wage ^b	
Human Capital				
Education (in years)	1.021*		1.083**	
Education (Reference=None)				
Primary		.963		.800
Secondary		1.172		1.321
College		1.284		2.065+
Graduate School/Professional		1.411		3.718*
English (Reference=None)				
Poor	1.468	1.462	.381+	.383
Fair	1.924**	1.936**	.502	.534
Good	2.074**	2.078***	.641	.675
U.S. Work Experience (Months)	.983**	.983**	.976*	.976*
Social Capital				
Network: Family	1.266+	1.258+	2.213**	2.147**
Network: Ethnic Association	.871	.857	3.238	2.859
Cultural Capital				
Employment-related Deficits	1.254*	1.263*	.937	.950
Religious Barriers	1.105	1.099	1.375	1.332
Symbolic Capital				
Sex (Reference=Male)	.813*	.808**	.474*	.439**
Financial Capital				
In-Kind Assistance for Job	1.945***	1.931***	1.785+	1.746+
Multiple Forms of Capital				
Employment Training Program	.677**	.673**	.285**	.261**
Model Statistics				
Subjects	938	938	938	938
Observations	1338	1338	1338	1338
Events	1149	1149	190	190
Degrees of Freedom ⁴⁷	12	15	12	15
BIC	13498.934	13521.634	1962.991	1990.003

⁴⁷ The rule of thumb for unbiased estimates in Cox regression holds that there should be a minimum of 10 events per variable (EPV). However, recent simulation studies have found minimal bias with as few as 5 events per variable (Vittinghoff and McCulloch 2007).

Table 13. Contexts of Reception Models
(Exponentiated Coefficients Shown)

	Labor Mkt Partic.^a		Livable Wage^b	
Bivariate Correlations				
Utah State Unemployment Rt. (annual)	-.0320*		-.0187	
Utah State Poverty Rate (annual)	-.1282*		-.1439*	
Attitudes Toward Immigrants (%)	-.1037*		-.2937*	
Event History Analysis				
Utah State Unemployment Rt. (annual)	.947		1.138	
Utah State Poverty Rate (annual)	.927	.891***	.685*	.752**
Attitudes Toward Immigrants (%)	.995	.992*	.990	.998
Model Statistics				
Subjects	932	938	932	938
Observations	1203	1337	1203	1337
Events	1026	1149	185	190
BIC	8294.301		1266.388	

Table 14. Holistic Models of Economic Integration
(Exponentiated Coefficients Shown)

	Labor Mkt Partic. ^a	Livable Wage ^b
ETHNIC ORIGINS^b		
Cultural Distance—Attitudes	.873	1.349
FORMS OF CAPITAL		
Human Capital		
Education (in years)	1.025*	1.073**
English (Reference=None)		
Poor	1.618*	.495
Fair	2.105***	.606
Good	2.260***	.864
U.S. Work Experience (Months)	1.022*	.978*
Social Capital		
Network: Family	1.309*	2.408***
Network: Ethnic Association	.983	4.172+
Cultural Capital		
Employment-related Deficits	3.082**	1.078
Religious Barriers	1.113	1.389
Symbolic Capital		
Sex (Reference=Male)	0.835+	.494*
Financial Capital		
In-Kind Assistance for Job	1.991***	1.907+
Multiple Forms of Capital		
Employment Training Program	.693**	.311**
Social and Economic Context		
Utah State Poverty Rate (annual)	.651**	.752**
Time Varying Covariates		
U.S. Work Experience (Months)	.958***	—
Employment-related Deficits	.385*	—
Utah State Poverty Rate (annual)	1.407*	—
Model Statistics		
Subjects	937	937
Observations	1335	1335
Events	937	190
Degrees of Freedom	17	14
BIC	1149.271	1953.266

Table 15. Hypothesis Tests

Dimensions & Hypotheses	Labor Mkt. Partic.	Livable Wage
ETHNIC ORIGINS (EO)		
Culture		
Cultural Distance—Attitudes	Interactions only	EO Model and Interactions only
Cultural Distance—Practices	No	No
Homeland Histories		
Polity Type	No	No
Politics		
Political Discrimination Index	No	No
FORMS OF CAPITAL (FC)		
Human Capital		
Education (in years)	Yes	Yes
Education (categorical)	No	Yes
English	Yes	No
U.S. Work Experience	Yes (negative and time varying)	Yes (negative)
Social Capital		
Network: Family	Yes	Yes; Independent and Interactions
Network: Ethnic Association	No	No
Cultural Capital		
Employment-related Deficits	Yes (positive and time varying)	Interactions only
Religious Barriers	Interactions only	No
Symbolic Capital		
Sex	Yes	Yes
Race	No	No
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS (CTX)		
Economic Context		
Unemployment Rate	No	No
Poverty Rate	Yes (negative and time varying)	Yes
Social Context		
Attitudes Toward Immigrants	CTX Model Only	No

CHAPTER VI

REFUGEE AND SERVICE PROVIDER PERSPECTIVES ON ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN UTAH

From its inception, this study has been concerned with capturing the full picture of refugee employment and economic integration in Utah. Despite the richness of the quantitative data, a full picture is impossible without the voices of refugees and the service providers who are working to help them find suitable employment. This study progressed in a cyclical and recursive fashion, beginning with introductory meetings with service providers. Next, I began to organize the quantitative data. This process not only involved extracting information from administrative forms, it also involved reading the text of hundreds of case notes to find dates and code a handful of binary indicators. Analyzing the quantitative data answered some questions, but left others unanswered, and it yielded a host of new questions, such as why was there almost no effect for education when we know from decades of immigration and employment research, that education is a key predictor of employment outcomes? Also, why was there no effect for individual cultural barriers, when service providers report this as a recurring issue for their clients in relation to job acquisition and job retention? Finally, with no description of the race of the refugees in our data, I had no way of separating the effects of conspicuous foreignness (Reitz and Sklar 1997) from those of ethnicity and of race. These lingering

questions led me to believe that a closer inspection of the text of the case notes was warranted, as was the collection of new data from the refugees themselves.

This chapter continues as follows. First, I begin by briefly describing the analytical methods. Next, I present the findings from the textual analysis of case notes. Finally, I describe the findings from the focus groups.

Analytical Method

The case-note data include case notes for 4,178 individuals spanning from 2002 to 2014. I used qualitative data analysis software (NVivo) to assess the frequency of key words and phrases related to the themes of interest in both the case notes and the focus groups. I also open-coded the focus group transcriptions to identify central themes.

Findings

Case Notes

My analysis of case notes yielded findings around four main themes. Three of the themes were related to issues I specifically investigated based on meetings with service providers and the findings from the qualitative analysis. These themes were *cultural capital*, *gender norms*, and *religious constraints*. The fourth theme emerged while auditing the coding and identifying representative quotes. This last theme deals with *caseworker positionality*. Giametta defines positionality as “the arrival at the field site and the positioning of oneself in a specific way” (Giametta 2017:9). In this situation, it relates to how caseworkers position themselves relative to the refugees they serve. In the paragraphs that follow I will discuss each theme, provide examples, and give examples of

caseworker positionality related to that theme.

Cultural Capital

When coding for cultural capital, I highlighted references to employment-specific cultural capital, as well as general cultural norms and practices. As the case notes are written primarily by the refugee's employment caseworker, with only occasional notes from social services caseworkers, employment-specific cultural norms are mentioned with greater frequency than more general cultural norms. Employment specific cultural capital includes understanding timeliness and work schedules, the practice of giving two weeks' notice before resigning, appropriate business attire, appropriate workplace attitudes and behavior, norms around workplace communication, and sexual harassment, while general cultural norms and practices include body language, eye contact, shaking hands and other forms of greeting, hygiene, and familiarity with common practices and laws. Table 16 lists the coding categories related to both employment specific and general cultural capital.

Despite the fact that the case notes more frequently mention employment specific cultural capital, only 3.83 percent of all case notes contain references to employment specific cultural capital deficits. And, only 1.53 percent of all case notes contain specific discussion of general cultural deficits. However, service providers repeatedly mentioned that refugees' lack of understanding of cultural U.S. cultural practices, both general and employment specific, functions as an impediment to employment. Figure 7 maps the number of refugees whose case notes contain references to these types of cultural capital.

As Figure 7 makes clear, there are four main areas of employment specific

cultural capital recurring in the case notes. Thirty-one percent of the references to employment specific cultural capital relate to individuals quitting a job without giving two weeks' notice. While some references relate this issue to lack of knowledge of the practice, others indicate a limited understanding of the systems of employment. For example, one refugee's case notes state:

Julia⁴⁸ explained why she left her job and her reason for quitting was chemical reaction. She also mentioned that she didn't know she has to give the employer two weeks' notice or even call them if she doesn't want to show to work which we believed she knew about these roles [sic].⁴⁹

Another case note documents the conflict refugees experience between being told they should give two weeks' notice and the fear that this practice will jeopardize new employment.

Client called me today and informed me that she got hired by IHC and is starting on Monday. But [the manager] at [her current job] would not let her go. She was very worried and asked me what she can do. I called [her current manager] and she told me that she needs two weeks' notice otherwise she will not hire refugees anymore because they just leave jobs and don't give two weeks' notice. I called the client and asked her why she did not give two weeks' notice. She said she was afraid that she will lose the new job if she told IHC that she cannot start on Monday because she has to give two weeks' notice. (She thought IHC will hire another applicant to replace her if she cannot start on the 22nd).

This and other case notes highlight how refugee clients often do not understand that many of the rules and policies established by the agency reflect common labor market practices. In the example above, we see that the client seemed unaware that her new employer would accommodate her need to give notice to her prior employer. This cultural

⁴⁸ The names of all informants have been changed to protect anonymity.

⁴⁹ All grammatical errors in quoted material are copied directly from the Case Notes or transcribed focus groups. To improve readability, I have only noted the first error.

misunderstanding could jeopardize future employment opportunities if a potential employer calls a previous employer to procure a reference.

A significant number of cultural capital references (24 percent) also relate to being on time, understanding the work schedule, and missing work, with references to missing work comprising the majority of the references in the category. Explanations for these workplace norm violations range from refugees not understanding how schedules work in the U.S. to not knowing they should communicate with their employer if they can't make it in to work. Joseph's case notes raise the former issue. His caseworker writes:

[Joseph] also stated that he was not told what his schedule was last week, and missed work because of that. He also said that he was taking his lunch and his supervisor came in and asked him to work, he responded by saying that he has time taken out of his paycheck for lunch, so he felt he could take it when he wanted to.

