Negotiating Belonging: Attitudes Towards Immigrants and Refugees, and Experiences of Displaced Syrians in the U.S.

by

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DEDICATION

to those who do not stop imagining a world without state violence.

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My early experiences with belonging, not belonging, and belonging to more than one place at the same time perhaps came from my family's frequent moves for jobs from city to city. By the time I was a fifth grade, I had lived in four different cities and changed three schools within my native country, Turkey. However, questions about migration, nativism, and home had been more deeply imprinted in my family history than I realized when I was younger. My great grandparents were forced to migrate from Greece to Turkey during the population exchange of the 1920s. A generation later, my grandparents became migrants once more when they went from Turkey to Germany as "guest workers" in the 1960s. My father, after spending his childhood and formative years in Germany, returned to his native land, Turkey but has never stopped asking where he belonged. Years later, when I left "home" to study in the United States, during my visits to Turkey in the summer months, I began to understand why my father sometimes felt like a foreigner in his native country. Writing this dissertation has taught me to appreciate the courageous journeys of those who are forced to leave their homes, those who chose to leave their native lands or come back to it, and those who made new homes along the way.

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I follow a migrant-centered approach in investigating the meso-level e.g., intergroup) and micro-level (e.g., individual) challenges and affordances that influence refugee and immigrant *belonging* in the United States. I situate my analysis in the larger socio-historical context in which migrant communities have been dehumanized by White-supremacist rhetoric and a series of policies that enabled deportations, entry quota restrictions, and travel bans. This dissertation is comprised of three studies, using multiple methods (quantitative and qualitative), and viewpoints of privileged and marginalized members of the society (e.g., American citizens, Syrian refugees). In the first study, I found that when ordinary U.S. citizens viewed Syrian and Mexican immigrants as part of a historical narrative, they felt *affinity* towards the recent waves of immigrants from both groups. Those who perceived contemporary immigrants from these two dehumanized groups as similar to immigrants in the past were more likely to feel warmly towards them; and this affinity towards Syrian and Mexican immigrants predicted voting for Clinton (as opposed to Trump) in the 2016 Presidential Election. The second study had two parts. In the first part, with an online sample, I examined Americans' representations of various immigrant groups (e.g., undocumented, refugee, documented, Mexican, Syrian, Nigerian, German) using an inductive approach to elicit contemporary public discourses about immigrants. I found that refugees were constructed as more *vulnerable* (and less *hardworking)* and more like *drains* on national resources (than *assets* to the nation). In the second part, I examined how consequential these social representations were for granting Syrian refugees legal and institutional rights. This study showed that people who viewed Syrian

refugees as vulnerable and drains were less likely to believe that refugees *deserve to belong*; while those who viewed them as hardworking and assets for the nation were more likely to agree on granting them legal and institutional rights. In the third study, I interviewed with recently resettled Syrian families in order to understand how they negotiate belonging in this new context. I found that the pressure to quickly become self-sufficient deterred refugees from engaging with their ethnically close communities, contributed to isolation, and cycle of poverty. Furthermore, this isolation and fear of stigma was experienced differently based on the family type. Women-headed refugee households were up against double stigma: for not sharing their home with male kin, and for being welfare-dependent. The three studies altogether showed that acceptance of contemporary immigrants and refugees by the American public requires the perception of them as fitting into the historical narrative of American immigration, an appreciation of the migrants' heritage culture, and perception of them as assets and hardworking rather than vulnerable and resource draining. On the other hand, for recently resettled refugees, their sense of belonging in the U.S. depends on the relations with their ethnic relatives and co-nationals in the ethnic enclave, and the expectation to quickly become self-sufficient and economically independent created fractures in these otherwise close-knit communities.

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to belong in America? Who is included and excluded? What must people have in common to belong together? How do citizens and non-citizens give meaning to their experiences? The questions of belonging are intricately linked with intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989/1993; Yuval-Davis, 2007), with different identity groups' struggles for recognition (Taylor, 1992), and different meanings attached to "home" (Ahmed, 1999; Brun & Fábos, 2015). While sense of belonging could be defined in relation to a place, the physical inhabitance of a place is not a precondition to feeling a sense of belonging. One can feel one belongs to a place one is physically distant from, or one can feel lack of belonging to a place one physically inhabits. This is why it is important to understand the questions of belonging intersectionally in relation to the struggles for recognition and the meanings of home.

Sara Ahmed (1999) explains that the idea of home as a fixed place is based in the idealized images of "home as a purified space of belonging" (p. 339) where one feels safe and comfortable and moves with ease. This idealized image of home constructs the opposite of home, being away from home or leaving home, as opening oneself up to "dangers," encountering with "strangers," and/or becoming a stranger. The danger of such narratives of home as a fixed place and the opposite of it as loss of identity and memory, is that they occlude the ability to see the generative possibilities for new identities in the making. Sarah Ahmed borrows the notion of "diasporic space" from Avtar Brah, and offers a definition of home as a diasporic space to enable an understanding of these new possibilities: "home can mean where one usually lives, or it can mean where one's family lives, or it can mean one's native country" (p. 338). For some people

where they usually live is also where their family lives and is also their native country. When the co-existence of these three registers was never broken, the questions of belonging were less likely to be asked. In a way, "leaving home" becomes a critical moment for beginning to ask "Where one's home is" and "Where one belongs." For those for whom the three registers are different and geographically distant from each other, the questions of belonging become more salient.

Under the normative framework of home as a fixed place, or the assumption that one is born, lives and dies in the same place, the idea of citizenship is often thought about in connection to nation-state. However, for migrants, refugees and people of ethnic and racial minorities for whom the questions of belonging are raised more often than for the hegemonic majorities, citizenship is multi-layered and home is multiplex. Nira Yuval-Davis (1999, 2007) developed the notion of "multi-layered citizen." Instead of viewing citizenship as an attachment to the nation-state, Yuval-Davis (2007) explained that people's rights and obligations are multiply shaped by their membership in "local, ethnic, religious, national, regional, transnational and international political communities" in complex ways (p. 562). Some of these political communities are attached to the state, while others are non-state. Regardless, one's citizenship in one layer is affected by citizenship in others. For example, one's experience of womanhood will be different depending on whether one is middle class or working class, from the hegemonic majority or a migrant, young or old, living in the suburbs or the city. In this sense, a refugee woman's sense of belonging in the U.S. will depend on not only the fact of being a non-citizen, but also on being a woman and low-income, and living in an ethnic enclave. In this dissertation, considering these complex and multi-layered ways of attachment, I seek to understand how citizens and non-citizens negotiate migrant and refugee belonging in the United States.

Given that immigration is a multidisciplinary field of research that sociology, demography, anthropology, political science, history, geography and many others participate in, one can ask what the contribution of psychology would be. Social psychologist and immigration researcher Kay Deaux (2006) argues that psychology is uniquely positioned to contribute migrant-centered analyses to the field. Psychologists focus on individual experiences, such as memories and self-definitions or acculturation experiences, which are processes we still need to learn more about. Psychology is also relevant in offering the analysis of meso level processes, such as social interactions between the members of the receiving[1] country and the migrants, intergroup attitudes and behaviors, stereotypes and the social networks of the migrant (Deaux, 2006; Hurtado, Gurin, & Peng, 1994). Both micro and meso level processes could differ across migrant communities and receiving societies, as well as across history. However, unless an interdisciplinary approach is taken, psychologists do not typically study the macro level processes, such as immigration flows and policies, which might limit psychologists' understanding of social, cultural, historical and political forces that shape and are shaped by the migrant[2] experiences (Deaux, 2006). On the other hand, those who study macro level social and political processes and structures, for example political scientists, legal scholars or demographers, have the challenge of losing sight of lived experiences of migrants (Deaux, 2006; Hurtado et al., 1994). Thus, the field of immigration studies could benefit from sociocultural perspectives in psychology (Kirschner & Martin, 2010) that are attentive to the macro context while interpreting meso and micro level data.

[1] 'receiving' society is preferred over 'host' society throughout this dissertation, in order to avoid the implication that migrants are 'guests' and/or that they are passively being "hosted."
[2] I use the term migrant whenever I refer to experiences, perceptions, and feelings of those who are displaced or voluntarily migrated to new contexts; and I use the term immigrant whenever I refer to the receiving majority's perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and stereotypes about those who migrated.

Deaux's (2006) migrant-centered framework adapts Pettigrew's (1997) model of personality and social structures, which suggests examining macro, meso, and micro level forces in relation to each other. Furthermore, Deaux's migrant-centered approach asks us to (1) put the experience of the migrant at the core of one's analyses, (2) evaluate this experience with the acknowledgment that it is shaped by more than one context (*i.e.* the receiving country/culture and the heritage country/culture), and (3) recognize the agency of the migrant within the context of policies and practices that influence and limits their choices. For example, the fluctuating U.S. resettlement quotas during a time when the largest number of people worldwide in the last 70 years were displaced from their home countries (UNHCR, 2019a) influenced the living conditions of many migrants who were resettled, who were waiting to be resettled and who may never be resettled.

Every year the president of the United States consults with the Congress and with refugee admissions agencies, in order to determine the processing priorities for the refugee resettlement and put a cap for the number of refugees to be admitted (U.S. Department of State, 2018). The cap, or the quota, is not always filled; and in that case the number of admitted refugees would be less than the ceiling. Under President Obama's administration, the ceiling for the number of refugees to be admitted to the US in 2016, was 85,000; and 84,994 displaced persons from around the world were admitted (Refugee Processing Center, 2019). Under President Trump's administration, with Executive Order 13769 issued on January 27 of 2017 (and the revoked version, Executive Order 13980 issued on March 16), the ceiling number of refugees to be admitted in 2017 was lowered to 50,000; and the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) was suspended until December 4, 2017 (The White House, 2017a, 2017b). The annual ceiling set for 2020, is 18,000, the lowest level on record since the inception of the U.S. Refugee

Resettlement Program in 1980 (Migration Policy Institute, 2020). Executive Orders 13968 and 13980, titled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry in to the United States," or commonly known as the "Muslim ban" or "travel ban" also prohibited the entry of those whose country does not meet adjudication standards. Syrian refugees were particularly featured as "detrimental" to the interests of the United States in the Executive Orders (The White House, 2017a). As the news reported during this time, hundreds of travelers were detained in the airports or their visas were provisionally revoked (e.g., BBC News, 2017; Shear, Kulish & Feuer, 2017). In addition, hundreds of refugees who had been approved to resettle in the US just before the Executive Orders, had to change plans after, or live with the uncertainty this brought to their lives, and those who had already been resettled experienced fears of being deported. It is important to acknowledge that the implications of these policies might be far beyond their more obviously seen negative consequences. In addition to the fact that the "Muslim ban" negatively affected those who were hoping to resettle in the U.S. right before its enactment, it also might have contributed to deeming those who had already resettled as "unwanted."

In order to integrate the analysis of macro level processes and structural forces into my sociocultural approach, I will draw on "critical bifocality," introduced by Weis and Fine (2012) as an epistemology. Critical bifocality begins with the understanding that the researcher has an ethical responsibility "to make claims about what is designed to be unseen" (p. 177). It is bifocal because it asks researchers to situate the stories of individuals in a "contextual and historic understanding of economic and social formations," (Weis & Fine, 2012, p. 186); and it is critical because it challenges the assumptions about what is given. What does this mean for migrant-centered immigration research? First, it means resisting the tendency to pathologize the individual migrant by challenging the individualistic conceptualizations of depression, loss,

stress, and trauma (e.g., Lykes & Hershberg, 2015; Ornelas & Perreira, 2011). Immigrants and refugees experience mental health problems due to multiple environmental stressors prior to migration, during their resettlement, and post-migration (Esses, Hamilton, & Gaucher, 2017; Ornelas & Perreira, 2011). For example, research links immigrants' experience of adverse economic conditions (e.g., Aguilar-Gaxiola & Gullota, 2008; Nicklett & Burgard, 2009), or political violence and persecution prior to migration (e.g., Fortuna, Porche, & Alegria, 2008), to long-term mental health consequences. During their search for a new place to live, migrants might have been exposed to dangerous conditions due to restrictions in immigration that create stress and/or trauma (e.g., Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002). Finally, in the post-migration stage they continue to be exposed to stressors in the process of adapting to a new country. Anti-immigrant sentiment in the receiving country (e.g., Marrow, 2009), experiences of discrimination (e.g., Finch, Kolody, & Vega, 2000; Greenwood, Adshead, & Jay, 2017), and expectations of co-ethnics for those who settle in dense co-ethnic communities (e.g., Kao, 2004; Menjivar, 2000, Parrado, Flippen, & McQuiston, 2005) are linked to poor mental health outcomes in the post-migration process. Resisting the individualistic notions of mental health means investigating these and other potential environmental stressors, as well as challenging the notions that personal strength and satisfaction can act as "buffers" or can help a person rebound from trauma (e.g., Moane, 2011; Espín, 2015). Often migrants are expected to hide their sadness and grief, which might be perceived as ingratitude by the members of the receiving majority (Ahmed, 2010; Espín, 2015). However, from the perspective of the migrant, immigration is a complex process and often includes a mix of positive and negative feelings. Mourning the losses and grief are most likely to be healthy responses in the process of making a new place home (Espín, 2015; Papadopoulos, 2002). Therefore, a migrant-centered approach has a stake in and an ethical

responsibility to redefine resilience of individuals and communities as shaped by social structural and institutional resources through a lens of social justice (e.g., Grabe, 2012; Grabe, Grose, & Dutt, 2014; McClelland, 2010). In this dissertation, a migrant-centered approach is used to shift the focus from migrants' mental health as an individual process or outcome to the examination of social, political, and institutional processes as shaping complex and contradictory migrant experiences.

In this particular work, in understanding what resilience and empowerment means for individual migrants, displaced persons, and their communities, I benefit from the work of feminist psychologists (Becker, 2005; Riger, 1993) and liberation psychologists (Lykes & Hershberg, 2015; Moane, 2011). For example, Lykes and Hershberg's (2015) participants were Maya in the US who are migrants from Guatemala, but who were also forced to migrate internally within Guatemala before migrating to the US. In their participatory action research, the researchers illustrated how their participants made connections between their multiple migrations and structural forces such as extreme poverty, experiences of violence, and protracted armed conflict. In considering their participants, resilience could only be understood through their ties to their communities and resistance to hegemonic power manifested as the US military involvement in Guatemala, racial profiling experienced in the U.S., and gender violence and labor exploitation they have experienced as life-long migrants.

A final note on the methodology is that *intersectionality* (Crenshaw, 1989/1993) is an important concern to this dissertation in every stage, from asking the research questions to analyses. Following the principles of an intersectional approach to carrying out a psychological study that Cole (2009) clearly articulated, each study in this dissertation has been developed to attend to Cole's questions: (1) who is included? (2) what role does inequality play? (3) what are

the similarities across different groups? The first question about who is included in a given category is particularly important because it helps us arrive at a more nuanced understanding of how experiences are shaped differently by multiple identities even within the same category (Cole, 2009; Deaux & Greenwood, 2013; Stewart & McDermott, 2004). For example, psychological research within refugee studies predominantly focuses on refugee mental health, including depression, loss, trauma, and anxiety. However, recent studies have shown that the prevalence of mental health issues among refugees varies, depending on other demographic characteristics of refugees, such as age, gender, educational level, and social class (Bogic, Njoku, & Priebe, 2015; Esses, et al., 2017; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Steel, et al., 2009; Stuart, Klimidis, & Minas, 1998). For example, Porter and Haslam (2005) showed in a meta-analysis that age is a strong predictor of mental health among over 22,000 refugees, with children and adolescents having the least, and adults over 65 years of age having the most, mental health issues. It is important to understand the reasons for these disparities and to develop age-specific social structural and institutional supports that will help refugees adapt to the changes in their lives. Hollander and colleagues (2011) found in a large study that women refugees fare worse than men in terms of mental health issues, controlling for all other demographic factors. The authors suggested that the potential reasons for this disparity include higher rates of exposure to human rights violations among women before displacement, and social isolation they experience after displacement. This reveals the importance of taking into account the heterogeneity within the category when understanding the experiences of refugees, in order to be able to create appropriate interventions and social change.

The second question, asking what role inequality plays, is as important (Cole, 2009; Stewart & McDermott, 2004). Every individual occupies more than one location vis-à-vis

privilege and marginalization in categories such as race, gender, social class, sexuality, ability, nationality, and religion. Social and material inequities, marginalization, stigma, and privilege are constituted through historical and ongoing power relations within these categories between the dominant and subordinate positions, and are compounded by the multiplicity of the positions one occupies across different categories. In explicating the role of inequality, it is important for social scientists to be attentive to the multiplicity of the social locations individuals occupy. For example, Greenwood, Ashead and Jay (2017) studied migrant women's experience of stress due to acculturation in Ireland by paying attention to the "visibility" of status as a migrant. A visibility marker for immigration in Ireland is skin color. Their study showed that migrant women of color experienced more overt discrimination as compared with White migrant women, and were also excluded from the ordinary privileges due to "visibly" being an immigrant, resulting in more acculturative stress and less life satisfaction for migrant women of color.

Third and last, intersectionality guides researchers to look for and find the similarities between social categories in order to disrupt normative and privileged positions, notions, assumptions and institutions (Cole, 2009; Mahalingam & Rabelo, 2013). Looking for similarities across difference is a "tool for political organizing" that is used by feminist researchers in the social sciences and humanities. Cathy Cohen (1997) is one of the contributors to this political project through her analysis of the similar ways in which the sexualities and intimate relationships of gays, lesbians and single women on welfare were stigmatized. Cohen's (1997) analysis shows how marriage as a heteronormative institution was used as an incentive to get these stigmatized groups in line. One of the first steps in finding shared experiences across groups is to look into the experiences of the groups that research has overlooked. For example, Ussher and colleagues (2017), in their study of the sexual and reproductive health of migrant

women examined the commonalities and differences in how Afghan, Sudanese, South Sudanese, Iraqi, Latina, Somali, Tamil and Punjabi women construct and give meaning to their sexual and reproductive experiences. They found that, for migrant women, feeling shame is associated with discussing menarche, menstruation, premarital sex, and sexuality in the absence of knowledge and communication about these matters. This influences health seeking behavior negatively, increasing the silence and secrecy around these issues. The authors concluded that it is imperative for health services providers and health educators to understand and address the culturally specific and religious frames women use in defining their sexual experiences to better serve these populations. Finding commonalities across groups is an important goal for this dissertation in order to identify the power relations, institutions and ideologies that subordinate certain groups in similar ways.

The aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the interdisciplinary field of migration and refugee studies with three empirical studies using multiple methods that can provide a more complete understanding together than separately. The three empirical studies use various methods, data collection periods, and take into account the interactive nature of the creation of immigration discourses and immigrant social representations as well as the multiplicity of voices in the creation of the two. The first two studies focus on the meso level processes, such as the dominant group's social representations of the subordinate groups and intergroup attitudes. I use quantitative data and analyses in both studies, in order to examine the discourses circulating within the American mainstream shaping the contemporary social, cultural and political atmosphere. I define the American mainstream with the help of Yuval-Davis' (2007) term "hegemonic majority" which includes everyone who is not a migrant, refugee or a member of racial or ethnic minority. Therefore, the American mainstream includes those who have

hegemonic power over communities of color and immigrant communities. Overall, the first two studies allow me to describe and question the contemporary socio-political context to which refugees arrive. The third study focuses on micro level processes by centering the lived experiences of Syrian refugees who recently resettled in the U.S. based on interviews with them. This dissertation, while maintaining a commitment to methodological plurality, was not conceived to be a mixed method design. However, in harmony with qualitative approaches to mixed methods (Hesse-Biber, 2010), the integrated interpretation of the three studies will be driven by the lived experiences of the marginalized with a commitment to understanding and promoting social justice.

The first study's analyses are based on data from an online longitudinal panel study, the collection of which spanned the period from July 2016 to January 2017, after Donald Trump's inauguration speech. This study positions this dissertation in a particular time and larger social context, reminding us that those contexts always matter when we inquire into immigrant and refugee stereotypes, as well as experiences of displaced persons. Dehumanizing political rhetoric in the period leading up the 2016 Presidential election and in the aftermath invoked the question "Who belongs here?" The first study inquires whether and how members of the American public might find *affinity* with Syrian and Mexican immigrants, and whether finding affinity mattered for their choices in the voting booth in the 2016 Presidential election. Affinity in this study is used as a larger framework for receiving society members' feelings of warmth and liking towards dehumanized targets, which could be considered a signal of acceptance and a statement saying "You belong here!" in this context.

In study 2, I focus on a different aspect of acceptance the members of the receiving majority could signal to migrants and refugees. I assess the receiving majority's willingness to

grant refugees legal and institutional rights, and to what kind of refugees they agree to grant belonging legally. Study 2 consists of two phases in data collection and analysis. In the first phase, I delve into the nature of immigrant and refugee social representations by using a novel method to elicit social representations commonly held by members of the majority. Using an intersectional approach, first I aim to find out about the content of social representations about Syrian immigrants and refugees in comparison with other immigrants. Next, I assess whether particular intersections of Syrian refugee demographics (*i.e.* gender, religion, and skill level) matter in their acceptance by the receiving majority. Taking into account the role of perceived demographics, social representations, and acculturation perceptions, the aim of study 2 overall is to examine the receiving society members' perceptions of "Who *deserves* legal belonging?".

In Study 3, I transition from the meso level to the micro level of data, and focus on the meaning making practices of Syrian people who resettled in the State of Michigan in the United States in post 2011. The aim of the third study is to understand how individuals give meaning to their experiences in the resettlement context. In this study I use a combination of inductive and deductive approaches to analyze qualitative interviews in order to understand how refugees negotiate self and identity, navigate the social and institutional structures, and forge a sense of belonging in this new context.

CHAPTER I

Study 1: Creating Affinity with Immigrants: Personal Salience and Perceptions of Historical Continuity

Immigration was one of the hot button issues during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, and continued to be so in the aftermath of the election. Donald Trump drew upon anti-immigrant sentiment in his rhetoric from the beginning of his election campaign. Within a couple of months into his presidency, immigrant communities were negatively affected by the continuing discussion about building a wall along the US-Mexico border, deportations and separation of families, an executive order that introduced a travel ban for seven Muslim countries, and racial profiling laws and attacks on the sanctuary cities at the local level. This rhetoric, and these policies and practices, implied that members of certain groups do not deserve the same human rights and treatment as others. The perception that certain groups or individuals are less human than others forms the basis for justifying their moral exclusion, and denying them freedom and autonomy (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013; Opotow, 1990; Prati, Moscatelli, Pratto & Rubini, 2015).

Against this socio-political backdrop, in this study I aim to understand how members of the American society felt about two of the most deprived immigrant communities and whether these feelings were related to people’s decisions in the voting booth. The goals of the current study are twofold. First is to examine the public’s affinity for Mexican and Syrian immigrants. Second is to examine how consequential affinity with Mexican and Syrian immigrants was for

individuals' reported votes. I define *affinity* as one's feelings of warmth toward a person or a group that one does not necessarily share an identity with. Affinity, as defined here, does notexclude feelings of warmth and liking towards groups one identifies with (e.g., immigrant), but expands liking and warmth beyond the boundaries of the groups one is a member of (e.g., White identified person feels warmly towards Latinx). In this study, I use two potential variables that could be related to finding affinity with immigrants. First is the personal salience of immigration via one's family's recent immigration history. I hypothesize that having immigrants in one's recent family past could make one feel affinity for immigrants, because the stories of immigration and the challenges immigrants face will be familiar to these people and a source of identification or empathy. Second is the belief in the historical continuity of immigration as a "national model" (Alba & Foner, 2015) through perceived similarity between past and present immigrants. National models are deeply entrenched cultural and historical traditions. Underneath the historical continuity of immigration as a "national model" is the idea that the United States has become an advanced nation with immigrant labor and a multicultural epicenter with the diversity of its immigrants. I hypothesize that those who believe immigrants in the past and immigrants today are similar rather than different will be more likely to feel affinity for Mexican and Syrian immigrants. Although these two immigrant groups have different characteristics, both have been among the groups particularly targeted by the current political rhetoric, and negatively affected by the new government policies. In the next section, I will discuss the histories and characteristics of these two target groups of immigrants.

The History and Characteristics of Mexican and Syrian Immigrants in the U.S.

Historically, an opposite pattern of flow is observed between entrants from Mexico and from Syria. More than 16 million Mexican immigrants migrated to the U.S. between 1965 and

2016 (Pew Research Center, 2015), and Mexicans remained the largest immigrant origin group in the United States until 2014 (Zong & Batalova, 2016), even though migration flows from Mexico stopped increasing in 2001 (Gonzalez-Barrera, 2015). Due to this long history of immigration, relatively large number of immigrants, and the proximity of the two countries, the American public has substantial familiarity with Mexican immigrants. At the same time, Mexican immigrants remain a highly stereotyped group (Lapinski, Peltola, Shaw, & Yang, 1997; Cowan, Martinez, & Mendiola, 1997), and representations of them are not always accurate (Kinefuchi & Cruz, 2015). The overwhelming majority of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. are Christian (79%), with 61% Catholic and 18% Protestant (Donoso, 2014).

Syrian immigrants first entered the United States in large numbers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as economic immigrants. This wave of immigration from the area called Greater Syria (including Syria and Lebanon) mostly included Christian single men, who later brought their families if they succeeded in building a life in the United States (Kayyali, 2006). With the restrictions imposed by the 1924 Immigration Act, the number of new entrants from Syria declined until 1965. Between 1965 and 1992, a new influx of Arab immigrants from Greater Syria gained permission for entry (Kayyali, 2006). Since the 1990s, immigration from Arab countries has resulted from the impact of wars in the Middle East, starting with the aftermath of the civil war in Lebanon between 1975-1990, and the Gulf War in Iraq in 1990, followed by invasion of Iraq post 9/11 (Schopmeyer, 2011), and most recently the ongoing war in Syria since 2011. By 2014, the number of Syrian immigrants in the United States approximated 86,000, accounting for only .2 percent of the 42.2 million immigrants in the country (Zong, 2015). Even though the total number of Syrian immigrants is small within the overall immigrant population, the absolute number of Syrian origin entrants was twice as large as

the overall immigrant entrants between 2010 and 2014 (Zong, 2015). According to the State Department's Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS), 20,998 Syrian refugees were resettled in the U.S. from October 2011 to October 2017 (Refugee Processing Center, 2019). However, after 2017, with the recent policy changes these numbers have decreased to their historic low since the creation of U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program. Even though Syrian immigrants historically have been predominantly Christian, nearly all of the recently resettled Syrian refugees are Muslim (20,677 of 20,998) (Refugee Processing Center, 2019).

Past research in psychology measured attitudes towards ethnic and/or racial groups, sometimes with the goal of identifying the commonalities in how prejudice operates across groups that differ in their "cultural distance" to the mainstream of the receiving society (Berry, 1997, p. 23) or vary in status and standing in the receiving society (e.g., Bikmen, 2015, Stephan et. al, 1998, Zou, & Cheryan, 2017), and sometimes with the goal of identifying the differences in how prejudice operates across groups (e.g., Dixon & Rosenbaum, 2004). In this paper, I will be following a combination of these approaches. My goal is to identify the similarities and differences in the way people may find affinity with Mexican and Syrian immigrants who are similar in terms of the way they are dehumanized in the current political rhetoric and treatment, but different in terms of their characteristics such as religious and cultural identities. Recent psychological research has considered the possibility that the perceived "foreignness" of target groups may result in distinct findings for groups, rather than simply replicating the same patterns for every immigrant group (e.g., Mullen, 2001; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Mullen (1991, 2001) suggested an index of foreignness of ethnic groups, which revealed that as groups differ more from the Anglo-Saxon norm, American citizens perceived them with greater negativity. Recent

research has found that people of Asian, Latino, and Arab descent were viewed as more foreign than either Blacks or Whites in the United States (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). In the present research, I investigate affinity for Mexican and Syrian immigrants, two groups that were deemed foreign in previous research, in order to observe differences and commonalities in when Americans feel warmly towards them.

Few previous studies directly compare attitudes towards Syrian and Mexican immigrants in the United States. In one study, researchers measured and compared U.S. citizens' attitudes towards Mexican and Arab immigrants, in particular perceptions of symbolic and realistic threat and levels of prejudice towards these two groups of immigrants right after 9/11 and one year later. Right after 9/11, U.S. citizens reported higher levels of prejudice against Arab immigrants compared to Mexican immigrants, and perceived Arab immigrants as a threat to American culture and values more than Mexican immigrants. This pattern continued to be the same one year after 9/11 (Hitlan, Carillo, Zárate, & Aikman, 2007). On the other hand, Mexican immigrants were perceived as a threat to economic resources more than Arab immigrants after 9/11 and this continued to be the case one year later (Hitlan, et al., 2007). These findings suggest that Arab and Mexican immigrants may be evaluated with different criteria for inclusion in the society due to different associations they evoke. However, in today's political climate in the United States, almost two decades after 9/11, individuals with egalitarian and humanitarian values have met this dehumanizing rhetoric of populist right-wing politicians with heightened sensitivity for human rights violations and increased support for immigrant rights (Citrin & Wright, 2009). Overall, the United States is experiencing a shift in trends towards a warming of attitudes for immigrants (Fussell, 2014). It is possible that people who feel warmly towards one

of these groups will also feel warmly towards the other. Therefore, it is important to understand what underlies affinity by examining attitudes towards more than one group at a time.

Finding Affinity with Immigrants

Most of the social psychological literature is built on an investigation of identity-based liking and disliking towards groups one is a member of or an outsider to. Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorization theory (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987) suggest that members of a group who share a common identity tend to minimize differences amongst themselves and favor their group and the members of the group over other groups and their members. People are drawn to their ingroup cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. For example, individuals recall information about the ways in which ingroup members are similar and out-group members are dissimilar to the self (Wilder, 1981), they remember less positive information about outgroup members (Howard & Rothbart, 1980), and they experience more positive affect toward the ingroup (Otten & Moskowitz, 2000).

Although social identity and self-categorization theories shed light on ingroup processes, they have been criticized for not including attention to the power relations that are in place. They assume that ingroup favoritism defines the experience of all groups, regardless of whether they are low or high status. In contrast, some theorists have noted that systemic power relations make it difficult to argue that the processes of social and self-categorization are identical for marginalized and privileged groups. Apfelbaum (1979), in particular, argued that ingroup favoritism is distributed unequally across a line of privilege. Members of privileged groups, she argued, are the ones who maintain the favorable standing of their group and enjoy their prestigious group status, while attempting to undermine the ingroup cohesion of the marginalized groups. In line with this reasoning, in political rhetoric, the construction of a "dehumanized

other" begins with imagining an "us"—often the nation— that is related to discriminatory and dehumanizing rhetoric, policies and practices for immigrants (Opotow, 1990). The "nation" is described as an imagined community "… because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). Immigrants, as a category, live outside of the imagined national community (Verkuyten, 2018). The outsider status is assigned to the immigrant both legally, by not granting citizenship, and socially, by "not recognizing them as belonging to the same imagined national community" (Verkuyten, 2018, p. 48).

It may be difficult to talk about an ingroup, in the social psychological sense, to which immigrants and longer-term settlers of a country belong together. However, perhaps we can imagine, experience, and theorize more flexible and fluid forms of relating to each other and belonging to state and non-state polities. Although affinity has not been used or measured much in psychology previously, this study gives us an opportunity to capture these non-identity based feelings of closeness, liking, and warmth toward a group or a person. In this socio-political context, affinity for immigrants could mean the first step for their acceptance and inclusion in the society.

Affinity, as a concept, has a longer history in sociology and philosophy than in psychology. "Affinity groups" has been used in the new social movements literature to imagine new possibilities in building social justice. Affinity groups are defined as broad collectivities with looser ties than imposed by strict forms organizational membership, bringing together like-minded people with multiple identities and from various social class backgrounds (Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Day, 2011). Feminist philosopher Donna Haraway theorized affinity as relatedness by choice, rather than by blood (Haraway, 1991). According to Haraway, affinity politics help

envision an alternative to identity politics, politics that are driven by shared social and political concerns rather than static identifications. After originating in this realm, affinity travelled to psychology and political science. Researchers often refer to feelings of warmth towards various groups, measured by feeling thermometers, as affinity (e.g., Abrajano & Lundgren, 2015). For example, a cohort of Black Americans in 1965 felt little warmth towards Latinos, while a cohort of Blacks in 2006 felt more warmly towards Latinos (Abrajano & Lundgren, 2015). The authors concluded that this change in Black Americans' feelings over the course of the four decades have led to "less hostility" and "more affinity" towards Latinos. However, the meaning of affinity has not always been contextualized in these empirical research settings. Does this finding mean that younger generations of Blacks began to see commonalities in the systemic oppression of the two communities? Or, did they start imagining possibilities for solidarity with Latinx communities? It is difficult for empirical research to answer these questions with a single feeling thermometer measurement. Nevertheless, psychology holds the potential to offer explanations to these questions and understand the experiential, attitudinal and emotional components of affinity. Affinity, defined as feelings of warmth in this study, is neither fully cognitive nor fully identity based, although it is possible that people are more likely to feel warmly towards those with whom they share identities or to whom they are drawn. Early unitary models of attitudes (e.g., Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) prioritized cognitive processes, while researchers later have proposed multicomponent attitude models in which affective and cognitive processes depend on each other (e.g., Esses & Dovidio, 2002; Haddock & Zanna, 1999; Zanna & Rempel, 1988). Overall, this body of research suggests that emotions, compared to thoughts and beliefs, are the stronger predictors of majority group members' perceived social distance from minority groups (Stangor, Sullivan, & Ford, 1991), and willingness to engage in contact with them (Esses & Dovidio,

2002). The aim of this study is to examine whether there is an underlying affinity, or emotional warmth, component that drives people's positive attitudes for target groups.

When a government or a certain policy mistreats immigrants and communities of color, this could induce feelings of affinity in people who sympathize with the stories of disenfranchised groups even when they do not belong in the same group or their political ideology is not necessarily progressive (e.g., Branscombe, Doosje, & McGarty, 2002). In a recent study, Australian participants felt prosocial emotions (i.e. guilt, blameworthiness, pity and sympathy) for asylum seekers and this was linked to the Australian government's mistreatment of Afghan asylum seekers during the "Tampa crisis" in 2001 (Abeywickrama et al., 2019). An interesting question that remains to be answered is how the dehumanizing anti-immigrant rhetoric that resurfaced throughout the 2016 election may or may not have elicited feelings of warmth toward immigrants in the U.S., and whether these feelings played a role in voting behavior. Before turning to the vote, I will focus on two distinct antecedents of affinity for these groups of immigrants in the following sections. First, one may find affinity with Mexican and Syrian immigrants due to the personal salience of immigration based on the recent immigration history of one's family. Second, one may find affinity with Mexican and Syrian immigrants based on one's perceptions of the similarity of past and present immigrants as a source of historical continuity.

Personal Salience of Immigration: Recent Family Immigration History. Does knowing that one's recent ancestors (parents or grandparents) were immigrants to the United States help one sympathize with the challenges of immigration and being a foreigner in a new land; and create affinity based on a shared history with new immigrant groups? One of the questions this study seeks to answer is whether one's family's recent immigration history is

associated with warm feelings toward immigrants. Having a recent family immigration history—that is, immigration of family members within two generations of the individual— could help one identify with the category immigrants if one has heard or know the immigration stories of their parents and/or grandparents.

The common ingroup identity model suggests that intergroup bias and conflict can be mitigated by broadening people's understanding of their ingroup (Gaertner et al., 1993; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). For example, Esses and colleagues (2001), in an experimental study, found that when Canadians were primed with the perception that they shared common ancestry with immigrants, their perception of immigrants was more positive. However, this association occurred when the common ancestry was framed as common *national* identity (e.g., "we all are Canadians") or as both *national* and *ethnic* identity (e.g., "we all are Canadians and ethnics of some sort"), but not when it was framed only as a common *ethnic* identity. This indicates that even when common ingroup identity was invoked to create positivity toward immigrants by capitalizing on people's tendency to favor the ingroup, ethnic identities alone were not accepted or seen as convincing, at least by Canadians.