Similarly, Samuel's case notes state:

[The manager] said the Samuel does not work on Sundays like he is supposed to and calls into work 20 minutes before his shift (he is supposed to call 2 hours before). [The manager] called the client and told him that he must work Sundays if he is scheduled and not to get work off often.

Another refugee's case notes go into more detail about issues surrounding frequent absences and leaving work early. After a meeting with Elizabeth, her caseworker wrote:

Elizabeth argued that there was no reason for her to be fired because she was sick (her leg was hurting) and she called in sick. I told her everything [her manager] told me but she kept saying that she was sick that day. She never talked about the other days they left early. Client's brother was upset because he said they were sick and that should not be a reason for them to be fired. I explained to him that it is not because they called in sick but there were a lot of other incidences; leaving work early without finishing work assignments...

Despite the fact that employment caseworkers instruct new refugee clients about workplace requirements pertaining to timeliness, work schedules, missing work, calling

in when sick or late, and giving two weeks of notice when resigning, these norms are frequently misunderstood. These misunderstandings may be a result of a language barrier, but they are more likely due to an understandable inability to retain the overwhelming amount of new information the refugees receive after resettlement. This may be especially true for African refugees, since even low-skilled and entry-level jobs in many African countries are characterized by greater flexibility and informality with regard to timeliness and work schedules, making the rigid employment relationships found in the U.S. difficult for many new arrivals to learn and comply with.

Finally, 24 percent of case notes mention that the individual has a “bad,” “negative,” “poor,” or otherwise problematic attitude in the workplace, and 26 percent mention behavioral issues, the majority of which relate to workplace conflict. Several clients have notes mentioning that they were fired from job(s) as a result of “anger issues/bad attitude.” Nina’s case notes, for example, discuss attitude problems at work as well as the effect on other employees.

Nina’s social service caseworker notified me that the client was let go from her hotel housekeeping job. He said that the client missed a couple of days because she was sick and that’s why she was fired. I called the Front Desk Manager at [the hotel] and talked to her about why the client was fired. She said that the client had a really bad attitude and was creating a hostile work environment for the other Housekeepers. She also said the client was slow, but that this was only a secondary or tertiary reason for her termination.

The minimal references to employment specific cultural capital deficits is in part due to the fact that the most detailed accounts describe cases where the refugee lost his/her job or was in danger of losing the job. Deficits that affect hiring are often only documented by the potential employer. While the caseworkers attempt to anticipate difficulties and provide training, often only the most egregious norm violations were documented. Moreover, in the earliest years (2002 to 2007) case notes often contained

little detail and cultural capital deficits were not mentioned for the vast majority of individuals unless the deficit caused them to lose a job. As a result, textual references to cultural capital may be underestimated. In addition, in many instances caseworkers did not list a refugee's specific deficits of cultural capital, and instead simply noted that the individual could benefit from employment workshops.

A number of pre-employment workshops and trainings are available at the RIC-AAU and other agencies. These workshops offer training in personal hygiene, business attire, business vocabulary and communication, common business policies (paid breaks, timeliness and time clocks, calling prior to one's shift if sick or unable to come in, giving two weeks of notice prior to resigning, etc.) as well as more advanced instruction regarding completing job applications, drafting resumes, and completing interviews. To capture the more oblique indications that a refugee client exhibited deficits of cultural capital I also coded all recommendations that the individual should complete or had completed employment workshops. I expect that the emphasis of service providers on refugee cultural deficits is more accurately reflected in the 10.75 percent of case notes that mentioned workshops or pre-employment trainings.⁵⁰ It is important to note that many people had text referencing more than one category of cultural capital. When aggregated, 5.03 percent people mentioned cultural capital deficits (general and employment specific), while 14.17 percent mentioned either workshops or general cultural capital deficits.

While there were far fewer references to issues around general cultural capital, the

⁵⁰ In mid-2012 employment workshops became a requirement to receive employment assistance services, so the case notes for 2012 through 2014 may have an inflated mention of workshops in the case notes.

references were notable. My analysis of the case notes found that the most frequent allusion to general cultural capital involved hygiene norms. In the case notes for one refugee client, a caseworker remarked:

Sarah likes the job and said it was “easy” and is excited to start the new position. The only problem [the manager] mentioned [with regard to the Sarah] was hygiene – that they have had several complaints from clients about former refugee employees who have had a strong smell. I talked to Sarah about hygiene and let [the manager] know that if any smells continue that we could give a basic workshop and provide hygiene kits if necessary.

Five months later another note was made in Sarah’s file. “I spoke with Sarah in depth about the importance of showering every day and she said she understood...” Six months later Sarah participated in a hygiene workshop hosted at her place of employment. The business continued to have issues with the hygiene of several of their refugee employees. In the case notes for another refugee, John (not his real name), the employment caseworker commented on a similar issue.

[John’s social services caseworker] came to talk to me about John’s hygiene. He said that the client has a bad smell, but that when he tried to confront him, John got very defensive and embarrassed. I told the caseworker that I will bring up the hygiene issue when we have interview prep and act as if it is just part of the normal interview prep.

For the most part, the caseworkers attempt to explain U.S. hygiene norms in a matter of fact way, discussing it as something that refugees may not know about the U.S. culture. However, occasionally the case notes evince a slightly patronizing tone. In John’s case, the social service caseworker “confronted” him. After interview training the employment caseworker gave John nine tips for his interview, beginning with:

- 1 Dress nicely!
- 2 Be on time
- 3 Smell Nice
- 4 Have questions at the end of the interview...

Another refugee’s case notes state the following: “We talked about hygiene issue

and how she could get benefit from it. She needs to come prepare for job search. She needs to dress up better and take shower before her appointments.” While this mode of explaining hygiene norms may be culturally sensitive in that it frames hygiene as a choice which has potential benefits, this type of framing understates the compulsory nature of many social and employment norms and may create confusion for refugees. To the extent that it utilizes tactics common in child-rearing—i.e., choice/consequences as opposed to rules—and those tactics are used in the refugee’s culture, this approach may also be viewed as patronizing. On the other hand, framing hygiene as a requirement of the jobs for which Victoria was applying and as a different or new cultural practice may be more appropriate as it both emphasizes the compulsory nature of the norms and exercises cultural sensitivity.

A handful of case notes also mention norms around body language, such as eye contact, smiling, and shaking hands and the meanings these behaviors have in the U.S. In one refugee’s case notes, the caseworker comments that after discussing body language and the importance of being friendly and kind, the client mentioned that “everyone always mistakes that he’s mad.” The caseworker clarifies that this “may be because he doesn’t smile...” Misaligned body language may also explain some instances of workplace conflict, communication issues, and complaints about attitude issues. Further, while issues like hygiene and body language are addressed in employment workshops and meetings with caseworkers, occasionally practices that are familiar in the U.S. are met with unease and even fear by refugees. For example, one older refugee quit a job because she was afraid to ride the elevator. While it may be possible to avoid elevators in one’s personal life, it is not possible in a hotel housekeeping job; moving a cleaning cart

to different floors of a hotel is a requirement.

Overall the references to these diverse forms of both employment specific and general cultural capital show the importance of gaining knowledge of U.S. cultural norms and practices for gaining and keeping employment.

Gender Norms

Gender roles and norms are another area in which the cultural practices of refugees may differ from those in the U.S. Many of the societies from which refugees originate have more restrictive and patriarchal gender norms than the U.S. However, these differ across the refugee ethnic groups. For example, some groups have prohibitions against women working, while others expect women to participate in the labor market.

Despite the fact that service providers gave numerous examples of divergent gender norms affecting refugee employment, only 23 people, or .55 percent, have case notes that reference this issue. Six additional people have notes documenting sexual harassment in the work place. In one man's cases notes, the caseworker describes the disconnect between the client's gender norms and the reality in the U.S., indicating that these new the new gender roles may be met with psychologically strain.

David said that in his culture, it is important for the man of the house to work and provide for his family, but in his case his wife is the primary earner for the household. He is responsible for caring for their young son and he wants to work to relieve that feeling.

In several other cases, the gender roles common in refugees' countries of origin allow husbands to "control" their wives. After one woman violated RIC-AAU policies by quitting her job without giving two weeks of notice, her husband reportedly called her employer saying he couldn't "control" his wife." In another case, a man's efforts to

control his wife were causing problems at her job. The case notes state,

Mina's employer has said that the client is doing great but that her husband may be creating some type of problem. Apparently, the client's husband tends to be very "controlling" of the client by not letting her speak, showing up with her for her training, and filling out her forms for her.

According to service providers (in interviews with them) and a handful of case notes, male relatives frequently attempt to control or coopt women's communication.

Patriarchal gender norms were also documented in relation to interacting with women in the workplace. One man experienced difficulties in his early jobs because he refused to shake hands with women and had not yet learned that it was important to politely communicate the reason for this refusal. Another man quit a job because he would not work for a manager who was a woman. Thus, while U.S. gender norms may tax familial relations and cause psychological strain during acculturation (Dion and Dion 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999; Pedraza 1991), they are not always mentioned in the case notes, unless, as in the examples above, the refugees' gender norms threaten their or their family's employability. However, the potential issues created by misaligned gender norms are not unknown to service providers. Agencies like UNICEF have established programs to teach Western gender norms to men in refugee camps (UNICEF 2005) and some countries in Europe have instituted programs to teach European gender norms to refugees (The Economist 2016) in an effort to reduce these issues.

Religious Constraints

In meetings with service providers, the service providers frequently mentioned that the religious practices of some refugees can restrict employment opportunities. They recounted examples of refugees with religiously-based schedule restrictions, restrictions

on working with pork and alcohol, dress code restrictions, and occasional restrictions on working with the opposite gender. While there were sparse mentions of religiously-based schedule and gender restrictions in the case notes, there were numerous references to restrictions on working with pork and alcohol and the constraints related to the Muslim dress code. In all, there were 491 references to these issues. Because these constraints were often discussed multiple times in a single person's case notes there were 191 people, or 4.5 percent of the cases that contained these references.

For men, the prohibition on working with pork or alcohol restricted them from working for the many meat manufacturing and packaging companies in the Salt Lake area. It also created restrictions for working in the restaurant industry. Women experience the same restriction on working with pork and alcohol, but face additional restrictions due to their dress code. While different Muslim denominations have different requirements, these can range from a requirement to wear a head scarf to a prohibition on showing any hair to a ban on wearing pants.

In general, caseworkers try to help their clients negotiate the Utah labor market, finding positions that may allow them to work while maintaining their religious practices. In some cases, refugees interview for jobs only to discover in the interview that they will not be able to wear their religious attire or may be required to work with pork or alcohol. The case notes show employment caseworkers responding to this in a couple of different ways. In some instances, the caseworkers discuss the issue with employers, exploring potential modifications to policies and asking about compromises that will meet the dress requirements of both the employer and the refugee. In others, caseworkers simply help their clients look for other employment opportunities. In a few instances, caseworkers

asked their clients if they might be willing to forgo their religious practices in order to accept the job.

Regardless of the caseworker's approach, the manner in which they describe the issue in the case notes reveal their personal feelings about the religious practices, specifically, their judgement about whether the religious practices are a personal choice or a religious requirement. Caseworker attitudes range from accepting to somewhat dismissive or patronizing. On the accepting end of the scale, the caseworker accepts or acknowledges that the refugee feels that they do not have a choice; they must adhere to these religious practices. The caseworkers use phrases like "the client *can't* wear pants," "the client is *unable* to work with pork," or "the client is *required* to wear a hijab." On the other end of scale, caseworkers describe the client as unwilling to modify their behavior. These caseworkers use phrases like "the client is *unwilling* wear pants," "the client *refuses* to work with pork," "the client *doesn't want* to work with alcohol," or "the client *isn't interested* in jobs where she can't wear a hijab." This way of framing the religious constraint is patronizing in that it frames the refugee as able but unwilling to conform to "innocuous" employer requirements. In the case notes, 63 percent of references to religious attire are framed in a patronizing manner, while only 37 percent are framed in an accepting manner. Similarly, 61 percent of references to pork and alcohol restriction are framed in a patronizing manner, and 39 percent are framed in an accepting manner.

Overall, the references to these religious constraints show the importance of understanding and negotiating the requirements of labor in a broad variety of industries in order to assist in the employment of Muslim refugees. However, caseworker biases may

shape their initial responses to obstacles encountered during job searches and interviews.

Caseworker Positionality

In addition to the above examples of position-dependent perspectives espoused by caseworkers, I found instances of caseworker positionality around two principal subthemes related to boundary creation (Rogers 2017). Boundaries are created and maintained through the rhetorical and physical strategies of *patronizing language* and *conditional assistance*. Conditional assistance means that refugees who receive employment assistance are required to adhere to a set of rules and conditions. Rules include accepting any job for which they are hired, retaining the job for at least 90 days, and giving two weeks' notice when quitting, as well as a number of minor rules surrounding meetings and interactions with the caseworker. In 2012, participation in pre-employment workshops also became a requirement. While these rules are not created by the caseworkers, the language used around the enforcement of the rules often underscores the privileged position of the caseworker and the boundary between the caseworker and the refugee client.

In all, only 2.4 percent of the case notes contained examples of caseworker positionality. Caseworkers have a degree of freedom in enforcing the employment policies. They can place clients on probation for policy violations, choosing probation lengths ranging from 30 to 90 days. They may also opt to decline probation, either because they felt the client didn't understand the policies, or because the client's family need was too great to deny them services. In the case of policy violations, the most patronizing language was often found when the caseworker did not place the client on

probation. In these instances, they used patronizing language to emphasize that, while they would make an exception to the rule, they were not happy about it. Moreover, enforcement of policies was not always understood by the refugee clients. For example, Vincent misunderstood policies about showing up without an appointment (he would not be seen), and not showing up for appointments (three “no-shows” can result in probation). As his caseworker explained:

He then tried saying that I told him I can't help him and I won't see him. I kept trying to tell him that was not what I said. I said that we could work on his resume during our next appointment that he schedules for next week, but he kept saying that I would refuse seeing him.

The caseworker further described the encounter by saying: “He kept taking everything I said out of context. I tried calming him down...” Other case notes also discuss the reactions of refugee clients to policy enforcement and how caseworkers attempt to manage those reactions by “admonishing” them, telling them to “change their attitude,” telling them to “calm down,” and attempting to shame them by stressing the damage the refugee is doing to the agency’s reputation. In Rosemary’s case notes the caseworker wrote:

...so I explained that when we help her find a job, we are putting our reputations on the line as well as the chance of other clients finding employment at that same company, and when she quits after 1 month, it makes the company not want to hire any other clients from us in the future.

Though the caseworkers have little power to change the conditional nature of services, the text of the case notes highlights that the issues of boundary creation and positionality relate more to how caseworkers frame their enforcement of agency policies than to the policies themselves. Due to the fact that all case notes are written from the caseworker perspective I sought to counterbalance these findings with insights from the refugees themselves.

Focus Groups

The results from the case note textual analysis indicated that culture, gender norms and religious constraints are salient factors in refugee employment. However, they could not disentangle the effects of race from the effects of belonging to a conspicuously foreign religion, such as the Muslim religion. In addition, the insights about the positionality of caseworkers led me to seek refugees' perspectives on these issues. I used the focus groups to further investigate these themes.

Themes from the Somali Focus Groups

My analysis of the focus group transcripts yielded findings around four main themes: *dress politics*, *religious discrimination*, *the value of education*, and *communication styles*. After basic introductions and “warm up” questions, I asked, “How is looking for jobs in Utah different from looking for jobs in Somalia?” The answers to this question immediately led to a discussion of dress codes and dress politics.

Dress Politics

“In Somalia, we don't have to worry about [the head scarf and dress].” The informant explained that the traditional Muslim dress and scarf worn by women was allowed at all jobs in Somalia. In the U.S., however, it was frequently an issue. Asha explained, “As a woman, we have several issue about the jobs. Dress code is our main concern, that we cannot get the job [sic] that we need.” I then asked, “Are there a lot of jobs that have a problem with your dress code?” Halima then explained, “Yeah, because they want us to wear the pants, which is, we can't wear, as a religion, that's why a lot of

people is no having jobs.” Several members of the group then explained that some women have been fired for adhering to their religious dress code. In other cases, the women in the Somali community were not even hired.

The justification given by employers for requiring employees to wear pants and remove head scarves typically related to workplace safety and OSHA regulations, and several of the informants agreed that the women’s religious attire could pose a safety risk in some jobs, especially in manufacturing jobs. However, in several cases there was confusion as whether the issue was actually safety related. For example, in the hotel industry there is no explicit OSHA regulation restricting dresses and head scarves among housekeeping personnel. However, the Somali informants still experienced issues due to their religious clothing. Naima, who speaks very good English, was able to directly address the issue in interviews and new-hire orientation saying, “I wear this [points to scarf]. If it’s a problem you have to tell me right now.” She continues, saying, “And they told me it’s okay as long as you don’t wear the long ones [scarves] and you tuck it under your shirt.” She goes on to say,

I worked, like, maybe two weeks, and then they have this rule come up. They say you cannot wear it anymore. I say, ‘You know what, I asked in my orientation. You are not going to tell me now, you don’t accept who am I.’ And they tell me, ‘It’s okay, let’s ask, but go home today.’

Naima went home, losing the opportunity to earn income that day. Her manager later called her and said, “Oh, OSHA said its okay to come.” When she returned, she worked for two additional days and then she and two other Somali women were sent home again for the same reason. Naima relayed the experience of one of the women. She said,

they call us, the other one, I wasn’t with her at that moment, they tell her that take off the hijab if you wanna work here. She didn’t speak English; she took it off. And then [there is a] smaller scarf under this. And then she took off the big one and put it the hanger over there and then they said, ‘this one too. You show your

hair.’ And she say, ‘No,’ and they sent her home.

However, Naima, due to her education and ability to speak English, was more familiar with her rights, and was able to address them with her manager and human resources.

Naima: But me and my other friend, we stick together and one day they call me in the office and they say, ‘If you wanna work here you don’t have to wear this hijab and so you wanna take it off if you wanna work.’ I said, ‘No. My religion order me to wear this one. It’s not something that it just look fun or I just have to, like, playing around, this is my religion stuff. You not gonna change me. I am who am I.’ And then, he laughed and then he told me that, if, and all this time I was okay, and he told me that if you are a study religion like that why don’t you become a Mormon. I said, ‘What?’ He repeat it again. And, I tell my friend, ‘Did you hear that?’ She say, ‘Yes. You cannot say that,’ she said. And then I tell him that, in his face, ‘You know what, this is United States. You cannot do that. I know. I was nice for this time, and I’m not gonna be nice no more, and I have to go find somebody who can help me, tell me what I have to have it, or where I don’t have to have it, for my religion.’ I went in human..., umm, I don’t know what.

Safia: Human resources.

Naima: Yeah, I went there, complain about it. But somehow, my people, they don’t know. They don’t know where to go. They don’t know where to stand because of the language. It’s a lot of them that’s facing it.

Me: So, if they don’t know where to go is there someone [in the community] who is telling them they can go to human resources?

Naima: Yeah, but they are scared, so they don’t want to say it. They don’t wanna talk about it.

Me: Are they taking off the scarves or are they going home?

Naima: Yup they taking them off.

Safia: Some of them.

This type of encounter was reiterated by several other members of the focus group. A few women were scared enough or needed the job badly enough that they would remove their head scarves, while others would refuse and be sent home. When these conflicts with management dragged on they often resulted in the woman quitting or being fired.

Because there are many entry level jobs in Salt Lake City where Muslim attire

would not be a safety issue I asked about whether they were able to find any of these jobs. Mohamed replied, “Yeah. For example, the professional ones, they accept it, but they going the not professional, they going the industrial they not accept. If they going the housekeeping, they will not accept.” I then asked, “Are there many in your community who have found professional jobs?” He replied, “Uhh. Few people, though who’s getting professional jobs is few people, the educated. Most of them they are going for the industrial.”

A number of things might explain the convoluted politics around Muslim religious attire. First, for some jobs, like manufacturing jobs, long dresses and scarves pose a legitimate safety issue. Second, in positions like hotel housekeeping it is an industry standard that housekeepers wear a uniform. While adapted uniforms are available in many industries (the athletic uniform industry, for example, has made great strides in adapting women’s uniforms to meet both athletic association requirements and religious requirements), hotel management may be unaware that shorter dresses with leggings and scarves contained tucked under shirts can meet uniform standards and allow the employee to adhere to their religious practices. Finally, due to a post-9/11 political climate that is often hostile to Muslims (Paul and S. Becker 2017) many businesses may seek to reduce the visibility of Muslim employees. Muslim men in Somalia do not have a conspicuous dress code, whereas Somali Muslim women practice a very conservative and conspicuous dress code.