Gaertner and Dovidio (2000) argued that the development or acceptance of a common ingroup identity does not require one to completely forsake the less inclusive group identity, but perhaps to transform the meaning of that identity. In other words, if people feel close to immigrants who are ethnically different from themselves because of their recent family immigration past, it would not necessarily mean that they give up their American national identity. On the contrary, they might think being "American" is not mutually exclusive of "being an immigrant." Because it provides a basis for affinity, I hypothesize that recent family

immigration history will be associated with feeling warmly towards Mexican and Syrian immigrants.

Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants. The image of a country's relationship to immigration (e.g., a place of inward vs. outward migration, a melting pot, assimilationist, multicultural...etc.) shapes people's notions of immigration and their relationship to immigrants, as well as the society's understanding of itself. Alba and Foner (2015) named these public discourses about immigrant integration "national models," and argued that national models can be dynamic and changing, but these changes take a long time, potentially a few generations. From the beginning of its migration history, people of the United States have adopted different national models ranging from a "melting pot" to "multicultural." America as a "nation of immigrants" is one of these models or public discourses and is based on the fact that the United States has historically been a place of inward migration.

In the context of the mid 20th century, the narrative of "nation of immigrants" was devised as a reaction to the immigration quota system established in 1921. This liberal turn towards "cultural pluralism" defined by Handlin (1951), adopted by President Kennedy (1964), and legalized in the Immigration Act of 1965 aimed at putting an end to admitting immigrants according to a hierarchy of racial desirability. While the intended cultural pluralism of the era objectively transformed the ways in which Jews, Italian Americans, Greek Americans and other European Americans gradually participated in the civic and political life over time, the economic, social, political realities of the mid-century America were not set up for the inclusion of Asian and Mexican immigrants in the same way (e.g., Ngai, 2004). However, half a century after its inception, the "nation of immigrants" narrative was invoked again in defense of immigrants of color, and refugees who were facing bans, deportations, detentions and human

rights violations as a result of a series of executive orders President Donald Trump issued. As a result, we witnessed protestors disrupting the nation's biggest international airports such as New York's JFK and Chicago's O'Hare, carrying signs that said, "We are all immigrants," "Refugees are welcome here," and "America is already great," invoking the narrative of America as "a nation of immigrants".

Discontinuity between the past and present of a country can serve as a trigger for increased perceptions of extinction threat and collective anxiety (Jetten & Wohl, 2012). For example, when British citizens were prompted with a story that implicated discontinuity between the people of England in the past and present, they felt collective angst about the future of their country, an outcome that led to support for more restrictive immigration policies. Some scholars have argued that in the United States, the "nation of immigrants" narrative can act as symbolic glue that creates an impression of historical continuity for America's immigrants (Bikmen, 2015). The belief that immigrants today are as hardworking and appreciative of American culture as immigrants in the past may create a basis for affinity with immigrants. In this study, I hypothesize that the more people perceive immigrants in the past to be similar to the current immigrants, the more warmth they will feel toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants.

Predicting Vote

In today's politically polarized American society, attitudes toward immigration and immigrants have been shown to predict political identification and vote. For example, in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, those who perceived immigrants as a security threat (Wright & Esses, 2019), and those who rated immigration as an important issue along with other "individual and national rights issues," voted for Trump (Blankenship, Savaş, Frederick, & Stewart, 2018). Furthermore, those who attached importance to their national identities voted for Trump, at least

in part because they thought immigration, gun rights and religious freedom were important issues in the 2016 election. Other research has demonstrated that when presented with information about the shifting US demographics, White Americans expressed greater racial bias (Craig & Richeson, 2014). Compared with those with lower ethnic identification, Whites with higher levels of ethnic identification perceived the racial shift in American demographics as threatening to their group status, and were more likely to vote for Trump and support anti-immigrant policies (Major, Blodorn, & Blascovich, 2016). Evidence from other Western democracies has also demonstrated that populist right-wing politicians in Belgium, France and Netherlands mobilized collective angst and fear of losing collective identity by contrasting the past and present of their countries in order to garner support for restrictive immigration policies (Mols & Jetten, 2014). In this study, I will examine how U.S. citizens' feelings of warmth towards Syrian and Mexican immigrants at the time of the 2016 election affected their vote, as well as the non-identity based antecedents of their affinity towards these immigrants. Previous studies have found that often when the receiving majority feels sympathetic towards immigrants, they engage in reconciliatory actions to improve immigrants' situation (e.g., Verkuyten, 2004). For example, Dutch participants felt sympathetic towards refugees who were displaced by political conflict. This feeling, in turn, predicted their tendencies to support pro-immigrant policies, such as their access to healthcare and education (Verkuyten, 2004). The 2016 U.S. elections took place during a time of heightened immigration and displacement due to economic crises, wars and conflicts in the Global South (UNHCR, 2019a). The majority of the displaced remained close to home and sought asylum in nearby countries (UNHCR, 2019a). In 2016, as the conflict in Syria continued to worsen, the UN Secretary General called for increased sharing of responsibility globally to alleviate the continued pressure on the poor countries bordering Syria (UNHCR, 2016).

Similarly, the UN identified key priorities to support Mexico in being a destination for the largest number of asylum seekers from Central America (UNHCR, 2020). It was common to hear about human rights and the global refugee crises every day in the media, as well as in Donald Trump's dehumanizing rhetoric about immigrants and refugees. Therefore, during the period leading up the election, people in the United States had either been processing two contradictory kinds of information at the same time, or were exposed to only one of these discourses, depending on their political orientation. Amidst these contrasting rhetorics, one humanist and the other dehumanizing, how warmly did people in the U.S. feel about Mexican and Syrian immigrants, and did how they felt affect how they voted? In examining the link between affinity and vote, I will control for political orientation, as well as demographic characteristics such as race, religion, gender, social class, age, and sexual orientation.

Due to the high importance and relevance of immigration as an issue in the 2016 elections, I expected people's feelings of warmth towards Mexican and Syrian immigrants to predict their vote. In particular, I expected that those who feel more warmly towards these groups would be less likely to vote for Trump, controlling for the participants' demographic characteristics (i.e. race, religion, gender, class, age, sexual orientation) and political orientation.

The Current Study

The goals of the current study are twofold. The first is to examine the roles of recent family immigration history and perceived similarity of past and present immigrants in creating affinity with Syrian and Mexican immigrants. The second is to explain the link between affinity toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants and vote.

Hypothesis 1: Simple Correlations. First, I will test the simple correlations between all the variables. I expect the two warmth measures (toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants) to

correlate with each other due to an underlying general attitude toward immigrants from the Global South. I also expect the warmth levels to correlate with general attitudes toward allowing Syrian refugees to the US and Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy. Specifically, positive attitudes toward Trump's Mexico Policy will be related to less warmth toward Mexican immigrants, and more positive attitudes toward allowing Syrian refugees into the U.S. will be related to more warmth toward Syrian immigrants. In addition, based on the reviewed literature, I expect politically liberal participants to feel more affinity toward both groups, compared to conservative participants, and for those who feel more warmly to be more likely to vote for Clinton.

Hypothesis 2: Predictors of Warmth toward Immigrants. The predictors of warmth toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants at the time of the vote (that is, the actual election) will be tested. The main effects of political orientation, recent family immigration history, and perceived similarity between past and present immigrants on warmth will be examined, controlling for demographic characteristics of the participants. Next, the two-way interactions between political orientation and perceived similarity of the past and present immigrants on warmth will be tested.

Hypothesis 2a. The presence of recent family immigration history will predict warmer feelings towards both immigrant groups (*i.e.* personal salience hypothesis).

Hypothesis 2b. Perceived similarity between the past and present immigrants will predict warmer feelings towards both immigrant groups (*i.e.* historical continuity hypothesis).

Hypothesis 3: The Link between Personal Salience and Vote, Mediated by Warmth. Those participants who have a recent family immigration history will be less likely to vote for Donald Trump. Having a recent family immigration history will help people feel more warmly toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants through personal salience of immigration, which in turn will predict the vote.

Hypothesis 4: The Link between Historical Continuity and Vote, Mediated by Warmth. Those participants who perceive high similarity between the immigrants of the past and today in terms of bringing cultural richness to the US and contributing to the country will feel more warmly toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants. These feelings of warmth in turn will predict their final vote. In particular, those who feel more warmly towards each group of immigrants right after the election will be less likely to vote for Donald Trump.

Method

Data Collection

Data were collected through an online panel study. Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) workers were surveyed four times during the 2016 U.S. Presidential election campaign. Data for this study are drawn from the first, second and third waves of data collection. The first wave (W1) was a few weeks before the Republican and Democratic Party Conventions in July 2016. The second wave (W2) was after the nominees had been decided and shortly before the candidates were given a chance to discuss their goals for the Presidency, in September 2016. The third wave (W3) was a few days after the election of President Donald Trump, in November 2016. Approval of the methods used to collect data for this study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Participants

People who were registered to vote in the United States were eligible to participate in the study. They agreed to take the survey in all four waves and signed an informed consent form. The analyses will include the 390 individuals (50% of those who began it) who continued through the first three waves of the data collection ending right after the election. As a general principle, a lower than 50% attrition rate is expected and viewed favorably in longitudinal

studies for purposes of generalizability (Menard, 2011). Similar studies have reported attrition rates of 21% with three consecutive survey requests; however, the attrition rate went up to 45% with four survey requests (Tortora, 2009). Moreover, online panel studies are reported to have higher attrition rates than surveys conducted on the phone (Tortora, 2009).

I compared the demographic characteristics of those who dropped out between the first and third waves and those who continued through the third wave. The two samples were not significantly different in terms of sexual orientation, social class and religious affiliation. However, older participants (M = 38.71, SD = 10.92) were more likely to continue through the third wave compared to younger ones (M = 33.86, SD = 10.71) ($t(767)=-6.22$, $p < .000$); White participants were more likely to continue through the third wave compared to their non-White counterparts (χ^2 (1, N = 769)= 4.19, $p < .05$); Women were more likely to continue compared to men (χ^2 (1, N = 769)= 8.13, $p < .000$); and liberal participants were more likely to continue compared to conservative participants ($t(767) = -3.42$, $p < .001$). These patterns in attrition are in alignment with earlier studies in which males, younger adults, less educated and non-White participants were more likely to attrite compared to their counterparts (e.g., Tortora, 2009). The demographic characteristics and the analyses reported below are based on the sample that continued through Wave 3. Finally, I compared the attrition rates between people who said they would vote for Trump and those who said they would vote for Clinton when asked in the first Wave. Those who said they would vote for Clinton were more likely to stay in the study than those who said they would vote for Trump (χ^2 = (1, N = 608) = 5.04, $p < .05$). About half of the early Trump supporters (49%) dropped out of the study; just over one-third of the early Clinton supporters (39%) dropped out.

Information about the participants' demographic characteristics was obtained in Wave 1. Slightly more than half (54%) of the sample identified as women, 46% identified as men. The majority (88%) of the sample indicated that they were straight, 12% identified as LGBTQI. Almost one-third of the sample (34%) reported that they were working-class, 24% lower-middle class, 35% middle class, and 7% upper middle class or upper class. The majority of the sample (79%) was White, 10% African-American, 5% Asian-American or Asian Pacific Islander, 4% Hispanic or Latino, 2% Bi-racial, and less than 1% each Native American or Middle-Eastern. Forty-one percent indicated that they were Christian, and 59% were not (Atheist, Agnostic, Jewish, Muslim, other, or none). The age of the participants ranged between 19 and 71, with a mean of 39 and a standard deviation of 11.

Even though MTurk samples are known to be relatively diverse compared to other commonly used convenience-based samples, such as college students, they tend to be younger than the U.S. adult population, more often students and unmarried, less racially diverse, have lower income, are more liberal, and more often vote for Democrats (e.g., Berinsky, Heber & Lenz, 2012). Thus, they are not precisely representative of national adult American demographics, political orientations and voting preferences (e.g., Levay, Freese, & Druckman, 2016). I will control for demographic characteristics (age, gender, race, sexual orientation, class, religion) of the sample in line with Levay and colleagues' (2016) suggestion that this helps approximate the likely findings in population-based studies (e.g., ANES).

Procedure

The data for this study were collected in three waves. Table 1 shows the significant events throughout the election cycle that corresponded to the waves of data collection. The warmth toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants measure was repeated in all waves, demographic

characteristics, recent family immigration history and perceived similarity between past and present immigrants were all measured in the first wave of the data collection.

Table 1. Timeline of the Waves of Data Collection and Corresponding Significant Events of the Election Cycle

Waves	Dates of Data Collection	Events of the Election Cycle
Wave 1	July 4-8, 2016	Before Republican and Democratic Party Conventions
Wave 2	Sep 5-9, 2016	After the Conventions/Before the Debates
Wave 3	Nov 14-18, 2016	After the Vote

Between the First and the Second Wave of data collection, the Democratic and Republican Parties announced their candidates and Donald Trump continued to use dehumanizing rhetoric against immigrants, this time as the presidential candidate of the Republican Party. In particular, during this time Trump had a meeting with the President of Mexico, Peña Nieto. During and after the visit, he publicized the idea of building a wall across the Southern border and insisted that Mexico would pay for it. He also made several statements during his campaign in which he equated Muslim immigrants and Islam with ISIS and accused Syrian refugees of threatening the safety of the people in the United States. Therefore, in the second wave of the data collection, I measured attitudes toward Syrian refugees and attitudes toward Donald Trump's meeting with Peña Nieto. Table 2 summarizes the timeline of all the measures used in this study. More information about each of these measures can be found below.

Table 2. Summary and the Timeline of All the Study Measures

Measures	Waves (W)
Participant Demographics	W1
Recent Family Immigration History	W1
Perceived Similarity of the Past and Present Immigrants	W1
Attitudes toward Allowing Syrian Refugees to the U.S.	W2
Attitudes toward Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy	W2
Warmth toward Syrian Immigrants	W1, W2, W3
Warmth toward Mexican Immigrants	W1, W2, W3

Measures

Demographics. *Gender identity* was asked in a two-step question, designed to be inclusive of all experiences (man, woman, transgender, transsexual, gender non-confirming, or other) (The GenIUSS Group, 2014). A similar strategy was used for *sexual orientation*; individuals were given a two-step question that allowed them to choose from straight, lesbian or gay, or bisexual; or to write in a response (The GenIUSS Group, 2014). As for *race and ethnicity*, the question "What best describes your race or ethnicity?" was asked and the participants were told to check as many as applied from the given options of African-American, Asian/Asian American, Latino/Latina/Hispanic, Native American, Middle Eastern, Caucasian/White, Biracial/Multiracial, and Other (with a box to write in). Participants' current *religious affiliation* was measured by asking "What is your current religious affiliation?" and they were given the options: Catholic, Christian (non-Catholic), Jewish, Mormon, Muslim, Agnostic, Atheist, and none, and a box to write in if none applied. As for *social class*, the question "How would you describe your social class?" was asked and they were given the options working class, lower middle class, middle class, upper middle class, and upper class to choose from. Finally, participants' age was asked, and they were provided a box in which they could write it in.

Political Orientation. The question "How would you describe your overall political views" was asked (The American National Election Study, 2012). The participants could indicate the best descriptor on a continuum from *very conservative* (1) to *very liberal* (7), with *moderate* (4) as the mid-point. The average was 4.94 (*SD* = 1.68) indicating that overall the sample was liberal leaning.

Recent Family Immigration History. The immigration history of their parents and grandparents was asked in order to determine the recent family immigration history. Participants were able to identify individuals who played the parental roles if their biological relatives did not. They were asked to indicate for both parents (if applicable) and for all four grandparents from each parent's side whether they *were born in the U.S., immigrated to the U.S. as a child*, *immigrated to the U.S. as an adult* or *lived in another country their entire lives*. I also gave them the option "*unknown*" to choose for the grandparents' immigration past. By focusing on these two near generations, I ensured that family immigration history (which is ubiquitous in U.S. samples) was recent, and therefore familiar to the individual through relatively directly known family members. These data were collected in Wave 1.

I then created two groups: those who *have no recent family immigration history* and those who *have some recent family immigration history*. Due to the small sample size, I could not differentiate between those whose immigration history started with their parents (n= 39) from those whose immigration history started with their grandparents (n= 75). The group that had recent family immigration history included those who reported that at least one parent or grandparent immigrated to the US at some point in their lives or lived in a country other than the U.S. their entire lives. In this sample, 29% (n = 114) of the participants indicated that they had a recent family immigration history (see Table 3 for the distribution of family immigration history according to participant's race/ethnicity).

Table 3. Family Immigration History According to Participants' Race/Ethnicity

	No immigration history	Immigration history	Total
White	236	74	310
Asian American	0	20	20
Hispanic	3	11	14
African American	32	6	38
Middle Eastern	0	0	0
Native American	2	0	2
Biracial	3	3	6
Total	276	114	390

Among those who indicated they had a recent family immigration history, the majority were White (65%), followed by Asian Americans (18%), and Hispanics (10%). Only a few of the African Americans (5%), and biracial identified participants (3%) indicated they had a recent family immigration history.

Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants. I created a scale with six items to measure the participants' perceptions of similarity between immigrants today and immigrants in the past. This was measured at Wave 1. Participants rated the items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree,* and 7 = *strongly agree*). Three items of the scale emphasized hard work and contributions of immigrants: "Immigrants to the U.S. work very hard in order to make a new life here, just as past immigrants did," "Immigrants bring cultural diversity to America today, as did our ancestors," and "Past immigrants to the US were more hardworking than immigrants today" (reverse scored). I addressed immigrant acculturation with two additional items: "Past immigrants to America were happy to take on American values, which today's immigrants are not," (reverse scored) and "Contemporary immigrants are less willing to embrace our way of life than those who immigrated to America in the past" (reverse scored). Finally, I addressed appreciation with one item: "Like past immigrants, immigrants today appreciate the opportunities they find in the US." The six items hung together well ($\alpha = .92$). This was measured only once in Wave 1.

Affinity. I used a standard feeling thermometer technique to measure warmth toward Mexican immigrants and Syrian immigrants. Feeling thermometers were first introduced in American National Election Study (ANES) in 1964 and have been widely used in ANES and other studies ever since (The American National Election Studies, 2012, 2016). The scale for the

feeling thermometers ranges from zero (coldest) to 100 (warmest), with a neutral point of 50. Respondents indicate how cold or warm they feel towards the presented groups on this scale. The participants were given the following prompt separately for each immigrant group: "*Please rate how cold or warm you feel toward Mexican/Syrian immigrants (0 = coldest feelings, 50 = neutral, 100 = warmest feelings).*"

Feeling thermometers were repeated in all three waves analyzed here. I used the Wave 3 feeling thermometers in order to predict affinity towards the two target groups with variables from Wave 1. In addition, since the feeling thermometer is a single item, in order to test my confidence in its assessment of affinity towards the target groups, I examined the feeling thermometer measure's correlations with some measures of related constructs available at Wave 2 and described next.

Attitudes. Right before the Wave 2 data collection, Donald Trump commented on the Syrian refugees as a security risk and had a meeting with the President of Mexico in which he talked about building a wall. I measured people's attitudes towards these two issues at Wave 2 in order to correlate these measures with the affinity measure to test the hypothesis that dehumanizing actions and rhetoric triggered compassionate responses from the public. The two attitude measures were:

Attitudes toward Allowing Syrian Refugees to the U.S. Attitudes toward Syrian refugees were measured with four items adapted from ANES Pilot Study of 2016 (The American National Election Studies, 2016). Two example items are "Syrian refugees should be allowed to come to the United States," "Syrian refugees should be protected against deportation from the United States." Participants rated these items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The four items showed excellent reliability ($\alpha = .97$). This measure was given in Wave 2.

Attitudes toward Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy. Attitudes toward Donald Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy was measured with three items created for this study. The items were "The meeting between Donald Trump and Mexican President is a positive step toward handling the illegal immigration issue," "If a wall is built across the US-Mexico border, Mexico should be the one to pay for the wall," "Donald Trump has softened his rhetoric and was agreeable during the meeting." Participants rated these items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The three items showed acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .72$). This measure was given in Wave 2.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

For the inspection of potential outliers, I calculated both Mahalanobis Distance (MD) and Cook's Distance for each continuous independent variables of interest (i.e. political orientation, and perceived similarity of past and present immigrants). According to MD statistics, there were no outliers on multiple variables. However, according to Cook's *d* statistics there were two outliers on perceived similarity of past and present immigrants variable (stud. deleted $resid_1 = -3.84$, stud. deleted $resid_2 = 2.45$, $p < .001$; see McClelland, 2000; Cook's $d_1 = .055$, Cook's $d_2 = .034$, see Fox, 1991). First, the two cases were visually inspected. One of the cases was noted to have the constant value of "strongly agree" given as an answer to all the items in the scale (including the reversed items). Next, all the regressions were run with and without these two cases. The inclusion of one of the outliers made a difference in the role of Recent Family Immigration History in predicting Warmth towards Mexican immigrants, but no difference in predicting Warmth toward Syrian immigrants. The outlier that changed the results was deleted and the following analyses excluded that case.

All the reported means and standard deviations were calculated before standardizing and centering the variables; before the creation of the interaction terms.

Hypothesis 1: Simple Correlations

Correlations between Demographics (W1) and Outcome Variables (W3). It is important to note that some of the participant demographics correlated with their attitudes (see Table 4). In particular, women were more likely than men to feel affinity toward both immigrant groups (for Mexicans, $r(387) = .12$, $p \leq .05$; for Syrians, $r(387) = .14$, $p \leq .001$) and to vote for Clinton ($r(387) = -.17$, $p \leq .001$). Those who identified as non-White were more likely than those who identified as White to have a recent family immigration history ($r(387) = .23$, $p \leq .001$); they perceived immigrants in the past and present as similar ($r(387) = .12$, $p \leq .05$), and voted for Clinton ($r(387) = -.25$, $p \leq .001$); however, they did not necessarily feel more affinity toward either of the immigrant groups. Those who identified as non-Christian (either Atheist or a different religion) were more likely than those who identify as Christian to view immigrants in the past and present as similar ($r(387) = .26$, $p \leq .001$), felt more affinity toward Syrian (but not Mexican) immigrants ($r(387) = .15$, $p \leq .001$), and voted for Clinton ($r(387) = -.25$, $p \leq .001$). Younger and liberal participants, compared to older and conservative participants, were more likely to view immigrants in the past and present as similar ($r(387) = -11$, $p \leq .05$; and $r(387) = -.60$, $p \leq .05$, respectively). Finally, liberals were more likely to feel affinity toward both immigrant groups (for Mexicans and Syrians respectively, $r(387) = .32$, $p \leq .001$; $r(387) = .42$, $p \leq .001$) and to vote for Clinton ($r(387) = -.71$, $p \leq .001$), compared to conservatives. Perceived similarity of the past and present immigrants positively correlated with warmth for Mexican and Syrian immigrants ($r(387) = .55$, $p \leq .001$; and $r(387) = .66$, $p \leq .001$, respectively). Finally, final

vote (Trump = 2, Clinton = 1) correlated negatively with perceived similarity of immigrants in the past and present and with warmth measures ($r(387) = -.60$, $p \leq .001$).

Correlations between Warmth Measures across the Waves and between Other Outcome Variables. The reported correlations for warmth measures on Table 5 come from Wave 2. The levels of correlations of warmth at Wave 1 and Wave 2 with all the other variables were very similar to the ones reported in Table 4. At Wave 3, both warmth measures (i.e. warmth toward Mexican immigrants and Syrian immigrants) correlated significantly with each other ($r(387) = .78$, $p \leq .001$) (see Table 4). This was not a concern for the multiple regressions since the two variables were part of two different regressions.

I tested the correlation between warmth toward both groups and general attitudes towards allowing Syrian refugees to the U.S. and Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy measured at the second Wave of the data collection. As predicted, those who felt more warmth toward Mexican immigrants at Wave 2 also had negative attitudes toward Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy ($r(387) = -.35$, $p \leq .001$) (see Table 5). Those who felt more warmth toward Syrian refugees at Wave 2 had positive attitudes toward allowing Syrian refugees to the United States ($r(387) = .74$, $p \leq .001$) (see Table 5). The two warmth measures (i.e. warmth toward Mexican immigrants and Syrian immigrants) also correlated with each other at Wave 2 ($r(387) = .69$, $p \leq .001$), and warmth towards Mexican immigrants at Wave 2 correlated with warmth towards Mexican immigrants at Wave 1 ($r(387) = .79$, $p \leq .001$) and Wave 3 ($r(387) = .82$, $p \leq .001$); and warmth towards Syrian immigrants at Wave 2 correlated with warmth towards Syrian immigrants at Wave 1 ($r(387) = .85$, $p \leq .001$) and Wave 3 ($r(387) = .84$, $p \leq .001$). All of these results gave me confidence that it was reasonable to use Warmth at Wave 3 as a general measure of affinity toward the two groups.

Table 4. Correlations between Independent and Dependent Variables across Waves

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	1.55	.49	__	.18***	.04	.01	.06	.14**	.17***	.00	.03	.12*	.14***	-.17***
2. Sexual Orientation	1.11	.32		__	.08	.15***	-.06	-.15	.18**	-.02	.06	-.01	.02	-.11*
3. Race	1.21	.40			__	-.07	-.04	-.15***	.09	.23***	.12*	.02	.04	-.25***
4. Religion	1.59	.49				__	-.06	-.11*	.32***	.07	.26***	-.03	.15***	-.25***
5. Social Class	2.17	.98					__	.03	-.11*	.04	.05	-.04	-.02	-.02
6. Age	38.75	10.94						__	-.05	-.02	-.12*	.07	.00	.07
7. Political Orientation	4.93	1.68							__	.05	.60***	.32***	.42***	-.7***
8. Recent Family Immigration	1.29	.46								__	.08	.09	.05	-.06
9. Perceived Similarity	4.74	1.47									__	.54***	.65***	-.6***
10. Warmth toward Mexicans	7.21	2.41										__	.78**	-.29***
11. Warmth toward Syrians	6.42	2.84											__	-.45***
12. Final Vote	1.30	.46												__

Note: Gender (1 = Man, 2 = Woman), Sexual Orientation (1 = Straight, 2 = Sexual Minority), Race (1 = White, 2 = Non-White), Religion (1= Christian, 2 = Non-Christian), Social Class (from 1 = Working class to 5 = Upper class), Age (continuous, ranged from 19 to 71), Political Orientation (from 1 = Very conservative to 7 = Very liberal), Recent Family Immigration History (1 = Absent, 2 = Present), Perceived Similarity between Past and Present Immigrants (continuous from 1 = low to 7 = high similarity), Warmth at Wave 3 (continuous from 1 = low to 11 = high), Final vote (1 = Clinton, 2 = Trump). ^{t} $p \leq 0.10$, *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$, $N = 390$

Table 5. Correlations between Warmth and Attitudes Measures at Wave 2

		M	SD	1	2	3	4
1.	Warmth toward Mexican Immigrants (Wave 2)	7.10	2.48	__	-.35***	.70***	.47***
2.	Attitudes toward Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy	3.24	1.36		__	-.49***	-.62***
3.	Warmth toward Syrian Immigrants (Wave 2)	6.10	2.95			__	.74***
4.	Attitudes toward Syrian Allowing Refugees to U.S.	4.33	1.90				__

Note: ^{t} $p \leq 0.10$, *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$, $N = 390$

Hypothesis 2: Predictors of Warmth

Two separate hierarchical regression analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) were conducted in predicting warmth toward each of the two groups right after the election (Wave 3). In each of the regressions, the roles of political orientation, recent family immigration history (*i.e.* personal salience hypothesis), and perceived similarity between past and present immigrants (*i.e.* historical continuity hypothesis) were examined, controlling for age, gender, sexual orientation, religion and class in predicting warmth toward the relevant group (i.e. Mexican and Syrian).

Warmth toward Mexican immigrants. Women, Christian, lower class and older participants felt significantly more warmly toward Mexican immigrants compared to their counterparts (see Table 6). Contrary to expectations, political orientation did not predict warmth toward Mexican immigrants. After controlling for the demographic characteristics of the participants, the *historical continuity hypothesis* was confirmed (see Table 6). In particular, the more similar people perceive immigrants in the past and present to be, the more warmly feelings they had toward Mexican immigrants. The *personal salience hypothesis* was not confirmed, but the recent family immigration history had a marginally significant effect on affinity. There was a trend among those with a recent family immigration history to be more likely to have warm feelings toward Mexican immigrants compared to those who do not have a recent family immigration history. The results of the regression in the final step indicated that all of these variables together explained 37% of the variance (R^2=.37, F(12, 377)=17.92, $p < .001$) in warmth toward Mexican immigrants. In summary, both the *personal salience hypothesis* and the *historical continuity hypothesis* helped explain warmth toward Mexican immigrants right after

the 2016 Election (although the test of the *personal salience hypothesis* did not yield significant results).

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Warmth toward Mexican Immigrants from Demographics, Political Orientation, Recent Family Immigration History and Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	Β	*t*	*p*
Gender	.20	.09	.10*	2.33	.02
Sexual orientation	-.06	.14	-.02	-.44	.66
Race	-.18	.11	-.07ᵗ	-1.61	.11
Religion	-.37	.09	-.18***	-4.10	.00
Social class	-.10	.04	-.10*	-2.38	.02
Age	.01	.00	.10*	2.29	.02
Political Orientation	-.02	.06	-.02	-.36	.72
Recent Family Immigration History	.08	.04	.08ᵗ	1.91	.06
Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants	.60	.05	.61***	11.44	.00
Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants X Political Orientation	-.03	.04	-.03	-.63	.53
Recent Family Immigration History X Political Orientation	-.04	.05	-.04	-.79	.43
Recent Family Immigration History X Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants	.01	.05	.01	.17	.86
	.37***				.00
Total R^2					
N	390				

Note: ᵗ $p \leq 0.10$, *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.00$

Table 7. Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Warmth toward Syrian Immigrants from Demographics, Political Orientation, Recent Family Immigration History and Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants

Predictor	*B*	*SE B*	β	*t*	*p*
Gender	.25	.08	.13***	3.15	.00
Sexual orientation	-.11	.13	-.03	-.83	.41
Race	-.13	.10	-.05	-1.32	.19
Religion	-.06	.08	-.03	-.71	.48
Social class	-.07	.04	-.07^{t}	-1.73	.08
Age	.00	.00	.05	1.20	.23
Political Orientation	.01	.05	.01	.22	.83
Recent Family Immigration History	.01	.04	.01	.24	.81
Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants	.67	.05	.67***	13.63	.00
Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants X Political Orientation	.00	.04	.00	.11	.91
Recent Family Immigration History X Political Orientation	-.03	.05	-.03	-.54	.59
Recent Family Immigration History X Perceived Similarity of Past and Present Immigrants	.07	.05	.06	1.34	.18
Total R^2	.46***				.92
N	390				

Note: ^{t} $p \leq 0.10$, *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.00$

Warmth toward Syrian Immigrants. Women felt warmer toward Syrian immigrants compared to men. There was also a trend for lower class participants to feel more warmly toward Syrian immigrants compared to upper class participants. Contrary to expectations, political orientation did not predict warmth toward Syrian immigrants, and the *personal salience hypothesis* was not supported (see Table 5). On the other hand, the *historical continuity hypothesis* was confirmed. The more similar participants perceived immigrants in the past and present to be, the warmer they felt toward Syrian immigrants. These variables together explained 46% of the variance ($R^2 = .46$, $F(12, 377) = 26.190$, $p < .001$) in warmth toward Syrian immigrants right after the 2016 Election.

Hypothesis 3: The Link between Personal Salience and Final Vote through Warmth

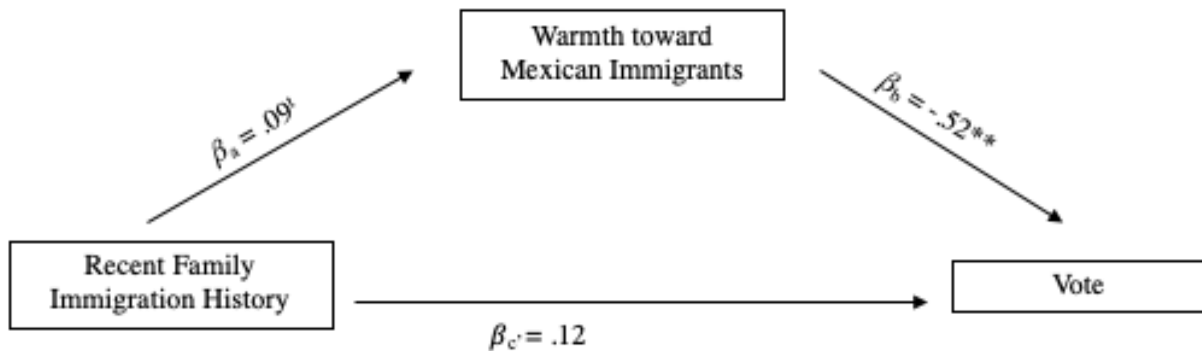
The personal salience hypothesis was partially confirmed in the regressions in predicting warmth toward Mexican immigrants and not toward Syrian immigrants. There was a trend for those who have a recent family immigration history to feel more warmly toward Mexican immigrants compared to those who did not have a family immigration history. Therefore, I only tested the role of Recent Family Immigration History on voting in the model with warmth toward Mexican immigrants and not in the model with warmth through Syrian immigrants.

Using model 4 of the Hayes PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2009; 2013), I tested only one mediation model with Recent Family Immigration History measured at Wave 1 as the independent variable (x), warmth toward Mexican immigrants at Wave 3 as the mediator (m) and voting behavior (Trump vs Clinton) as the dependent variable (y). I tested direct (c') and indirect (ab) effects by producing confidence intervals from 10,000 bootstrap samples for the indirect effects. The analyses had gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, religion and political orientation entered as covariates. Since the dependent variable (vote for Clinton vs. Trump) was

binary for all mediation analyses, the mediation analyses were mixed and used OLS regression for all analyses with continuous dependent variables (e.g., the warmth variable as mediator) and logistic regression for all analyses with vote as the dependent variable. Therefore, I will not report the total effects, but the direct and indirect effects (Iacobucci, 2012; MacKinnon & Cox, 2012). For a visual representation of the mediation analysis see Figure 1.

As can be seen in Figure 1, participants who had a recent family immigration history felt slightly more warmly ($p < .10$) toward Mexican immigrants at the time of the election ($a = .09$), and those who felt warmly toward Mexican immigrants voted significantly more often for Clinton ($b = -.52$). However, the indirect effect ($ab = -.05$) based on 10,000 bootstrap samples was not significant (95% CI [-.14, .00]). In addition, there was no evidence that having a Recent Family Immigration History had a direct influence on voting for Clinton ($c' = .12$ 95% CI [-.25, .50]).

Figure 1. The Effect of Personal Salience on Vote, Mediated by Warmth toward Mexican Immigrants



Note: Indirect Effect = -.05, 95% Confidence Interval (10,000 bootstrapped samples): [-.14, .00]. n = 389. Analysis controls for race (White vs. Non-White), gender (man vs. woman), class (continuous from working class to upper class), religion (Christian vs non-Christian), age (continuous, ranged from 19 to 71), sexual orientation (straight vs. sexual minority), and political orientation (continuous, ranged from conservative to liberal).*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, t < .10.

Hypothesis 4: The Link between Historical Continuity and Final Vote through Warmth

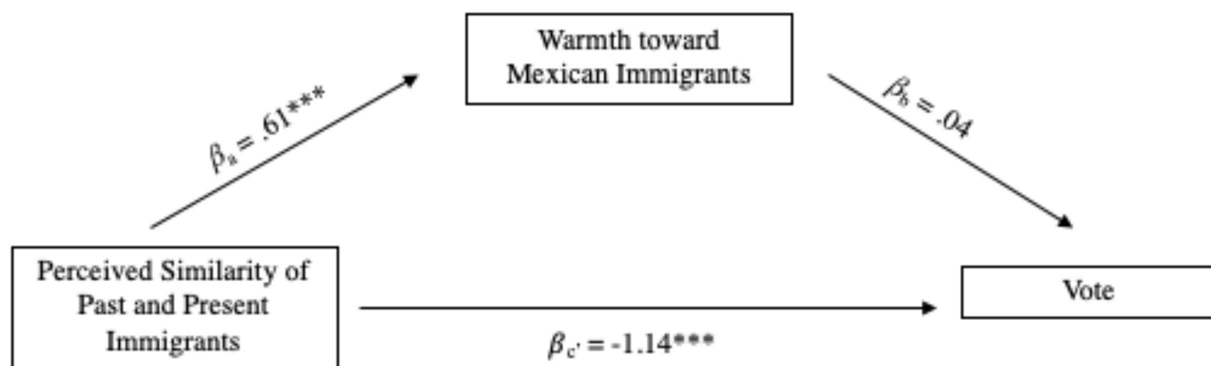
The results of the simple correlations demonstrated that Warmth, Perceived Similarity of Past and Present immigrants, and Final Vote are linked; and the results of the hierarchical regression showed that Perceived Similarity of the Past and Present Immigrants strongly predict Warmth towards Mexican and Syrian immigrants (*i.e. historical continuity hypothesis*). Altogether these results make it meaningful to test hypothesis 4. In hypothesis 4, the prediction was that people who perceived high similarity between immigrants of the past and present would be less likely to vote for Trump; and the warmth they felt toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants would explain this relationship in two separate mediation models.