Religious discrimination. The issues raised in the focus groups around dress politics are closely related to the issue of religious discrimination. The state of Utah can be characterized as politically conservative, predominantly Republican, with a majority

of its populace belonging to the Mormon religion (Formally: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a.k.a. the LDS church). In 2014, the Salt Lake Tribune reported that 62.64 percent of the populace were members of the dominant religion (Canham). There are only four Utah counties where the populations are less than half Mormon, and there are three where the populations are more than 80 percent Mormon. In Salt Lake County, the percentage is 51.4. Due in part to a history of extreme religious discrimination against the LDS church, most members are opposed to religious discrimination. However, the politically conservative climate in Utah may also contribute to fear and anti-Muslim sentiments. It is possible that this mélange of influences contributed to the misguided advice given to Naima by her former manager, that she should become Mormon.

Moreover, the informants perceived the dress politics as acts of religious discrimination.

Zahra described her experience of starting work for a company that makes cakes where the employer, who previously stated that her religious attire was acceptable, later told Zahra that she must remove her scarf and wear a hair net instead. After describing the experience Zahra said, “Naima is professional, she can get a job easy, but the other women who is not professional, they cannot get the job. They [employers] say, ‘Go home if you don’t take this dress.’ More important, in Utah, we have the discrimination in Utah.” And, there is certainly evidence to support Zahra’s claim. Food handlers’ regulations do not require hair nets. They simply require that hair be effectively “restrained” to prevent stray hairs from falling into food (Utah Department of Health 2016). The section on “Hair Restraints” in Utah’s food code, which is based on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Food Code states:

(A) Except as provided in ¶ (B) of this section, FOOD EMPLOYEES shall wear hair restraints such as hats, hair coverings or nets, beard restraints, and clothing

that covers body hair, that are designed and worn to effectively keep their hair from contacting exposed FOOD; clean EQUIPMENT, UTENSILS, and LINENS; and unwrapped SINGLE-SERVICE and SINGLE-USE ARTICLES.

(B) This section does not apply to FOOD EMPLOYEES such as counter staff who only serve BEVERAGES and wrapped or PACKAGED FOODS, hostesses, and wait staff if they present a minimal RISK of contaminating exposed FOOD; clean EQUIPMENT, UTENSILS, and LINENS; and unwrapped SINGLE-SERVICE and SINGLE USE ARTICLES (Utah Department of Health 2016:51).

Clearly, head scarves meet this requirement. Employers who are concerned about the effectiveness of head scarves could require Muslim women to tuck the scarves into their shirts. While employers may state that food handling regulations require Muslim women to remove their scarves and wear a hair net, this is not the case. When employers require Muslim women to wear a hair net, it may reflect ignorance of the actual code or it may be a subtle form of discrimination.

In other industries, businesses cite safety issues and Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) requirements, despite the fact that such requirements are not always present, or may allow modified religious attire. In fact, few OSHA regulations pertain to clothing, and those that do primarily address personal protective equipment such as hard hats, protective eye-wear, masks, and steel-toed boots (Occupational Safety and Health Administration 1970). Moreover, OSHA has granted exceptions to protective equipment requirements, specifically, they granted an exception to the hard-hat rule for Sikhs who wear turbans (McManis 1999). The OSHA regulations that are most likely to impose restrictions on religious attire pertain to machinery and machine guarding in order to “[protect] workers from ... preventable injuries” (Occupational Safety and Health Administration 2017). However, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the employer is required to make reasonable accommodations “that will permit the employee to adhere to religious practices and will permit the

employer to avoid undue hardship” (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission 2017).

In the hotel industry, the uniform requirements could be easily modified to allow Muslim women to wear their hijab and wear a dress that is slightly shorter (posing no risk from supply cart wheels). In essence, both OSHA and the EEOC expect that employers can and should make reasonable accommodations for religious attire, and that reasonable accommodations are possible for most safety concerns.

In some cases, uniform requirements are less a case of safety and more a case of corporate image. The EEOC also addresses this issue. They state:

An employer's reliance on the broad rubric of "image" or marketing strategy to deny a requested religious accommodation may amount to relying on customer preference in violation of Title VII, or otherwise be insufficient to demonstrate that making an exception would cause an undue hardship on the operation of the business (ibid.).

From this passage, we can infer that the “corporate image” justification amounts to discrimination in anticipation of customer prejudice. More importantly, uniform requirements were perceived by the refugee informants in this study as religious discrimination. Their accounts gave no examples of employers offering accommodations, and at least one example where the refugee suggested accommodations, but those accommodations were not accepted by the employer. Naima suggested tucking the hijab into her uniform shirt and wearing a slightly shorter skirt that would not pose a safety hazard. However, the employer denied this request, again citing safety concerns. It is hardly surprising that the informants perceived this to be a case of religious discrimination. Scholars note that religious discrimination, especially discrimination against adherents to the Muslim religion, has increased dramatically since September 11, 2001 (Ghumman, et al. 2013; Lakhani 2017; Syed 2010). Cases of discrimination against

Muslims comprise a disproportionate 20 percent of all religion-based discrimination charges made to the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC 2017).

Ghumman's research finds several trends that contribute to religious discrimination in the workplace including increased religious diversity and the presence of legal ambiguities (Ghumman, et al. 2013). In addition, a number of scholars documented perceived discrimination of Muslim women who wear hijabs (Forstenlechner and Waqfi 2010; Ghumman and Jackson 2010; Ghumman and Ryan 2013; Helly 2004; Malos 2010). However, one study found that perceptions of discrimination decreased as social immersion and integration increased (Awad 2010).

When I inquired about whether the informants felt that they had also experienced race-based discrimination they replied that they did not. Naima clarified by explaining that at work there are rules against it, but that their children experience it at school. Thus, while they have some understanding of U.S. race relations, and have multiple, intersecting identities which could form the basis of discrimination, they were unanimous in expressing that their most visible and dominant identity, that of Somali Muslim women, was the source of their discrimination.

Language and Education

My next line of questioning addressed how the community might be able to get more people into professional jobs, where the dress code is less of an issue. The informants responded mentioning two factors that they perceived as affecting opportunities for employment: English-speaking ability and education. The informants spent very little time discussing English-speaking ability as there are many resources

already available to help with this, including their own community's Functional English class. They saw education as more of an issue. In contrast to this focus group with the community leaders, informants in the focus group with community members saw the language barrier as more of an issue. Five of the seven informants who were employed at the time of the focus group were employed by the Humanitarian Center or Deseret Industries as part of a subsidized training program. The program, which includes four hours of on-the-job training and four of paid English language classes, only accepts refugees who speak very poor or no English. Three others had previously completed the program. When asked if the program helped them improve their English enough that they could apply for jobs on their own, several participants spoke at once, affirming that it did.

In the focus group with the leaders, Naima explained, "They [the new people] they don't speak the language; that's one problem... And then the other thing is nowadays is high school diploma. Nobody has it... Even if you wanna work in the kitchen they ask you this." Halima corroborated this account, explaining that employers want to see a high school diploma or a GED. Unfortunately, many refugees do not have documentation of their educational achievements, yet employers often require documentation. The informants explained:

Naima: I lost [my diploma]. So many of us they do not have because they lost. They don't have it.

Me: Do you have to have the diploma "in hand" to get a job?

Mohamed: Yes.

Naima: They don't believe you if you say I have it.

Mohamed: If you are from Africa.

Naima: So many of them, they have when they were at home, but after, nobody has.

As a white, native-born female, I have never been asked for proof that I graduated from high school when applying for an entry level job. For those of us in this privileged

position, we simply list the high school name and the year we graduated on the application or on our resume. In contrast, employers routinely ask refugees, especially those who are “conspicuously foreign,” to provide documentation of their educational background. Foreign education is devalued in the U.S. labor market relative to U.S education. And, while education is a key factor in acquiring professional jobs, lack of documentation prevents many refugees with a high school education from capitalizing on their education.

Communication Styles

The final theme that arose in the focus groups relates to the Somali style of communication. Somali intragroup communication can be characterized in three ways: high intensity, directness, and egalitarianism. The intensity of group conversations is the most immediately observable feature. Conversations are highly animated, jovial, with many people speaking at once. Group discussions can be cacophonous. On one occasion during the rapport building phase of the study, when the conversation in Somali was growing in intensity, Halima stopped to explain that that they weren’t arguing, that was “just how they talked.” Later she told the story of an encounter with her neighbor. The conversations in her apartment were often animated and loud. Her neighbor heard them talking (through the walls) and thought there were a lot of arguments going on. Her neighbor reported the arguments to the apartment manager. When the manager came to ask her about the arguments she said, “No, that’s just how we talk.” To the uninitiated observer, the intensity of the interactions may appear disputatious and even volatile.

During the first focus group, there were several occasions when the participants

were speaking at once. In order to help me catch everything that was being said during one particularly chaotic exchange, Mohamed yelled over the noise, “Just I am telling you we have to stop everybody talking [at once].”

Somali communication is also very direct. In relaying their interactions with managers around the Muslim dress code informants reported being quite blunt in telling the managers that they would not remove their hijabs. Naima describes herself as asserting her workplace rights “in [her manager’s] face,” exhibiting both directness and intensity. Many managers in the U.S. are more accustomed to polite and even slightly deferential treatment from their employees. For some, the directness of Somali communication may be poorly received.

Finally, Somali communication is egalitarian, in that every voice is heard. In one notable exchange near the beginning of the focus group with community leaders, there was a brief debate conducted partly in Somali and partly in English during which Mohamed corrected or revised Halima’s opinion but the debate continued in a good-natured manner. Halima, laughing, chastises Mohamed for correcting her. She says, “That’s not right.” Ahmed chimes in, “He’s gonna control you.” To which Halima responds still laughing, “No! You can’t control me. You can talk with her and I can talk to her.” At this point Mohamed said, “Okay,” and after a pause, “Okay, I will go. I will go home.” He then left the room. At this point conversation devolved into an animated debate in Somali. The remaining community leaders discussed things briefly among themselves and then requested that we pause the focus group while several of them left to retrieve Mohamed. This exchange featured Halima asserting her right to be heard in her own words. It also had all the intensity and disagreement of an argument. However,

Halima and the other leaders also sought reconciliation.