Accounting for the Link Between Historical Continuity and Vote with Warmth toward Mexican Immigrants. Using model 4 of the Hayes PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2009; 2013), I entered Perceived Similarity of the Past and Present Immigrants measured at Wave 1 as an independent variable (x), warmth toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants at Wave 3 as mediators in two separate models (m), and voting behavior (Trump vs. Clinton) reported at Wave 3 as the dependent variable (y). I tested direct (c') and indirect (ab) effects by producing confidence intervals from 10,000 bootstrap samples for the indirect effects. All the analyses had gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, religion and political orientation entered as covariates. Since the dependent variable (vote for Clinton vs. Trump) was binary for all mediation analyses, the mediation analyses were mixed and used OLS regression for analyses with continuous dependent variables (e.g., the warmth variable as mediators) and logistic regression for all analyses with vote as the dependent variable. Therefore, I will not report the total effects, but the direct and indirect effects (Iacobucci, 2012; MacKinnon & Cox, 2012). For

a visual representation of the mediation analyses for each of the two warmth variables as the mediators, see Figures 4 and 5.

As can be seen in Figure 2, participants who thought immigrants in the past and present are similar felt significantly more warmly toward Mexican immigrants at the time of the Election (*a* = .61), and were significantly more likely to vote for Clinton (*c'* = -1.14, 95% CI [-1.71, -,57]). However, warmth toward Mexican immigrants did not directly relate to voting. The indirect effect (*ab* = .02) based on 10,000 bootstrap samples was not significant (95% CI [-.34, .36]), meaning that warmth toward Mexican immigrants did not explain why those who perceive immigrants in the past and present as similar voted for Clinton.

Figure 2. The Effect of Historical Continuity on Vote, Mediated by the Change in Warmth toward Mexican Immigrants

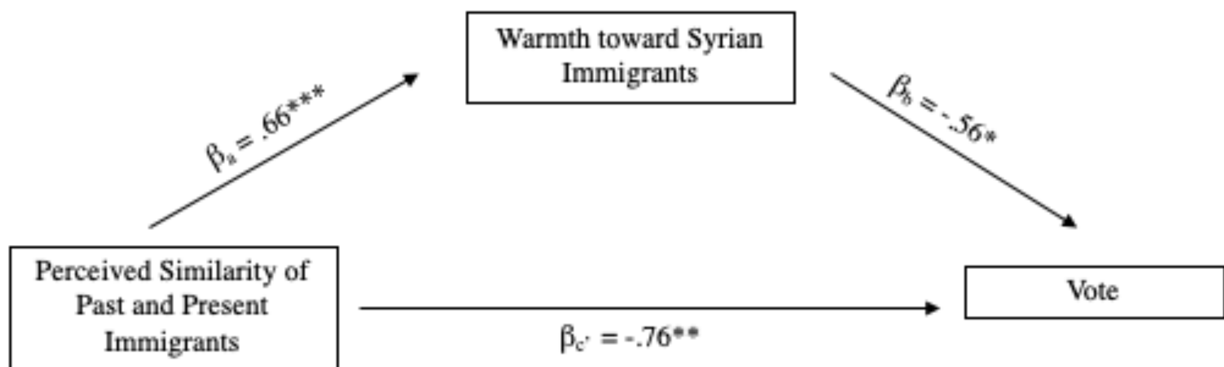


Note: Indirect Effect = .02, 95% Confidence Interval (10,000 bootstrapped samples): [-.34, .36]. n = 389. Analysis controls for race (White vs. Non-White), gender (man vs. woman), class (continuous from working class to upper class), religion (Christian vs non-Christian), age (continuous, ranged from 19 to 71), sexual orientation (straight vs. sexual minority), and political orientation (continuous, ranged from conservative to liberal).*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, t < .10.

Accounting for the Link Between Historical Continuity and Vote with Warmth toward Syrian Immigrants. As can be seen in Figure 3, participants who thought immigrants in the past and present are similar felt significantly more warmly toward Syrian immigrants at the

time of the election (*a* = .67), and those who felt warmth toward Syrian immigrants were significantly more likely to vote for Clinton (*b* = -.57). The indirect effect (*ab* = -.38) based on 10,000 bootstrap samples was significant (95% CI [-.88, -.02]), meaning that warmth toward Syrian immigrants explained the relationship between perceiving immigrants in the past and present as similar and voting for Clinton.

Figure 3. The Effect of Historical Continuity on Vote, Mediated by the Change in Warmth toward Syrian Immigrants



Discussion

A country's *national model* (Alba & Foner, 2015) is almost like a self-understanding of the society that shapes the social reality, intergroup relations, and institutional and policy outcomes. The United States has, throughout its history, adopted different national models from assimilationist to multiculturalist, often holding contradictory models at the same time (Alba & Foner, 2015). However, the citizenship regime in the United States, with its unique birthright policy, made it different from other Western nations, allowing generations of immigrants and their children to claim a part in the national narrative as contributors to the country. The "nation

of immigrants” narrative partly governed the society’s relationship to its past and present immigrants, creating a continuous history in which immigrants have always been included. In the current study, the societal perception of similarity between the past and present immigrants played a large role in explaining affinity for Mexican and Syrian immigrants, and voting patterns in the 2016 Presidential election, in which immigration was a high stakes issue.

Affinity with Mexican and Syrian Immigrants

Research in psychology on attitudes toward immigrants has focused extensively on prejudice and threat. This focus has been warranted by the protracted xenophobia and discrimination towards immigrants in North America and Europe. However, it is also important to understand the predictors of prosocial behavior and emotions towards immigrants, their attitudinal correlates, and their effects on reported behavioral outcomes such as voting (Verkuyten, 2018). Affinity with immigrants, operationally defined here as warmth towards immigrants, is a case in point.

The two warmth measures (i.e. warmth toward Mexican and Syrian immigrants) correlated with each other, and the more conservative participants felt less warmly toward both of these groups. This was expected, given the politically polarizing nature of immigration debate in the U.S. in recent years. On the one hand, right-leaning politicians, media and advocacy groups maintained that immigrants are drains on the national resources, and undermine national unity, or that they are dangerous and criminal. On the other hand, some left-leaning politicians, mass media, and advocacy groups highlighted immigrants’ contributions to the society, the difficulties they face in building a new life, the need to be tolerant, supportive and helpful, and the importance of cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity for the society. In the United States,

Mexican and Syrian immigrants were similarly dehumanized by the right-wing, while on the left there was a general pro-immigrant attitude underlying warmth toward the two groups.

Many researchers have demonstrated that feeling thermometers provide the general direction of respondents' affect toward a specific group (e.g., Green, 1988), and help researchers differentiate how people feel about various groups (e.g., Kalkan et al., 2009). However, feeling thermometers are far from perfect measures, in particular because different people may use the scales differently (e.g., Brady, 1985; Winter & Berinsky, 1999 as cited in Kinder and Winter, 2001); and because it is not clear exactly what they measure (e.g., Green, 1988). In terms of interpersonal comparability, the subjective nature of the interval scale does not let us compare, for example, whether one person's choice of thirty is necessarily same as another person's choice of the same value, as is of course true of all researcher-defined scales (Brady, 1985). In addition, some people tend to rate all groups relatively warmly (Wilcox, Sigelman, & Cook, 1989). Despite these shortcomings, research has demonstrated that feeling thermometers provide useful information as general measures of the direction of respondents' affect toward certain groups (e.g., Green, 1988). In particular, research conducted based on 2004 ANES data found that feeling thermometers were useful in differentiating between how the American public feels about different derogated outgroups (Kalkan, Layman, & Uslaner, 2009). For example, Muslims were rated with lower warmth and were perceived as both racial/religious outsiders and cultural outsiders, compared to other derogated groups that were perceived only as cultural outsiders (e.g., feminists, gay and lesbians, people on welfare), and those that were perceived only as racial/religious outsiders (e.g., Blacks, Jews, Asian Americans, Hispanics) (Kalkan et al., 2009). Other research demonstrated that lower warmth ratings correlated with racial resentment; White Americans who felt less warmth towards Black Americans were less supportive of racial policy

initiatives, such as prohibition of racial discrimination on jobs, federal assistance programs, and quotas for college admissions (Kinder & Winter, 2001). Therefore, feeling thermometers overall are useful measures to assess the direction of people's attitudes towards certain groups; and have been used to predict people's action tendencies (e.g., support for policies). In order to see whether the direction of responses to the feeling thermometers were related to endorsement of the hostile policies proposed by Donald Trump during his campaign, I examined the correlation between warmth toward Mexican immigrants and attitudes toward Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy, and between warmth toward Syrian immigrants and the attitudes toward allowing Syrian refugees into the United States. Right before Wave 2 of data collection, Donald Trump visited the President of Mexico and publicized the discussions about building a wall across the Southern Border. By that time, he also already had spoken to many different media sources about his views on Syrian refugees being a threat to the country. As predicted, those with negative attitudes toward Trump's Mexico Foreign Policy felt more warmly toward Mexican immigrants; and those with positive attitudes toward allowing Syrian refugees to the United States felt more warmly toward Syrian immigrants (see Table 5). Thus for this study use of the warmth measure provided by feeling thermometers is justified.

Personal Salience Hypothesis

In hypothesis 2a (*i.e.* the personal salience hypothesis), I predicted that those with a recent family immigration history would feel more warmly towards both immigrant groups. This hypothesis was partly confirmed. There was a trend for those who had at least one parent or grandparent who was an immigrant to the United States to feel more warmly toward Mexican immigrants, but not toward Syrian immigrants. At the core of this hypothesis was the assumption that people who are familiar with the stories of immigrants and challenges of immigration will

feel more warmly toward both immigrant groups. This was only true for feelings about Mexican immigrants, perhaps because Mexican immigrants are perceived as "typical" immigrants, or as more "integrated" with the United States due to the long history of immigration, the proximity of the borders, and religious identification of most Mexican immigrants. This interpretation is consistent with a finding in other research. People wrote in "Mexican" 59% of the time when asked to list the main immigrant groups in the United States (Lee & Fiske, 2006). However, the claim that Mexican immigrants are perhaps more integrated than Syrian immigrants needs to be empirically tested, since Mexican immigrants have also long been targets of negative attitudes (e.g., Lee & Fiske, 2006; Short & Magãna, 2002). It is important to note that only 4% of the sample was Latino or Hispanic identified when we asked about their race and/or ethnicity; and race/ethnicity was controlled for in this analysis in a binary manner (White vs. non-White, non-White including Latino and Hispanics as well as African, Asian and Middle Eastern Americans).

Previous studies have demonstrated that Arab immigrants (Zou & Cheryan, 2017) and Muslim immigrants (Kalkan et al., 2009) were viewed as cultural outsiders, or foreigners more than other immigrant groups (though not specifically compared with Syrians). Therefore, perhaps it is more difficult even for those who have a recent family immigration history to imagine commonalities with Syrian immigrants based on a shared immigration history. It may be easier for people to imagine commonalities with Mexican immigrants who are perceived as practicing Christianity, as opposed to Syrians who are perceived as practicing Islam.

Personal Salience and Final Vote Link, Mediated by Affinity. Personal salience of immigration, measured by recent family immigration history, did not predict final vote. Perhaps this is not too surprising, given that conservatives and liberals may be relating to their family immigration past differently. Recent family immigration history did not explain why people

voted for Trump (vs. Clinton), but warmth toward Mexican immigrants directly explained the final vote in this model.

I also acknowledge the limitation of the measurement of personal salience. The categorization I used, based on self-report of actual recent family immigration history, could not be conceptualized as "identification" with an immigrant past. In fact, I do not know how much the participants who had an immigrant parent or grandparent actually embraced this past, talked to their ancestors about this past, or saw themselves as part of it. A measure of identification with the recent family immigration past might capture the personal salience of immigration history better.

Historical Continuity Hypothesis

As predicted in hypothesis 2b, perceived similarity of the immigrants in the past and present was associated with warmth toward both groups of immigrants (*i.e.* historical continuity hypothesis). Almost half a century after its development as an idea (though at that time really referring to European immigration), the narrative of "a nation of immigrants" is invoked in today's political activism and advocacy, the most recent example being in the banners of airport activists against Trump's "Muslim ban." Thus, drawing parallels between contemporary and past immigrants might be an important source of affinity with immigrants for Americans, based on the creation of a shared history. Those who believe immigrants in the past and today are hardworking, appreciative of American culture, and bring cultural richness, may be less likely to think that immigrants disrupt a continuous national history, and more likely to think that they are the constituents of the nation (Jetten & Wohl, 2012). This finding suggests that the perception of inward migration as natural and present in the past and today of the country, and the perception

of immigrants in the past and today alike plays a role in citizens' positive affect toward contemporary immigrants.

Historical Continuity and Final Vote Link, Mediated by Affinity. Perceived similarity of immigrants in the past and present (historical continuity) was linked to the vote, such that those who thought immigrants in the past and today were similar were less likely to vote for Donald Trump. Furthermore, this relationship was explained by warmth toward Syrian immigrants. These results demonstrate that Donald Trump's dehumanizing and anti-immigrant rhetoric, particularly in the case of Syrian refugees, his rhetoric deeming refugees as terrorists, might have mobilized the voters to take action and vote against him. Those who believed recent Syrian immigrants (and maybe refugees) are likely to be as hardworking and contributing as immigrants in the past were less likely to vote for Trump, partly because they felt warmly toward Syrian immigrants (and refugees). Similarly, those who believed recent Mexican immigrants (and maybe asylum seekers) are likely to be as hardworking and contributing as immigrants in the past were less likely to vote for Trump. Unlike warmth toward Syrian immigrants, warmth toward Mexican immigrants did not explain the link between perceived similarity of past and present immigrants and vote, nor was it directly associated with vote when historical continuity was included in the model. This could be due to the strong association between those who perceive immigrants in the past and present as similar and those who feel warmly toward Mexican immigrants. Perhaps because Mexican immigrants were perceived to be more typical of the immigrants in the country from the past until this day, historical continuity was strongly correlated with warmth toward Mexican immigrants. The perception of historical continuity then explained the final vote, leaving too little variance to be explained by warmth toward Mexican immigrants.

Limitations of the Study

MTurk samples like the one used in this study are known to be younger, single, and students, have lower incomes, be less racially and ethnically diverse, and left-leaning than the US population (e.g., Levay, Freese, & Druckman, 2016). In order to overcome this limitation and approximate the likely findings in population-based studies, I controlled for six demographic variables (*i.e.* age, gender, race, religion, class, and sexual orientation), as well as political orientation of the participants.

Another limitation, as mentioned under the discussion of personal salience, is that the measure of family immigration history may not be the best way of capturing the psychological aspect of salience. Self-categorization and social identity theories suggest that identifying oneself as a member of a category is an important aspect of belonging to that group (Ashmore, Deaux, & MacLaughlin, Volpe, 2004). Therefore, the objective information about one's recent family's immigration past does not necessarily tell us whether the person knows and cherishes the memories of that past and thinks of it as a salient aspect of their personal history.

Contributions of the Study

National models (Alba & Foner, 2015) shape people's relationship to immigration and immigrants. Research in the psychology of immigration needs to consider these public discourses and historical patterns, particularly in understanding people's attitudes toward immigration and immigrants. One of the strengths of this study is that I considered one of the historical patterns—that is, that the United States has always been a country in which immigration is a constituent narrative about itself. In fact, the perceived similarity of past and contemporary immigrants strongly predicted affinity towards both groups of immigrants right after the 2016 election.

The simple correlations demonstrated that those who are younger, more liberal, racial and ethnic minority, and non-Christian were more likely to perceive immigrants in the past and present as similar, compared to their counterparts. Perhaps there is a growing trend among some segments of the society in terms of (re)claiming the historical continuity of immigrants' contributions to the nation; and this is linked with feeling affinity with immigrants, which in turn is linked with unpopularity of anti-immigrant politicians and their rhetoric.

An important contribution of this study is the identification of different components of affinity for the two different groups of immigrants. While perceived similarity of the past and present immigrants was linked with affinity for both Mexican and Syrian immigrants, recent family immigration history was linked with affinity only for Mexican immigrants (as a trend). This trend requires further investigation for different groups of immigrants. It may be important to assess whether those who have a recent family immigration history are able to generalize and feel affinity toward groups that have a different background than their own racial and ethnic backgrounds?

Implications for Future Research and Policy

Awareness of similarity is at the crux of interpersonal understanding and attraction (Bryne, 1961), positive relations within a group context (e.g., Otten & Moskowitz, 2000), and mobilization for collective action and social change in an intergroup context (Greenwood & Christian, 2008). In this study, I captured similarity from two different perspectives: one's own similarity to immigrants through recent family immigration history, and the similarity between the immigrants in the past and present. The former considered the personal salience of immigration in one's family history. The latter considered similarity of immigrant qualities in the history of the country, or historical continuity. Of the two, perception of similarity between

immigrants in the past and today more consistently predicted affinity with immigrants from these two countries. This finding is in line with the previous literature (e.g., Bikmen, 2015), as well as the socio-political phenomenon observed after Trump's presidency in the voicing of dissent against anti-immigrant policies. These findings tell us that emphasizing the contributions of immigrants in the past and today might support more positive attitudes toward immigrants; and may influence the voters' choices.

In Study 1, I examined two potential antecedents of affinity with immigrants, and how finding affinity with immigrants is linked with voters' choices. The differences in the findings with regard to Mexican and Syrian immigrants tells us that, even though both groups have been the target of harmful rhetoric and actions. The American public has different ways of connecting to each group. Thus, it is crucial to understand further what kind of social representations people have of each group and of other immigrant groups. In Study 2a, I examine people's social representations of various immigrant groups, and in Study 2b I examine how consequential these social representations are for people's attitudes about their acceptance of immigrant and refugee belonging in the United States.

CHAPTER II

Study 2a: Representations of Syrian Refugees

As increasing numbers of people have been displaced since the beginning of the political unrest in Syria in 2011, at least four different popular images of refugees have dominated the Western media: (1) the lazy con-artist "invading" or "flooding" the Western countries to take advantage of the lax refugee admissions systems and relying on tax-payers' money (e.g., Glowacki, 2017), (2) the dangerous criminal or potential terrorist who is threatening the well-being of people and Western civilization (e.g., Jacobs, 2016), (3) the poor, fragile, desperate victims particularly made popular with the image of three-year old Alan Shenu's[3] dead body on the shores of the Mediterranean (e.g., Moyer, 2015; Mortimer, 2016), and (4) the resilient, talented refugee, emphasized by bringing the stories of, for example, successful Syrian athletes during 2016 Olympics to the mainstream media (*e.g.,* Blair, 2016; Olympic News, 2016). This list of different depictions of Syrian refugees is not exhaustive. However, what is clear is that the language of "Syrian refugee crisis" that goes along with these images render some of the actual migrant identities, beliefs and desires invisible, while making other agendas hypervisible. In fact, it is paradoxical that in many Western countries internal security concerns were invoked more often than human rights issues associated with the displacement of Syrian people (Evans & Bauman, 2016). The discourse of "Syrian refugee crisis" often blurs whether the "crisis" aims to

[3] The media widely misidentified the boy as Aylan Kurdi, a name given by the Turkish authorities after the dead body was found. They preferred to mark his ethnicity by referring to him as Kurdi, the Kurd. His first name, Alan, meaning flag-bearer, perhaps, 'not liked' by the Turkish authorities due to the insinuation of the child's now vanished future role in protecting the cause of Kurdish community, and they replaced it with Aylan which is only phonetically close and otherwise means 'open area' in Turkish. Slovic and colleagues (2016) discussed the affective economy created around displacement of Syrian people by the circulation of Alan Shenu's photograph.

describe what the displaced persons are experiencing or the Western countries' fear of being "overcrowded" by refugees and having a "decrease in the quality of life" along with "terrorist threat," as Donald Trump has suggested (e.g., Jacobs, 2016). On the other hand, the repeated use of the words "Syrian" and "refugee" and "crisis" in the same phrase might have led to the conflation of these terms. In other words, Syrian became almost synonymous with refugee in the public discourse, which inevitably reduces a heterogeneous group of people to a one-dimensional category; moreover, with the attachment of "crisis" to it, certain affective responses are enabled and attributed to a people. The aim of this study is to examine U.S. citizens' social representations of displaced Syrian people with a bottom-up approach. I will, then, use these inductively-identified social representations developed in Study 2a to understand Americans' attitudes towards refugee belonging in the United States in Study 2b.

The four different depictions of refugees I described above may not be the only ones that are circulating, but may be the most frequently and commonly presented in contemporary public discussions. The goal of this study is neither to explicate how many different media depictions of Syrian refugees there are, nor to systematically examine the relationship between media depictions and the public's reactions. However, one aim of this study is to capture the heterogeneity of discourses reflected in the content of social representations about Syrian refugees. Most social psychological assessments of social representations, schemas or stereotypes use itemized questionnaires, or semantic differentials that researchers construct based on the previous literature.

Early Psychological Study of Migrant/Refugee Representations

Katz and Braly's (1933) classical work is the earliest examples of research on stereotype content using adjective lists. Later researchers identified multiple dimensions of stereotype

content based on itemized questionnaires, dimensions reflecting not only traits but also physical characteristics and behaviors of the group being assessed (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Madon, 1997; Niemann et al., 1994). More recently, Fiske and colleagues (2002), using a checklist method, proposed the Stereotype Content Model which includes warmth and competence of the group being assessed as the two fundamental dimensions. Studies that made use of pre-defined adjective lists have contributed to the literature by introducing the ability to make comparisons across different respondents and groups, as well as giving researchers the opportunity to assess particular dimensions of social representations. However, using researcher-defined lists and items raises questions of ecological validity of immigrant social representations, particularly in a time when the social constructions of race, ethnicity, and nationality are dynamic and fast-changing, depending on international relations, foreign policy, domestic immigration policies, circulating discourses.

Inductive Examination of Migrant/Refugee Representations

One way of examining how different groups of immigrants are socially constructed and stereotyped is to simply ask people about their associations regarding different immigrant groups. This can help create a participant-generated pool of concepts that captures those elements of current discursive constructions about immigrants that in fact are part of individuals' associations, as well as those associations that may not be openly discussed in public. This also eliminates the problem of overrepresentation or hypervisibility of certain representations in research. However, one challenge of this kind of project is developing a method to analyze the resulting vast set of idiographic participant-generated data in order to study patterns across individuals.

Chung and Pennebaker (2008) introduced the *meaning extraction method* for personality and social psychologists who are interested in understanding how research participants talk and/or write about the self and others in everyday language, without imposing pre-defined lists of words. The Meaning Extraction Method relies on the understanding that language is a vehicle for understanding people's thoughts, values, emotions and deep-seated motives, and it has been used to extract information about personalities, individual differences, social processes, and mental health (Boyd, 2017). In attitude research, it has been used to study views regarding alcohol (Lowe et al., 2013) as well as vaccination (Mitra, Counts, & Pennebaker, 2016). The meaning extraction method helps manage idiosyncratic free descriptions generated by participants, by combining the strength of participant-generated data with the statistical rigor of factor analysis. The goal is to come up with easily communicable clusters of co-occurring features that are commonly used in the participants' accounts.

In this study, I adopt the Meaning Extraction Method as an inductive approach to examining the content of social representations about Syrian immigrants in relation to other immigrant identities. Using intersectionality as a critical lens (Cole, 2009), I am particularly interested in understanding how the category of "Syrian immigrants" is similar to, different from, and dependent on, other categories for meaning, such as nation and ethnicity (*i.e.* Arab, Syrian, Canadian, Mexican), religion (*i.e.* Muslim, Christian), gender (*i.e.* male, female), family status (*i.e.* parent, child), and legal definitions (*i.e.* immigrant, refugee, documented, undocumented). In particular, I examine (1) where the Syrian immigrants stand among other immigrant groups, based on the categories mentioned, in how they are stereotyped, (2) the content of social representations regarding Syrian immigrants, (3) how similarly or differently from refugees and

immigrants people view Syrian immigrants. Overall, I hope to better understand the complexity and the ambivalence included in the four prevalent images that were discussed earlier.

Method

Data Collection

The survey was distributed online to MTurk workers who reside in the United States by a collaborative research group including researchers in Michigan (me, Benjamin Blankenship and Abigail Stewart), New York (Kay Deaux) and Ireland (Ronni Greenwood) in January 2017. (A subsequent survey, not included in this dissertation, was distributed in Ireland.) The survey included questions about 30 immigrant categories selected based on differences in nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, skill levels, legal status, age, and parental status. Identical survey questions were asked regarding each immigrant category. Each participant was presented with a randomly selected set of 13 different immigrant groups out of 30 and was asked to describe each immigrant group. Each group was described by 20 participants, though participants described different arrays of 13 groups. A separate survey for the uninflected "immigrant" category was presented to a separate group of 20 people who had not seen the inflected immigrant group names. In total, data were generated for 31 different immigrant groups (including the uninflected "immigrant" category) from the participants. Approval for this study was obtained from the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board (IRB), and from the University of Limerick IRB.

Participants

Ninety-two participants responded to the survey. Some immigrant categories were assessed by more participants than others due to the randomization procedure in this online survey. In order to ensure an equal number of responses for each immigrant category, 20

participants were randomly selected to represent each group, utilizing all 92 cases. It is important to note that even though the participant characteristics are reported for this sample, the unit of analysis for this study is the immigrant categories, not the individual participants.

Slightly more than half (57%) of the sample identified as men, 43% identified as women; only one individual did not indicate their gender. The majority (92%) of the sample indicated that they were straight, 3% identified as gay or lesbian, 2% identified as bisexual, and 2% identified as asexual. More than one-third of the sample (39%) reported that they were middle class, followed by working class (28%), lower-middle class (26%), and 8% upper middle class or upper class. Almost half (46%) had a Bachelor's Degree, and 36% had some college education; 12% had a high school diploma; and only 3 % had a professional or doctoral degree. The age of the participants ranged between 18 and 68, (M = 36, SD = 11). The majority of the sample (81%) was White, 7% is Asian-American or Asian Pacific Islander, 6% each were Hispanic/Latino and Black, and 1% were Middle-Eastern; two participants did not report their race or ethnicity. The mean reported religiosity (1 = not at all religious, 7 = very religious) was 2.4 (SD = 2), with 56% giving a "1" rating; and the mean reported political orientation (1= conservative, 7 = progressive) was 3.9 (SD = .78)

Measures

Social Representations of Different Immigrant Groups

Participants were presented with the group name (e.g., Syrian immigrant); and were asked to generate 4 or 5 attributes for this group. In order to elicit social representations of different immigrant groups that are circulating in the everyday public discourse, the prompt below was repeated 31 times with every different group name:

> The United States, like many other countries in the world, is receiving many immigrants. Not all immigrants are the same however, as they come from different countries, have different appearances, ages, skill sets, etc. We would like to know what your view is of some of the specific kinds of immigrants that come to the US. Please list all the traits, characteristics, and attributes that come to mind when you think of the following immigrant group. Try to list no fewer than 4 or 5 traits, characteristics, and/or attributes for this group. Remember we are not interested in your personal beliefs, but in how you think they are viewed by others. There are no right or wrong answers.

The participants were then provided with six small text boxes per category so they could type in their short answers regarding each category.

Data Analyses

Meaning Extraction Method

The Meaning Extraction Method (MEM) was used to analyze the open-ended attributes collected from the participants. MEH (the Meaning Extraction Helper) is a computerized text analytic tool, that first captures the terms people use to think about themselves or others, in this case about immigrants (Chung & Pennebaker, 2008); and then assesses the terms' co-occurrence across different categories. Since this dataset included idiosyncratic words that were difficult to code in a meaningful way, count, or generalize across categories, the MEH was used to tabulate the most common words generated by the participants across all categories. Any word that was generated by five or fewer than five respondents was not included in the analyses. There were 310 words (attributes, traits, etc., excluding function words like pronouns, prepositions… etc.),

each generated by more than five respondents. MEH produced a matrix of the 310 terms across one axis and each immigrant category on the other axis. The matrix contained 1's and 0's to indicate whether each term was generated at least once (1) or not even once (0) to describe each immigrant category. This matrix provided the raw data for computation of a factor analysis identifying which terms clustered together across categories.

Results

Factor Analysis

To perform an exploratory factor analysis, a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) extraction method with varimax rotation is used (Osborne & Costello, 2009). All factor solutions from 5-10-factors were examined in order to identify the one that would make the best theoretical sense. All five of the research group collaborators reviewed and discussed all of the solutions and agreed that the five-factor solution offered the most parsimonious and theoretically interpretable factor structure. Terms that were synonyms or near-synonym for any given immigrant category (e.g., "speaks English" for "English-speaking immigrants" category), and terms that describe the national, religious, ethnic, racial origins rather than traits for immigrant categories were excluded from calculation of factors (e.g., "White" for "British immigrants"). Items were included in the factor calculations if they had loadings of .40 or above on one factor and did not cross-load onto any other factor. Terms with negative loadings were subtracted in calculating scale scores. Table 8 shows the total variance explained by each factor and Table 9 shows the factor loadings of each item.

Table 8. Total Variance Explained

	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings
Component	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	25.49	8.22	8.22	25.49	8.22	8.22	20.50
2	17.99	5.80	14.02	17.99	5.80	14.03	19.97

3	16.37	5.28	19.31	16.37	5.28	19.31	17.11
4	15.16	4.89	24.20	15.16	4.89	24.20	16.96
5	14.59	4.70	28.90	14.59	4.71	28.90	15.06

The first factor, which we labeled Vulnerable vs. Hardworking, included the descriptions *fearful, fragile, needy, desperate, scared, sad, weak, and humble* loading positively; and *hardworking* loading negatively. To confirm that these descriptions reflected an underlying construct, we ran a confirmatory reliability analysis which yielded an alpha of .85 for the scale composed of these items, indicating excellent reliability.

The second factor, labeled as National Drain versus National Asset included the terms *lowerclass, criminal, not wanted, welfare seeker, dumb, poor, ignorant, lazy, annoying, unskilled, illegal, dangerous, untrustworthy,* and *has kids* loaded positively; and *educated, funny, similar, smart, assimilates,* and *skilled* loaded negatively. To confirm that these descriptions reflected an underlying construct, we ran a confirmatory reliability analysis which yielded an alpha of .86 for the scale composed of these items, indicating excellent reliability.

The third factor, labeled as Worthy, included the descriptions *safe, outgoing, devoted, excited, faithful, moral, creative, kind,* and *religious,* all (negatively) loaded on this factor. To confirm that these terms reflected an underlying construct, we ran a confirmatory reliability analysis which yielded an alpha of .72 for the scale composed of these items, indicating good reliability.

The fourth factor was bipolar; we labeled the poles Individually versus Socially Competent. It included the terms *able, capable, different, loud, masculine, strict, mean,* and *darkhair* with positive loadings; and the terms *eager, reliable, helpful, bilingual,* and *compassionate* with negative loadings. To confirm that these terms reflected an underlying

construct, we ran a confirmatory reliability analysis which yielded an alpha of .78 for the scale composed of these items, indicating very good reliability.

The fifth and final factor, labeled as Sociable, included the terms *accented, family-oriented, curious, giving, interested,* and *alcohol-drinker,* loaded positively; and *selfish* loaded negatively. To confirm that these descriptions reflect an underlying construct, we ran a confirmatory reliability analysis which yielded an alpha of .65 for the factor, indicating good reliability.

Table 9. Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation

Factor 1: vulnerable vs. hardworking		Factor 2: national drain vs. asset		Factor 3: worthy		Factor 4: individually vs. communally competent		Factor 5: warm and sociable	
terms	loadings	terms	loadings	terms	loadings	terms	loadings	terms	loadings
fearful	.83	lower class	.71	safe	-.62	eager	-.57	accented	.62
fragile	.76	educated	-.64	outgoing	-.56	reliable	-.55	family (-oriented)	.50
needy	.75	criminal	.61	devoted	-.52	helpful	-.54	curious	.47
desperate	.70	funny	-.56	excited	-.52	able	.53	giving	.44
scared	.68	not wanted	.54	faithful	-.49	capable	.52	selfish	-.42
sad	.65	welfare seeker	.54	moral	-.49	bilingual	-.48	interest(ed)	.40
weak	.65	similar	-.50	creative	-.45	different	.44	alcohol drinker	.40
humble	.58	dumb	.48	kind	-.43	loud	.44		
hardworking	-.43	poor	.47	religious	-.41	masculine	.43		
		ignorant	.45			strict	.43		
		lazy	.45			mean	.42		
		annoying	.44			compassionate	-.41		
		unskilled	.43			dark hair	.40		
		smart	-.43						
		illegal	.42						
		assimilates	-.42						
		skilled	-.42						
		dangerous	.42						
		untrustworthy	.42						
		has kids	.41						

Notes: Terms are included in this table if their frequency was above 5 and they loaded on a factor by .40 or above. Terms loading on more than one factor are not included in this table and in the factor calculations. Words with minus signs (negative loadings) were subtracted in calculating factor scores. Some participants provided national, religious, racial or ethnic markers that defined groups or categories rather than traits for some categories of immigrants. Terms that were synonyms or near-synonyms for any given immigrant category were excluded from calculation of factors. More generally, terms that were not a trait, characteristic, or attribute were excluded from the factor structure.

The position of Syrian immigrants in relation to other legally defined categories

In order to examine where Syrian immigrants are positioned among other immigrant groups, I created graphs that represent the profiles of each immigrant group in question, based on the factor scales that are a result of our bottom-up approach. In creating these profiles, standardized scores were assessed with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation (SD) of 10. Since each immigrant category was rated by a small number of individuals, my analyses will rely on visual inspection of the scores and I adopt 1 standard deviation (10 standard scores) as a criterion for noting differences. I will describe the patterns of scores within and across categories.