Gender norms and communication. Despite the egalitarian inclination to let everyone speak, a subtle patriarchal hierarchy became apparent. When Mohamed returned, Halima was less assertive. In addition, at several points during the focus group he attempted to control and/or redirect the conversation. Luckily, several of the other informants were equally assertive. In addition, Mohamed demonstrated the gender hierarchy by repeatedly speaking for the women in the group, beginning his comments with “Our ladies...” Somali communities are characterized by a remarkable degree of egalitarianism (Putman and Noor 1993). However, the egalitarianism in communication and debate remains subtly subject to leadership hierarchies which are decidedly patriarchal (United Nations Development Programme 2013).

These features of Somali communication—high intensity, directness, egalitarianism, and gender hierarchies—especially when co-occurring, are distinctive and contrast sharply with the deferential and bureaucratically hierarchical communication styles that dominate the U.S. labor market. As such, they may cause social discomfort for native-born co-workers who think they are viewing a volatile argument. And, they are likely to contribute to misunderstandings in the workplace.

Discussion

The combined perspectives of the caseworkers and Somali refugees offer a number of insights for understanding refugee employment in Salt Lake. Analysis of the focus groups and the case notes yielded findings around the common themes of *cultural capital*, *gender norms*, and *religious discrimination*. In addition, the focus groups

revealed the importance of *education* received in the U.S. And, the case notes revealed examples of caseworker *positionality*.

While the case notes gave many examples of different types of cultural capital, only one was readily noticeable in the focus groups—communication style. However, the case notes showed that disparate communication styles were sometimes the source of breaches of other related cultural norms. For example, lack of knowledge of communication norms, including vocal pitch and volume, facial expressions, appropriate levels of directness, and deference to managers, was sometimes noted as the initial cause of workplace conflict and inappropriate workplace behavior. The focus groups demonstrated how easily alternate styles of communication could be misinterpreted.

Distinctive gender norms were also visible in both the case notes and the focus groups. While these were infrequently mentioned in the case notes, this was partially due to the fact that gender norms were only documented when they interfered with employment. When adhering to rigid patriarchal gender norms conflicted with the standard employment practices they were received as breaches of cultural capital. In the focus groups, a new layer of the gender picture emerged. First, patriarchal gender hierarchies are often subtle. Second, gender roles intersect with religious practices to create multiple intersecting axes of disadvantage for Somali women.

Religious constraints functioned as a dual disadvantage bridging cultural and symbolic capital. The cultural practices associated with the Muslim religion create limitations on the types of jobs both men and women can accept. These were frequently noted in the case notes. However, in the focus groups, the Somali men insisted that restrictions on working with pork and alcohol didn't limit their employment because

there were plenty of other jobs available. On the other hand, the women experienced difficulty finding work due to their religious dress code. And, while many employed cited safety issues as the reason for refusing to allow the hijab, regulations supporting this claim are only present in the manufacturing industry. The requirement to wear specific, unmodified uniforms likely had more to do with corporate image than safety. Moreover, since some members of U.S. society espouse fear and animosity toward Muslims, the conspicuous nature of the Somali women's religious attire reduces their desirability as employees (for some employers). In essence, their conspicuous Muslim-ness effectively reduces their symbolic capital in the labor market, even for low-status jobs.

The issue of human capital was also raised in both the case notes and the focus groups. Caseworkers often made brief notes about the refugee's level of education, a reminder of the information captured in the Employment Assessment form. However, in the focus groups it became clear that different forms of education have different value in the Utah labor market. First, a number of previous studies have documented that foreign education is less valuable than U.S. education in the labor market. Second, many refugees lack documentation of their foreign education. Due to their conspicuous foreignness employers ask for documentation from refugees when they do not with the native born. As a result, foreign education has no value in the Utah labor market.⁵¹

Finally, the case notes revealed examples of boundary work and positionality on the part of caseworkers. In the case notes, caseworkers used rhetorical framing that evinced subtle beliefs that Muslim women could/should remove their religious attire if

⁵¹ The exception to this is college education. University Neighborhood Partners has programs to verify and if necessary recertify foreign degrees.

necessary to obtain a job. In addition, there were notable examples related to conditional assistance and patronizing language. However, when probed about their experience with employment services at the various agencies the Somali refugees had no complaints. They saw the religious discrimination of employers as the core problem. Those who no longer sought services from the larger agencies explained that they only worked with the Somali Community Self-Management Agency because they would drive them to appointments and interviews. In essence, my own position outside the community allowed me to see the positionality of the caseworkers, but the recipients of aid did not see the boundary work being done. In the perceptions of the Somali refugees, this had no effect on employment.

In the next chapter, I will discuss how these findings relate to the quantitative analysis, and how both sets of findings relate to the holistic model of refugee economic integration.

Table 16. Cultural Capital Indicators

Employment Specific Cultural Capital	General Cultural Capital
Appropriate Business Attire	Body Language
Appropriate Workplace Attitude	Eye Contact and Shaking Hands
Appropriate Workplace Behavior (Including Workplace Conflict)	General Knowledge of Laws
Appropriate Workplace Communication	Hygiene
Resigning without Notice	Misc. Cultural Familiarity
Sexual Harassment	
Timeliness and Work Schedules (Including Missing Work)	
Understanding of Occupational Mobility	
Work Ethic	

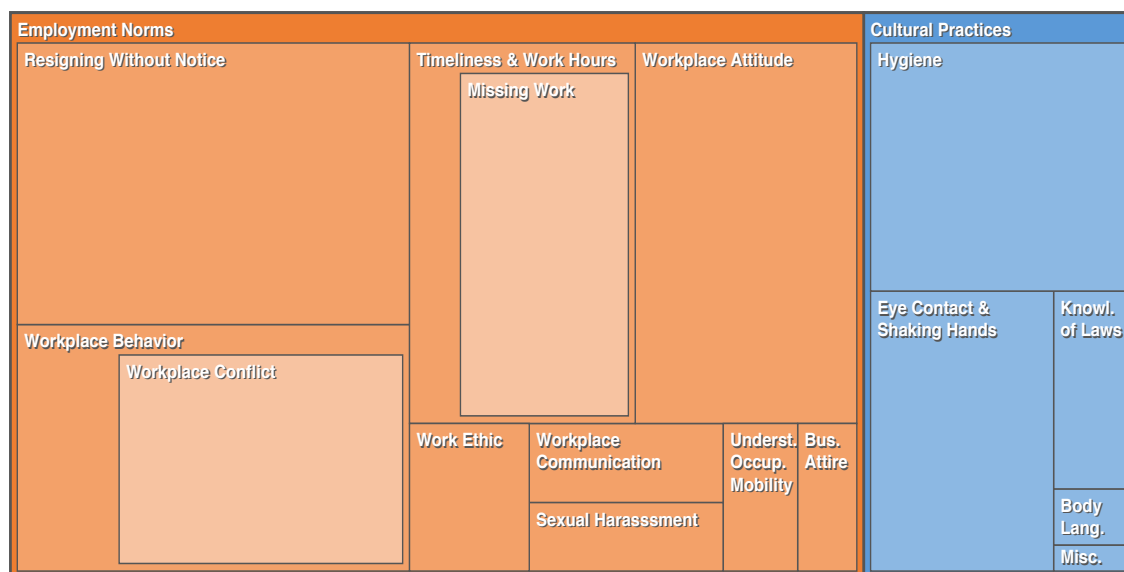


Figure 7. Number of Refugees with Cultural Capital References

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This dissertation began with the premise that assisting refugees with their social and economic integration is important for academics and practitioners alike, especially in light of the recent mass exodus of Syrian refugees. While both academics and practitioners have made considerable progress in understanding these parallel forms of integration, there is more to learn if we are to ensure that resettlement leads to self-sufficiency for the many thousand refugees resettled in the United States each year. The integration of immigrants and refugees occurs across many domains, including the economic, cultural, social, and political domains. The goal of this research project has been to investigate the economic domain of refugee integration, with the intent of gaining a comprehensive picture of refugee employment and economic integration in Utah, an emerging immigration gateway and prominent resettlement community.

A broad range of previous research has investigated the economic integration of immigrants and a with only a small number addressing the issue vis-à-vis refugees. One key study called for researchers to be more comprehensive in their definition of economic integration and more thorough in their investigation of the various types of economic integration (Kuhlman 1991). In general, scholars view economic integration as participation in the U.S. economy that results in an adequate standard of living while

allowing migrants to maintain valued aspects of their cultural identities. Kuhlman's research identified four aspects of refugee economic integration that researchers should address: labor market participation, adequate income, the absence of discrimination, and a non-negative impact on the receiving community. While the first two items deal with employment-related outcomes, the latter two address aspects of two-way integration, whereby the receiving community adapts to the presence of refugees. Kuhlman recommends that researchers address both aspects of economic integration.

Extant research also outlines some pathways to economic integration. In general, it tells us that several forms of capital—human, cultural, social, and symbolic—act as assets, enabling economic integration, while the conditions and needs of the local economy determine employment opportunities, and social contexts of reception determine the actual accessibility of those opportunities. In addition, theories surrounding ethnic origins (Hein 2006) suggest that a refugee's homeland culture and political experiences may affect the ease of adaptation and integration.

To date, existing research has not comprehensively tested the applicability of these theories for the refugee experience. Moreover, Table 2 (Chapter III) demonstrates the relevant theories—*Ethnic Origins* (2006), *Forms of Capital* (2001), *Modes of Incorporation* (2001), *Model of Refugee Integration* (1991) complement each other, each offering a component the others lack. For example, the ethnic origins theory contains elements designed to capture a refugee's culture of origin, the nature of authority in government institutions, and the salience of political discrimination against minorities. Such homeland descriptions were notably lacking from other theoretical approaches. Similarly, theories surrounding modes of incorporation address how the destination

communities receive the refugees, providing institutional and social contexts. While many of the key elements necessary for understanding refugee economic integration are present in previous theories, prior research has been somewhat piecemeal in applying these theories, underscoring the need for a theoretical model that ties the theories together. As a result, I presented and tested my *Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration*, which combined and built upon recommended elements from four key theories.