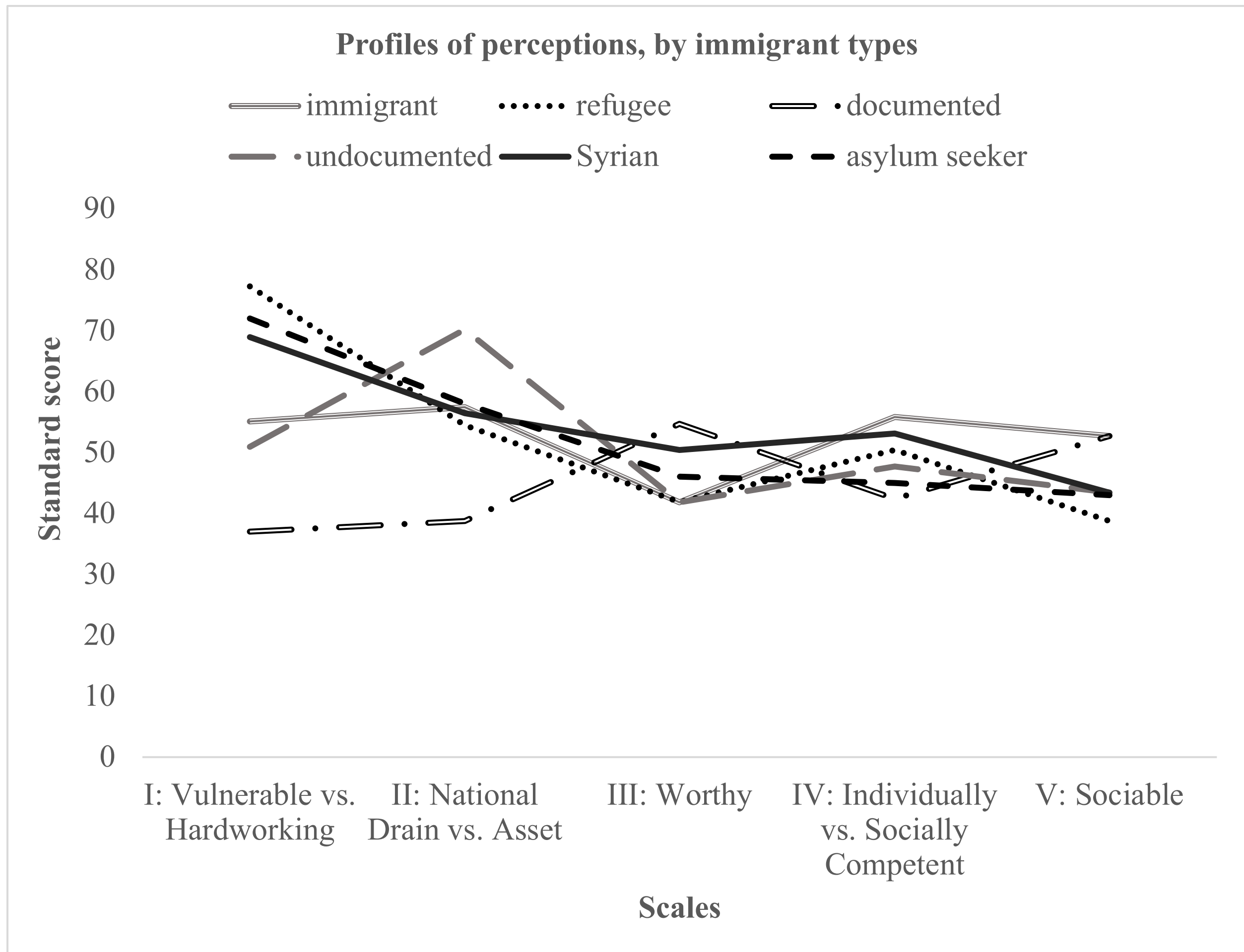
For the first set of comparisons, I examined where Syrian immigrants fell in relation to terms such as "immigrant," "refugee," "undocumented immigrant," and "documented immigrant." As can be seen in Figure 1, the profiles of the descriptions of Syrian immigrants on the five factors are closest to refugees and asylum seekers. Following our method of taking a standard score of 10 as a criterion of difference, it appears that the participants do not view refugees and asylum seekers as different; they view Syrian immigrants as similar to refugees on all five of the characteristics that resulted from our bottom-up approach, confirming the notion that these categories are conflated in Americans' representations.

The most distinctive characteristic of Syrian immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers that differentiated them from other groups was vulnerability. On the Vulnerable vs. Hardworking dimension, Syrian immigrants ($M = 69$), asylum seekers ($M = 72$), and refugees ($M = 77$) scored highest among all other groups in vulnerability; and their scores did not appear to be different from each other (they are less than 1 SD apart from each other). All three were also above the mean, though not particularly high (less than one standard deviation from the mean of all

immigrant groups) on being a national drain rather than an asset, and were not different from each other (M_{syrian} = 56, $M_{asylum\ seeker}$ = 58, $M_{refugee}$ = 54).

In contrast, the participants viewed documented and undocumented immigrants as different from each other on all five scales. Refugees and undocumented immigrants had exactly the same score (*M* = 42) on the Worthy dimension. Syrian immigrants (*M* = 50) were seen as closer to documented immigrants (*M* = 54) than undocumented immigrants (*M* = 42) on worthiness; however, they were not a full SD away from either group. On the Sociable dimension, refugees (*M* = 39) were seen as different from documented immigrants (*M* = 53); however, Syrian immigrants (*M* = 43) were somewhat less different from documented immigrants. On the Individually vs. Communally Competent dimension, while Syrian immigrants (*M* = 53) were seen as more individually competent, documented immigrants are seen as more socially competent (*M* = 42); with refugees scoring in between (*M* = 50).

Figure 4.Profiles of Syrian Immigrants and Other Immigrant Categories



Discussion

This study revealed that social representations of immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, documented and undocumented immigrants were complex; and Syrian immigrants were viewed by U.S. respondents in January 2017 as more similar to refugees and asylum seekers than to immigrants. It is possible that these representations reflect fluid cultural ideas that change over time and in different places, depending on socio-political events and existing discourses and dominant framings of those events by the media and politicians, as well as lay individuals. Syrian immigrants were seen as more similar to refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants than they were to generic immigrants and documented immigrants. This undoubtedly

is a result of the contemporaneous humanitarian crisis leading to the displacement of 11.7 million Syrian people, with 6.2 million of them being internally displaced (UNHCR, 2019b).

One of the most prominent characteristics of Syrian immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the participants' associations was Vulnerable vs. Hardworking. This dimension revealed that the public expects that Syrian immigrants and refugees may be sad, scared, fragile, fearful and needy (potentially as a result of the experiences they have been through pre-and/or post-displacement), while also believing that they are not hardworking. The polarization of hardworking with the terms that indicate vulnerability in the same factor could be confusing and counterintuitive. Although there may not be causality, perhaps people cannot imagine a traumatized refugee or immigrant to be hardworking, or maybe they do not think it is reasonable to expect them to be hardworking. The Vulnerability vs. Hardworking factor tells us that the perceptions of sad, fragile, fearful and needy, and the perceptions of not hardworking depend on each other in shaping people's imagination of refugees, asylum seekers and Syrian immigrants. Thus this factor needs further investigation in relation to the idea of victim-blaming. Are people's associations of a lack of hard work with sadness, fragility and being in need linked with blaming systemic, institutional and societal factors or individuals for their shortcomings (Gurin, Miller & Gurin, 1980)? Complicating the understanding of vulnerability further, the findings showed that even though undocumented immigrants may experience similar precarities with refugees and asylum seekers as a result of deportations, or policies such as Public Charge and ending DACA, undocumented immigrants were imagined as not as vulnerable as the others. Perhaps undocumented immigrants are seen as having a choice to leave (or not come here at all) compared to refugees, even though the path from asylum seeking to becoming undocumented are part of the same process with the path from asylum seeking to becoming a refugee. Essentially,

refugees who are granted refugee status and resettled in the US have to be asylum seekers in a second country before being resettled in the U.S., however this connection may not be visible or intelligible to the public. The “undocumented” status was a stamp of disapproval that prevented the public from seeing how refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants might be similar to each other in terms of vulnerability.

The content of the drain scale includes many stigmatizing words (criminal, not wanted, welfare seeker, dumb, ignorant, lazy, annoying, illegal, dangerous, untrustworthy) mixed with words that indicate poverty (lowerclass, poor) that we hear in the public discourse for those who are often blamed for their situation. The ambivalence present in the content of the National Drain vs. Asset and the Vulnerability vs. Hardworking scales was reflected in the public’s social representations of Syrian immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers as more Vulnerable and less Hardworking, and scoring closer to being a drain on resources rather than a national asset. These representations could create grounds for victim-blaming of those migrants and refugees who are perceived to be “not hardworking” and “vulnerable” if they are also perceived as “drains” on the national resources.

Finally, Syrian immigrants were represented as neither particularly Individually Competent nor Socially Competent; they seemed somewhere between the two. They were seen as less Sociable than average. Fiske and colleagues (2002) argued that “disrespect” or “pity” for a group that is believed to be “incompetent” can be masked under allegedly “warm” stereotypes, and thus privileged groups can maintain support for the status quo with the help of this “paternalistic” attitude. For example, the stereotype of the perceived social warmth of elderly people, housewives and disabled people often is associated at the same time with them being perceived as incompetent. Therefore, this kind of stereotype (i.e. warm but incompetent) serves

to maintain the status quo. In this study, both the individually competent and communally competent had some favorable aspects. The fact that Syrian immigrants were not viewed as either may indicate the public's unfamiliarity with this group; but this is an empirical question that needs to be answered.

Conclusion

The two dimensions, Vulnerable vs. Hardworking and National Drain vs. Asset, deserve further examination in relation to public perception of refugees in various domains and their acceptance. The perception of "poor and fragile" refugees in need of protection has produced responses such as the "iconic victim effect," which Slovic and colleagues (2016) define as the mobilization of a stronger response by the distress of a single person than by that of large numbers. Particularly in this case, given that the victim was a 3-year-old child, the response may have been even stronger. Slovic and colleagues (2016) empirically demonstrated the increase in humanitarian aid to the Swedish Red Cross after the image of Alan Shenu was made popular in the media, which then immediately diminished as the image began to fade away from people's memories. The authors concluded that the hypervisibility of "vulnerability" of others does not result in long-term structural changes that would improve the conditions for them. Their analysis was limited to the examination of humanitarian help to the Swedish Red Cross, and European and North American audiences and actors are not homogeneous in how they responded; however, their finding about what the hypervisibility of vulnerability does over time is important to keep investigating. In study 2b, I will examine whether people's ideas about refugee vulnerability is related to their ideas about refugee deservingness of legal and institutional rights.

Since opposite images depend on each other to exist (Vulnerable vs. Hardworking, or Drain vs. Asset), it is important to keep examining the seemingly positive responses and

perceptions as well. Emphasizing the strengths, talents, and accomplishments of the refugees rather than vulnerabilities, emerged as a liberal left-leaning response, and has been less common in the mainstream media (Parater, 2015). These portrayals often involve telling a personal story, or someone else's narrative who had experienced displacement in their life but was strong, talented, skilled, accomplished, adaptive and/or resilient. Even though these representations are helpful in adding complexity to the circulating narratives about displaced people, they locate "resiliency" in the individual refugees, ignoring the possibility that it is the particular circumstances they face that enable or disable these positive adaptations (e.g., Esses, et al., 2017). In addition, these images of "resilient" immigrants or refugees can easily be used to support a dichotomy of good vs. bad immigrants (Cisneros, 2015). In study 2, I will also examine these positive images of hardworking refugees, or national assets in relation to views of deservingness.

In conclusion, Study 2a helped me inductively investigate social representations like Vulnerable vs. Hardworking and Drains vs. Assets that are commonly associated with Syrians, refugees, and asylum seekers. In study 2b, I will investigate how the social representations of Syrian refugees in terms of these inductively-defined dimensions contribute to majority group members' perceptions of refugees' deservingness of legal and institutional rights. In particular, I will assess whether perceptions of Syrian refugees as vulnerable and drains are associated with people's perceptions about Syrian refugees' deservingness to belong in the U.S. legally. *Affinity* with Syrian and Mexican immigrants, as examined in Study 1, could be one indicator of offering recognition and acceptance to refugees and immigrants at the symbolic level signaling that they belong here. These symbols of inclusion were reflected in the banners of airport protesters "We are all immigrants!" or "Refugees are welcome here!" Another, and less often examined

(Verkuyten, 2018; Andreouli, 2019), dimension of belonging is the societal perceptions of the appropriateness of offering legal recognition to immigrants and refugees. In study 2b, I will investigate how consequential the public's social representations of Syrian refugees are in terms of their perceptions of Syrian refugees as deserving legal belonging in the United States.

Study 2b: Belonging: From vulnerable refugees to deserving citizens

Refugee vulnerability has been depicted in the Western media and attributed by the larger society to refugee experiences before resettlement, such as embarking on perilous journeys across the Mediterranean, living in precarious conditions in refugee camps, and existing outside of established political, legal, and social orders. These accurate but limited depictions of vulnerability have contributed to the understanding of the Western countries that resettle refugees as saviors and the refugees who resettled as resilient individuals. This conception conceals the ways that the social order, policies, regulations and societal conceptions of deservingness may generate vulnerabilities even after resettlement as they try to build new lives in North America, Europe, and in the UK. In addition, even though the circulation of images of vulnerable refugees has been shown to result in increased donations to humanitarian aid organizations (Slovic et al., 2016), we do not know if these compassionate responses are lasting and whether these responses go beyond increased affinity with these groups and are linked with support for granting them institutional assistance and legal rights in the long term. The aims of the current study are twofold. The first is to understand how social representations of refugees as vulnerable or as assets shape people's opinions about Syrian refugees' deservingness of legal and institutional rights in the United States. The second is to examine the extent to which supporting refugees' maintenance of their heritage culture or expecting them to assimilate to American

culture plays a role in linking social representations about Syrian refugees and support for their deservingness of legal and institutional rights.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability has long been a discursive minefield in the Global North for the creation and delivery of social policy, regulations and interventions in order to ameliorate the conditions for those who are exposed to unfair treatment and human rights violations (Fawcett, 2009). While improving the conditions for those who are more vulnerable gets us one step closer to the ideal of social equality (Peroni and Timmer, 2013), who is vulnerable is inevitably decided according to arbitrary criteria (Smith & Waite, 2018); and vulnerability has been used as a criterion for the selective delivery of welfare provisions. This created new hierarchies of rights and entitlements among Syrian asylum seekers and refugees (Smith & Waite, 2018). For example, in the UK the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Programme (SVPRP) was established in 2014, determining who is vulnerable and thus eligible for assistance. However, in 2017 news reports indicated that the UK suspended taking in refugees with mobility issues and learning disabilities (Agerholm, 2017). As a result, children with disabilities were deemed "*too vulnerable"* to deserve the support of the government (Smith & Waite, 2018).

While programs and policies like SVPRP are framed as protecting those who are vulnerable, they reduce the multiplicity of refugee experiences and identities into one which relies on 'feminized and infantilized images of "pure" victimhood and vulnerability' (Sigona, 2014, p. 370). Perception of a certain group as too vulnerable can be associated with viewing them as "incompetent." As noted earlier, elderly people, housewives and disabled people are often exposed to this paternalistic bias with the perception of them as warm but incompetent people (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Furthermore, this emphasis on vulnerability is

consequential because it may affect how refugees interact with others, including their caseworkers and service providers. Often the expectation is that vulnerability should be obvious or readable, which puts pressure on refugees to “perform” vulnerability in order to receive support and not be perceived as economic migrants (Bhabha 2001; Maegusuku-Hewett, Dunkerley, Scourfield, & Smalley, 2007).

Deserving to Belong

Government policies about immigration and immigrants are not limited to entry quotas or regulations regarding exits and deportations; but also include policies and regulations about what kind of life immigrants live, that is, whether immigrants and refugees have the legal rights and institutional protections to advocate for themselves and are included in society. The policies focus on issues like: What rights do they have? Are they protected from discrimination and harassment? Do they have easy access to healthcare, fair employment, safe housing, long term residency, and schooling for their children? These elements reflect beliefs about whether they *deserve to belong*. In this study, I examine the question of who the respondents see as ‘worthy’ of belonging. *Deserving to belong* is broadly defined as including a continuum of rights and claims from welfare to healthcare, and from eligibility for long term resident status to citizenship.

The relative deprivation framework is relevant to understanding why the perceptions of migrant vulnerability matter to the members of the receiving majority in granting access to resources. At the core of relative deprivation theory is the idea that one’s deservingness is related to the expectation of how much one deserves (Crosby, 1976); and the expectation of deservingness, as well as the actual gains one gets out of a situation, are not independent of how much power and privilege one has in the society (Blysma & Major, 1992; Crosby, 1976;

McClelland, 2011). It is equally important to examine what outcome one expects oneself as deserving, as well as what outcome others view one as deserving; and how the two interact in shaping various realities for people depending on where they stand in the social hierarchy.

Judgments about another person's deservingness depend on the perceived personal responsibility of the person for the action(s) that have led to the outcome, whether the person is liked or not, whether the person belongs to one's own or another group, and the level of moral character the person is attributed (Feather, 1999, 2015). The attribution of moral character to another person, Opotow (1999) argues, is directly relevant to our "scope of justice." (p. 3). People tend to demarcate their "moral community" based on their perceived similarity to others, or affinity with others, and the potential for reciprocity, and entitlement to sharing some of the same resources. As I showed in study 1, sometimes affinity could be found through a national narrative that suggests historical continuity or expansion of one's moral community through a sense of shared history. When the other is perceived as a nonentity, in other words as outside the boundaries of one's moral community, denial of their "needs or entitlements to basic resources, such as housing, health services, respect, and fair treatment" is justified (Opotow, 1990, p. 2). Social inequality is perpetuated by favoring the moral character of privileged individuals while criminalizing the marginalized. Perhaps one of the best examples of this was the figure of the "welfare queen" created by the *Chicago Tribune* and used by Ronald Reagan in his campaign in 1976 (Levin, 2013). Reagan painted a picture of this villain to serve the biases of his voter base, "… a lazy black con artist, unashamed of cadging the money that honest folks worked so hard to earn." (Levin, 2013). According to Reagan, she was the mother of 14 children, had three new cars, and a full-length mink coat. The woman who bilked the government – as well as possibly being involved in other crimes like murders and kidnappings, using 80 different names – in fact,

was neither a homemaker nor black as described by Reagan (Levin, 2013). However, the image Reagan painted easily instilled fear of nationwide welfare fraud and stigmatized the poorest people as potential scroungers.

Anti-welfare hostility in the United States is a long-lasting phenomenon, the beginning of which can be traced back to before the emergence of the welfare rights movement in the mid-60s (Nadasen, 2005). When it comes to policy decisions, particular groups who are framed as “a problem,” “noncontributing,” “threatening,” or “alien” are targeted first (Rochefort & Cobb, 1994; Edelman, 1988; Yoo, 2008). Public support for restoring the rights of certain groups is dependent on how worthy of aid they are considered, whether their circumstances are believed to be out of their control, and whether they are viewed as having the will to be independent (Cook & Barrett, 1992; Nadasen, 2005). Even when their circumstances are believed to be out of their control, these populations are stigmatized in the society, as in the case of single mothers on welfare (Mink, 1995; Nadasen, 2005).

It is increasingly relevant to be able to capture how race, gender, social class, and immigration status depend on each other in determining who is deserving and who is not (Pessar, 1999). For example, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1995) examines the anti-immigrant discourses during policy hearings and argues that women and children immigrants specifically are characterized by U.S. policy makers as “ripping off” the benefits of the welfare state in a way that takes away from the state’s ability to take care of its truly “deserving” and “authentic” citizens. Nevertheless, highly-skilled immigrants are generally liked and preferred over low-skilled ones not only by policy makers, but also by members of the majority, due to the belief that low-skilled immigrants disproportionately use public services that are a burden on the tax payers (Helbling & Kriesi, 2014). In fact, one study found that it is more difficult for female immigrants from

certain countries (e.g., Iran, India, Japan) to transfer their privileges at home (e.g., education) into higher occupational status in the U.S. as compared to male immigrants from the same countries (Waldinger & Gilbertson, 1994). Therefore, while the policies and regulations stigmatize certain groups as scrounging the benefits, the same policies and regulations create conditions for "needing" the benefits.

The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, drawing from the discourse of "illegality," restricted welfare and public benefits for immigrants at the local, state, and federal levels, limited noncitizens' ability to bring class action suits, introduced greater punishments for illegal entries and provided more funds for border patrol (Deaux, 2006). Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), signed by Bill Clinton in the same year, as part of his ongoing campaign to "break the cycle of welfare dependency" (1992), cut federal safety nets, such as supplemental security income (SSI), for many groups like single mothers (Narain et al., 2017) and elderly and disabled immigrants (Yoo, 2008). The legislation also granted states the option to not provide public assistance to noncitizens, limited the amount of public assistance one can get throughout their lifetime to five years and required one to work after two years of receiving assistance (Naples, 1997). During policy hearings for PRWORA, the supporters of cutbacks framed elderly and disabled immigrants as antagonistic to American values of hardwork, independence and individualism, and thus not "worthy" of receiving SSI (Yoo, 2008). In particular, elderly immigrants were predominantly presented as coming to the U.S. to take advantage of SSI and making no contribution to the society. The dominant framings disregarded the difficulties of settling in a new country when old, and the fact that elderly immigrants often contribute by taking care of

their grandchildren, or work in the lowest paying jobs with no health insurance or other benefits (Yoo, 2008).

Arguably the history of immigration reform and policies in the United States reveals that major cutbacks to immigrant rights and welfare enable and are enabled by forged dichotomies between legal and illegal (or documented and undocumented) immigrants, during times of increased anti-immigrant sentiment. Those who are deemed to lack "self-sufficiency" are discursively "illegalized" by attributing ill-intentions to their presence in the United States (Yoo, 2008). On the other hand, other policies and regulations have been used to tame immigrants for "Americanization" (Mink, 1995). For example, just as the Aid for Dependent Children program was used to coerce poor single mothers to conform to white middle-class motherhood norm, Mother's Pensions programs were used to get Southern and Eastern European immigrant women aligned with American values (Mink, 1995). Concerns for demographic characteristics of an immigrant population and attributions of similarity/dissimilarity between the immigrant's heritage culture and receiving culture have always factored into decisions about who to include and exclude (Meyers, 2004), and how to treat them (Mink, 1995). All in all, judgments about the moral character of the migrant cannot be separated from the what the migrant's culture means to the receiving society.

Migrant Acculturation

Throughout most of the twentieth century, before multiculturalism became the normative model of immigration, immigrants were expected to assimilate to mainstream American culture (Alba & Nee, 2003). The earliest model of acculturation (Gordon, 1964) in trying to capture the migrant experience in the US was inevitably a reflection of assimilationist policies. Gordon's model conceptualized acculturation as a unidimensional phenomenon and assumed one type of

experience for all migrants, with a natural progression from maintenance of heritage culture to fully assimilating into the receiving culture. The prototypical immigrants during the nineteenth and early twentieth century were low-status and ethnoracially excluded Southern Italians and Russian Jews (Alba & Foner, 2015). Contrary to common beliefs, assimilation was not forced upon immigrants, but rather there was a mutual interaction, with migrants themselves participating in the social and institutional life of the receiving country, or choosing not to (Alba & Foner, 2015). In other words, not only the receiving majority but also some migrants sought a certain degree of cultural compatibility for assimilation to take place. This example was a case in point that acculturation expectations of migrants and the receiving society are interactive.

Following the 1960s and 70s, with the increased pressure for civil rights and liberties from the American public, legal recognition of "differences" began not only in immigrant incorporation (Isin & Wood, 1999), but also in the participation of Blacks in civil society (Glazer, 1978), endorsement of "differences" within feminism (Irigaray, 1993; Lorde, 1984), and affirmation of a multiplicity of sexual experiences (Johnston, 1973). This shift from individualistic, opportunity-oriented, and color-blind social relations to a "differentialist" approach in civil rights and liberties marked the discursive ascendancy of multiculturalism (Glazer, 1997). Again, in alignment with this historical transition to cultural pluralism, Berry (1980, 1984) proposed a bi-dimensional acculturation model accounting for the multiplicity of migrant experiences, which is still used widely by psychologists today. This model suggested that culture maintenance (migrant's heritage culture) and culture adaptation (receiving society's culture) can be represented by two separate dimensions rather than as the polar ends of the same continuum. Therefore, migrants should decide for themselves (1) whether it is valuable to maintain heritage culture identity and characteristics, and (2) whether relations with the receiving

society should be sought or avoided (Berry, 1984). The model defined four distinct migrant acculturation experiences accounting for the multiplicity of migrant experiences: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. However, it still did not explain the interactive nature of acculturation. According to both the unidimensional and bidimensional acculturation models, the responsibility to acculturate is assigned to the migrants; thus, any problems experienced throughout the cultural adaptation process would be attributed to the migrants (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974; Glazer & Moynihan, 1970).

When acculturation is imagined as a solely migrant experience, it does not account for the potential transformations a society would go through after the reception of immigrants, and fails to address the interactive nature of migrant-majority experiences (Sayegh & Lasry, 1993; Brubaker, 2001). When acculturation's interactive nature is neglected, multiculturalism becomes paradoxical (Ahmed, 2010). It requires the migrant to make a compromise in order to *deserve to belong*; and the compromise is liberating oneself from "tradition" while immersing oneself in "Western assimilation." On the other hand, the members of the receiving majority make evaluative judgments based on immigrants' country of origin, and hold differential acculturation attitudes depending on the "value" of immigrants. For example, the Quebec French majority had "less assimilationist, segregationist, and exclusionist" acculturative attitudes toward French immigrants than toward Haitian immigrants because Haitian culture was seen as too dissimilar to integrate with the Quebec French culture. Haitians were "devalued" on the basis that they lacked favorable traits such as being hardworking, punctual, intelligent, and trustworthy (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). Similar paradoxical engagements with certain cultures deemed as "traditional" or "different" also exist in contemporary United States. For example, in one study, Latinos and Asian Americans were considered to be more foreign and inferior compared to White Americans

(Zou & Cheryan, 2017). In another study, stereotypes of Latino immigrants as unable or unwilling to assimilate were linked with the perception of Latinos as causing unemployment in the US, diminishing school quality, and committing crimes (Timberlake, Howell, Grau, & Williams, 2015).

The Current Study

Refugee belonging in the United States, and elsewhere, is multilayered, complex and context-dependent. The members of a receiving society may feel affinity and compassion for refugees depending on the “acceptability” of the level of vulnerability and/or the perceived similarity of cultures. If the perceived cultural fit is low or if the members of majority seem to be close to expanding their knowledge of and closeness to other cultures, then this may affect how much support they will be willing to offer to refugees. In the current study, I am interested in several aspects of the perceptions of society of Syrian refugees in the eyes of members of the receiving society, as a function in part of perceived refugee demographics (i.e. occupation, gender, and religion), particular refugee social representations (i.e. vulnerable, drain vs. asset), acculturation expectations (i.e. expecting refugees to assimilate, and supporting refugees’ heritage culture maintenance), and attitudes about refuges’ deservingness of legal and institutional belonging in the United States. It is important to note that members of the receiving society are not monolithic. They may have different degrees of perception of refugees as drains vs. assets or vulnerable vs. hardworking; they may have different acculturation expectations or be willing to grant different levels of legal and institutional support. Unlike study 2a, in which I examined various social representations as they circulate in the public domain, in study 2b, I will examine who draws on what kinds of social representations and what this tells us in terms of who is more willing to grant legal and institutional rights to refugees.

Hypothesis 1. First, I will examine differences in perceptions based on perceived refugee demographics (i.e. occupation, gender, religion). I hypothesize that members of the receiving majority will view skilled, male, and Christian Syrian refugees in a more positive light compared to unskilled, female, and Muslim Syrian refugees. In particular, those Syrian refugees who have more privileged social statuses in the U.S. (i.e. skilled, male, or Christian) will be perceived as more deserving of legal and institutional belonging in the United States compared to those who have less privileged social status (i.e. unskilled, female, or Muslim). In addition, those with more privileged social statuses will be expected to assimilate less and supported to maintain their heritage culture more, compared to those with less privileged social statuses. Finally, the more privileged will be perceived as less vulnerable, and more like a national asset compared to their counterparts.

Second, I will examine the simple relationships between all the variables. Based on the reviewed literature and the results of Study 2a, I hypothesize a positive correlation between perceiving Syrian refugees as vulnerable and perceiving them as drains on the national resources. In addition, perceptions of vulnerability and drains on resources will be linked with less support for maintenance of heritage culture, more expectation of assimilation, and less support for the idea that refugees deserve legal and institutional rights in the United States.

Hypothesis 2. Based on the reviewed literature, the perception of a particular group as vulnerable may bring together the belief that they are too weak or incompetent (Fiske et al., 2002). Incompetent groups are often seen as undeserving of legal and institutional rights (Sigona, 2014; Smith & Waite, 2018). If one perceives Syrian refugees as vulnerable, one is likely to believe that refugees do not deserve legal and institutional rights. This link between refugee vulnerability and deservingness could be explained by the lack of support for culture

maintenance and higher expectation for assimilation. In other words, those who think vulnerable refugees do not deserve legal and institutional rights will do so because they think vulnerable refugees' heritage culture is not worthy of maintenance, and they should rather assimilate to American values and culture.

On the other hand, if one perceives refugees as an asset, one is likely to believe that refugees deserve legal and institutional rights. This link between refugees as assets and deserving to belong will be explained by support for culture maintenance and no expectation of assimilation. In other words, those who think of refugees as assets will think that they deserve legal and institutional rights because their heritage culture is worthy of maintenance and they do not need to assimilate to American values and culture.

Method

Data Collection

The survey was distributed online in December 2018 to a new sample of MTurk workers who reside in the United States. The data collections for study 2a and study 2b were about 11 months apart. As in Study 2a, participants were asked similar questions for a smaller number of different immigrant categories. However, they were asked about items and measures that were researcher-defined, based in part on participant-generated representations identified in Study 2a.

Each participant was presented with a randomly selected set of four different immigrant groups out of 36, and each immigrant group was rated by 30 participants (see Appendix A for the list of intersectional categories and how they are organized into random groups of four). Overall, data were generated for 36 different intersectional immigrant groups from the participants. I examine data generated for only Syrian refugees with different gender, religious, and occupational identities. The participants evaluated six different Syrian refugee categories

(skilled, unskilled, male, female, Christian, Muslim). Of the six Syrian refugee categories, no two were assigned to the same person. In order to prevent the participants from making comparisons on their own, the data for each of the six Syrian refugee categories were drawn from a separate randomly assigned subsample of people. Approval of the methods for collecting these data was obtained from the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Measures

Social Representations

The inductively-identified items, generated by the participants in study 2a reflect attributes of Vulnerable, and National Drain vs. Asset. Participants were asked to rate each group on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely), in terms of how common it is to have attributes of Vulnerable and National Drain vs. Asset for the members of this group. The Vulnerable scale included five items, namely *needy, desperate, scared*, *weak,* and *hardworking* (the latter was reverse coded). The scale had excellent reliability ($\alpha = .80$). The National Drain vs. Asset scale included 10 items, namely *educated, similar to Americans, smart, assimilates, funny, criminal, poor, lazy, welfare-seeker, untrustworthy, dangerous* (the latter six were reverse coded). The scale had excellent reliability ($\alpha = .88$).

Support for Heritage Culture Maintenance

For each group of Syrian refugees, participants were asked to indicate how much the group *should* be able to maintain their heritage culture. I created four items to assess support for culture maintenance on issues such as speaking the native language and celebration of cultural/traditional holidays; they were rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The items were: “[they] should be able to speak their native language in public with speakers from their country of origin,” “[they] should be able to speak to their children in their

native language in public," "[they] should not use their native language in public now that they are in America," and "[they] should be able to celebrate their traditional holidays." High scores on this scale meant a tendency to support refugees to maintain their Syrian culture in the United States. The scale had excellent reliability (α = .85).

Expectation of Assimilation

For each group of Syrian refugees, participants were asked to indicate how much the group *should* adapt to the American culture. I created three items to assess expectation of assimilation on issues from the spoken language to celebration of cultural/traditional holidays and were rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Example items are: "[they] should have a good command of English if they want to live in this country," and "[they] should celebrate traditional American holidays like Thanksgiving." High scores on this subscale mean having more assimilationist attitudes, that is, that immigrants should take on the values of the American culture. The scale had excellent reliability (α = .77).

Deserving Legal and Institutional Rights

Deservingness in a variety of areas was measured with eight items. I created eight items to measure participants perception of refugee deservingness. Participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), how much they think each group of immigrants "should have access to" (1) "education for their children," (2) "health care for all members of their families," (3) "welfare and poverty support programs," as well as how much they think each immigrant group "should have a right to be" (4) "free from harassment by local people," (5) "safely housed in this country," (6) "free from discrimination in pursuing jobs," (7) "eligible to become a legal permanent resident (i.e. green card holder) in the U.S." (8) "eligible to gain U.S. citizenship." The scale had excellent reliability (α = .95).

Results

Hypothesis 1: Do Refugee Demographics Influence Perceptions?

In three separate independent-samples t-tests, I tested whether participants perceived skilled vs. unskilled, male vs. female, and Christian vs. Muslim Syrian refugees differently. Contrary to the first hypothesis, there were no differences in people's perceptions of the three pairs in terms of their social representations, attitudes regarding their acculturation, and deservingness of legal and institutional rights. Even though none of the differences was significant, since power to detect differences was relatively low it is worth noting that there were two trends for *skilled Syrian refugees* to be perceived as more Hardworking and less Vulnerable ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .67$) and more like an Asset ($M = 3.19$, $SD = .63$) compared to *unskilled Syrian refugees* ($M = 3.13$, $SD = .81$, $t(63) = 1.68$, $p = .09$; and $M = 2.88$, $SD = .81$, $t(63) = -1.73$, $p = .08$, respectively). None of the other comparisons (i.e. based on gender and religion) revealed statistical trends or significant differences. See Table 10 for the comparisons based on occupation, Table 11 for the comparison based on gender, and Table 12 for the comparison based on religion.

Since there were no differences in the three paired comparisons, to assess whether this was the result of low power in those comparisons (because the Ns ranged from 29 to 33 per group), I collapsed the three demographically more privileged refugees into one group (i.e. skilled, male, Christian) and the three less privileged groups into another (i.e. unskilled, female, Muslim). Next, I tested the difference in people's perceptions of the higher and lower privilege groups. There were no significant differences in how people perceived the higher or lower status refugee groups in terms of their social representations, attitudes regarding their acculturation and deservingness of legal and institutional rights (see Table 13).

Since there were no differences between pairs based on occupation, gender, religion, and no differences based on relative privilege levels when the pairs were collapsed, I collapsed the data for all six Syrian refugee groups (skilled, unskilled, male, female, Christian, Muslim) into one for the following analyses. After collapsing the data, I tested the correlations among all the variables (see Table 14). As hypothesized, those Syrian refugees who were viewed as Vulnerable were less likely to be viewed as Assets (and more likely to be viewed as Drains on resources). In addition, as expected, the perception of vulnerability was linked to less support for heritage culture maintenance, more expectation for assimilation and less support for granting them legal and institutional rights. On the other hand, the perception of refugees as Assets was linked to more support for heritage culture maintenance, less expectation of assimilation, and more support for granting them legal and institutional rights. These correlations are in line with my hypotheses and support carrying out the mediation analyses for hypothesis 2. In addition, these analyses show that heterogeneity in social representations among the receiving majority matters. It shows that endorsing different social representations on the Drain vs. Asset and Vulnerable vs. Hardworking dimensions is linked to different views of refugee belonging.

Table 10. Differences in Perceptions by Refugee Occupation

	Refugee Occupation							
	Skilled		Unskilled					
Perceptions	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Refugee Social Representations:								
Vulnerable	2.82	0.67	3.13	0.81	63	1.68	.10	.40
Asset	3.19	0.63	2.88	0.81	63	-1.73	.10	.42
Attitudes about Acculturation:								
Support Culture Maintenance	4.02	0.94	4.09	1.11	62	.24	.81	.06
Expect Assimilation	3.07	0.84	3.27	0.97	62	.88	.38	.21
Deserving Legal Rights	3.72	0.91	3.93	1.14	62	.83	.41	.20

Note: ^{t} $p \leq 0.10$, *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$, $N_{unskilled} = 31$, $N_{skilled} = 34$

Table 11. Differences in Perceptions by Refugee Gender

	Refugee Gender							
	Male		Female					
Perceptions	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Refugee Social Representations:								
Vulnerable	3.02	0.81	3.24	0.73	61	-1.14	.26	.27
Asset	2.92	0.82	3.00	0.69	61	-.40	.69	.10
Attitudes about Acculturation:								
Support Culture Maintenance	3.79	1.08	4.13	0.93	60	-1.32	.19	.32
Expect Assimilation	3.01	0.86	3.04	1.02	60	-.14	.89	.03
Deserving Legal Rights	3.77	1.40	4.09	0.99	60	-1.02	.31	.24

Note: ^{t} $p \leq 0.10$, *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$, $N_{male} = 33$, $N_{female} = 30$

Table 12. Differences in Perceptions by Refugee Religion

	Refugee Religion							
	Christian		Muslim					
Perceptions	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Refugee Social Representations:								
Vulnerable	2.98	0.49	2.78	0.82	60	-1.11	.27	.08
Asset	3.20	0.56	3.19	0.87	60	-.04	.97	.00
Attitudes about Acculturation:								
Support Culture Maintenance	4.11	0.84	3.98	1.06	60	-.53	.59	.04
Expect Assimilation	3.32	0.82	3.26	0.82	60	-.27	.78	.02
Deserving Legal Rights	4.07	0.76	3.98	1.19	60	-.36	.72	.03

Note: ^{t} $p \leq 0.10$, *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$, $N_{christian}= 28$, $N_{muslim}= 34$

Table 13. Differences in Perceptions by Refugee Privilege

Perceptions	Refugee Privilege: Higher (skilled, male, Christian)		Refugee Privilege: Lower (unskilled, female, Muslim)					
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Refugee Social Representations:								
Vulnerable	2.94	0.68	3.04	.81	188	.96	.34	.13
Asset	3.10	0.69	3.03	.80	188	-.64	.52	.09
Attitudes about Acculturation:								
Support Culture Maintenance	3.97	0.96	4.06	1.03	186	.63	.53	.09
Expect Assimilation	3.13	0.84	3.20	0.93	186	.55	.58	.08
Deserving Legal Rights	3.84	1.07	4.00	1.11	185	.99	.33	.15

Note: ^{t} $p \leq 0.10$, *$p \leq 0.05$, **$p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$, $N_{high} = 95$, $N_{low} = 95$

Table 14. Simple Correlations

	Measure	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Vulnerable	__	-.70***	-.36***	.17**	-.45***
2.	Asset		__	.50***	-.26***	.63***
3.	Support Culture Maintenance			__	-.06	.71***
4.	Expect Assimilation				__	-.04
5.	Deserving Legal Rights					__

Note: ᵗ $p \leq 0.10$, * $p \leq 0.05$, ** $p \leq 0.01$, *** $p \leq 0.001$, N = 190

Hypothesis 2: Do Acculturation Expectations Explain the Link Between Refugee Representations and Deserving?

The prediction for Hypothesis 2 is that since people who perceive Syrian refugees as Vulnerable disagree that Syrian refugees Deserve Legal and Institutional Rights (as shown in testing Hypothesis 1), this negative link would be explained by the lack of Support for Heritage Culture Maintenance and high Expectation for them to Assimilate to American culture.

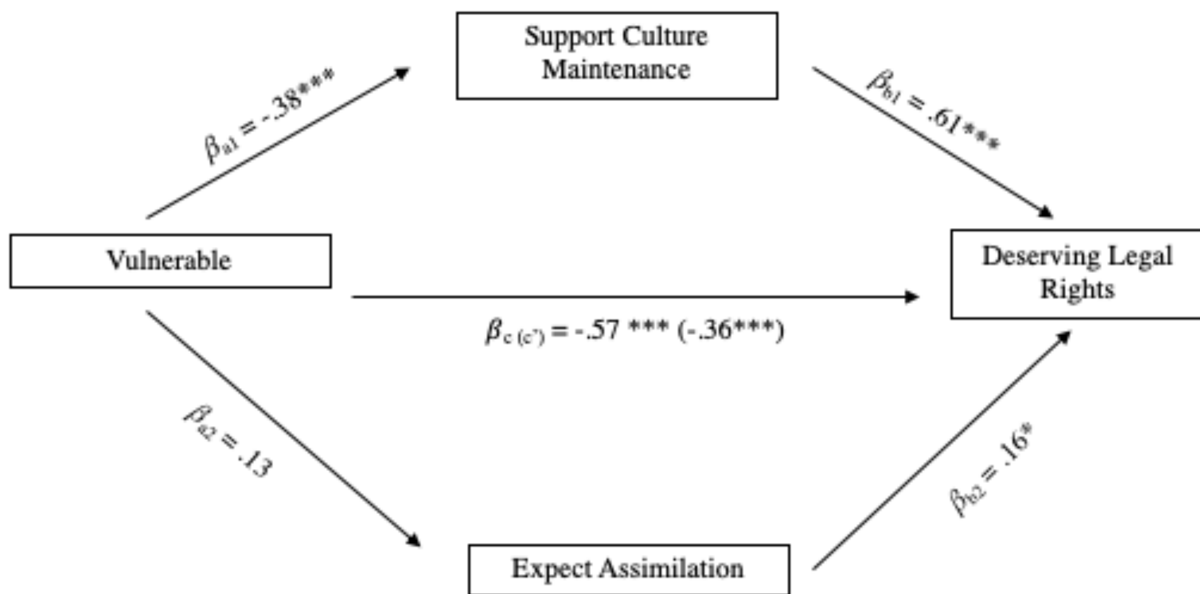
Using model 6 of Hayes PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2009; 2013), I tested two separate parallel mediations with one the Perception of Syrian Refugees as Vulnerable as the independent variable (x) and another the Perception of Syrian Refugees as Asset as the independent variable (x). In both parallel mediations, I entered Support for Culture Maintenance and Expectation of Assimilation as mediators (m_1 and m_2); and Deserving Legal and Institutional Rights (y) as dependent variable. I tested direct (c') and indirect effects (ab_1 and ab_2) by producing confidence intervals from 10,000 bootstrap samples for the indirect effects. All the analyses controlled for gender, race, social class, age, sexual orientation, education, religiosity and political orientation. I report the total, direct and indirect effects below. For a visual representation of the mediation analyses for each of the two warmth variables as the mediators, see Figures 1 and 2.

Accounting for the Link between Perception of Syrian Refugees as Vulnerable and Their Deservingness

From simple mediation analysis using a combination of OLS path analysis and logistic regression, the perception of Syrian refugees as Vulnerable indirectly influenced Support for their Legal and Institutional Rights through Support for Culture Maintenance, but not through Expectation of Assimilation. As can be seen in Figure 1, if participants perceive Syrian refugees

as Vulnerable then they are less likely to Support Syrian Refugees' Heritage Culture Maintenance (a_1 = -.38), and the lack of Support for Heritage Culture Maintenance is in turn associated with lack of Support for Legal and Institutional Rights (b_1 = .61). A bias corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect (ab_1 = -.23, CI [-.39, -.10]) was significant; and there was evidence that the Perception of Syrian Refugees as Vulnerable also influenced Support of Legal and Institutional Rights independent of its effect on Support for Culture Maintenance and Expectation of Assimilation (*c'* = -.36, *p* = .00).

Figure 5. Parallel Mediation Model Testing the Effect of Perception of Syrian Refugees Vulnerable on Refugee Deserving, Mediated by Support for Heritage Culture Maintenance and Expectation of Assimilation

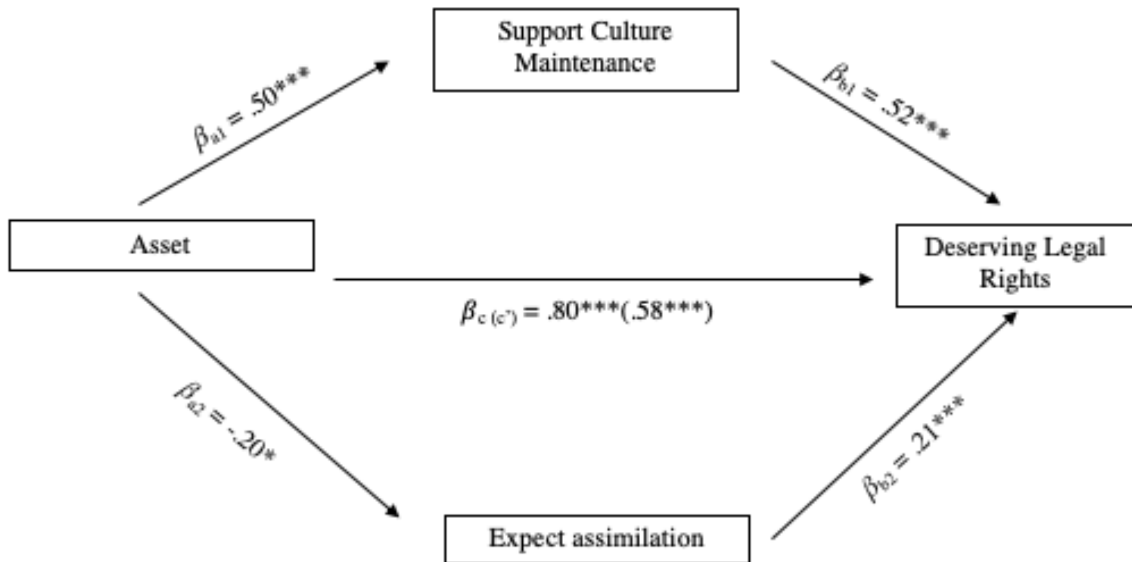


Note: Indirect Effect of Support for Culture Maintenance = -.23, 95% Confidence Interval (10,000 bootstrapped samples: [-.39, -.10], Indirect Effect of Expectation of Assimilation = .02, 95% Confidence Interval (10,000 bootstrapped samples): CI [-.02, .07], n = 179, R^2 = .61 F(11,167) = 23.79, $p < .000$. Analysis controls for race (White vs. Non-White), gender (man vs. woman), class (continuous from working class to upper class), age (continuous, ranged from 19 to 71), education (continuous from less than primary school to professional degree), sexual orientation (straight vs. sexual minority), religiosity (high to low) and political orientation (conservative to liberal).*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, t < .10.

Accounting for the Link between the Perception of Syrian Refugees as National Assets and their Deservingness

From simple mediation analysis conducted using OLS path analysis, the perception of Syrian refugees as Assets to the Nation indirectly influenced Support for their Legal and Institutional Rights to refugees through both Support for Culture Maintenance and Expectation of Assimilation. As can be seen in Figure 2, if participants perceived Syrian refugees as Assets, then they were more likely to support Syrian Refugees' Heritage Culture Maintenance (a_1 = .50), and less likely to Expect them to Assimilate (a_2 = -.20). Support for Heritage Culture Maintenance (b_1 = .52) and Expectation of Assimilation (b_2 = .21) were associated with Support for Legal and Institutional Rights. The indirect effect through Support for Culture Maintenance (ab_1 = .26, CI [.12, .42]) was significant, as was the indirect effect through Expectation of Assimilation (ab_2 = -.04, CI [-.11, -.00]); and there was evidence that the perception of Syrian refugees as Assets was associated with Support of Legal and Institutional Rights, independent of its effect on Support for Culture Maintenance and Expectation of Assimilation (c' = .58, p = .00).

Figure 6. Parallel Mediation Model Testing the Effect of Perception of Syrian Refugees as Assets on Refugee Deserving, Mediated by Support for Heritage Culture Maintenance and Expectation of Assimilation



Note: Indirect Effect of Support for Culture Maintenance (*ab_1*) = .26, 95% Confidence Interval (10,000 bootstrapped samples: [.13, .42], Indirect Effect of Expectation of Assimilation (*ab_2*) = -.04, 95% Confidence Interval (10,000 bootstrapped samples): CI [-.11, .00], n = 179, R^2 = .61 $F(11,167) = 23.79$, $p < .000$. Analysis controls for race (White vs. Non-White), gender (man vs. woman), class (continuous from working class to upper class), age (continuous, ranged from 19 to 71), education (continuous from less than primary school to professional degree), sexual orientation (straight vs. sexual minority), religiosity (high to low) and political orientation (conservative to liberal).*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, t < .10.

Discussion

Summary of the Findings

The primary goal of this study was to investigate the extent to which public opinion about Syrian refugee deservingness in the United States varies by the perceived demographic characteristics of refugees, social representations about them, and attitudes about their acculturation. In this study, I used the social representations about Syrian refugees that were found inductively in Study 2a. I focused on two of the most common social representations about Syrian immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers from the previous study. These were the perception that they are Vulnerable vs. Hardworking and the perception that they are National Drains vs. Assets. In addition, I presented the participants with six different refugee groups based on occupation, gender, and religion.

The Link between Perceived Refugee Demographics and Refugee Deservingness. Contrary to the first hypothesis, people's perceptions did not significantly differ between any of the three pairs of Syrian refugees based on occupation, gender and religion. All groups were viewed as similarly undeserving when tested separately for each demographic characteristic (i.e. skilled vs. unskilled, male vs. female, Christian vs. Muslim), or when collapsed into two groups as higher and lower privilege (i.e. skilled, male, Christian vs. unskilled, female, Muslim). There could be several reasons why differences between these groups did not emerge as originally expected.

First, Americans' perception of difference based on occupation, gender and religion of Syrian refugees may be small or invisible, and all that mattered to the participants may have been their refugee status and/or their nationality. Social psychologists have identified the various ways in which people manage information about others when they are presented with information that the other belongs to multiple groups at the same time (Bodenhausen, 2010). One of these mechanisms is "dominance" in which primacy of one identity influences how information about other identities are interpreted, and this information affects one's behaviors, attitudes, and emotions towards the group (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). It could be that the primacy of the refugee identity or the primacy of the Syrian identity dominated people's perceptions; and the secondary identities based on gender, religion, and occupation of the Syrian refugees were not important in light of this information. Some of the refugee identities may be particularly invisible to our participants. For example, the difference based on religion may not be easy to identify, or perhaps the difference doesn't matter to most perceivers, since Christian Arabs are similarly stigmatized as Muslim Arabs, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11 (Shryock, Abraham, & Howell, 2011). In short, for American participants Syrian refugees may be perceived as a more

homogeneous group than I originally hypothesized. This could be due to homogenizing media representations of the Syrian refugees (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013), lack of interpersonal contact with actual Syrian refugees (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), the primacy of the refugee identity, or for other reasons.

Second, it could be that the sample sizes for the three comparisons based on occupation, gender and religion of Syrian refugees were too small to obtain an interpretable significant difference. For that reason, I collapsed the less and more privileged groups and tested the difference between the two, which produced a larger sample size, since different people rated different groups. However, the results were again not significant.

Based on the assumption that the primacy of a dominant category (in this case Syrian refugee) may be shaping the overall perception of these groups, I collapsed data from all six groups. The results of the simple correlations were consistent with my predictions. People's perception of Syrian refugees as National Assets and perception of them as Vulnerable negatively correlated with each other, while perception of them as a Drain (the opposite of Asset) correlated positively with the perception of Syrian refugees as Vulnerable (and negatively with the perception of them as Hardworking). Even though people's perception of Syrian refugees as Vulnerable and Drains rather than Assets were statistically related, the two perceptions are conceptually different. Therefore, I carried out two separate parallel mediation analyses with each perception to assess how each is linked with people's ideas about Syrian refugee acculturation and deservingness.

The Link between Refugee Social Representations, Attitudes about Refugee Acculturation and Deservingness. As predicted in the second hypothesis, those people who viewed Syrian refugees as Assets were more likely to perceive them as deserving of legal and

institutional rights in the US. This may be partly due to the perceived "cultural fit" of Assets. Participants did not expect those who they perceive as Assets to assimilate and supported their heritage culture maintenance; and this partly explained why they agreed to granting refugees legal and institutional rights. In contrast, those people who viewed Syrian refugees as Vulnerable were less likely to perceive them as deserving of legal and institutional rights; and the lack of support for Syrian refugees' heritage culture maintenance partially explained why they did not support granting refugees legal and institutional rights. These findings point out multiple and complex social representations of Syrian refugees as well as diversified acculturation expectations from them. In addition, the diversity in social representations and acculturation expectations are linked with different support for refugees' legal and institutional rights.

Those who perceived refugees as Assets (educated, smart, and trustworthy) or Hardworking were more likely to support their maintenance of their heritage culture and agree that they deserve legal and institutional rights in the U.S. On the other hand, those who perceived refugees as Drains (lazy, poor, criminal) or Vulnerable (desperate, in need, and traumatized) were less likely to support their maintenance of heritage culture and deservingness of legal and institutional rights. The polarized views and contradictions in how social representations are linked to majority members' ideas of deservingness show that judgments about appropriateness of refugees' heritage culture maintenance could be made on the basis of "refugees' market value" and eventually become consequential for granting them legal and institutional rights. Perhaps this indicates that what "integration" or "refugee belonging" means to many Americans is based on an economic expectation of integration into the labor market. Or, perhaps, integration into the labor market facilitates one's integration and belonging in the society.

The contrast in the level of support given to the heritage culture maintenance and deservingness between the Syrian refugees who are perceived as vulnerable and assets begs the question of what people viewed as fundamentally different between the Assets and the Vulnerable. The defining characteristics of assets were *educated, similar to Americans, smart, assimilates, trustworthy* (along with *not lazy, not welfare-seeker, not poor, not dangerous,* and *not criminal*). Perhaps due to these characteristics, individuals viewed as Assets were seen to have a more "secularized" culture that did not pose a threat to American values of hard work, independence, and self-reliance and thus were supported in maintaining their heritage culture. These characteristics would ease assets' integration into the labor market, and perhaps that is why they are seen as more deserving; or alternatively because they are seen as more deserving of legal and institutional rights, their integration would be easier. The discursive construction of assets as highly skilled and hardworking and their stories of entrepreneurial success create a "moral economy" (Garner, 2007, p. 67) in which all immigrants and refugees are evaluated for legal belonging on the basis of their prospective "economic calculability." (Cisneros, 2015, p. 365). The defining characteristics of vulnerable, on the other hand, were *needy, desperate, scared, weak,* and *not hardworking*. These assessments of refugees made them candidates to be perceived as "too vulnerable" to deserve any provisions (Smith & Waite, 2018). The perception of vulnerability in the United States (as in many other Western countries) can be inherently stigmatizing by implying that the vulnerable person is a "non-contributing" member of the society. Vulnerable refugees' heritage culture was viewed as less worthy of maintenance than that of those perceived as assets, perhaps because they are seen as lacking the qualities of hard work, independence, and self-reliance.

While this study shows that refugees who are perceived as vulnerable are less likely to be supported for heritage culture maintenance and are seen as less deserving of legal and institutional rights, the reality is that all refugees contribute to the economy (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016). In fact, in the United States, there is a great deal of emphasis on integrating refugees into the labor market right after their arrival. Arguably, the conditions considering "having a right to work" are better in the United States for refugees compared to economically precarious countries (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016). In compliance with the 1951 Refugee Convention, refugees gain Employment Authorization immediately upon their arrival. The US policy, in this sense, is designed to prevent refugees from relying on government assistance for an extended period of time. However, due to the expectation to start working immediately without having any language acquisition opportunity, most refugees start with entry-level jobs that are incommensurate with their preexisting skill levels, education, or experience (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016). For this reason, refugees who do not have good linguistic skills remain on the margins, sometimes folded into the informal economy, working in jobs in which they feel invisible, and/or in conditions that are unsafe or unhealthy. Therefore, the contrast between refugees as assets and refugees as vulnerable is not as stark as the polarized views of these participants imply.

Limitations of the Study

This study demonstrates that the participants' perceptions of Syrian refugees as Vulnerable and as Assets vs. Drains were related to how much they supported refugees' maintenance of their heritage culture, and how much they believed refugees deserve legal and institutional rights. It is important to note that the correlational nature of these data limit our confidence in interpreting the causal direction of these results. For example, it is difficult to know whether people who perceive refugees as vulnerable do not support their heritage culture

maintenance, or whether people who support refugees' culture maintenance think of refugees as less vulnerable and more hardworking. Similarly, it is difficult to know whether people think refugees do not deserve legal and institutional rights because they should not be allowed to maintain their heritage culture, or whether they are not supported for culture maintenance because they are seen as undeserving. These relationships may also be recursive.

The data collection for this study was done right after the 2016 Presidential Elections during which particular groups of immigrants (in particular, Muslims, Mexicans, refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented) were invoked more often than usual in the popular media and by the political leaders, potentially creating a heightened sense of polarization between the left-and right-leaning participants in the way these groups could be described. It is also important to note that the data collection happened at a moment when vulnerability was invoked in relation to the "Global Refugee Crisis," and illegality or criminality discussions were invoked in relation to immigration status (documented vs. undocumented). Therefore, all the social representations my collaborators and I have discovered as a result of Study 2a, which Study 2b builds on, were in circulation on the media and in the public discussions. Our findings are a reflection of this particular time in history and may or may not be replicated in a different country and at a different historical moment.

In Study 2a, I focused on how citizen's social representations of Syrian refugees relate to how deserving they think they are. People who perceived Syrian refugees as Vulnerable also perceived them as less Deserving. This pattern may or may not apply to other groups of immigrants. The nation of origin of the refugees, and the receiving society's perceived level of "cultural distance" and comfort level in engagement with refugees and immigrants from different

cultures could be a decisive factor in receiving majority members' perceptions of these groups would always create the same results of different ones.

Finally, with the historical and discursive changes in acculturation in any given cultural context, the measurement of acculturation and acculturation perceptions also change. Researchers have identified three main problems with the existing acculturation measures. These are the use of proxy measures (e.g., the amount of time passed since immigration) and unilinear measures (e.g., measuring adaptation and assimilation on a continuum, rather than separate processes), as well as failure to capture multidimensionality of acculturation (e.g., behavioral, identity, and linguistic components) (Birman & Simon, 2014). Even though these problems were associated with the acculturation scales that are used to assess how immigrants acculturate, some of these problems are also applicable to measuring the public's (non-immigrants) acculturation perceptions. Since the existing acculturation perceptions measures did not address some of the three issues mentioned above at the same time, I created my own measurement of acculturation perceptions. It is not unilinear, since I separately assessed assimilation and culture maintenance, and the items cover linguistic and behavioral dimensions of acculturation experience. There are no items about identity since the refugees are presumably at the beginning of their acculturation experience, and it is not helpful to have people think whether refugees should adapt or reject American identity and give up or maintain Syrian identity. Creating a measure for my specific needs for this study was helpful. On the other hand, using a new, unvalidated measure has its own limitations, and I did not add any other validated measurements of acculturation perceptions to the study due to concerns about participant fatigue.

Policy Implications

Policy decisions, demographic flows and social representations of refugees all govern each other (Deaux, 2006; Esses et. al., 2017). People have social representations and schemas, not only about particular immigrant or refugee groups, but also about immigration and immigrants in general, and about a country's position in relation to these. For example, historically, the United States has had different social representations about the kind of place it has been for immigrants, such as "a melting pot," or a "multicultural" country. These social representations are used in creating government policies because officials often pair policy making with rhetoric in order to get support for their policies; and government policies further enhance pro- or anti-immigrant social representations, as well as affecting immigrant flows and demographic patterns.

In the last couple of years, in the aftermath of Donald Trump's Election as the President, there have been negative changes to the immigration and asylum policies of the United States. This study suggests that garnering support for refugees' ability to maintain their heritage culture may be crucial in creating support for the provision of legal and institutional rights to the refugees. The moral judgments behind the perception of a group as Vulnerable or as a Drain encourages people to place these communities outside one's "scope of justice" (Opotow, 1990). However, these moral justifications injure not only those who are excluded, but also the perpetrators, because they lose the opportunity to enlarge and enrich their culture and group's boundaries by letting new perspectives in (Fine, 1990). This is why, in this study, people's support for refugees' heritage culture maintenance is understood as playing an important bridging role between the perception of a group as Vulnerable and believing that they deserve legal and institutional rights. For more members of the receiving majorities to enlarge their moral

communities, this study points to the value and support of native cultures of immigrants and refugees. While individualistic attributions of vulnerability further create stigma deeming refugees as undeserving, increased support for refugees' maintenance of their language, traditions, cultural and ethnic identity helps build a more open society that acknowledges legal and institutional rights as basic human rights, in alignment with the 1951 Refugee Convention. Even though the correlational data in this study does not allow inferences about causality, these associations suggest that valuing of the contributions of particular cultures to the larger American culture may be an important approach to encouraging greater inclusion of refugees and other immigrants in the minds of U.S. citizens.

In Study 1 and 2 I examined American society's views of immigrants and refugees of different national origins (e.g., Mexican and Syrian), and legal status (e.g., immigrant, refugee, asylum seeker). Both studies showed that feelings, perceptions and beliefs in regard to immigrant belonging are not homogeneous. In fact, people's perceptions of immigrants and refugees could contain contradictions and be polarized in a society in which politicians use immigration to appeal to the voters; and refugee acceptance and recognition by the members of the majority is a multifaceted process. In particular, in Study 1, I found that Americans who believe that immigrants in the past and present were similar to each other were more likely to feel affinity toward Syrian immigrants; this, in turn, predicted voting for Clinton instead of Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election. Thus, I showed that affinity, fluid and flexible forms of closeness and feelings of warmth not based in a shared history or identity, could shape receiving majority's perceptions of immigrant belonging. Furthermore, in study 2, I examined a rather different dimension of belonging from the perspective of the American public, focusing on their attitudes about Syrian refugees' deservingness of legal and institutional rights. In Study 3, I will change

focus and turn to accounts by Syrian refugees in an effort to understand their lived experience of belonging, not belonging, and/or multiple belongings in their ethnic enclaves with their co-ethnics and co-nationals, as well as in the American mainstream.

CHAPTER III

Study 3: Experiences of Displacement, and Negotiating Belonging in a New Context

In 2011 ordinary people who were fed up with the humiliation and frustration they faced every day under the regime of President Bashar al-Assad in Syria shed fear despite the 40-year state of emergency which silenced people, and started protesting to find dignity, freedom, and decent living conditions (Abouzeid, 2018; Ajami, 2012). What began as small gatherings and protests, turned into nation-wide dissent and uprising by mid-March 2011 (Abouzeid, 2018). It is important to note that while those who protested were ordinary men and women, old and young people, there were also ordinary people who were uncomfortable with the protests (Hisham, 2018) as the demonstrations awakened the regime's all-too-familiar violence and harsher punishments against ordinary people to repress and silence (Abouzeid, 2018). What began as an expression of Syrian people's longing for democracy quickly turned into a war of the government against its own people, displacing millions from Syria beginning in 2011. The aim of the current study is to examine the narratives of recently resettled Syrians in order to understand how refugees negotiate self and identity, navigate the social and institutional structures, and forge a sense of belonging in a new context. I will use a combination of inductive and deductive approaches to analyze semi-structured qualitative interviews with a critical eye on the institutional and relational dynamics that reproduce privilege and marginalization in resettlement context.

Counter-Story Telling and Critical Bifocality

With the goals of centering refugees' lived experiences and analyzing these in the context of local and global resettlement institutions, I will make use of practices of *counter-story telling* (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004; Romero & Stewart, 1999) and *critical bifocality* (Weis & Fine, 2012). Neither counter-story telling nor critical bifocality is a method. They could rather be thought of as approaches, or interpretive lenses, the researcher chooses to adopt in the research process from data collection to the analysis. Counter narratives or counter stories, used interchangeably, are almost always defined in relation to master narratives, perhaps because of the prevalence and the cultural dominance of the latter. Master narratives, or dominant discourses, offer a plot line that include what is assumed to be a common and normative experience for everyone. Thus, people tend to interpret and evaluate not only others' but also their own experiences in relation to these dominant discourses. When our stories diverge from the master narratives, a challenge to finding meaning outside these readily available plots presents itself (Andrews, 2004; Harris, Carney, & Fine, 2001; Romero & Stewart, 1999). Master narratives "… subsume many differences and contradictions and restrict and contain people, by supporting a power structure in which gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and ability all define who matters and how" (Romero & Stewart, 1999, p. XIII). Master narratives are perhaps the reason the counter narratives are needed.

Counter-story telling *is both a challenge to power and is challenging for the teller* because the cultural domination of master narratives fosters marginalization and exclusion of those who are powerless within the commonly accepted plot lines. Counter narratives are a *challenge to power* because people who tell counter narratives often do so with the awareness that their stories will challenge the norms and expectations. Thus, their stories help document

and validate an alternative reality about experiences that are marginalized by the master narratives. In the meantime, counter-story telling is *challenging*, especially in research, when the stories we hear from those who we consider to be on the margins do not match the stories we expect or want to hear (Andrews, 2004; Jones, 2004). Our participants, even when we think of them as having experiences that diverge from the mainstream, may reproduce master narratives that do not serve them socially and politically. In that case, who is the one doing the counter-story telling? Should the researcher convey the stories as they are or should she interpret them with a critical lens? This particular juncture is where combining critical bifocality with counter narratives becomes important and is a preference a researcher can have.

Weis and Fine (2012) characterize critical bifocality as "a theory of method" dedicated to explicating the way structural conditions that create privilege and marginalization are enacted through institutional policies and practices (p. 174). One of the two foci of *bifocality* is centered on the institutional policies and practices that contribute to the unfair distribution of resources, wealth, and human rights across locales. The other of the two foci is centered on the individuals' lived experiences. This bifocal attention together with a critical interpretive lens is used in making the role of institutions visible in fostering dispossession in immigrant and low-income communities of color, disabled individuals and others who are on the margins of the society. As stated above, marginalized individuals and poor communities of color do not always have the critical interpretive lens when telling their own experience; thus, master narratives that marginalize them can be woven into their stories. It could be because the marginalized aspire to be like the members of the privileged groups and do not associate themselves with the structural conditions that will delimit individual upward mobility (Apfelbaum, 1979) and justify the status quo at the expense of their own well-being (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004). It could also be

because the marginalized do not have intergroup or interpersonal contact with the members of the privileged group in order to be able to make social comparison; therefore, they end up blaming their dispossession to their individual shortcomings rather than feeling deprived by the systemic and institutional forces (Crosby, 1976; Gurin, Miller, & Gurin, 1980; Major, 1994). There could as well be other reasons. Maintaining bifocality with a critical interpretive lens allows approaching this multiplicity with curiosity, while enabling an understanding of how local and global institutions systemically nurture "circuits of dispossession and privilege" without attributing weakness or strength to individuals (Weis & Fine, 2012, p. 173). In the current study, a methodological commitment to counter-story telling with a lens of critical bifocality will help document the relations of power that impinge on the refugee experiences of pre-and post-displacement and of resettlement, as well as identifying the ways in which refugees give meaning to these experiences and resist the systems of oppression.

The Resettlement of Syrian Refugees in Michigan

Michigan Governor Rick Snyder, on the local news in October 2015, publicly expressed pride in the existing "Middle Eastern Community" and showed an interest in resettling Syrian refugees specifically because of the "cultural ties" Michigan could afford them (Wxyz-TV Detroit Channel 7, 2015). However, the Governor's support for resettling Syrian refugees lasted only until November 14, 2015, when a series of terrorist attacks, later claimed by ISIS, took place in Paris, leading the governor to halt refugee resettlement in Michigan, citing his concern for the "safety of the people who live in the State" (Wood TV8, 2015). Syrian refugee resettlement in the U.S. generally was terminated in January 2017 when President Trump's Executive Order--eventually known as the "Muslim ban," or the "Refugee ban"—was adopted (The White House, 2017a, 2017b). The State of Michigan resettled 2,244 Syrian refugees

between October 2011 and October 2017; this placed Michigan second, after California, among the states which resettled the largest number of Syrian refugees (Refugee Processing Center, 2019). The majority of these Syrian refugees were resettled during the brief window from October 2015 to November 2016.

Immediately after the election of Donald Trump in 2016, the work of refugee resettlement agencies was constrained by restrictions on federal funding allocations and decreased resettlement quotas (Burke, 2018). It is against this socio-political backdrop that introduced institutional challenges to resettlement that I sought to understand the lived experiences of Syrians who had recently resettled in Southeast Michigan. Since 2011, Syrian refugees have been portrayed in the media and in political rhetoric either as vulnerable victims who are in need or as dangerous criminals and terrorists who are a national security risk. These polarized images and the focus on one-dimensional portrayals of Syrian refugees produced a simplistic understanding of refugees—one that did not include any attention to the impact of local and global resettlement practices on their experience.

Refugees themselves have little or no control over how resettlement works (Lindsay, 2017). UNHCR identifies those to be resettled and assigns them to the countries that submitted quotas and certain criteria for resettlement. In some cases, refugees cannot bring all the people they consider part of their family as they are being resettled. The only choice refugees have in the process is to decline a resettlement offer. As a result, the current resettlement regime empowers the states to choose what kind of refugees they want to resettle, while leaving refugees only with the right of refusal (Lindsay, 2017).

The refugee resettlement regime today is based on the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted in 1951 (UNHCR, 1951). The 1951 Convention

defines a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (UNHCR, 1951, p. 3). The UNHCR offers three durable solutions to protracted refugee situations: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement. Resettlement is often the last resort among the three options; it involves the selection and transfer of refugees from one country in which they have initially sought protection, to a third country that has agreed to admit them as refugees (UNHCR, 2011). In theory, refugee status in the country of resettlement should grant them permanent residency, protection against being forced to return to their original country (refoulment) where they faced persecution, and legal rights similar to those of nationals with the possibility of eventually becoming a naturalized citizen of the country of resettlement (UNHCR, 2011). Of the three options, resettlement is often viewed as less appealing both by the UNHCR and by the refugees themselves; only 1% of all refugees have the option to be resettled (Lindsay, 2017).

Based on the 1951 Convention, the core value of refugee resettlement is “to identify and protect ‘the most vulnerable’ refugees.” (Lindsay, 2017, p.11). In 2011, UN Refugee Agency explicated two key considerations in the identification of the most vulnerable refugees to be resettled. These considerations were to protect the principle of family unity, and to address the protection gaps by adopting an age, gender, and diversity sensitive approach. On the basis of these two key considerations, UNHCR published six criteria for identifying refugees with the most urgent needs. These priorities were: (1) women and girls, (2) children and adolescents, (3) older refugees, (4) refugees with disabilities, (5) lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) refugees, (6) refugees from minorities and indigenous groups (UNHCR, 2011).

In 2016, as the conflict in Syria continued to worsen, the UN Secretary General called for increased sharing of responsibility globally to alleviate the continued pressure on the host countries in the region (UNHCR, 2016). As of March 2016, over 4 million displaced Syrians were hosted by countries bordering on or near Syria, including Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. These refugees had no prospect of safe return back to Syria, and lacked resources and opportunities for a better life in these impoverished host countries (UNHCR, 2016). In response to the call from the UN Secretary General, Canadian and United States governments participated in "surge resettlement operations" for Syrian refugees in 2015 and 2016. As part of these surge resettlement operations, the U.S. government, in its attempt to expedite processing of certain groups for resettlement, reframed UN's priorities as "survivors of violence and torture, those with severe medical conditions, and women and children-consistent with our national security" (The White House, 2015). While the UNHCR put forward "key considerations" to identify "the most vulnerable" and "in need" groups on the basis of their identities, the U.S. government's framing of those groups as "low security risk" contributed to 'feminized and infantilized images of "pure" victimhood and vulnerability' (Sigona, 2014, p. 370), and implied that those who are not considered *the most vulnerable* may be dangerous.

Resettlement Policies and Practices

Refugees face the demands of the receiving societies immediately upon arrival for their resettlement and have little time to process what is expected from them, often in the context of unresolved trauma due to war and displacement. Current resettlement policies emphasize self-reliance as central to sustainable refugee resettlement. The UNHCR defined self-reliance as "… the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a

sustainable manner and with dignity. Self-reliance, as a programme approach, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern, and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian/external assistance." (UNHCR, 2005, p. 1). The UNHCR bases its approach to creating refugees' self-reliance on building strong communities and social structures. According to this approach, the goal is to build community among refugees of all ages and genders, facilitate interactions between the host community and the refugee community, and have refugees be involved in every aspect of planning, assessment, implementation and monitoring of social and economic activity.

In the state of Michigan, four main nonprofit agencies work as local resettlement agencies. These local resettlement agencies help the refugees with basic needs for the first 30 to 90 days of arrival with funding from the Department of the State and connect them with other supportive services; their goal is to support refugees' capacity to become self-reliant and integrated community members as soon as possible. At the end of the 90 days humanitarian aid period, refugees may be eligible for some continued public assistance, including cash or medical assistance, supplemental security income, government subsidized housing or food stamps. The caseworker assigned to each refugee household is expected to continually assess these needs, make decisions on a case by case basis, assist them in applying for the assistance they need, and stop the services if the need is met.

The Current Study

In the current study, I examine the narratives of Syrians who have been recently resettled in Southeast Michigan. I am especially interested in how the participants describe their feelings of belonging and not belonging in both the American mainstream (hegemonic majority) and the Syrian or Arab-origin enclaves. I will use the concepts of counter-story-telling and critical

bifocality to interpret these narratives. Without understanding how the resettlement regime contributes to the maintenance of local and global power hierarchies, the stories refugees tell could simply be understood as stories of “victimhood” and/or “resilience” as a function of psychological weaknesses or strengths of individuals. This is not my intent. Instead, I will not treat their narratives as transparent windows onto “reality,” but will recognize ways that the participants may be “countering” dominant narratives about their experience, and will use critical bifocality as a way to contextualize their experiences within the social, cultural, and institutional milieu they exist. Neither counter-story telling nor critical bifocality alone can produce a comprehensive understanding into the resettled Syrian refugees’ experiences in the Unites States. However, combining the two could help generate a fuller picture of the refugees’ stories against the backdrop of the contemporary resettlement regime.