In the sections that follow I briefly review the theoretical model and findings from the previous chapters. I then discuss how the findings from the different methodologies relate to and complement each other.

Theoretical Framework

The model I presented in Chapter II draws from four influential models of integration: Hein's *Ethnic Origins* model (2006), Nee and Sanders *Forms of Capital* model (2001), Portes and Rumbaut's *Modes of Incorporation* theory (2001), and Kuhlman's *Model of Refugee Integration* (1991). It articulates three sets of factors that contribute to economic integration and requires a multidimensional approach to measuring economic integration. In order to sufficiently assess the profusion of factors contributing to economic integration while examining multiple dimensions of economic integration I employed a mixed methods approach. This approach allowed me to supplement the findings from one analytical method with insights from other data sources and methods. Essentially, it allowed me to address components of the model unaddressed by a single method or data source, answer questions raised by those findings, and add

robustness by duplicating findings with multiple methods.

Findings from the Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis of data compiled from administrative forms addressed two forms of economic integration: labor market participation and adequate income. This analysis found that all three dimensions of the model are relevant to refugee employment outcomes. In the ethnic origins dimension, the event history analysis found that cultural distance in attitudes operates through and in conjunction with other variables such as education and English speaking ability to influence economic integration. In other words, a refugee's culture of origin has no direct effect on employment outcomes. However high levels of cultural distance can reduce the value of their education and English language skills in the Utah job market.

In the forms of capital dimension, the analysis demonstrated that while all of the forms of capital play a role in the economic integration of refugees, the effect can differ for different aspects of economic integration. For example, English-speaking ability is valuable for labor market participation, while education level is valuable for acquiring a livable wage. Like culture of origin, individual cultural capital primarily operates in conjunction with other variables. And, employment-related cultural capital is valuable for acquiring a livable wage. The absence of religiously-related cultural barriers only manifests a relationship when interacted with other predictors, and the relationship is only present for labor market participation. Social capital exhibited a surprising relationship with employment outcomes. Weak ties demonstrated no association with economic integration, while the stronger ties found in family connections were beneficial

for both employment outcomes. Symbolic capital exhibited a similarly surprising relationship with economic integration. While sex was related to both employment outcomes, proxies for race were not related to either outcome. One possible reason for this is that since the proxy variable was based on the region of the world where the refugee is from, the effect of race may be masked by other variables related to ethnic origins. And, since education levels are closely associated with a country's level of development, individual characteristics may also absorb some of the effect of race.

In the contextual dimension, high poverty rates are negatively associated with employment. Contrary to expectations, social context, specifically negative attitudes toward immigrants, was unrelated to employment outcomes.

This quantitative analysis contributes to our understanding of the factors that promote the successful economic integration of refugees, but also raises some questions about some of the more surprising associations. For example, why is education only valuable for acquiring a livable wage and not labor market participation? And, why is there no direct effect for individual religiously-related cultural barriers? Why does the effect of race disappear when controlling for other forms of capital? And, why is there no visible effect of a negative social context. These questions were more readily answered by the qualitative analysis.

Findings from the Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analyses combined the perspectives of caseworkers and Somali refugees to explore issues of cultural difference and gender and racial discrimination. The findings offered explanations for the surprising findings from the quantitative analysis

and provided insights into the state of two-way integration in Utah.

The qualitative analysis gave some evidence of the importance of ethnic origins. Specifically, the style of communication common in Somalia differs from the style in the U.S., especially with regard to volume and intensity, and focus group participants acknowledged that their style of communication had sometimes been misinterpreted. In essence the practices of their origin culture led to breaches of U.S. cultural norms. For example, animated but amicable debates may appear to be loud and potentially volatile arguments. More importantly for the work place, the direct communication of opinions and issues may be perceived by some managers as confrontational and disrespectful which, as the case notes found, can create conflict in the work place.

Forms of capital were consistently highlighted in both the case notes and the focus groups. For example, the focus groups made it clear that different levels of education have different value in the Utah labor market, and that refugees experience difficulties due to their lack of documentation of foreign education. Employers routinely request diplomas to verify refugees' education, yet many lost their documents during the initial flight from their country (Bach and Carroll-Seguin 1986; Bloch 2002; Lamba 2003; Waxman 2001). Deficits of symbolic capital exacerbate this problem. Due to the conspicuous foreignness of many refugees, employers more frequently request documentation of their education than they do from the native-born population.

While employment-related cultural capital was frequently mentioned in case notes, voluntary agencies provide extensive training on these issues, which might explain the lack of association between employment-related cultural capital and labor market participation seen in the quantitative analysis. Religiously-based cultural barriers, on the

other hand, were salient areas of disadvantage for the Somali refugees. Religious constraints involve both cultural and symbolic capital. The cultural practices of the Somali Muslims create limitations on the types of jobs they can accept. However, the disadvantage was primarily present for women. The attitudes of the Utah community toward Muslims, combined with the conspicuous nature of the Somali women's religious attire, reduces their desirability as employees and led to instances of discrimination. In essence, their conspicuous Muslim-ness effectively reduces their symbolic capital in the labor market, even for low-status jobs. Interestingly, due to their multiple, intersecting disadvantaged statuses, Somali Muslim women did not perceive any racial discrimination. Instead, they attributed discrimination to their more conspicuous status as Muslims.

The instances of discrimination reported in the Somali focus groups speak to the presence of subtle, but pervasive anti-Muslim sentiment in the Utah community. This is an indication that while refugees are welcomed in Utah, comprehensive two-way integration has not yet occurred. In other words, while positive governmental reception, strong service agency infrastructure, robust co-ethnic organizations make for positive contexts of reception, some in the community have not adapted to the presence of refugees, restricting their access to services and employment. This may stem from a belief that full acceptance of refugees, especially Muslim refugees, will be damaging to business (Esses, Dovidio, and Hodson 2002; Murray and Marx 2013). Another indication of the progress of two-way integration was seen in the case notes, which revealed examples of boundary work and positionality on the part of caseworkers. Despite their training and their obvious intention to assist refugees, their modes of phrasing case notes

about Muslim religious attire not only disclosed examples of positionality and boundary work, they also served as a litmus test, revealing the attitudinal propensities of the community.

Tying It All Together

The findings from the quantitative and qualitative analyses overlap in their support for the four components of the Holistic Model. In addition, the analyses complement each other, supplementing each other's findings, and explaining surprising findings.

First, in the event history analysis, only the highest levels of education were significantly associated with economic integration, and education was only associated with the acquisition of a livable wage. The focus groups confirmed the differential value of various education levels and offered an explanation. Lacking documentation, refugee education at the high school level and below has little value in the Utah labor market. And, while most employers don't require documentation of high school education from their average applicant, they routinely require documentation from conspicuously foreign applicants.

Second, despite their repeated reference by caseworkers, religiously-related cultural barriers exhibit no direct association with economic integration, only an indirect association with procuring a livable wage. The negative relationship between religiously-related cultural barriers and livable wage is reduced as English speaking ability improves. The focus groups help explain the lack of relationship with labor market participation. Somali men maintain that they experience no difficulties entering the labor market as a

result of their restrictions. However, Somali women experience significant difficulties due to their required religious attire. The association may be masked in the quantitative analysis due to the unimportance of the religious barriers for men. In addition, analysis of the case notes revealed that religious barriers were frequently omitted from the administrative forms. Often, these barriers were entered into the case notes after a refugee had received a job, but could not stay at the job due to their religious attire. As a result, the database, which was constructed based on the administrative forms, may underreport religious barriers. The case notes and focus groups confirmed that religious barriers are, indeed, an issue for a small group of refugees.

Third, the insights gleaned into the intersectionality of Muslim women's identities help explain why the quantitative analysis saw no effect for race after controlling for other forms of capital. In keeping with intersectionality literature, people perceive their intersectional statuses in a myriad of ways. In some circumstances, only one or two of their disadvantaged statuses may be perceived as noteworthy. In the case of the Somali Muslim women, their status as Muslim women superseded their status as black women. Future research should employ a comparative design with additional ethnic groups who differ in one or both of the dual axes of race and religion. Such a design would help separate the effects of the two predictors.

Fourth, the quantitative analysis found no relationship between negative social context and economic integration. These analyses used negative attitudes toward immigrants in general as the indicator of negative social context. However, the focus groups revealed that negative reception and attitudes may be specific to Muslim refugees rather than all refugees or all immigrants. In the current political climate, with

increasingly negative sentiments toward Muslim refugees (Esses et al. 2008; Murray and Marx 2013) this finding is especially alarming and should be investigated further in future studies.

Finally, this study offers strong support for the *Holistic Model of Refugee Economic Integration*. A comprehensive understanding of refugee economic integration requires an examination of all three dimensions—ethnic origins, forms of capital, and context. By employing multiple methodologies, I replicated support for each of the three dimensions and added support for a few individual predictors that were not highlighted in other analyses. Table 17 shows which analyses support each of the dimensions and predictors.

In addition, both the event history analysis and the focus groups offer support for the assertion that the factors influencing economic integration interact, change over time, and have different effects on different aspects of economic integration.

In conclusion, the findings in this study offer support for the assertion that four existing theories are applicable for the refugee experience of economic integration, but indicate that rather than applying these theories in a piecemeal manner researchers should take a comprehensive approach to investigating refugee economic integration. In essence, a refugee's ethnic origins, their forms of capital, and the contexts of reception combine to shape their economic integration. But two-way integration is more difficult to predict. This study found incomplete two-way integration indicated the presence of “creative” discrimination whereby employers use occupational safety as a tool of discrimination. Rather than functioning as an outcome, as Kuhlman specified, this predictor is both an immediate contextual predictor and a potential future outcome, indicating possible

cumulative causation. And, as a key predictor for the economic integration of Muslim women, discovering tools for reducing this and other forms of discrimination are crucial for a thriving and economically healthy Utah community.

With 60 to 70 thousand refugees immigrating to U.S. each year, successful economic integration is critical. The results of this project help advance theory, by offering a comprehensive model of refugee economic integration. The results may also provide practical insights for service providers and employers regarding specific practices that may improve employment two-way integration. Each individual refugee's successful economic integration reduces the strain on limited State and Federal resources and contributes to diverse societies and thriving local economies.