Method

Recruitment

I used snowball sampling for this study. Some participants were recruited through each of three community organizations described below: the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), the Central Academy (CA), and the Washtenaw Refugee Welcome (WRW). At the end of each interview with the participants who were recruited through these organizations, we asked for their connections with other Syrian refugee families we could contact (see the phone script for recruitment in Appendix C).

When my interpreter first contacted the participants, she would say “We would like to have a conversation with you about your experiences prior to and after your resettlement in Michigan.” After the first interview we realized that the word “interview” is associated with the many interviews the participants had through UNHCR and through the Federal Resettlement

Agencies prior to coming to the US. It therefore connotes an "interrogation-like" interaction and is associated with institutions. For that reason, after that we avoided using the word "interview" to describe our interactions with them and opted for phrases like "have a conversation" in order to convey the meaning that our interactions with them would be rather casual and that they would have agency in shaping the interaction.

Participants

The families I interviewed had been in the United States on average for 21 months, ranging between 10 to 36 months. All the interviewees were resettled in the U.S. between October 2015 and November 2016. Twenty-two Syrian refugees were interviewed (13 = women, 9 = men). The average family size was 6 people, ranging between 1 and 11. Some households included extended family members such as elderly and siblings and their families. Four of the 22 families I got to know were headed by widows or divorcees. Average age and years of education did not differ significantly between men and women. The average age of female interviewees was 39, ranging between 32 and 56. The average years of education for women was eight years, ranging between five and 12 years. The average age of male interviewees was 40, ranging between 32 and 56. The average years of education for men was eight, ranging between four and 12 years.

At least one person in the household was currently employed in 15 of the 22 households I visited; two of 22 were in transition between jobs and were currently looking for jobs. In only five of the households was no one currently employed. Three of these families were recipients of disability pensions and two of retirement pensions. All but one of the 13 women interviewed were homemakers when in Syria. At the time of the interviews, 11 of the women were homemakers and two of them worked outside the home. Among the 11 homemakers, four had

previously worked outside the home at some point during their time in the United States even though they had never been employed prior to coming to the United States. When employed, they either became part of the unskilled labor force or the informal economy in the United States. The kinds of jobs women worked in previously or at the time of the interviews were: sorting donations at a thrift store, catering food independently from home, cleaning as janitors in schools, or working at a dry cleaner, McDonalds, grocery stores, or bakeries. About half of the men had been small business owners when in Syria, two were soccer players, one worked as a postman, one had been unemployed due to his disability. Like the women, the men either became part of the unskilled labor force or the informal economy after resettling in the United States. The kinds of jobs they worked in previously or at the time of the interviews were: as janitors in schools, hospitals or hotels, as cooks in restaurants, in recycling facilities, or in aluminum and iron processing facilities, body shops or car mechanics, construction businesses, or in moving companies. Two of the nine men interviewed were retired. The kind of jobs male interviewees worked in were not different from the kind of jobs the husbands of the female interviewees worked in.

All of the names I use in the results section of this paper are pseudonyms to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. According to the data provided by the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (see Table 15), the locales in which this fieldwork was conducted (Detroit, Ypsilanti, and Dearborn) were not the ones that resettled the largest numbers. However, even the number of those we spoke to who live in Ypsilanti was larger than the official Refugee Processing Center numbers. This is because refugees are exceedingly mobile, particularly during the initial years of their resettlement during which they are in search of the town best fitting for their community, educational, and financial needs. The

22 households we visited were scattered all around Greater Detroit. More specifically, 13 of the households we visited were located in Ypsilanti, a small and historically working-class town about 40 miles west of Detroit. Among these 13 households, 11 were within a public housing project and two were located in town, not too far from the housing project. Of the remaining nine households, five had a Detroit zip code and were located on the border between Detroit and Dearborn in Detroit's predominantly Black and impoverished neighborhoods; and four were located in predominantly Arab and Muslim Dearborn.

Table 15. Syrian Refugees' First Place of Resettlement in Michigan between October 2011 and October 2017

Township (in Michigan)	Year							
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Cumulative
Ann Arbor	0	5	0	5	19	91	33	153
Battle Creek	0	0	0	0	0	108	40	148
Bloomfield Hills	0	0	0	0	0	17	0	17
Bloomfield Township	0	0	0	0	9	20	0	29
Clinton Township	0	0	0	0	3	425	62	490
Dearborn	0	0	0	0	76	281	38	395
Dearborn Heights	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
Detroit	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	20
Eastpointe	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Farmington Hills	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	7
Garden City	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Grand Rapids	0	0	0	0	45	96	7	148
Hamtramck	0	0	0	0	0	38	5	43
Lansing	1	0	0	0	0	67	0	68
Madison Heights	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Pleasant Pidge	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Pontiac	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Roseville	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4
Sterling Heights	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Troy	0	0	0	0	75	519	93	687
West Bloomfield Township	0	0	0	0	5	1	0	6
Ypsilanti	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	7
Cumulative	1	5	1	5	246	1,692	294	2,244

*Data extracted from the Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS)

Data Collection

Interview procedure

My methodology and approach to interviewing draws from several approaches: (1) the life story (McAdams, 1988) and narrative study of lives (Josselson & Lieblich, 1993) approaches in psychology; (2) feminist approaches to qualitative research (e.g., Oakley, 1981; 2016); and (3)

critical and ethical practices for research that relies on translation (e.g., Edwards, 1998). There is no textbook definition of "the narrative study of lives" in psychology and the practice itself has been evolving with variations as the academic community becomes more self-reflexive (Josselson, 1993). In my research, as I wanted to learn about refugees' constructions of self, identity, and community during resettlement, marrying the narrative study of lives with the feminist social scientific imagination was intended to enable me to transgress the boundaries associated with the dichotomies of "formal/informal, objective/subjective, structured/unstructured" (Oakley, 2016, p.197). Feminist social scientific practice and theory have been crucial in guiding my data collection and analysis. Drawing on Indra's (1999) assertion, I conceptualized gender as "a key *relational* dimension of human activity and thought" that is informed by social constructions of manhood and womanhood which have social and material consequences for how men and women experience and live their lives (p. 2). Therefore, the gendered and feminist lens I adopted for this research is not rooted solely in women's activities or experiences, but is informed by the observation of the *relationality* of gender permeating everyday lives of women and men.

Feminist narrative inquiry can be an intimate form of data collection. I invited myself into the everyday lives of the participants, even if only for a couple of hours and asked what most people would consider to be personal and private questions about their distant and recent pasts, present circumstances and future vision. In stark contrast with the intimate nature of the interaction, the encounter is regulated by certain rules that hold us, the researchers, accountable to our scientific communities. Having the participant sign informed consent, recording the interview, and compensating interviewees for participation are reminders of the formality of the interaction between the researcher and the participant. Within the confines of this regulated

intimacy, the researcher must build a trusting relationship with the participant. For the interviews I conducted, building a trusting relationship involved not only my interactions with the main interlocutor of the interview, but also with other family members in the household and with the interpreter accompanied me. Typically, during the interview, other family members would be present in the shared living room together with the main interlocutor, me and the interpreter. Even though there was a designated interlocutor to whom I directed my questions in each interview, I encouraged other family members to contribute to the conversations. Including other family members in the conversation was crucial for building trust with my participants, not only because of the cultural meanings attached to kinship (Shryock, 2000), but also because of the significance of collective narration in this particular case.

Refugee families went through the experience of displacement together; often they had to move on together with whoever was able to come along, even when they continued to have losses along the way. Moreover, once they are resettled, the refugee household is viewed as a unit by governmental and non-governmental agencies when providing assistance; therefore, the experience of one family member is highly dependent on the experience of other family members. From their displacement to resettlement, the family members have a collective memory in which their stories are multilayered and interdependent. Disrupting this collective memory either by asking the main interlocutor to talk in private or asking the other family members not to interrupt would not only be counterproductive to building trust, but also unfair from a feminist 'ethics of care' standpoint (Edwards & Mauthner, 2011; Gilligan, 1983). The family members were never disruptive or derailing of the course of the interview; the storyline was still determined by the main interlocutor, with the family members sporadically contributing details; and the accounts offered did not conflict with each other. There is always the possibility

that the main interlocutor would have told a different story, or talked more about different kinds of experiences, if others were not in the room. This could have been the case especially during the interviews with some of the women in the presence of their husband, children, and/or mother-in-law. However, observing cultural norms and not damaging the relationship with the participants felt more important at the time of the interviews than asking other people to leave or asking the participant to talk privately.

I think of these narratives as "family stories" because they reflect the experiences of a particular family member, and yet are the versions of the stories that were shareable in the presence of other family members, who sometimes contributed to them. Some of the women I interviewed did not have husbands and/or children and were interviewed privately. Those private interviews revealed different dimensions of the gender dynamics within the Syrian refugee community when read in juxtaposition with the family stories. In interviews with some women who did live with husbands and children, their husbands were running errands or working, but the children would still be present and sometimes the husband would come home at some point and join us. Similarly, when we interviewed some of the men, their wives were visiting a neighbor or doing work around the house, and their children would often be present, with the wives joining us at some point. Finally, in some households, extended family members were also present during the interviews.

Translation

As a person who only speaks and understands beginner level Arabic, I worked with translators and interpreters to carry out this project. Different methodological decisions about translation were made in different phases of this study. I will briefly summarize the three phases

when the decisions were made, and the reasons for these decisions. These three phases were prior to data collection, during data collection, and during transcription and analysis.

Prior to data collection. The interview questions and some potential prompts for these questions were first written in English and then translated into Levantine (Syrian) Arabic by a bilingual person who is a native speaker of both Arabic and English. Next, the material was back-translated to English by another bilingual person who is a native speaker of both languages. The differences between the original English version and the back-translated English version were small and were resolved through discussion with both translators; the translations that fit the purposes of the research best were accepted (see Appendix B for the interview protocol).

During data collection. A third, independent interpreter worked with me in the data collection phase. This interpreter reviewed both the original English and the final Arabic translation of the interview questions; she agreed that the translation represented the questions I intended to ask and that they were asked in a culturally appropriate manner. Before working with this interpreter, I shared the goals of the research and the research questions with her and I continually explained to her the kinds of things that I was interested in learning from the participants as we went from one interview to another. After each interview the two of us discussed the interview for about fifteen minutes and recorded our conversation on a voice recorder. These recordings included our reflections, emotions, and thoughts about the interview, the participants and their surroundings, as well as the interpretation/translation process and our relationship with the participants (for an example from one of our debriefing sessions, see Excerpt 1 in Appendix D).

The interpreter who accompanied me in the interviews was a bilingual and bicultural Syrian-American woman who is a native speaker of both English and Arabic. She was concerned

about her insider/outsider status and the potential hindrance that her relative position of privilege posed to her ability to connect with the participants, despite their shared heritage and language. She was modestly dressed, young and married; her manners and way of speaking conveyed her high level of education, her cosmopolitan Damascene background, and her Sunni Islamic faith. When we visited the participants in their homes, she would immediately connect with them and build rapport. Her religious and ethnic background made connecting with the participants easier, even if her education level and professionalism were potentially viewed as a divergence. The participants were curious to learn about her and would often seek out opportunities to ask her questions about her background and her current living situation during or at the end of the interview. Her calm and serene demeanor and appropriate use of religious and cultural phrases in response to hearing about the losses and difficulties they experienced as refugees encouraged participants to easily open up to her.

Our post-interview debriefings were very helpful to inform, reassure and check in with each other, as well as to change communication patterns that did not serve us, and to set a direction for the interviews ahead. It also helped us build rapport between ourselves, which was an integral part of a three-way interview situation. After the first few interviews my interpreter started feeling more comfortable providing feedback and direction for me, as I did for her (see Excerpt 2 in Appendix D).

The presence of my interpreter during data collection was a constant reminder of the participants' struggles with the language barrier since arrival. During the interviews, we had a three-way interaction, and all of the translation was consecutive. I would ask the question in English, the interpreter would translate it into Arabic, and the participant would respond in Arabic. The interpreter would ask further questions if there was need for clarification, or would

respond to the participant appropriately before translating the response back to English; then I would respond to what the participant said and ask the next question in English. The interpreter used first person (direct speech) when translating my questions to the interviewees in Arabic; and used third person (indirect speech) when translating the interviewees' responses into English. The interpreter's use of first person when asking the questions was her choice and helped communicate the unity between her and me to the participants. The language use conveyed that we were a collaborative team and our mutual interest was to understand the participants' experiences. On the other hand, using the third person when translating what the participants said helped the interpreter distance herself from what has been told and convey her respect for the participants' ownership of their stories. Furthermore, her use of the third-person in translating participants' accounts made the interpreter visible in the process. As Edwards (1998) states, the visibility of the interpreter is important for relaying crucial information about an aspect of the participants' lives. It is a constant reminder that the participants lack linguistic capital to the extent that limits their ability to communicate in the absence of a bilingual person.

Although the interpreter and I initially worried that the participants would be bored while their comments were being translated, in fact they listened to the interpreter carefully while their stories were being translated and nodded if they somewhat understood what was being told. They often watched me for my reactions as I was listening to the English version of their stories, and sometimes interrupted the interpreter to add to the story as they saw from the verbal or nonverbal cues that I was interested in what they were telling. Finally, a few of the participants who had some knowledge of English and were able to follow what the interpreter was saying commented on her ability to retain everything and stick to the order of things they said.

At times the translation became more difficult, due to the emotional weight of the story. In those moments, the interpreter was challenged by the simultaneous demands of giving the appropriate response to the participants' narratives while preparing to translate what had been told. I often could understand from watching the participant's tone of voice or tears that a difficult experience was being described, even though I did not understand the content, and I would wait patiently while the interpreter was offering support and exchanging appropriate words to honor their story before translating it. On some occasions the interpreter cried along with the participant. In such moments I would let them both be silent for a while and calm down before moving on. The unique difficulty of these moments was that the weight of emotions had to be felt twice by everyone in the room: first during the initial telling in Arabic and second during the translation. However, the participants were very eager to hear the interpreter tell their difficult stories to me in English, and they would often watch my reactions as the story was being told. Perhaps bearing witness to their stories being told and then listening to it in the English language was powerful because the recognition of their stories told in the language they were trying to learn earned their stories a new status.

The situation was probably more burdensome for my interpreter than for the participant or me, in that she had to both hear about a difficult experience and then had to translate it in the moment. My interpreter also identified with the participants at a deeper level than I could because of her connection to the homeland and she felt particularly compelled to help the refugees personally because she spoke their language. Rebecca Campbell (2002), who works with rape survivors, encourages an "ethics of care" in "emotionally engaged research." This includes "caring for the research participants, caring for what becomes of a research project, and caring for one's self and one's research team" (pp. 123-124). Getting into a sustainable work

flow with my interpreter was something we both actively worked on. This included checking in before, during, and after each interview, as well as periodic discussions between us about how to handle some emotions that arise. McClelland (2017), writing about her work with Stage IV breast cancer patients, acknowledges the danger of listening, both during the interview and in the aftermath while transcribing and analyzing. Interviews on sensitive topics or with participants who have been through difficult experiences can be emotionally costly. During our data collection, my interpreter and I went through phases of "compassion stress," defined as a manageable level of stress associated with having sympathy (Burr, 1996; Pickett et al., 1994). I dealt with this stress by offering support and help to the participants in connecting them with local voluntary organizations and individuals whenever I could. For example, when they asked, I connected some of the participants with volunteers in various small local organizations that offer transportation or tutoring in English; I also encouraged my interpreter to help, if they asked for a document to be translated during our interview and if she felt comfortable doing it. However, I think my interpreter and I experienced the compassion stress differently because of our different insider/outsider statuses. Towards the end, right before our last interview, she was feeling particularly stressed about not being able to help enough. It was particularly important to me to recognize her feelings and to support her desire to help. When she opened up to me about the accumulated stress, we talked about various things we could do after the data collection ended to support the refugees we had met.

During transcription and analysis. Methodological decisions about translation and interpretation in qualitative interviewing are made on the basis of the researcher's epistemological approach, as well as practical considerations. Differences in how qualitative researchers value, weigh and view the role of language exist on a continuum (Willig, 2001). At

one end are qualitative researchers who believe that language is a relatively transparent tool that allows the researcher to learn about the internal experience of the interviewee. At the other end are researchers who believe that language is a constitutive element in the creation of different versions of reality. Regardless of whether research includes translation or not, those who are on the latter end of the continuum suggest that the words we choose and the way we tell our experiences constitute only one version of reality (Fairclough, 1995). What difference does this make for researchers who rely on translation? The act of translation itself in both cases is critical. In my case, I view translation as a constitutive aspect of the data, and the translator's presence is integral to the analyses rather than being merely instrumental in the data collection (Fersch, 2013; Temple & Young, 2016). Thus, if versions of reality are dialogically constituted in every interaction, then any translation/interpretation is another version of reality. For this reason, cultural and linguistic competence, identities and experiences of the interpreter and the researcher are part of the research (e.g., Temple, 2002). Thus, the criteria for rigor include not only the accuracy of the translation (which of course is important and must be valued), but the ability to analyze how meaning is co-constructed in a three-way interaction among the researcher, the interpreter and the participant (Fersch, 2013; Brämberg & Dahlberg, 2013). This approach requires the visibility of the interpreter in the manuscript that comes out of the research process (Edwards, 1998). In order to make the interpreter visible and acknowledge the participants' ownership of their narratives, I used verbatim transcriptions of the interpreter's translations in the third person she used during the interviews. However, it was not always easy to keep the interpreter visible throughout the analyses. Because I relied on the interpreter's account, often my voice and the interpreter's voice using the third person when referring to what the participants had said, became one and the same. This was inevitable given the process we

adopted, and underscores why it was important to continually discuss our experience, and for me to share with the interpreter the aims and questions motivating the research.

Voice recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim by research assistants and me. The transcripts were then “integrity checked” by my interpreter and to the extent possible, given that I am not bilingual, by me. Integrity checking includes listening to the audio recordings while reading the transcriptions to make sure that the translations in the transcripts are accurate reports of what the conversation between the interpreter and the participant was about (Ussher, et al., 2017, p. 1906). For this step, I first went through the transcriptions while listening to the recordings and (1) marked some of interpreter’s word choices, particularly for words that could have multiple meanings in English; (2) marked interpreter’s sentences and/or words that needed elaboration or explanation (to ensure accuracy); and (3) marked segments in which the interpreter was interrupted before completing her translation during the interview, or when the interviewee talked for a very long time, making it impossible for the interpreter to retain all the details in translation during the interview (to ensure completeness). Then the interpreter went through the transcriptions while listening to the recordings, and added postscripts to the transcriptions to ensure the most appropriate words were used, and that the translation was accurate and complete. During our integrity check we found only small divergences or inconsistencies in the translation. Any afterthoughts found as a result of the integrity check were discussed between us and added to the transcript when relevant and appropriate; and the transcript was edited for readability (for an example of an integrity check, see Excerpts 3 and 4 in Appendix D)

Sometimes a participant talked for a very long period of time; in these cases, the interpreter made decisions about how to summarize what was being told. Since the interpreter

understood the goals of the research, I trusted her ability to make these decisions on the spot. In those moments, she would tell me during the interview that she would summarize what was said by the participant and translate the details from the audio recording after the interview; then we would move on with the interview. During the integrity checks, we worked on completing the data with these details[4].

Compensation

The participants were compensated for their time and participation with $25. The interpreter mentioned the participation fee when she contacted the participants to schedule the interviews, and we presented the participation fee in a white envelope at the end of the interview. In almost all cases, the participants did not want to accept the participation fee and insisted on not taking it. In particular, male participants resisted to taking the envelope. We had to be particularly careful when offering the participation fee to not re-stigmatize them for being on the receiving end. We would say, "This is provided by the university for your time, and we would get into trouble if we do not give this money to you." Upon hearing this, they would be less reluctant to take the envelope. A few participants commented that it was important for them to "get things out of [their] chest and that [they] did not participate for the money."

Analytical Approach

Fischer-Rosenthal (2000) states that the task of a person who is describing their life is to create meaning out of their experiences in constructing a narrative, while the task of the

[4] Since language is fundamental for the construction of meaning, it would have been ideal to analyze verbatim post-interview-translations of the participants narratives from Arabic to English. This would have required to first create verbatim transcription of conversations between the interpreter and the participants in Arabic, then a verbatim translation of these parts to English, and finally integration of the verbatim transcription of the English spoken parts of the interview between the interpreter and me with the post-interview-translation of Arabic spoken parts between the interpreter and the participants. I did not have the financial resources to do this for this dissertation. However, the collected data will be translated verbatim for future publications.

researcher is to interpret and reconstruct the person's account to create a new meaning at a different discursive level. As Josselson (2004) writes, "Because meanings cannot be grasped directly and all meanings are essentially indeterminate in any unshakeable way, interpretation becomes necessary" (p. 3). Since hermeneutics is a necessity in narrative research, translation adds another layer of interpretation in the process of reconstructing meaning. In fact, the meaning is co-constructed by the participant, the interpreter and the researcher, with the added challenge of all three using different discursive tools, speaking to different audiences, and having different goals in mind when making sense of the story. It is then the researcher's responsibility to work through these versions, while contextualizing them. Narrative analysis, Schiff (2017) writes "… reaches inside the person and extends outward toward the social world, drawing these two gestures together into one seamless movement." (p. 141). Interpretation, in this sense, is a continuous act of threading the needle between the personal narrative and its situational, socio-historical, and cultural contexts.

One of the challenges of narrative analysis is that all you have is the story as told by the participant (in my case also as interpreted by the translator). It may seem contradictory to have the aspiration of contextualizing the story when you only have what the person tells you. It is not unreasonable to think that each individual is particular in their own ways, or that their interpretation of what happened could be skewed based on their personality. However, when you have many stories told by different people with common themes cutting across as well as contradictions, the commonalities and variations help contextualize the individual stories. This is why it is important to have interviewed 22 people about the same general topic. The analytical approach that I followed is based in narrative analysis (McAdams, 1988); however, it is also informed by qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I first identified themes

cutting across the narratives of many individuals. Then, within each theme, I explored two or three individuals' narratives that were both contradictory and complementary to enable a rich contextualization of each theme. Therefore, my analytical approach aimed at providing context both within and across individuals.

The combination of narrative and thematic analysis helped me identify the patterns in the stories that depended on who was telling them. I started to identify counter narratives after seeing how similar to each other the stories told by widows, divorcees, and women with disabled husbands were, and how different they were from the stories told by the women with able-bodied male kin as well as the able-bodied male participants. I grouped together the stories of women whose husbands were disabled, lost to death, or whose marriage ended, due to the commonalities in their accounts, specifically the reorganization of gender roles that have occurred for them during resettlement. Then I read the stories of these women from non-traditional households against the stories of the members of traditional refugee households in which the marriage bond was protected and traditional gender roles were transferred somewhat more effectively post-displacement. After identifying the differences in the accounts of traditional and non-traditional households, I organized the findings into four broader themes. The first theme is "The end of life as normal." In this theme, I identify the way participants describe how they lost their sense of normalcy after the war and displacement in their everyday lives. The second theme is "Salvaging reputation through hard work." In this theme, participants from different kinds of households describe how they reckon with stigma of depending on assistance. The third theme is "Independence & Self-sufficiency." In this theme, I identify the gendered experience of gaining independence and self-sufficiency in resettlement. The fourth and final theme is "Citizen-

making." In this theme, I identify the gendered experience of standing before the legal institutions, and the gendered differences in the way participants described their experiences.

Results

Traditional vs. Non-traditional Households

Among the recently resettled Syrian households I visited in Southeast Michigan, about two-thirds of them preserved traditional gender roles from their previous lives in Syria. These households were headed by able-bodied men. After resettlement, able-bodied men continued to work to provide for the family, while the women took care of the needs of the children, husband and the elderly, if there were any, in the house. Saba, as an example of stay-at-home women interviewed in these traditional families, said a typical day for her was spent by: "… making the house… Her youngest daughter (who is one-year-old) is keeping her busy nowadays. She prepares food for her children and when her husband comes home— he comes home pretty late— she tries to create some environment where they can enjoy the evening as a family."

The women in these traditional families who had able-bodied and employed husbands spent the majority of their time maintaining the house, catering to the needs of their husbands and children. Even though taking care of business outside the household was not something that these women typically had done before resettlement, the women and their husbands recognized the necessity of sharing these responsibilities outside the household for being able to survive as a family. Many women refugees expressed the joy and freedom they associated with learning how to drive in the U.S. Arwa, for example, said "A Syrian is a Syrian," and nothing changed in terms of how she views herself; but, "things in their lives had to change and she had to adapt to the new things, even though in her roots she is still a Syrian." One thing that she enjoyed about being in the U.S. was that she could go out if she wanted, and drive, buy the groceries on her

own, or interact with men. In contrast, in Syria it was more common for women to just be at home and for the men to take care of all the other things outside of the house; her husband or her son would be the people who answer the door or talk to other men if need be. In the U.S., she felt like family life and marriage was more cooperative, and various tasks and responsibilities were shared.

While Syrian women in traditional households enjoyed their new roles and responsibilities outside the house, how did men respond to these changes in their partners? Were they experiencing any changes in male gender roles and responsibilities? Arwa said her husband progressed as he saw that she was progressing; he accepted the changes in her behavior as they came because he understood them to be natural adjustments to where they lived. When I inquired further about whether there were any changes in her husband's behavior, she responded that the biggest change was that he gave her a lot more freedom. She added that there was still room for improvement because even though he gave her a lot more freedom, she did not own a car to be doing things outside the house on her own. Perhaps it was more common for women to change, and have added responsibilities outside the house, such as grocery shopping, which to them looked like freedom, rather than an additional responsibility. Men's gender-related behavior and roles largely remained unchanged, beyond accepting the changes they saw in their wives. Some men realized the toll on their wives' mental health of being isolated in the house and not having any exposure into the society takes; these men supported them in exploring different options to learn English and how to drive. Some men still held onto the traditional gender ideologies and restricted their wives' access to the outside. For example, Haider, at the end of our interview, asked me if I could help them find a female English teacher who would come to their house to teach his wife English. He was worried about his wife going to English classes outside and the

gender of the instructor she would work with mattered for her and Haider to feel more comfortable.

Although women enjoyed sharing responsibilities outside the house, they were not always able to act on these responsibilities due to some material barriers. These women, in most cases, did not have access to the only family car because the men would drive the car to work. The women almost unanimously told us that not having access to a car or other means of transportation limited their ability to go to the English classes, take children to school or hospital, or run errands in the absence of their husbands. In some of these cases, women were pregnant or had little children and that added an extra barrier to being able to leave the house. These women fulfilled their traditional gender roles as homemakers, and some still aspired to have a life outside the house, to be able to learn to drive and master the English language. Not having access to a car or other means of transportation, having little children or being pregnant and having their husbands handle business outside home created the conditions for women's monoculturalism. Staying home meant that they were isolated from the larger society and not learning or practicing English. As they continued to stay home they learned to control the things they could inside the house rather than outside and their isolation grew further with their reluctance to learn English and interact with "the Americans." Even though the preservation of gender roles was advantageous for the survival of their families, both men and women in traditional households had to adjust to the demands of a different economic and social life in the United States.

In these households in which the women stayed at home and men worked for long hours, it was typical for men to not be able to learn English or improve their English because they did not have time to study the language as they had to provide for the family. These men worked either in businesses owned by other Arabs who were established in the area, or in jobs in the

service industry in which they were mostly invisible (e.g., cleaning). Given the language barrier, some Syrian refugee men were underemployed due to the jobs available to them. Paradoxically, working for long hours and in jobs that do not require English meant that they could not improve their language skills, nor their job prospects for the future. This resulted in men being stuck in a cycle of underemployment, precarity, and monoculturalism, like Haider, a young man who changed jobs three times within two years and did not have much time to learn English, living in government subsidized housing with his wife and two young children. His job at the time of this interview required him to lift and carry heavy items. He worked 11 hours a day, leaving very little time to do anything outside work. One advantage of his job, Haider said, was that he did not have to know English to do the job; but one drawback was that because he did not have any time outside of his work, he could not go to classes to learn English and improve his prospects for better jobs in the future. Haider thought, because of not knowing English, his family ended up missing things that they were eligible for. For example, he knew that he would have been eligible for food stamps based on his income level; however, he had not been able to fill out the forms in English, and the family did not have a caseworker who was helping them any more after about two years in the U.S. His wife also did not know any English and she was not able to take care of the errands outside the house because of having to take care of their two little children and not having any means of transportation when her husband drove the car to his work. The barriers Haider's family faced were commonly experienced by other traditional families. The expectation that Haider's family should quickly become self-sufficient perhaps put them in a cycle of poverty because their need for more time to learn English and perhaps find a better job was not recognized in the resettlement context.

Although the traditional household was the most typical among the Syrian refugee households we visited, about one-third of the sample did not fit the description of a traditional household. Some women had lost their husbands as a result of war and displacement; other women lost their husbands due to health reasons or to divorce; still others had a disabled husband, which resulted in shuffling gender roles with the new demands they encountered in a new context. Most importantly, the way these women in the households that were not traditional in form talked about their experiences resembled each other, and diverged from the way women in the *traditional households* described their experiences; thus, I called this group *non-traditional households*. Even though the non-traditional households varied more than the traditional ones in terms of their composition and what made them non-traditional, the common experience among them was that they were female-headed, either due to the husband's disability or absence. For example, Yasmin's husband could not work nor could he attend the mosque regularly due to illness. As the sole breadwinner in her household, Yasmin believed the Muslim community did not include her family when distributing donations because of her husband's irregular mosque attendance. Yasmin's interpretation of the relations within the Arab and Muslim community resembled that of widow and divorcee refugees more than that of married refugee women in traditional households, even though Yasmin's husband was living with her. Yasmin said "out of everyone living here," referring to the refugee community who lived in the government subsidized housing, "my situation is the most difficult because I am pregnant, I have to take care of my other children, and I have to be the one who works because of my husband's condition." The resemblance in the stories of women in the female-headed households indicated that it was important for the men in the refugee families, as the head of the household, to show up at the mosque if the family wanted to accumulate reputation in the Arab and Muslim community and

be considered when aid is distributed. In a context where all the formal and informal institutions of resettlement and the surrounding communities favored the heteronormative family unit, women in non-traditional households had a common unsettling quality to their experiences, and they described experiences by using words such as "the worst" or "the most difficult" in comparison to others'.

In contrast to the traditional families, the struggles of the non-traditional households were as much about adjusting to the losses and the role reversals as about adjusting to the United States and finding a place for themselves within their supposedly close-knit communities (Syrian, Arab, and Muslim). For example, Asma, a widow, experienced gendered stigma and the isolation from the Syrian, Muslim and Arab communities. She told us about a time when she had difficulty breathing in her house and could not get help from her closest Syrian neighbors in the government housing. The neighbor's husband answered the phone in an angry tone saying, "What do you need?" Asma asked to speak with his wife, but the man said, his wife doesn't have time to talk to her, and hung up. Later, Asma realized that there was a gas leak in her house, and she slept that night with her door open. In the morning, she wanted to visit her neighbor; however, the neighbor did not let her in, and said, "Excuse me, but my husband doesn't speak with [other] women." Asma told us that "the doors has been closed to her…because she doesn't have a husband." Yasmin, Asma, other widows, divorcees, and women whose husbands were absent from the public sphere due to disabilities talked about the ways Syrian, Arab, and Muslim communities, their supposed ingroup, were not welcoming to them.

The End of Life as Normal: "after what happened in Syria…"

Life in Michigan, as refugees gradually found out, was qualitatively different than the life they knew in Syria prior to the events of 2011. Two different participants in separate households

uttered almost the exact same sentence in describing their loss and grief: “the body is here, but the *heart* is in Syria” said Rania; and “the body is here, but the *soul* is in Syria” said Haider. Haider is a relatively younger father of two; Rania is a widow living with her four children. Both participants articulated the intensity of the *wants* and *desires* with the heart or the soul, as opposed to the constrained materiality of the physical body in the here and now. Both seemed to view their physical body’s presence in the here and now as an *obligation,* while what the *heart desires* or the *soul craves* is to be in Syria, perhaps at an earlier time before everything was rotten. They would not have chosen to be here, if it was not the way it had to be.

Refugees defined pre-2011 life in Syria as normal or natural, an ideal that is perhaps lost forever in a distant past and a distant place. As Rania put it, for all their “normal lives,” her family lived in Homs in Syria, but “after what happened,” they moved to Damascus first, and from there to Jordan before resettling in the United States. Very rarely, interviewees referred to “what happened in Syria” as “war,” “revolution,” “clashes,” or “crisis.” For most participants it was common to use the more neutral word “the events,” and avoid using words that would make them look like they were picking a side, unless they were talking about losing a loved one in a “clash,” or in “war.” Perhaps the word choice was also relevant to the difficulty of comprehending what had happened, or that what had happened was not only one thing but many things at the same time. They said, “after the events in Syria,” “after what happened” or “after 2011” to refer to the end of normalcy.

The year 2011 was a watershed moment, a breaking point for the life they had known as Syrians. Samer, a 56-year-old man who lost one of his sons, said, “Everything was normal up until the revolution got started… People in Homs are very normal. They are calm and serene and don’t like to have any problems with other people. He never expected that they would have to

leave Homs." One can hear in Samer's voice that he blamed the end of his comfort to the uprising, even though Samer himself was not pro-regime. Like Rania and Samer, most other participants described their lives before 2011 as involving abundance, joy, and carefreeness, despite the usual struggles of everyday life. The abundance was often associated with the number of people and the family around them, but also with wealth and lifestyle. Saba, for example, who had a "nice and stable upbringing," went to school until sixth grade and got married when she was 15. She had "a really big family" and her relatives all lived nearby, but after her marriage she moved in with her in-laws' who were "an even bigger family," thus creating even more people even closer at hand. Saba and her sister both married men from the same family. They lived in

> … a Syrian style house, like the ones you see in Bab Al-Hara[5] with a courtyard with trees and flowers in it, and several rooms opening up to this common area. Even after those around them started building tall buildings, they kept their old-style house to protect their heritage. They had six families living in the same big house.

Saba remembers it as an "enjoyable life, with her in-laws being very humble and very nice." Her husband owned a restaurant and they "lived comfortably." After 2011, "Everyone had to part ways. Her father-in-law passed away and her mother-in-law passed away. Her sister ended up moving to a different area. Everyone ended up moving in their own direction because of *what was happening* in Syria."

[5] "The Neighborhood's Gate." A contemporary popular TV series widely watched in the Arab World. It takes place in a neighborhood in Damascus, Syria during the inter-war period under French rule. The show chronicles the daily events and family dramas in this neighborhood.

Unlike Saba, who came from a cosmopolitan Damascene background, Nabila came from a rural farming family and grew up in Daraa. She went to school until tenth grade, when she married her husband who was also from Daraa. Nabila says,

> It was a very calm, quiet and safe life. She and her husband both are from farmer families because the rural area they lived was very fruitful and agriculturally productive. They never needed to import any sort of thing. Everything was available in their region, and people who wanted to do business would typically go to Kuwait to do business, but there were also people who were just farming and living off of their agricultural production.

Nabila refers to pre-2011 as "calm, quiet and safe" times. For her, the abundance was due to the richness of the agriculture in this area, and the big self-sustaining families lived there content with what they had. Yasmin, who grew up in the industrial city of Homs, also talked about how having a big family was important to her growing up:

> Her childhood was very nice. She had two brothers and twelve sisters. Her house was always full of excitement and action. They would go up on the roof sometimes, and they were always running around and sometimes in the summer they would go to the beach, and she was saying it was always full of happiness. After 2011, Yasmin's family was also uprooted from Homs where they lived their entire lives until then. They lost one of her brothers *in the war*, only two months after he got married. Other family members now live in Egypt, Dubai, Libya and Syria. She is the only one who is in the United States, with her husband and children.