Table 17. Analyses Supporting the Holistic Model

Dimensions & Hypotheses	Event History Analysis	Case Notes	Focus Groups
ETHNIC ORIGINS			
Culture			
Cultural Distance—Attitudes	✓		
Cultural Distance—Practices			✓
FORMS OF CAPITAL			
Human Capital			
Education (categorical)	✓		✓
English	✓		✓
U.S. Work Experience	✓		
Social Capital			
Network: Family	✓		✓
Network: Ethnic Association			✓
Cultural Capital			
Employment-related Deficits	✓	✓	
Religious Barriers	✓	✓	✓
Symbolic Capital			
Sex	✓		✓
Race			
CONTEXTUAL FACTORS			
Economic Context			
Unemployment Rate			
Poverty Rate	✓		
Social Context			
Attitudes		✓	✓

APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

Intake Form

NAME:

Revised 9.9.11

**Asian Association of Utah
Refugee and Immigrant Center****INTAKE FORM**

Person Completing Form:

Date of Intake:

Client's Name (last, first):Caseworker:

Alien #:

Social Security #:

Date of Birth:

Sex: M F

Nationality:

U.S. Date of Arrival:

Resettlement Agency:

Language(s) Spoken:

Skill in Spoken English: none poor fair good

Client's Full Address:

Telephone #:

Cell #:

Best time to call:

E-Mail Address:
_____Type of Case: Refugee Asylee Second Migration TIP Parolee

State of Original Resettlement:

Utah Date of Arrival (if differs from U.S. DOA):

Reason client is seeking RIC-AAU assistance (check all that applies):Referred by (i.e. DWS, Hum. Center) _____

NAME:

Revised 9.9.11

Unemployed, needs job Employed, seeks better job

Seeks PT or additional job Other _____

Is client currently receiving cash assistance? Yes No

If yes, what kind: RCA FEP (1 parent) FEP-TP (2 parent)

DWS Caseworker (if available): _____ Case # (if available): _____

APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING INFORMATION:

Is customer currently working? Y N

If so, what is CURRENT schedule?

	<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUES</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THURS</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
<u>from</u>							
<u>to</u>							

Other commitments, obligations, appointments need to work around? No

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

(Include name, relationship, address, phone #)

NAME:

Revised 9.9.11

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION as of _____ (Date)

Marital Status: Married Widow Single Separated Divorced

NAME	Relationship To Applicant	Gender (M/F)	DOB	Employment Status if over 18¹ (Select all that apply)	Immigration Status² (Select one)	Alien # IF Asylee or 2 nd Migration	Soc. Sec. # IF Asylee or 2 nd Migration
1.	Self						
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							

¹ Employment Status Codes: **Unemployed/Seeking Work (JS) Paid Employment/Full-Time (FT) Paid Employment/Part-Time (PT) Unemployed (UN) Student (S) Homemaker (HM) SSI income (SSI) Unemployment Ins (UI)**

² Immigration Status Codes: **Refugee (R) Asylee (A) 2nd Migration (2M) U.S. Citizen (US) TIP (T) Parolee (P)**

Self-Sufficiency Form



Refugee & Immigrant Center
ASIAN ASSOCIATION OF UTAH

INDIVIDUAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY/EMPLOYMENT PLAN

updated 5.13.13

Staff Person:

Today's Date:

Client Name:

Social Security Number:

To be completed at time of intake and updated at employment reactivation:

Gross Test – 200% of Poverty Level (FT=173 hr/mo) Effective date: March 2013			
Information current as of initial intake			
Highlight or bold household size on chart			
<i>Chart assumes 173 working hours in a month per person based on 2,080 work hours/person/year</i>			
Household Size	Monthly*	Hourly Wage (1 FT employee)*	Hourly Wage (2 FT employees)*
1	\$ 1915.00	\$ 11.06	
2	\$ 2585.00	\$ 14.94	\$ 7.47 each
3	\$ 3255.00	\$ 18.82	\$ 9.41 each
4	\$ 3925.00	\$ 22.69	\$ 11.35 each
5	\$ 4595.00	\$ 26.56	\$ 13.28 each
6	\$ 5265.00	\$ 30.43	\$ 15.22 each
7	\$ 5935.00	\$ 34.31	\$ 17.16 each
8	\$ 6605.00	\$ 38.18	\$ 19.09 each
9	\$ 7275.00	\$ 42.05	\$ 21.03 each
10	\$ 7945.00	\$ 45.92	\$ 22.96 each

Monthly income chart for household

Name	Relationship To Customer	Type of Income	Hourly Wage	Ave # Hr Work/Mo	Average Monthly Income	Is this income stable?
	<i>self</i>					
Total monthly income: \$ <i>(insert amount)</i>			Stable monthly income: \$ <i>(insert amount)</i>			

1. What is the necessary hourly wage for the client in order to meet self-sufficiency (consider other stable sources incomes in the household):
2. Is this income realistic as a short term goal? Yes No
 - a. Why or why not?
3. Is this income realistic as a long term goal? Yes No
 - a. Why or why not?
 - b. If not, what other resources are available to the client and/or what resources does the client utilize now?
4. Does the client receive food stamps? Yes No If yes, monthly amt?
5. Does the client receive cash asst? (If receiving FEHP answer Yes) Yes No If yes, monthly amt?
6. Is the client on housing? None Section8 Public Housing FEHP

Employment Assessment Form

NAME:

Revised 9/16/11

**Asian Association of Utah
Refugee and Immigrant Center
INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT**

Date Prepared:

Prepared by:

Client's Name (last, first):

SECTION A: WORK HISTORY

A1. What types of work did the client do before coming to America?

If applicable:

<u>Employer & City, State</u>	<u>Type of Business</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hr/wk</u>	<u>Date Started</u>	<u>Date Ended</u>	<u>Reason Left</u>

A2. How long has client worked in USA? ____ Currently employed? Y N

List employment history in US below:

<u>Employer & City, State</u>	<u>Type of Business</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hourly Wage</u>	<u>Hr/wk</u>	<u>Date Started</u>	<u>Date Ended</u>	<u>Reason Left</u>

A3. What type of job does the client desire?

What does client want to do in the future? (may differ from what did in past)

NAME:

Revised 9/16/11

SECTION B: EDUCATION/ TRAINING/ SKILLS

B1. **What schools/training has client attended?** (include training that was not completed. If no formal education, check here:)

<u>Type of School</u>	<u>Name/Location of School</u>	<u># years completed</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Completed? Degree?</u>
Elementary School				
High School				
College(s)				
Other Training:				

B2. **Any licenses/certifications related to clients past employment or training?**

B3. **Do any diplomas or licenses need to be recertified?**

Yes No If yes, which ones?

B4. **Computer Skills:** none some basic skills fair good

B5. **List any interests, hobbies, or skills which could apply towards a job:**

Ask about crafts, handiwork, cooking, sewing, child care, art & musical talents, sports, building skills or any skills obtained in refugee camp. Also ask about past leadership roles including teaching, coaching, religious or social organizations, and child care, worksite experience.

Worksite experience (if applicable):

<u>Worksite Agency</u>	<u>Duties</u>	<u>Hrs/wk</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>End Date</u>

NAME:

Revised 9/16/11

SECTION C: POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**C1. Language Skills****a. Able to read & write in native language?**Yes Read only Write only No

b. English Skills: Speaking none poor fair good
 Reading none poor fair good
 Writing none poor fair good

C2. Job Searching Skills**a. Could client complete an employment application in English?**Yes With some help No **b. Could client interview for a job in English?**Yes With some training No, needs interpreter **c. Does client have business clothing for interviews? Yes No** Any hygiene issues? Yes No **d. Does client have a resume?**Yes No Yes, but it needs updating **e. Does client have any experience successfully looking for work in Utah? (check any that apply)**

- Experienced & can job search on own with employment leads
 Has some experience in USA but not locally
 Limited experience. Training would be helpful.
 No experience. Needs personal hands-on assistance

f. Can client realistically attend AAU Employment Workshops at this time?Yes No

If no, please state reason why: _____

C3. Transportation (check all that apply):

Means of transportation: Own Vehicle Access to Vehicle Bicycle
 Public Transportation Car/Van Pool Walk Other _____

Has a driver's license? Yes No Does not want to drive Is the license from another state/country? Yes No If yes, where? _____

NAME:

Revised 9/16/11

C4. Child Care: Does client need child care in order to work?

Yes No If yes, # children & ages (refer to):

If yes, how will this child care effect employment options?

C5. Temporary and/or permanent health and physical disabilities: (include need for eye glasses or hearing aids; pregnancy related health issues)

C6. Observable or reported depression, anxiety, fears, substance abuse or other mental health issues that would impact employment:

C7. Others (including criminal charges):

SECTION D: ADDITIONAL SPECIAL NEEDS/DESIRES IMPACTING JOB SEARCH

D1. Identify any SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS, and/or CULTURAL ISSUES that may impact employment options:

D2. Identify any types of jobs that client does NOT want to consider:

D3. What is the MINIMUM WAGE client is willing to accept?

D4. Client's DESIRED work days & hours:

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
from							
to							

a. What factors are influencing work schedule?

Transportation Child Care Religious School Other _____

b. Interested in part-time second job? Yes No

SECTION E: SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT ASSESSMENT

E1. OVERALL COMMENTS & OBSERVATIONS BY INTAKE WORKER REGARDING EMPLOYABILITY OF CUSTOMER (i.e. desire to work, specific training needs etc):

APPENDIX B

FOCUS GROUP RECRUITMENT

Recruitment Email

Dear [*Contact Name*]:

My name is Yvette Young and I am a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Utah. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about the employment experiences of refugees in Utah. You are eligible to participate in this study because you are a member of the Somali refugee community in Utah and are over the age of 18. I received your contact information from [*Contact name of referrer at Association Name*].

Participation in this research includes completing a short questionnaire about your background and employment history and participation in a focus group. If you decide to participate, you will complete the survey and return it to me prior to the focus group. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The focus group will include 6 to 10 Somali [*men/women*]. The focus group will take approximately two hours. I would like to audio record the focus group and then we'll use the information to compare and analyze key themes with those raised by participants in other groups.

Remember, this is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at yvette.young@soc.utah.edu or (385) 237-4949. You can expect to receive a follow-up email in approximately one week.

Sincerely,

Yvette Young

Recruitment Flyer

Refugee Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers needed for a refugee employment study.

Are you over the age of 18?

Are you a Somali, Sudanese, Iraqi or Iranian refugee?

Have you worked in the United States, or
have you looked for a job in the United States?