As these different accounts and many others show, having a big family as part of one's everyday life experience growing up was important to Syrian people. After what happened in Syria,

beginning with 2011, big families were scattered, and some family members were lost. Among all the difficulties of building life from scratch in a completely different place. the most difficult was perhaps the *lack* of abundance refugees experienced, after growing up with lots of family and support around them. The lack of kin around them was an everyday reminder of things not being "normal." This has become a setback for all the refugee households who feel like a small portion of their families were transplanted here, but a particular setback for the women in non-traditional households who feel like their sense of being whole was compromised. Not having able-bodied male-kin around them was both a practically and an emotionally challenging issue for the women in non-traditional households. This meant exposing themselves to the stigma of not having support on top of actually not having the support.

Salvaging Reputation through Hard work: "… I want my reputation to be good."

Able-bodied young Syrian men were motivated by a desire to acquire a "good reputation" in the community, establish esteem, and restore a sense of self through hard work. Thus, they attributed a great deal of importance to their employment status. Even when they were underemployed, underpaid, or overworked, refugee men were grateful to be working, and to have been granted the right to work in the US. This had not always been the case in other countries they lived in since their journey from Syria began. In the Greater Detroit area, the presence of Arabic-speaking people in the ethnic enclaves gave them more options to choose from when it came to employment, housing, and schooling. In addition, the lax employment law in the U.S., compared to other countries, granted them the right to work while having refugee status. However, many of the men we interviewed were overworked and underpaid, and they often felt that they had to accept work in unhealthy conditions. These men or their wives talked

about how some employers were taking advantage of their vulnerability and putting them in precarious situations.

In search of better treatment, refugee men frequently changed workplaces in the first couple of years of resettlement. Irfan had been a shoemaker in Syria. He had owned a small shop in which he made and sold women's shoes. When the situation in Syria became worse, he went to Turkey first on his own, found work, and then brought his family there. Irfan, a hardworking man with his first craft, learned how to make chairs and coffee tables using iron in a little workshop in Turkey. When he and his family came to the United States, the resettlement agency found him work in a facility that processed iron and aluminum. After working in this facility for a year and a half, Irfan started having breathing problems from the fumes being emitted in the closed room that he was working in. He fainted several times and eventually went to a doctor.

> *Interpreter*: …The doctor said, 'you shouldn't be working there anymore' and wrote a note. So, he stopped working there about three months ago. But then, because he stopped working, the food stamps were cut off and he didn't have any sort of health care. They said 'you have to be working' to keep being eligible for aid, but he couldn't find any sort of job… So now he said that tomorrow he's going to ACCESS so that he can try to get a license to drive a semi-truck and that way he can potentially just work in transportation.
>
> *(Irfan adds in Arabic)*
>
> *Interpreter*: He doesn't know exactly when he will start (working again), but the idea is just that he's starting the process of trying to find (new) work. But he obviously wants to find something that wouldn't affect his health. Because you know working in those factories was really dangerous to his health because of the fumes and the gasses-
>
> *Researcher*: Yeah that's bad.

Interpreter: He said something like driving would just be normal. He said to be inhaling 'natural air.'

Researcher: Right.

Interpreter: But then he's like 'I don't want food stamps and I don't need any sort of help. I just want to be able to work and make sure my kids can go to school and maybe they can become something.'

Researcher: *(turns to Irfan)* Do you think that it's gonna be enough to get by? Like you know with no food stamps and no other help from the government?

(Interpreter translates into Arabic)

Irfan: 'Inshallah' *(meaning "God willing" in Arabic)*

(Interpreter repeats 'God willing' in Arabic)

(Irfan continues to respond in Arabic)

Interpreter: Yeah so he was saying that in Syria we're not used to having this sort of help. Everyone's typically independent. And so, he just wants to be able to stand on his feet without having any sort of aid. He said for two reasons. One is that he wants his reputation to be good. Another is he doesn't want to just be living off of help from others. And he said that he's hopeful that if he were to work that he would be able to just provide for himself.

What did having a good reputation mean to Irfan? His vision for the future, driving his desire to have a good reputation, was similar to the path of any immigrant in North America who wants upward mobility: good education, success, and wealth for their children. Good reputation meant establishing a good name and being known as a "hard worker" both within the enclave community and in the larger society. Being a hard worker and being supported by aid were

viewed as mutually exclusive, sometimes at the expense of one's health. Irfan believed that through his hard work, his children someday could reach a level of comfort that he himself may never have.

Most refugee men were grateful that they could work comfortably communicating in Arabic at a workplace owned or run by Arabs. However, regardless of working with fellow Arabs or other ethnic groups, they still had to endure precarious situations in the United States like those in other countries. Furthermore, for some of them, working in an Arab-owned or run workplace often meant that their interaction with the larger American society was restricted by being stranded in the "enclave economy," which they believed limited their opportunities in the United States. Mariam's husband was previously employed as a janitor in a workplace known to be one of the largest employers in Michigan. The subcontractor used to have him work for three months, lay him off for a month, and employ him back again for another three months. Due to this precarity, Mariam's husband quit this job and found work at a body shop owned by Arabs. He felt better about this new job because the work was similar to what he used to do in Syria. This gave Mariam's husband more confidence and job satisfaction at first, because the job was what he was able to and wanted to do. However, this workplace only lasted until he noticed that he was being paid $700-$800 less than this job normally paid monthly. He then was introduced to his current workplace, another body shop in Detroit, by "an American friend" whom the family met through a local voluntary organization that welcomes refugees. Even though Mariam's husband had changed three workplaces within 10 months, at the time of this interview they seemed to be more content about the current workplace in terms of fair pay, work hours, and the suitability of the job. Mariam's family was a rare example, along with a couple of other

families, where the breadwinner was eventually able to transfer his former skillset to his job in the United States.

The stay-at-home women with employed husbands were often apprehensive about the long hours their husbands had to work in the United States. For example, Saba wants to start working even though she never worked outside the house before. She said that when they were in Syria, “It was a very different situation and a time. They owned a house, they owned their restaurant, and they didn’t have to worry about the rent. They were living very comfortably.” Here, she told us, both her husband and her son, who work at the same workplace, did not even have *Iftar*[6] with their family during the month of *Ramadan* last year, because both were working long hours. This was particularly challenging for the family, as they value the tradition of being together at the dinner table as a family during the month of Ramadan. Despite their diminished social time together, Saba added, “… and all of this is really just to make ends meet, not to go beyond.” All the money her husband and her son earn goes to paying the rent and the bills. In addition to the income earned by her husband and her son, she said, the family receives a lot of help from the community; yet they still struggle to get by because of the high cost of living. Saba told us that in Syria her husband owned a restaurant before it was bombed and destroyed in the war. They lived more comfortably in Syria than in the US, and her husband was still able to spend more time with their family. She came to realize that “American society created a living that makes it so that multiple people in the family -men, women, children- have to work in order to be able to secure all their needs.” Saba’s daughter, who was present at the interview, was recently graduated from high school and going to start college next year with a

[6] This is the name of the meal Muslims eat to break the fast during Ramadan. Iftar has social significance. Muslim families host Iftar meals in which they invite friends and extended family over and dine together for hours after the sunset during the month of Ramadan.

scholarship that partially covers her tuition. She interrupted her mother, saying "That's why I want to work next year, to be able to help my dad paying the tuition for the college. I feel guilty putting so much pressure on him."

As in the case of Irfan's and Saba's families, the experience of each family member depended on the needs and contributions of others in the family. It was common for youth to drop out of school or work part-time to support their families as they studied; it was also common for women to not work even if they wanted to, because of not being able to afford childcare; and for men in traditional households to overwork to keep their big families afloat, while not spending as much time with them as they did in the past. All the affordances and barriers were experienced together as a household, influencing each family member's future aspirations, paths, and acculturation in American society in unique ways depending on their age, ability, and gender. While for the non-traditional households, building reputation is not even in question since the absence of able-bodied male-kin makes these women prone to stigma from the first day on, for the traditional households, building reputation has taken its toll from all the family members as they were tasked with earning a place in the community.

Independence & Self-Sufficiency: "… we pray to be independent, so that we don't have to give ourselves up to survive."

The institutions of resettlement and the social relations in the ethnic enclave supported better the refugee households in which the heteronormative family was preserved, and traditional gender norms were kept intact. Those households whose realities were distant from these norms, the non-traditional families, were likely to struggle more. The traditional family, as a unit, was more likely to get closer to the ideals of self-sufficiency and independence through gender-based division of labor, the presence of an able-bodied male, the hard work of the wife in the domestic

sphere and the husband outside the house. However, this was not always the case for the non-traditional families where the responsibilities had to be shuffled and roles need to be redefined.

Asma was only one of the refugee women we talked to who had to be the sole breadwinner after losing her husband. Before everything has gotten worse in Syria, Asma used to be an event planner and organized banquets; therefore, having a work life and maintaining a household was second nature to her. After leaving Syria, she spent about three years in Turkey, where she worked in a restaurant as a chef. In Turkey, her daughter and her daughter's in-laws accompanied her. When she received the phone call from UNHCR and was offered resettlement in the United States, her daughter, who had lost her husband in an explosion when crossing the border from Syria to Turkey, did not want to come to the US. She was afraid she would not be able to practice Islam and wear her hijab in the United States. Asma decided to come to the US by herself. The resettlement agency put her together with another Syrian refugee woman to share a room together, but that was a difficult experience for Asma, because she felt her values did not match her roommate's, when her roommate started inviting men over to their shared room. Her previous experiences taught her that men tried to take advantage of Syrian women who are in desperate situations after the war; she wanted not to rely on men, but to be independent. Eventually, she asked to be placed in public housing.

> *Interpreter*: When she spoke with the Medicaid (on the phone), she wanted to see if she could find public housing just so she could live on her own and still be able to afford it. And even though all of her work was closer to where she previously lived, she just wanted to feel comfortable. That's why she ended up living here (in the public housing) and now she works.
>
> *Researcher*: And commutes every day?

> *Interpreter*: I don't know if it's everyday…
>
> (*Interpreter asks Asma in Arabic*)
>
> *Interpreter*: It's just depending on need so she said sometimes I'll sit for two months without any work. So it's just need based.
>
> *Researcher*: Is it enough for her to be able to get by?
>
> (*Interpreter asks Asma in Arabic*)
>
> *Interpreter*: So yeah, so there is often difficulty with being able to pay the bills and get by when she doesn't have work. But she's saying that if she were to find some kind of formal work it'd be very difficult because then her rent would actually go up because the rent is based on percentage of how much money they make. And, it's difficult because when she's not working and she's on her own she starts to feel depressed because of not having any sort of human contact. But it ends up being more burdensome if she were to find some sort of formal work because of having tax issues and then losing (eligibility for) public housing.

Asma emphasized many times her desire to live on her own and "comfortably," which is an indication, along with her decision to resettle in the US despite her daughter's refusal to come, that she is independent; and she does not abstain from what she wants and needs to do in order to please others. She understood the urgency of becoming self-sufficient, and her independent personality led her to engage with the outside world to meet her own needs, rather than relying on other people to assist with her living. This is why she wanted to find "formal work" that is permanent and consistent, and the kind that would save her from isolation and depression by enabling human interaction on a daily basis. However, catering food after preparing it in her own

kitchen, helped her remain eligible for public housing, because this way she did not have to report her income. The paradox is that resettlement and welfare institutions urged her to become self-sufficient, while preventing self-sufficiency by keeping her -and other refugees- on the brink of insolvency. In Asma's experience the same system that was stigmatizing refugees (and other welfare-recipients) for being lazy or non-contributing was the very system that was teaching them to cheat, at the cost of experiencing isolation and poor mental health. Even though Asma was able to establish a more independent living than she previously had, she was still "underemployed" because of the fear of losing her eligibility for government subsidized housing.

"After what happened in Syria," Asma's independence and freedom became more important to her than ever before. After losing her home and many of her loved ones in the clashes in Syria and being away from her daughter, Asma had endured depression, and yet has been holding onto life with great tenacity and passion. Her independent living situation was the most important thing to her as a widow, after what she had been through. When she moved to Turkey, she had to change the way she wore her hijab to blend in with the women in Turkey. She used to wear her hijab in Aleppen style, called "jilbab," which initially made her Syrian identity visible when in Turkey. Men would catcall her in Turkish, "Sen Suri, gel Suri" meaning "Come here, Syrian." A Turkish man wanted to marry her and stalked her for a while. Because of experiences like these, she was afraid and eventually changed the way she dressed.

Researcher: Did you have to do anything else here in the US to blend in?

(Interpreter translates and Asma responds in Arabic)

Interpreter: She started wearing longer blouses and pants and something that she wraps around just to match what the community here is wearing.

Researcher: Did the way she covers her head change?

(Interpreter translates and Asma responds in Arabic)

Interpreter: Yeah just the style of the scarf not necessarily the way she's covering.

(chatter in Arabic between the Interpreter and Asma)

Interpreter: She's saying that even when she came here, she'll still sometimes wear the Turkish style hijab. She said it doesn't really matter here as much because everyone knows their limits here and it doesn't play as big of a role as it did when she was in Turkey. When there were Syrian refugees moving to Jordan and Egypt or Turkey, what ended up happening was that a lot of men would want to marry Syrian refugee women. Later on some of them ended up in divorce. She just didn't want to deal with any of that. That's why she wanted to just blend in and wear what women in Turkey were wearing so that she could just avoid men seeking her out for marriage.

Asma feared Arab men's fantasies about marrying Syrian women. She said "because Syrian women are known to be good homemakers and are well-rounded," Jordanian men, for example, had this fantasy. Or Yemeni men would threaten their wives that they would get a divorce and take a Syrian woman instead. Asma said that after the war, once men saw the despair of Syrian women, they finally found opportunities to act on their fantasies. When she was working in the kitchen at a Yemeni restaurant right after being resettled in Michigan, she said, the men in the kitchen would jokingly say "I want to marry a Syrian woman," and she would say "I'm as old as your mom." She laughed when telling the story and said, "What is it they want from Syrian women?" Then, she went on to say, "American men are so great in the sense that they could see a really beautiful woman in front of them and wouldn't even look."

Despite the many homogenizing assumptions Asma made about Syrian women, Arab men, and American men, her fear that men were preying on her, because they wanted to find a

Syrian woman who was in a desperate situation, was based in some reality. Asma was not the only female participant who mentioned this, although her story perhaps carried more weight because she had been trying to get along on her own. She said, speaking for other Syrian women, that "… We pray to be independent, so that we don't have to give ourselves up to survive." As a widow who wanted to stand on her own feet and be independent, the only way out she found was to participate in the informal economy. This helped her still be eligible for public housing and not rely on anyone else. For her, in an ideal world, there needs to be sustained housing aid and no fear of losing it because of her income through "formal work" until she becomes truly self-sufficient.

Refugee households varied in terms of the family structure, family size, and health. These three factors together, among other things, contributed to how fast and how well the household could become self-sufficient. Families that stayed intact after the war, with all family members present and each family member able to carry out their previously assigned family roles and traditional gender roles, were better equipped to function under the given institutional structures. Families in which the able-bodied men, despite all the struggles, were the breadwinner were mostly appreciative of the governmental and non-governmental aid, employment opportunities, education for their children, and the new life they found. In contrast, women and men in non-traditional families struggled more to navigate the institutional structures and inter-ethnic tensions, they experienced being policed for receiving aid, and found it difficult to enjoy life in the United States.

Mohsin lived in public housing with his wife and their four children. He had a disability that did not let him continue his education beyond fourth grade. Throughout his adult life, he only worked for three years before his eyesight and muscles deteriorated. After his marriage,

Mohsin received financial help from his brothers because he could not work. He has been managing his illness with medication his entire life, and before coming to Michigan he had been hopeful that there would be a cure for his condition in the United States. Only five minutes into our interview with Mohsin and his wife in their home, their Jordanian neighbor, an older woman, popped in with some paperwork in her hand. She interrupted our conversation and asked my interpreter to translate the papers for her. I decided to save the more private questions for Mohsin to the end, hoping that the neighbor would leave after we helped her. She stayed longer than I wanted, and Mohsin was obviously uncomfortable responding to some of the questions. When she eventually left, Mohsin's wife, Sadaf, told us that her depression had gotten worse since they moved into public housing from their previous rental home. Sadaf told us that after moving in, she started having a lot of pain in her body; she would wake up with swollen feet and hands and feels soreness throughout her body. Her doctor diagnosed her with fibromyalgia, and Sadaf believed that fibromyalgia, along with her depression, was caused by the "evil eye and people envying her, because [her physical symptoms] started around the time they moved in to public housing."

> *Interpreter:* People will come into her house and say, "Your house is really nice and you're doing really well and you're able to take care of your kids and you're able to do this and that…" So, she feels that all of that talk and the way people look at her causes the evil eye and that's why maybe she's dealing with depression.
>
> *Researcher*: Does it make you uncomfortable when people say things like that? Does it make you uncomfortable when they comment on how nice your house is?
>
> *(Interpreter translates and Sadaf responds in Arabic)*

Interpreter: She was mentioning that, with their neighbors, even though they live in the same complex and they know it's the same exact houses, after she and her husband moved into this home people were like "Oh you guys are so lucky you got a house that's on to the street," "It's a corner house." And every time they have something new people will say something about it.

(*Mohsin smiles shyly and adds in Arabic)*

Interpreter: He's saying 'don't laugh at us.'

Researcher: No, not at all

(Sadaf adds in Arabic)

Interpreter: She was also saying she doesn't mind the compliments, but she can tell when people are saying it out of envy or as a compliment. People would talk about them behind their backs and she feels like people are watching them. When they are leaving the neighborhood, people say "Oh they go out a lot" or "They do this and do that…" And people will come into their house and see what it's like, and then tell other people about it. She feels like they were a lot happier in the other house even though that one was more expensive than this one. They were happier there because they didn't have to deal with the difficulties of the social life. Especially the fact that they actually enjoy a social life. Her husband's personality is very more open and a happy spirit. He likes to socialize and that sort of thing. People will envy him for his lighthearted personality and so that sort of talk makes them feel uncomfortable because they feel like everyone is always eyeing what they're doing and how their life is.

I was struck by Sadaf's interpretation that the cause of her depression is the other's "evil

eye." However, one does not have to believe in the evil eye, or in religious or spiritual explanations, to understand that others' gaze makes Sadaf uncomfortable. She felt under scrutiny, and that she was being policed by the community. Perhaps Mohsin and Sadaf's family was one of the families that had to depend on the welfare support and donations more than most of the other families due to Mohsin's disability. The fact that neither Mohsin nor Sadaf were working, and yet were able to afford to live reasonably well, was enough to make them feel like other people were talking about them. It is difficult to know what the "other people" were actually thinking or talking about them; however, Mohsin and Sadaf felt conflicted about enjoying a social life and undeserving of happiness because they were refugees who depended on aid. The community in public housing reproduced the welfare stigma in their own community and internalized it.

I understood the gravity of the community-induced-stigma better when I talked to Nabila, who presented a very different example than Mohsin and Sadaf. As Nabila told me about how much she and her husband liked working at a drycleaner because it helped them interact with people and learn English, she took the frame hung up on the wall and handed it to me proudly. Inside the frame was a certificate reading, "Successfully achieved self-sufficiency within 180 days since arrival. He has demonstrated hard work and determination during this time of transition." This certificate was given to Nabila's husband. Nabila went on to tell me that they were the only family who were trying to be truly self-sufficient and that was why the local resettlement organization in their initial place of resettlement, before moving to Michigan, gave this certificate to them.

> *Interpreter*: She said that she and her husband out of all the families were the most consistent with how much they worked. Most of the people would work certain days and

not other days and none of the women worked at all. They never had time to see people (or to socialize). They would only communicate with them over the phone. She also mentioned how she really liked to be consistent with her work. She and her husband would work until the kids were ready to be picked up from school, then they would make sure their kids would change their clothes and were fed; and especially in the winter when the days were short they didn't really have time to do anything otherwise. And on the weekends, she would work at a hotel in housekeeping. She just really liked to have a schedule and work fulltime and so that never left any time for socializing.

Researcher: I'm going to ask about the children and their situation in the school more. But because you mentioned you and your husband were consistently working all the time and that there are differences within the Syrian community, for example, most wives as you mentioned did not work, so did it create any problems within the community?

(Interpreter translates into Arabic and Nabila responds)

Interpreter: She wants to clarify like what kind of problem you're talking about

Researcher: Do people judge each other based on how much they work or don't work or what they get or not get, that kind of thing?

(Interpreter translates into Arabic)

(*Nabila chuckles)*

Interpreter: (chuckles) She said "how did you know about all our problems?"

Researcher: (chuckles) Is that a problem?

(Nabila understands and responds in Arabic)

Interpreter: What she's saying is that it definitely caused certain problems because there were people who worked and people who didn't work. When you work a certain amount,

> they do an assessment and then you no longer receive cash help or food stamp help. So some people were like it's better to not work and receive help than to work really hard and not receiving help as much. She and her husband were very hardworking. And she would start talking she said that they didn't really mix with people that much and so they didn't hear that much. But sometimes they would hear people saying bad things about them. And she said it was out of jealousy that particularly she and her husband were very adamant about working and very successful in working.

Although Nabila and her husband presented a very different example than Mohsin and Sadaf in terms of reaching self-sufficiency, what was similar in both stories was that both Sadaf and Nabila thought other people were talking about them. They felt they were being judged by their own community based on how much they worked, how much they socialized, and what they could afford. The refugee community internalized the negative stereotype that those who receive welfare are lazy and non-contributing to the extent of feeling guilty and undeserving when they socialized.

Competition for Resources: "People were trying to keep these things for themselves.'

Refugees received help from two different kinds of sources. First was government aid that they would apply for with the help of their caseworkers assigned from the Department of Homeland Security or with the help of their local refugee resettlement agency. Second was humanitarian aid through donations of individuals in their local communities or small voluntary organizations. The second kind of aid organizations and individuals came both from within the Muslim and Arab communities and from interfaith communities. Often when the government aid was not enough to meet demands, the second type of aid would be a substitute. However, the multiplicity of sources and the decentralized distribution of aid was tricky for the refugees

because this required them to know the sources existed, and be able to ask for help in order to get it. The story of Asma (introduced in the previous section) gave me some insight into how the local donors and voluntary organizations work. I commented on the nice decorations Asma had on the walls—some flowers and frames. Perhaps I made her uncomfortable, though of course I intended to be saying something nice. She immediately responded by saying that,

> … Because she doesn't have much responsibilities [like children to take care of, or a husband] sometimes people will call her and tell her that there is furniture coming in or clothes for children that she will likely be helpful in distributing to people and take for herself as well. She then brings the stuff to her place, first sees what she needs for herself, then distributes the rest to the other people in the public housing.

Asma's account demonstrates how comfortable she is going in and out of the organizations and befriending the volunteers and community organizers. This contrasts with many other women who told me that they were too shy to ask for things. Sometimes aid depended on who had more linguistic and cultural capital, was able to communicate their needs, and actively sought help.

It was difficult to assess whether a particular household gets as much aid as they need, since the aid structures were variegated and not streamlined. Refugees who have strained relationships with their caseworkers were more likely to be convinced that other refugees were receiving more aid, or that others found ways around certain obligations when their caseworker seemed stricter in imposing certain criteria or implementing one rule. Although in fact the infrastructure set up for the distribution of aid reinforced unequal access, refugees located the problem within the individuals in their own community and tended to distance themselves from their ingroup.

Yasmin's family was in Jordan when their case to be resettled in the United States was approved. Yasmin and her husband attended classes through the organization that managed their case to prepare for their resettlement. Yasmin said they had thought they knew what to expect about living in the U.S., and they had the image of the U.S. as "more humane than other nations" but a series of disappointing events disenchanted them immediately upon arrival. When the caseworker who was supposed to pick them up from the airport did not show up, Yasmin knew that she should stop assuming that anything she learned in the preparation classes was going to be true. Then their caseworker put them through a few more challenges. As Yasmin's family was being hosted by "an American family," their caseworker looked for an appropriate rental property for them to move into. Yasmin was very grateful to the family who hosted them, but also felt like they were a burden as their stay extended. Meanwhile, their caseworker found a place for them, but when Yasmin wanted to see the place before moving in, the caseworker told her that they would have to agree to rent the property if they wanted to see it in person. Later Yasmin and her husband learned when they talked to other refugees that "a lot of the things their caseworker told them were untrue." Even though we have no idea whether their caseworker was telling the truth or not, it was certainly the case that Yasmin lost trust in their caseworker. From her point of view, she and her family were given missing or wrong information, and they were missing out on things that they might be eligible for if they had a better caseworker.

When they first arrived, like many other families, the Arab community brought them food until their food stamps started. They benefited from the generosity of the American, Arab, and Arab-American communities whenever the welfare system failed them. However, Yasmin said,

> There were a few experiences that made her feel like they weren't really a community… Every time there was a church that was passing out items for new mothers, like maternity clothes or clothes for kids under six, and diapers… Immediately after she found out about this place, she posted the location [on the whatsapp group with other Syrian refugees] and said they were passing out all these things. Every time she found out about a new resource, she was very open with [other refugee women like herself] and [was] telling everyone about those resources. But then she learned that sometimes there would be [resources] that everyone knew about, but no one told her. She felt that people were trying to keep these things for themselves and not trying to help other people.

Yasmin felt deeply betrayed by the Syrian refugee community. However, she did not blame the system that created the situation in which refugees were struggling and competing for limited resources; instead, she blamed her own community for being greedy and not sharing.

A caseworker's way of managing a household's file could have a big influence on the family's path. The caseworkers could encourage and help refugees apply for the aid that they would be eligible for or could discourage them from applying for the things they might be eligible and/or not help them with the application. However, some refugees also had unrealistic expectations from the caseworkers. Noor felt like their caseworker set her sons' path in the wrong direction. Among all the refugees I interviewed Noor was the most noticeably resentful woman. She resented her caseworker, she resented the Syrian refugee community, and she resented being a widow. Noor and her three sons lived in an apartment complex occupied mostly by White American young people and college students. Two of her sons were twins aged 20 and the third son was 21 at the time of the interview. Noor accepted resettlement in the United States

in the hope that her sons would be able to continue their disrupted education. The two younger sons were in high school when they first arrived; however, their grades suffered because they did not know English well enough. Then their caseworker started pressuring them to start working three months into their resettlement, and her sons ended up not getting a high school diploma. At the time of the interview, all three of her sons were working at various restaurants, and because there were three employed adults in their household, Noor's family did not qualify for the kind of government aid granted to "other families who have younger children."

Underlying Noor's frustration was the fact that neither her husband nor her sons' lost childhoods could be brought back. Noor felt deeply resentful that her sons had to fulfill the role of a father when in fact they were still very "young and deceivable." She felt that her children's future was compromised and that they should have been able to continue their education instead of having to support their family at this early age. Noor blamed their caseworker for pressuring her children to start working instead of trying to find other options like helping them get better in English and continue their education. She also resented other Syrian families for "figuring out how to get more help." When Noor asked her caseworker "how is everyone receiving more help than we are?" the caseworker told her that "Earlier the resettlement agency used to have more [monetary] support, but now they don't have as much support." Noor says "We only came two months after other families and those other families received help." But her caseworker responded, "… it's your luck."

Even though Noor had unrealistic expectations that her college-age sons would be able to attend college in the United States without knowing English, it was neither Noor's nor her sons' fault that her sons were displaced at a critical age and lost their father. It was not only the current poverty they were living in, it was the unattainability of college education and the unavailability

of the dream of upward mobility that made Noor resentful. She envied other families who had younger children for getting the kind of help she and her sons were not getting. Perhaps it was too painful for her to admit that it was the privilege of having "an older male as the head of the household" that was missing in her life. Noor did not question the traditional gender norms that naturally lead her sons to replace their fathers' role to be the breadwinner.

Adnan's wife, Hanan, had a very different view of what life in the U.S. offers, compared to Noor who lost her husband and Yasmin whose husband is disabled. Adnan and Hanan had ten children, the youngest aged four and the oldest 17. Three of their children had hearing disabilities. Since the family's arrival, all three children started getting medical attention for this problem, as well as attending school and being assigned special tutors to help them learn despite their hearing problem. Hanan said:

> It's really nice that here [in the U.S.], the government itself really cares about people with disabilities, it cares about women, it cares about children, and it gives them rights. When they call the U.S. a humane country it really holds true from their experience. The future of their children here in the U.S. is good.

Of course, time will show whether Adnan and Hanan's children continue their education and attain upward mobility. Regardless, Hanan, in stark contrast to Noor, was able to hold onto the dream that her children will attain upward mobility. Adnan agreed with his wife and added,

> They have been in the U.S. for two years, and not even once they notice any odd look or negative treatment from people at a shop, at the mall, or work. Here your worth is the same as any other person's. You wouldn't be able to differentiate between an American, a Spaniard, a Mexican, and an Arab. No one person is less than another. In Syria, you can tell a professor from a doctor from an employee. Everyone is recognized by a label. He

> tells his friends that after two years of being here, he can't differentiate between a doctor and a janitor. Both are driving the same cars, wearing the same clothes.

In his previous life in Syria, Adnan worked in mail delivery; at the time of this interview he was a janitor. Despite his limited contact with American society, he still believed that it was non-hierarchical and that a doctor and a janitor could expect the same level of respect from others. When I asked about their relations with "Americans," he said, "None of their American neighbors have come and visited them. Because there are a lot of Arabs living in this area they actually see a lot of them, but also it's because their house is not in the best part of the neighborhood." For Adnan and Hanan, naturally, the people with whom they compared themselves were the other Arabs and other refugees who lived in close proximity to them. To Hanan, in the U.S., "Those who are capable of work can work, and those who are capable of owning a home or land can own, and those who can take from the bank can take. The government gave them a green card and they treated them well." Adnan and Hanan's account resembled most other traditional families' accounts. They were more content with what they had and perhaps did not have a reason to think that others were getting more aid, in part because the able-bodied male head of the household uplifted their reputation within the community.

Citizen-making: "… in this country, if you are honest, the laws and the judges are here to support you."

When we met Irfan, he was getting help in obtaining a license to drive a semi-truck in order to realize his new business idea. With paperwork in hand, Irfan and his friend Mustapha were talking to the social services in ACCESS. When Irfan quit working in the iron-aluminum processing facility due to his health problems, his health insurance was interrupted. He contacted his caseworker to inform her about the situation and potentially to get back on his insurance, as

well as to get some sort of cash help or food stamps until he found another job. However, the caseworker told him that he had to be working to have health insurance, and she claimed that he had made $7,500 in one week before quitting his job and thus could not be eligible for food stamps or cash help from the government. Irfan, on the other hand, told her that he did not even have $1000 in his bank account and all the money he made had to be spent to make ends meet. To convince the caseworker he brought his bank statements; however, she was not convinced. Irfan then went to the resettlement agency and told them that he was going to go to the court to solve this unfair treatment. He told us that "after threatening [the resettlement agency] by going to the court, [they] put everything back in place," changed his caseworker, and provided him with food stamps and health insurance until he found a new job.

How did Irfan, who was new to the U.S. as a refugee with relatively little power and privilege to fight against American institutions, come up with the idea and the courage to "threaten" the resettlement agency, an institution that he relied on for aid? With this in mind, I asked him: "If you really had to go to the court, you know it could have been really difficult, right?" To my surprise, Irfan said, "No," he had actually been to the court once and found out that in America the court system works on behalf of those who are treated unfairly. He told a story about when they first came here: he found an old and abandoned house that still had an owner. The owner told him to "to just get rid of all the stuff in it and do whatever he wants with the house." Irfan said his family only needed a roof over their head, so he "dumped all the stuff out and fixed whatever was broken," and turned the house into a livable space. However, what he did not know was that he was not supposed to dump old furniture out on the street. This ended up causing him a fine for $1,500 from the City, and he appeared before the judge. In the court there was a translator with him. First they made him take an oath not to lie, then the judge asked,

showing the pictures of the trash he dumped: "Is this true that you did this?" Irfan responded "Yes." Then, the judge asked: "Is this true that this is the amount you dumped?" Again, Irfan responded "Yes." Then, the judge asked: "Why?" And, he said "I just needed a place for my kids to live and I didn't know what the system is, and I needed a place to put everything." The judge forgave Irfan "because he told the truth" and reversed the fine. Irfan said, "… in this country, if you are honest, the laws and the judges are here to support you." Having been through the court and gained a sense of mastery before the judge once, when the caseworker denied Irfan aid, it occurred to him "to take this issue to the court."

Irfan's absolute respect for the working of criminal justice system could not be generalized to all refugees, particularly to the women in non-traditional households. Refugee women in non-traditional households who have to go through the court system themselves found the status holders in the ethnic enclave intimidating and did not trust in the criminal justice system as much. These women relied on what and who they perceived to be "American" more so than the relations within the enclave to fight back against exploitation and unfair treatment. In the middle of our conversation, Rania remembered that she needed someone to read some paperwork for her. She brought out her purse, took out a folded piece of paper and gave it to my interpreter for her to translate. The document was from the lawyer's office. Rania said she was afraid to find a Lebanese lawyer who would favor her Lebanese employer, so she found an "American" lawyer. Rania rolled up her sleeves and showed us the injury that went across her arm. One day at work she pulled out a tray, and the hot oil spilled over her arm. The employer sent her home after the incident without offering medical remedy. Rania's perception of Arab-Americans of Lebanese origin as occupying the top in positions of power, privilege, and reputation in Dearborn made her think that a White American lawyer would be more *objective*

and *fairer* to her. Becoming a desirable citizen was not as easy for the refugee women who were in non-traditional families as it was for the men, because the women's credibility was challenged and they had to fight simultaneously against the oppressive structures within the household (against a violent husband), in their community (against Arab men who try to benefit their desperate situations) and in the larger society (institutions which they perceive as unfair).

Discussion

Counter-Stories of Resettlement

Recently resettled Syrian refugees in Southeast Michigan told multiplex and contradictory stories against the dominant narratives that subsume differences among refugees. An ongoing commitment to counter-storytelling during data collection and analysis proved useful in identifying what has been lost in the media images and public discussions of refugees. Looking at the narratives of different kinds of non-traditional households together and juxtaposing them against the narratives of traditional households revealed not only the gendered power relations between non-traditional and traditional households, but also led to the re-examination of how power and privilege was distributed between sexes within traditional households. The latter helped me question the assumption that resources would be equitably available to women and men who live in the same household in resettlement. By challenging the notion of men as the natural "head-of-the-household," I identified at least three counter-narratives. First was that the normative UNHCR resettlement framework with the ideal of protecting "vulnerable" women and children from further harm worked in paradoxical ways on the ground in resettlement context in Southeast Michigan, facilitating isolation and marginalization of those on the margins. Second, the contemporary resettlement regime with the expectation of self-sufficiency, against the backdrop of limited resources and competitive

community norms, created fractures within the Syrian refugee community. Third, refugees worked towards recreating a sense of normalcy and restoring their reputation through hard work. The fear of stigma from within their own communities and from the larger society, as well as the gendered expectations, played a role in how they performed vulnerability as they worked toward becoming "desirable citizen-subjects" (Ong, 2003).

The Normative Resettlement Framework as Paradoxical for Those on the Margins

The UNHCR framework for resettlement emphasized reducing "vulnerability" and "risk" for women, girls, gendered minorities, disabled and elderly by putting these groups at the center of its "key considerations" (UNHCR, 2011). In alignment with this policy, the U.S. and Canadian Governments considered women and children, and traditional families as "low security risk" over men of fighting age for resettlement (Lindsay, 2017). Paradoxically, the approaches of the UNHCR and the governments combined contributed to the manufacturing of what Enloe (1991) calls "womenandchildren" as a pure victim status, creating a generative context for the performance of vulnerability rather than reducing it. The accounts of the women in non-traditional Syrian refugee households in Southeast Michigan stand in stark contrast to the accounts of women and men in traditional households, demonstrating how the stigma of dependency and weakness is fostered in paradoxical ways among the newly resettled.