**If you care about refugee employment
PLEASE SIGN UP!**

What does the study involve?

1. A short survey
2. A 2-hour focus group

Volunteers will receive \$20 for participating.

All participant information is kept confidential. The results of the study may be used to provide recommendations to agencies providing employment services to refugee clients. Study results will also be provided to all participants.

The study has been approved by the University of Utah's Institutional Review Board.

For More Information:

Yvette Young, M.A. | yvette.young@soc.utah.edu | research@yvetteyoung.com
University of Utah | 380 S 1530 E Rm. 414, Salt Lake City, UT 84112

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APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONING ROUTE

Focus Group Questioning Route

Opening	1. When did you first move to Utah?
Introduction	2. Have any of you worked since moving to Utah?
Transition	3. For those of you who said “yes,” tell us what types of jobs have you had?
	4. For those of you who said “no,” tell us a little bit about why haven’t you worked?
Key Qs	<i>Separated into Themes</i>
	Language Barriers
	5. [<i>If English was mentioned</i>] Are there any jobs you can do without speaking English?
	Cultural Differences
	6. How is looking for jobs in Utah different from looking for jobs in Somalia? [<i>Probe</i>] How did you react to this?
	7. How is working in Utah different from working in Somalia? [<i>Alternate Phrasing/Probe</i>] At your first job was there anything about the work or rules that surprised you? [<i>Probe</i>] How did you react to this?
	8. Was there anyone who helped you make sense of the differences?
	Religious Differences/Barriers
	9a. <i>Female Informants Only</i> : Some Somali refugees have mentioned that it can be hard finding a job that allows you to wear your headscarves. Have you ever experienced this? [<i>Probe</i>] Tell me about your experience?
	10a. <i>Female Informants Only</i> : If you have problems at work due to your scarves who do you go to for help? [<i>Probe</i>] How did you resolve the issue?
	9b. <i>Male Informants Only</i> : Do you have similar difficulties due to restrictions on working with pork and alcohol?
	10b. <i>Male Informants Only</i> : If you have problems at work due to these restrictions who do you go to for help? [<i>Probe</i>] How did you resolve the issue?
	Discrimination: Race and Gender
	11. Do you think you are ever treated differently at work because of your race? [<i>Probe</i>] Can you give me an example?
	12. Do you think you are ever treated differently at work because you are female? [<i>Probe</i>] Can you give me an example?
	<i>Now I’m going to switch gears a little bit and ask some questions about the people who may have helped you find a job.</i>
Ending	20. Did you ever get help finding a job from one of the refugee agencies?
	21. What types of things did they do that were helpful?
	22. Was there anything that was frustrating about their services?
	23. Is there anything else you wish they had done to help you find a job? [<i>Alternate Phrasing</i>] If you could give them any advice what would it be?
	24. I want to make sure I understand what you are telling me about looking for looking for work in Utah. Is there anything we should have talked about but didn’t?

APPENDIX D

CULTURAL DISTANCE INDEX

Cultural Distance Index Components

WORLD VALUES SURVEY QUESTIONS & CODING/INDEXING METHOD	
<p>Power Distance (r = 0.3729*)</p>	<p>0 = high power distance 1 = low power distance</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respect for authority:</i>^b “I’m going to read out a list of various changes in our way of life that might take place in the near future. Please tell me for each one, if it were to happen, whether you think it would be a good thing, a bad thing, or don’t you mind? “Greater respect for authority.” • <i>Autonomy:</i> “Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five.” “independence,” “determination, perseverance,” “religious faith,” and “obedience.” • <i>Political action:</i> “Now I’d like you to look at this card. I’m going to read out some different forms of political action that people can take, and I’d like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never, under any circumstances, do it. Signing a petition.” Response options include: 1 “Have done,” 2 “Might do,” and 3 “Would never do.” • <i>Income inequality:</i> “Now I’d like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between. Incomes should be made more equal vs. We need larger income differences as incentives. 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual questions rescaled to range from 1 to 5. 2. Index created by taking the mean. 3. Index rescaled to span from 0 to 1. 	
<p>Collectivism vs. Individualism (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.6965; r = 0.0530*)</p>	<p>0 = collectivism 1 = individualism</p>
<p>“Now I will briefly describe some people. Using this card, would you please indicate for each description whether that person is very much like you, like you, somewhat like you, not like you, or not at all like you?” 1 “Very much like me,” 2 “Like me,” 3 “Somewhat like me,” 4 “A little like me,” 5 “Not like me,” and 6 “Not at all like me.”</p>	
<p><u>Collectivism:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Family security:</i> “Living in secure surroundings is important to this person; to avoid anything that might be dangerous.” • <i>Environment:</i> “Looking after the environment is important to this person; to care for nature.” • <i>Proper behavior:</i> “It is important to this person to always behave properly; to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.” • <i>Tradition:</i> “Tradition is important to this person; to follow the customs handed down by one’s religion or family.” 	
<p><u>Individualism:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creativity:</i> “It is important to this person to think up new ideas and be creative; to do things one’s own way.” • <i>Pleasure:</i> “It is important to this person to have a good time; to “spoil” oneself.” • <i>Success:</i> “Being very successful is important to this person; to have people recognize one’s achievements” • <i>Adventure:</i> “Adventure and taking risks are important to this person; to have an exciting life.” 	

Collectivism vs. Individualism (continued)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individualism variables reverse coded. 2. Index created by taking the mean. 3. Index rescaled to span from 0 to 1. 	
Masculinity vs. Femininity (Cronbach's alpha = 0.6024; r = 0.1154*)	0 = patriarchal gender attitudes 1 = equitable gender attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Men's right to a job</i>: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women." 1 "Agree," 2 "Disagree," and 3 "Neither." • <i>Women's need for children</i>: "Do you think that a woman has to have children in order to be fulfilled or is this not necessary?" 0 "Not necessary;" and 1 "Needs children." • <i>Women as single parents</i>: "If a woman wants to have a child as a single parent but she doesn't want to have a stable relationship with a man, do you approve or disapprove?" 0 "Disapprove;" 1 "Approve;" and 2 "Depends." <p>"For each of the following statements I read out, can you tell me how much you agree with each. Do you agree strongly, agree, disagree, or disagree strongly?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Men as political leaders</i>: "Men make better political leaders than women do." • <i>Boy's education</i>: "A university education is more important for a boy than for a girl." 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual questions rescaled to range from 1 to 5. 2. Questions coded so a low score indicates patriarchal attitudes. 3. Index created by taking the mean. 4. Index rescaled to span from 0 to 1. 	
Uncertainty Avoidance (Cronbach's alpha = 0.4982; r = 0.1154*)	0 = high uncertainty avoidance 1 = low uncertainty avoidance
<p>"Now I'd like you to tell me your views on various issues. How would you place your views on this scale? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left; 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right; and if your views fall somewhere in between, you can choose any number in between."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "One should be cautious about making major changes in life vs You will never achieve much unless you act boldly." • "Ideas stood test of time better vs New ideas better." <p>"Now I want to ask you some questions about your outlook on life. Each card I show you has two contrasting statements on it. Using the scale listed, could you tell me where you would place your own view? 1 means you agree completely with the statement on the left, 10 means you agree completely with the statement on the right, or you can choose any number in between."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I worry about difficulties changes may cause vs I welcome possibilities that something new is beginning." 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual questions rescaled to range from 1 to 5. 2. Index created by taking the mean. 3. Index rescaled to span from 0 to 1. 	

Long-Term Orientation (Cronbach's alpha = 0.7584; $r = 0.3141^*$)	0 = weak long-term orientation 1 = strong long-term orientation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Service</i>: "For each of the following aspects, indicate how important it is in your life. Would you say it is: Service to others." 1 "Very important," 2 "Rather important" 3 "Not very important," and 4 "Not at all important." • <i>Thrift</i>: "Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important? Please choose up to five. Thrift saving money and things." 0 "Not mentioned" or 1 "Important." • <i>National pride</i>: "How proud are you to be [Nationality]?" 1 "Very proud," 2 "Quite proud," 3 "Not very proud," and 4 "Not at all proud." • <i>Clear moral guidelines</i>: "Here are two statements which people sometimes make when discussing good and evil. Which one comes closest to your own point of view? A. There are absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. These always apply to everyone, whatever the circumstances. B. There can never be absolutely clear guidelines about what is good and evil. What is good and evil depends entirely upon the circumstances at the time." Possible responses include: "Clear guidelines about what is good and evil," "Depends upon circumstances at the time," "Disagree with both," and "Other answer." 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual questions rescaled to range from 1 to 5. 2. Variables for service, national pride, and guidelines for good and evil reverse coded. 3. Index created by taking the mean. 4. Index rescaled to span from 0 to 1. 	
Indulgence versus Restraint^c	0 = restraint 1 = indulgence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Happiness</i>: "Taking all things together, would you say you are very happy, quite happy, not very happy, or not at all happy?" • <i>Life control</i>: "Some people feel they have completely free choice over their lives, while other people feel that what they do has no real effect on what happens to them. Please use this scale where 1 means 'none at all' and 10 means 'a great deal' to indicate how much freedom of choice and control you feel you have over the way your life turns out." • <i>Importance of leisure</i>: "For each of the following, indicate how important it is in your life: very important, rather important, not very important, or not at all important: family, friends, leisure time, politics, work, religion, service to others." 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individual questions rescaled to range from 1 to 5. 2. Index created by taking the mean. 3. Index rescaled to span from 0 to 1. 	

^a Correlation with the Hofstede et al. measure. Significance with $p < 0.05$ indicated by asterisk.

^b Hofstede et al. indicated in their study that the Secular Rational versus Traditional Authority index (*TradRat Index*) found in the WVS correlates with small versus large power distance countries as measured in the IBM study (2010:94). The correlation of the *TradRat Index* with Hofstede's *Power Distance Index* is only 0.1040, but it is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. While the WVS's *TradRat Index* correlates with the *Power Distance Index*, it is conceptually distinct. The *TradRat Index* is based on Weberian notions of authority (Weber 1914), while the *Power Distance Index* captures a respondent's perception of the presence of inequality and their acceptance of inequality. As a result, I selected several variables from the WVS that more closely reflect the concepts behind the *Power Distance Index* and combined them into a modified power distance index.

^c This dimension was constructed using the same questions used by Hofstede et al. As a result, correlations are not provided.

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