How do non-traditional households in resettlement become stigmatized, isolated and at more risk for economic disadvantage compared to traditional households, when, in fact, the UNHCR framework of refugee resettlement (2011) prioritizes women and girls' well-being? Indra (1999) argues that the recognition of Women in Forced Migration (WIFM), as a paradigm change in human rights discourse, can be traced back to the 1985 Decade for Women Conference held in Nairobi. Later, the institutionalization of the status of women and gendered minorities in

forced migration discourses continued with the UNHCR's 1990 Position Paper on Gender-Related Persecution, and 1991 Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014). Despite the recognition of displaced women's status in these documents, refugee women have often been portrayed as "apolitical and non-agentic victims" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2014), and as vulnerable, weak, and dependent "womenandchildren" (Enloe, 2014). These 'feminized and infantilized images of "pure" victimhood and vulnerability' has led to the shrinkage of the subjectivities available to refugee women (Sigona, 2014, p. 370).

Others' attributions of characteristics, traits, behaviors and social identities create anticipation of public performances in everyday encounters and interactions between strangers, which then become grounds for stigma (Goffman, 1963). People develop these social anticipations from each other based on available information that are likely to be constructed on the basis of dominant narratives. One enduring dominant narrative used by the state, the media and the public to determine "worthiness" for public assistance is "deservingness" (Watkins-Hayes & Kovalsky, 2017). In many post-industrial countries, the welfare state is organized around the classification of figures of deserving and undeserving poor, migrants, and refugees (Smith & Waite, 2018). In this "(re)moralized welfare ethics," one's social value is assessed on the basis of the recognition of them as either "contributing" members or as "vulnerable" towards whom the society has an ethical responsibility to protect (Smith & Waite, 2018, p. 18). This socially constructed opposition between the figure of the poor refugee who is contributing, working towards self-sufficiency, and is a potential asset to the nation vs. that of vulnerable, aid-dependent, and weak created the basis for the stigmatization of those who are assumed in position of vulnerability.

Only adopting an intersectional lens (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989/1993; Yuval-Davis, 2007) could help with a better apprehension of how the positions of power, privilege and prestige were differentially available to traditional and non-traditional refugee households in Southeast Michigan. Major and O'Brien (2005) suggest that in the absence of reference to power, the concept of stigma becomes undifferentiated and its far-reaching consequences allowing discrimination and prejudice to unfold cannot be understood. The relative power, prestige and privilege one is assigned through group membership changes the ways one acts, entering a new situation with that understanding of one's position in the larger society. For example, asylum-seeking children are compelled to act as vulnerable victims in their encounters with welfare services in order to secure support or risk being considered "merely" economic migrants (Bhabha, 2001; Maegusuku-Hewett et al., 2007). Similarly, I found the resettlement experiences of the women in non-traditional households have taught them to "perform" vulnerability to be able to receive assistance. For example, although caseworkers typically arrange a multi-room house for traditional families upon their arrival, Asma, a widow, had to share a single room with another refugee woman like herself. This asymmetry in the recognition of needs for independence at the local level set Asma and other women like her behind in reaching self-sufficiency from the very beginning of their resettlement experiences. She, as the person assumed in position of vulnerability but whose need for independence was not recognized, had to be the one to call the Medicaid and the Resettlement Agency many times, and express her need for an independent living situation, while the traditional families did not have to perform this kind of vulnerability to have a room of their own.

Contemporary Resettlement Regime Facilitates Fractures in the Community

The UNHCR approach put gaining self-reliance at the front and center of its resettlement framework. The *2005 Handbook for Self-reliance* emphasized protecting "dignity," reducing "vulnerability," and building "strong communities" among refugees as individuals and families gain the ability to develop economic and social independence in resettlement. The Handbook suggests involving refugees in every aspect of planning, assessment, implementation and monitoring of social and economic activity in order to remain accountable to these goals. However, there are no accountability practices set up in place to check whether the goal of building community among refugees is met or not as each refugee household is working towards self-reliance (Garnier, Sandvik, & Jubilut, 2018). The lack of accountability structures and understanding of power dynamics at the local level led to the concentration of the local male opportunity-brokers' power, privilege, and prestige (Indra, 1999), while exacerbating the stigma and isolation experienced by the non-traditional households.

Across all the refugees we interviewed, war, displacement and resettlement had turned their families' lives upside down and brought an end to their sense of normalcy. Inevitably, all of them experienced change in place, culture, and language. These could be the most obviously expected consequences of displacement and resettlement. However, they also experienced changes in the family structure, family size or composition; they lost or added family members to their households along the way. Perhaps the most significant loss they experienced was the *lack* of wholesome relationships and abundance of kin around them. Growing up surrounded by "lots of family," Syrians were accustomed to strong social support and networks and thus felt a particular sense of emptiness in their new, socially barren life; and did not know how to navigate the formality of institutions where they did not have any kinship ties.

Andrew Shryock (2000) explains how the use of terms like "nuclear" or "immediate" family, in the sense that it describes the American family, do not apply to the Arab family. The Arab family is too big and boundless that it is not obvious where it begins and ends, governing every aspect of life. For immigrants and refugees, the abated and uprooted version of the family is a source of desperation. Particularly for immigrants from postcolonial regions, in which the idea of a nation-state is new, families and kinship are valued over the "nation" which is too obscure to comprehend and over the "society" which has its overwhelming customs and values that do not necessarily reflect one's own (Shryock, 2000). Therefore, for Arab immigrants, institutions, as an extension of the nation, the government, and the society, are incomprehensively big and difficult to understand. The way American institutions function with their ranks and divisions where one gets work done without personally knowing anyone, is too formal and alienating to the Arab immigrants and refugees.

Arabs in Southeast Michigan, after decades of immigration from various nations, in their search for normalcy, created strong networks of Arabic-speaking friends and acquaintances across national and religious differences that became part of what Shryock (2000) calls "family resemblance" (p. 575). In these family-like relationships, Arabs help each other navigate this new and not yet American but also not Syrian (or Lebanese, or Iraqi, or Yemeni) world. Even though these networks divide along lines of privilege based in nation of origin, religious sect, or clan affiliation, men who build up a certain level of reputation in the community, sometimes only by persistently showing up at a mosque, could have access to these networks and strengthen their community bonds, regardless of their nationality, religion, village of origin, or clan affiliation (Shryock, 2000). Reputation in Arab Detroit is a powerful mechanism governing the gendered relations within the ethnic enclave. Reputation was attributed to men and created new

opportunities and avenues for them and their families; however, it was enabled by policing and restricting women's behavior and relations outside the household, and constraints solidarity among women (Aboulhassan & Brumley, 2019). Thus, building a reputation was important to newly arrived Syrian families; however, it constrained the movement of Syrian women with no male kin in the public sphere.

The networks in the enclave, dividing along lines of Lebanese vs. Yemeni and Syrian, or Chaldean vs. Muslim, divisions that could only be defeated by male privilege, were impenetrable to Syrian women in the non-traditional refugee households. Therefore, these seemingly inclusive Arab networks in Greater Detroit that help men build reputation can quickly become sources of exclusion, isolation, stigma and even violence for women (Shryock, 2000). It is against this backdrop that the accounts of the women in the female-headed Syrian refugee households differed from the accounts of the women and men in traditional refugee households. In the absence of an able-bodied male kin, the fear of gendered and sexualized stigma contributed to women's isolation from the Syrian, Arab and Muslim communities, taught them to "perform" vulnerability, and facilitated dependence on assistance.

Arab families in Southeast Michigan with an able-bodied male head of the household, who enjoy a certain level of privilege, are able to get work done through the networks they established with these family-like relations. In contrast, those who are excluded from these privileged groups complain that organizations in Southeast Michigan are run, controlled, or dominated by clannish groups, or cliques (Shryock, 2000). This is evident in Rania's desire for "an American lawyer" because she feared a Lebanese-origin lawyer would protect her Lebanese-origin employer, and in Yasmin's feeling that her family was not counted when aid was being distributed by the nearby mosque. One stark difference in the accounts of the members of

traditional and non-traditional refugee households when it came to their relative distance from the able-bodied Arab family was that “the dream” of being upwardly mobile, getting higher education for their children, buying a house and other expensive items in the future was available to the members of traditional households, while it did not look so attainable for the members of non-traditional households. The experiences of displacement and poverty still posed challenges to the traditional refugee families. However, the ability to sustain normative gender roles to a certain extent and to recreate family life with the work of the husband outside the house and that of the wife in the domestic sphere, gave them higher hopes for their children to be upwardly mobile and have a better life in the future.

People in marginalized positions do not always reject structures of power and dominance that marginalize them (Blankenship et al., 2017); thus, they may reproduce the master narratives that in fact puts them at a disadvantage. Tore et al. (2001) stated “critical stories are always (and at once) in tension with dominant stories, neither fully oppositional nor untouched” (p. 151). The UNHCR approach for social and economic self-reliance was internalized as an ideal by most of the refugees. Interviewees articulated not wanting to depend on the welfare or humanitarian assistance and expressed a desire to work and be independent, even when their resettlement experience was antithetical to the immediate attainment of full independence, due to the barriers associated with establishing a new life in an unfamiliar land in a language one does not speak. The complexity of these experiences revealed that the path to self-reliance presented many barriers, and the failure to become self-reliant and/or the expectation of failure reinforced self-induced stigma about dependence within the community. The pressure to become independent and self-sufficient through hard work fostered isolation from the other refugees, and members of the Syrian refugee community policed each other and compared themselves to those like them in

terms of how much aid every household received, who was employed, and how much each person worked. For example, Nabila and her husband preferred not getting involved with other Syrians because they thought working and establishing themselves was more important than having a social life; Mohsin and Sadaf isolated themselves from the community because they felt under scrutiny of others whenever they enjoyed a social life while living on government assistance. Social psychological research demonstrates that members of the stigmatized groups recognize the negative images of their groups that are held by the majority and internalize these images, thereby damaging their self-esteem (Frost, 2011; Mead, 1934). This internalization often results in their rejection of the "undesirable" identity (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999), and difficulties in building coherent communities (Apfelbaum, 1979).

The social comparisons that led to competitive and unhealthy social relations could, in part, be traced back to how the institutions of the refugee resettlement foster competition. Under the contemporary resettlement regime, compassionate individuals step in to fill in the holes created in the welfare system. Opportunities for refugees pop up in unexpected ways through volunteer individuals and organizations, donations may be distributed in unorganized ways, or help may appear in unexpected places. Refugees have to actively seek these resources themselves to be able to survive and compete for limited resources. However, even when they actively pursue opportunities, they may not get what they need; they will still be comparing themselves to the other refugees. Even though the aim behind the humanitarian aid is benevolent, the form of distribution can speed up community disintegration and distancing of individuals from otherwise close-knit ethnic and religious communities, preventing refugees from building communities of their own. This disintegration influences non-traditional households more than

traditional households, perhaps because social norms and the structural conditions supported the employment and economic independence of male heads of the households more than women.

Everyday Practices of Citizen-making and Home-making

Even though the refugees we interviewed did not feel they belonged in the U.S. in the same way that they felt they belonged in their homelands, gradually they engaged in everyday practices of home-making and citizen-making. Forced migration leaves one with little control over important life decisions for a prolonged period of time. Even the experience of resettlement, regardless of being potentially one of the most positive outcomes in protracted refugee situations, could leave the refugees with the feeling that they have no control over where and how they choose to live. Perhaps it is too early to be speaking of a true sense of belonging in their place of resettlement for the newly resettled Syrian refugees. However, the desire to recreate a sense of normalcy was evident in their permanent search for a better place to live, a better job and better schools for their children. Many refugees exercised control and authority in everyday lives by moving to a “safe” neighborhood and changing to a workplace where they were treated better.

Refugees felt stigmatized in many ways, which drove their eagerness to restore their reputation within their ingroup and work towards becoming desirable citizen-subjects for the outgroup that holds power and is responsible for the distribution of privilege. On the path to becoming desirable citizen-subjects, refugees were vigilant about anything that would further stain their name; they worked towards overcoming both the stigma of being a refugee and the stigma of being a welfare recipient. For men, restoring reputation took the form of establishing a good name through work and relations within the enclave; for women, it was about protecting their honor and chastity from men outside while fighting against exploitation in the workplace and domestic violence at home. Both men and women came to recognize the role of criminal

justice system as a pillar of proving one's status and reputation in U.S. society in their fight against what they perceived to be unfair treatment. Men, in their dealings with the institutions and the legal system, seemed more confident in themselves with the extra boost and trust they earned in the community. On the other hand, women in the female-headed households were reluctant to deal with the institutions and felt weak before the consolidated male power supported by the relations in the enclave these institutions represented to them.

CONCLUSION

It may be too early for Syrian refugees to be talking about a true sense of belonging as they have many tasks to accomplish ahead. As Sara Ahmed (1999) notes, the issues of home, identity and belonging become complicated after leaving home:

> In some sense, the narrative of leaving home produces too many homes and hence no Home, too many places in which memories attach themselves through the carving out of inhabitable space, and hence no place in which memory can allow the past to reach the present (in which the 'I' could declare itself as having come home).

However, it is through the everyday acts of accomplishing and not accomplishing tasks, such as getting a driver's license, learning English, enrolling children for school, negotiating with the landlord, and finding a job that creates stories of "making home in limbo" (Brun & Fábos, 2015) and helps them form new memories in a new place. Most importantly, it is an ongoing negotiation between them and their immediate surroundings, and a negotiation between them and the American mainstream they hardly ever have everyday contact with.

The relationship between belonging and citizenship is complex. Yuval-Davis (2007) explains this link with the "cricket test" which was invented by a minister in Margaret Thatcher's conservative government. According to the cricket test, during a game, if one cheers for the team of their country of origin when they are playing against Britain, that means they do not really "belong" to Britain. Yuval-Davis argued (2007) people who are construed as originating from "other ethnic, racial, and national collectivities" are not viewed as belonging to the nation even

when they have citizenship; and belonging is even more complex for refugees, migrants and ethnic/racial minorities. Yuval-Davis (2007) coined the terms "multi-layered citizenship" that explains the complex ways in which migrants, refugees and ethnic/racial minorities experience belonging, sometimes as belonging to more one place at the same time, and sometimes as not belonging anywhere. While the nation-states might be playing a role in how one experiences citizenship, membership in ethnic, racial, religious collectivities and other non-state polities shape one's experience of belonging. Therefore, one's sense of belonging is multiply shaped by local, national, regional, and transnational communities one is a member of, and one's social location based in their gender, class, ability, age, and such within those communities.

The notion of multi-layered citizenship was prominent in Syrian refugees' various descriptions of their ties to the Arab and Arab-American communities, as well as to the American mainstream. Syrian refugees from traditional and non-traditional households experienced belonging in their close-knit ethnic communities and to the American mainstream in multiplex ways. In particular, the women in the non-traditional households talked about being estranged from their local ethnic communities. This estrangement was triggered by the experience of gendered stigma and some women distanced themselves from their ethnic relatives. On the other hand, the experience of estrangement led them to imagine an idealized closeness to the American mainstream with which they have little contact on a daily basis. The women and men in the traditional refugee households were more mindful of how they represented their local ethnic community and their place in it, perhaps because the presence of an able-bodied male head of the household made it possible for them to accumulate reputation within the community. On the other hand, they also enjoyed aligning themselves with the American mainstream even though they admitted that they did not know or meet many

"Americans." It would be accurate to say that Syrian refugees in Southeast Michigan are currently experimenting with multiple layers of citizenship, loyalties and belonging.

Affinity

Perhaps at this stage the "cricket test" is too rigid to be able to explain the negotiation of belonging between the various segments of the American public and Syrian refugees. However, as Yuval-Davis (2011) points out, emotional attachment to various collectivities could form the basis of a group's belonging or the acceptance of their belonging by others. Therefore, alternative forms of thinking about belonging, like affinity, may help defining how refugees and the American mainstream relate to each other. In Study 1, I examined the American receiving majority's feelings of warmth for Syrian immigrants and found support for non-identity based forms of affinity among the American public during the 2016 Presidential Election. Presidential Elections in the United States, like in any other democratic country, are times for most citizens to reflect on the nation's past and present, and the roles of different actors in this history anywhere from left to right on the political spectrum. The 2016 Presidential Election was certainly an opportunity for heightened reflection on what being an American means, or in a way "who belongs and truly represents America," and what the nation does within and outside its borders, as well as "on" its borders. We have witnessed the southern border playing a pivotal role in the mobilization of voters on both sides of the political aisle, and we have witnessed increased concerns and appreciation for the so called "extreme vetting" of the refugees and the "Muslim ban." Study 1 gives us a glimpse of this moment. Even though my measurement does not fully capture the actual emotions, and how they unfolded throughout time in the election cycle, the high correlation between feelings of warmth towards Syrian immigrants and attitudes towards Syrian refugees allows me to speculate that compassion and beliefs in some humanist ideal could

be underlying feelings of warmth. This high correlation tells us that people who were more likely to feel affinity with Syrian immigrants also viewed the idea of deporting refugees negatively and agreed to let more Syrian refugees in. Components of this reflective moment are, then, the relationship between affinity with Syrian immigrants and who Americans are as a nation in relation to their immigrants and who they voted for.

The measure of perceived similarity of the immigrants in the past and present captured the "national model" of immigration (Alba & Foner, 2015) in people's minds. By measuring to what extent people think immigrants remained as hardworking and appreciative of American culture today as in the past, this measure helped look into not only the master narratives people tell themselves about who the immigrants are, but also how these master narratives are consequential for political behavior, such as voting. I found that those who believed immigrants in the past and present are similar to each other were less likely to vote for Trump; furthermore, this link was explained by people's feelings of warmth towards Syrian immigrants.

Vulnerability

The UNHCR's call to the Global North for responsibility sharing in resettling the large number of Syrian refugees came in 2015, right before the presidential campaigns of each candidate in the U.S. gained more speed. As a response to this call, the refugee resettlement quota for the year 2016 made a little peak, after eight years of stagnation, under President Obama's administration. During this time, together with the rhetoric of global refugee crisis, a rhetoric of "vulnerability" has gained prominence everywhere from the human's rights discourses, to the media and discussions among the public. It is not surprising that vulnerability surfaced in the latter two studies in this dissertation in different ways at this historical moment and in this particular context. It is important to ask how the rhetoric of vulnerability traveled

between these spaces, from public to the media and human's rights discourses, as well as what good and what harm it may do.

In study 2a, participants were asked to generate their social representations of different groups of immigrants. People described refugees and Syrians similarly, and both groups were exemplars of people's representation of Vulnerability which included attributes such as weak, desperate, needy, and scared. In addition, these attributes stood in contrast to being "hardworking" in the minds of the participants, telling us that it was difficult for people to imagine someone who is weak, desperate, needy and scared to be hardworking at the same time. On the other hand, based on the correlations between Vulnerable vs. Hardworking factor and the National Drain vs. Asset factor, there was a great deal of overlap between the perception of Vulnerable and Drain on the one hand, and the perception of Hardworking and Asset on the other hand. This finding may imply that individualized and psychologized, rather than situational and structural, attributions of vulnerability and resilience (e.g., scared, hardworking) make people prone to stigmatizing certain groups as Drains (e.g., lazy, criminal) while complimenting others (e.g., educated, smart, funny). In either case, the shortcomings and the success were seen as the individuals' fault or accomplishment rather than the poverty that resulted from displacement. In study 2b, I inquired more into how consequential the perception of vulnerable refugees could be in terms of refugees' access to rights to belong. I examined the relationship between people's perceptions of Syrian refugees as vulnerable to their ideas of how deserving these refugees would be of legal and institutional rights. The results showed that the more people perceived Syrian refugees as Vulnerable, the less they perceived them as deserving legal and institutional rights.

The discussions of vulnerability in relation to the image of refugee is important because these social representations shape public attitudes, as well as actions and reactions of the refugees. As the "iconic victim effect" (Slovic et al., 2016) has demonstrated, the victimized and vulnerable depictions of one single refugee—especially a woman or child—results in compassion spikes in humanitarian action and aid, but does not necessarily lead to lasting institutional changes. On the other hand, these images of vulnerability and victimhood creates the expectation of performance of vulnerability for refugees to be eligible for humanitarian and government aid (Bhabha, 2001; Maegusuku-Hewett et al. 2007). In fact, in Study 3, I found that the women who were the heads of non-traditional households had a particular way of expressing their relationship to their communities different from the way women and men in male-headed households did. Women in the non-traditional households, as the presumed subjects of the discussed "vulnerability," due to the dominant framings of them as such by the UNHCR, media, and the governments, have come to embody vulnerability. Sadaf, who felt under scrutiny of her community all the time, felt guilty about enjoying a social life with her husband who had a disability because they were dependent on aid. Noor, who had adult sons, constantly calculated and compared herself to the other families with small children and felt that she and her sons were never getting enough aid. Yasmin thought, that her situation was the worst and the most difficult out of everyone among the refugee community. These women expressed feeling vulnerable more often and with more intensity than did their counterparts; they performed vulnerability in their interactions with us, perhaps because they had learned that that was more likely to convince the caseworkers, aid workers, and government officials they dealt with when they needed an accommodation.

Deservingness

The discussions of deservingness often focus on the migrants' economic value for the receiving societies. In Study 2b, I found that when Syrian refugees were perceived as greater Assets to the nation, they were more likely to be perceived as deserving legal and institutional rights. In addition, when they were perceived as assets, the public's likelihood of supporting refugees' heritage culture maintenance increased and the pressure to assimilate to American culture is lessened. Even though I did not find any significant differences between how people perceived male and female, skilled and unskilled, and Muslim and Christian Syrian refugees, there was a non-significant trend for a difference in people's perception of skilled versus unskilled Syrian refugees' deservingness. This trend suggested that with a larger sample it may be possible to find that people are more supportive of skilled Syrian refugees.

Groups unable to find traditional work (or who need a longer time than average to do so) are at higher risk for social isolation, monoculturalism, and acculturative stress. The benefits of work are not limited to its economic benefits to the refugee households and to the receiving societies. Work may indirectly improve refugees' self-esteem and mental health through providing them control and agency over their success and fostering social interactions and networks, unless the work environment is toxic and exploitative, which then undermines or reverses these effects. In particular, both female refugees who had never been part of a formal workforce in their lives before and male refugees who could not easily transfer their skills from previous work environments are at risk for experiencing these social consequences of not being able to find work.

Policy Implications

Addressing the Cost of Social Isolation

It is unrealistic to expect those who have never been in the workforce to integrate into the workforce after resettlement or to expect those who speak little English or do not have transferable skills to immediately find an appropriate employment situation. Colson (1999) stated that "resettlement involves a reordering of gendered relationships across a wide spectrum, but that reordering emerges from previous assumptions about gender and gendered experience of those involved." (p. 27). While Syrian women often experienced a newfound sense of freedom and mastery, their definition of self-sufficiency was not always related to work. Rather, they talked about smaller accomplishments in their everyday lives like being able to drive the car and run errands outside the house, taking their children to the doctor's appointments or to school and doing grocery shopping. Previous literature shows that it is the immigrant women who consolidate the status of their families in receiving countries, engage in community building, and facilitate their families' integration to the society (e.g., Foner, 1998; Pessar, 2001). However, the current resettlement framework needs to take into account the amount of time it takes for individuals with language barriers and different notions of gender roles to accomplish a renewed sense of agency. Investing in alternative solutions that will help newly arriving refugees find meaningful ways of participating in their receiving communities will potentially help integration outcomes in the longer term, ease the relationships within the refugee community in an area through lifting the weight of self-induced stigma, smooth out fractures and facilitate integration into the receiving society at their own pace.

Supporting Resettlement Organizations

Forrest and Brown (2014) suggest that intermediary organizations play a crucial role in the spatial distribution of newly arriving populations like refugees. These organizations place people into certain regions in order to meet labor needs or resolve intergroup conflict, which could sometimes exacerbate the preexisting problems. Therefore, the discussion of them should be incorporated when we study migration. The current resettlement regime is largely funded by individual or private donors and philanthropists; and governed by humanitarian aid organizations (e.g., UNHCR, NGOs, VOLAGs, Voluntary Community Organizations). This resettlement regime speeded up the divestment of governments in the Global North from addressing the protracted refugee situations by leaving the responsibility to humanitarian responses which are often rather spontaneous and irregular than consistent. The humanitarian aid organizations not only pick up the slack from the governments, but also have to exist and maintain a stable workforce despite the governments' efforts to dwindle them.

In the United States, the refugee resettlement quotas strikingly fluctuate with every change of government, which makes it almost impossible to maintain a stable workforce for the local and national resettlement organizations. The Trump administration set a historic record by establishing the nation's lowest refugee ceiling since the creation of its refugee resettlement program in 1980 (Pierce, 2019). As a result, at least 50 of 350 nation-wide refugee resettlement organizations have closed and the closures have been ongoing (Pierce, 2019). Pierce (2019) speculated that the closures could be due to lack of funds resulting from decreasing refugee admissions or that the State Department decided to eliminate affiliates if they resettled fewer than 100 refugees annually. Either way, the closures are intricately tied to the plummeting resettlement numbers. This inability to sustain the organizations and pay their workers

contributes to problems in the case management directly affecting refugees' everyday lives in resettlement context (Burke, 2018).

Future Directions

Refugees are exceedingly mobile, particularly during the initial couple of years of their resettlement during which they are in search of the town best fitting for their community, educational, and financial needs. During the first round of interviews, I found that within 36 months of initial resettlement, 15 out of 22 Syrian refugee households moved at least once within the State of Michigan, three out of 22 moved to the State of Michigan from a different State, and one household attempted to move to Canada but did not. There are a variety of reasons why refugees might engage in "secondary migration" (Bloem & Loveridge, 2018). Often, refugees have friends or relatives in other states, and they share information about the living conditions in different states. They learn from each other's experiences about safety, rent prices, the availability of health care, insurance rates, and the social services available before making the decision to move from initial place of resettlement, all with the intention of restoring a sense of normalcy. Even though the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) requires communication between local refugee resettlement agencies and thus can potentially track refugees' movement across states, in fact intra-state secondary migration is not tracked systematically. Perhaps due to the difficulties associated with tracking the movements, intra-state secondary migration, also known as relocation, is less understood compared to inter-state movements. One year after these interviews, I collected a second round of interviews with the same refugees I talked with for this study. As a future direction, I would like to examine what has and has not changed in my interviewees' lives: how many more times they have moved and what were important factors in their decision to move.

One of the findings of this dissertation is that the female-headed refugee households are at double jeopardy due to their gender and refugee status. While refugees are already stigmatized by the larger society for relying on government aid, refugee women in non-traditional households are also stigmatized by their supposedly close-knit communities due to their status as a widow, divorcee or other gendered identities attributed to them. I suspect that female-headed refugee households could be disproportionately affected by the neighborhood stigma from living in neighborhoods with higher crime rates. A recent article in the Detroit News indicated that there is a recent influx of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in previously blighted and crime driven Warrendale, Detroit (Hunter, 2019). In line with this, I observed in my follow up interviews with some of the traditional households that they bought a house in these neighborhoods. On the other hand, the female headed households are being pushed to the margins of these affordable neighborhoods (1) because they are told it is dangerous to live there, (2) it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to afford a house in these neighborhoods as they become "safer." In my future work, I would like to investigate further who "can afford" living in stigmatized neighborhoods, and what does refugee influx in stigmatized neighborhoods mean in terms of refugee self-sufficiency, as well as in terms of economic and social revitalization of previously stigmatized neighborhoods.

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APPENDICES

A. Random assignment of intersectional category names to the groups

Random Group	Primary Category Code*	Secondary Category Code**	Category Name	Status Code***
Group 1	A1	g1	Arab male immigrant	pm
	X4	g4	Straight (heterosexual) female immigrant	pm
	M5	sk1	Mexican immigrant with unskilled work background	mm
	C6	d1	Documented Canadian immigrant	pp
Group 2	S1	g1	Syrian male refugee	pm
	C4	x2	Lesbian Canadian immigrant	pm
	A2	g2	Arab female immigrant	mm
	R1	g1	Christian male immigrant	pp
Group 3	A7	x3	Heterosexual Arab immigrant	pm
	R2	g2	Christian female immigrant	pm
	S3	sk1	Syrian refugee with unskilled work background	mm
	C1	g1	Canadian male immigrant	pp
Group 4	S6	r2	Christian Syrian refugee	pm
	M2	g2	Mexican male immigrant	pm
	A6	x2	Lesbian Arab immigrant	mm
	C9	sk2	Canadian immigrant with skilled work background	pp
Group 5	R3	g3	Muslim male immigrant	pm
	M6	sk2	Mexican immigrant with skilled work background	pm
	X2	g2	Lesbian female immigrant	mm
	C5	x3	Heterosexual Canadian immigrant	pp
Group 6	C3	x1	Gay Canadian immigrant	pm
	A3	r1	Christian Arab immigrant	pm
	R4	g4	Muslim female immigrant	mm
	X3	g3	Heterosexual male immigrant	pp
Group 7	S4	sk2	Syrian refugee with skilled work background	pm
	C2	g2	Canadian female immigrant	pm
	M4	d2	Undocumented Mexican immigrant	mm
	A4	r2	Muslim Arab immigrant	mm
Group 8	C8	sk1	Canadian immigrant with unskilled work background	pm
	M3	d1	Documented Mexican immigrant	pm
	S2	g2	Syrian female refugee	mm
	A5	x1	Gay Arab immigrant	mm
Group 9	X1	g1	Gay male immigrant	pm
	C7	d2	Undocumented Canadian immigrant	pm
	M1	g1	Mexican female immigrant	mm
	S5	r1	Muslim Syrian refugee	mm

Notes: *Primary Categorie Codes: S=Syrian, X=Sexuality, R=Religion, C=Canadian, A=Arab, M=Mexican; ** Secondary Categorie Codes: g=gender, sk=skill, r=religion, d=documented status; ***Status Codes: pp=two privileged status, mm=two marginalized status; pm=mixed status (one marginalized, one privileged).

B. Interview Protocol

Introductions:

[Seating arrangement: the interviewee positions herself in between the interpreter and the participant for the most inclusive interaction between the three of them.]

[The interviewee introduces herself and the interpreter briefly] [In Arabic] Hello, my name is Ozge. And, I am a doctoral student in University of Michigan. I am interested in the experiences of refugees and immigrants for my research. This is why I would like to do this interview with you. I am originally from Turkey and I came to Michigan 5 years ago. And, this is [Interpreter's name]. [Introduce the interpreter]. My Arabic is not good enough to carry out this conversation. So, she is going to help me today to do this interview with you. [Interpreter takes over after this point].

Informed consent explanation:
Explain the study: Briefly, we are interested in learning what helps building a new life here in Michigan and what doesn't help. Material and social support systems you have, or you wish you had; housing, food security, language learning, employment, schools for kids, medical and health related concerns, relations with neighbors …etc.
Explain that the study is not going to benefit them directly: But in the long run, aims to improve the resettlement experience of people like you. That's why we really want to know about their experiences and learn from you.

Ask for recording the conversation: If there is resistance, explain: Because we are doing this with the help of a translator, it is difficult to take note and maintain a three-way conversation at the same time. That's why we're recording, to stay true to what you say during the interview. We promise to destroy this recording after the interview is transcribed. Your voice will not be used in any publications or media. It is only going to be listened by our research team for transcription. Of course, we would understand if you don't want to be recorded, in that case we will have to terminate the interview.

Introducing the interview: The interview is very casual. There is no right or wrong answers to any of the questions that I ask. It is about your personal experiences, your feelings and the way you perceive the things. You can withdraw the interview at any time you want, or you can choose not to answer any of the questions that you don't want to.
I will begin with asking a couple of questions about (1) your personal background and your family, (2) then I will move on to questions about the process of coming to the United States, (3) and finally I will ask questions about life here in Michigan.

Interview questions:

Background
Can you tell me a bit about yourself, and your personal background?

When were you born?
Where did you grow up?
How was life growing up? How was your childhood?
Did you go to school?
Where did you go to school?
What was the level of education you get?

Family and friends
Can you tell me who are the members of your family?
(if not mentioned) Do you have children? (ask about each children)
Are the members of your family here with you?
(if not) do you keep in touch with the members of your family who are not near you? How do you keep in touch?
Do you have family who are still in Syria?
(if yes) Do you keep in touch with them? How?
Do you have loved ones (extended family or friends) who are in Syria or in other countries?
(if yes) Do you keep in touch with them? How?

The decision to come to the United States
How many years has it been since you came and resettled in the US?
Did you live/stay in any other countries before coming to the U.S. from Syria?
Tell me a bit about the journey. How did you leave Syria? What happened after you've left Syria?
Tell me about any challenges along the way –only if you want to talk about it?
Who were with you during your trip?
Do you remember any conversations you've had on the way here? For example, on the plane, anything that your children or wife/husband have told you about the move? Any feelings that you remember?
What were your expectations before coming to the United States?
Did you have any fears? Any hopes?
Tell me a little bit about some of the agencies and organizations that were involved in your resettlement in the US?
How were they involved in your resettlement?
Were there times they were particularly helpful or not helpful?

Identity
I know the situation in Syria in general, but is there anything in particular *that you want to talk about* that made you leave the country?
What does being Syrian mean to you?
(prompt: how do you feel about being a Syrian)
Has your sense of what it means to be a Syrian changed since you moved to the United States?
What do you think about the word "refugee"?
Do you think that the word describes you as a person?
Do you see yourself as a refugee?
Do you ever introduce yourself as a refugee to a new person you've just met?

(if no) Why not?
(if yes) What happens when you introduce yourself as a refugee? What are people's reactions?
Do you think of being a refugee as part of your identity and your personal self?
Do you have personal qualities that make you different than what people think a refugee is?
How do you think other people in America see you?
Sometimes people might have ideas that are not true about people who belong to other groups (like people from other countries, with different religious backgrounds or identities different than their own). Do you think there are misconceptions or things people in the US do not know about people like you?
(prompt: if they mention "vulnerable" or "scared" or "needy" or "welfare-seeker", ask them to explain how does that make them feel? Why they are not true.)
What would you like Americans to know about people like you? What is it they don't know, and you would want them to know?

The first arrival
Who received you when you came to Michigan? Where did you stay before finding housing?
What were the first couple of months like? What were the challenges that you or your family members have faced?
How did you find this house that you're living in?
How did you find school for the kids?
Did the kids have any difficulties adjusting to the environment? (any difficulties in the school?)

Life in the United States
What is your typical day like? Can you walk me through a day in your life here? What do you do in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening? (Prompt: Who do you talk to during the day? Are you mostly by yourself during the day, or are there other people around you? Are there things you enjoy doing during the day? Or Are there things that are difficult to do?)

Self-expression-Language-The community
Tell me about the people you have met since you came here? (friends or acquaintances...) (ask about the composition: did they meet other Syrians? Arabs from countries other than Syria? Americans? Arabs? Muslims? Other immigrants?)
How is life in your neighborhood?
Is there a sense of community in your neighborhood?
Did you feel like being welcomed to the community?
How comfortable are you speaking in English?
(if "no" or low: What kind of challenges does this cause in your everyday life? Are you planning to improve your language skills?)
(if relatively high: How much English do you speak in your daily life? What challenges are there in your everyday life, if any, because of language barrier?)
What are the places that don't require you to speak English? (prompt: for example, which language do you speak at home, at work, at mosque, in public?)
And how do you feel when you can speak Arabic instead of English?
How close do you feel to other Arabic speaking groups in where you live?
Do you interact with them?
What do you think their perceptions of Syrians are?

Are you religious?
(yes or no) Do you think this affects at all how people in the US approach you?
(if yes) How easy or difficult is it to practice your religion in the US?
I am interested in how things change and remain the same.
What has changed for you since you moved here in terms of how you see yourself, and how others see you?

Health care, wellness, & welfare
Since your resettlement in the US, when you felt sick, have you been to a doctor? (if no, has anyone in your family been to a doctor?)
(if yes) How did you find a doctor?
How do you pay for health care?
Do you feel like the health care needs of you and your family are met adequately?
(If no) Do you think there is support if you or someone from your family were to get sick?
How would you find a doctor? How would you pay for it?
How do you get by? (how do you pay for your bills, for your rent, for food etc.?)
(prompt): How affordable is life in Michigan/Dearborn?
Are there things you wish to be able to afford?

Work
What was your occupation in Syria? Were you employed before leaving the country?
What is your current employment status?
If the reply is "employed",
How did you search for/find work?
What were the challenges you faced when you were looking for work?
What are the things you like and not like about your job?
Is there any other job you wish you could work at?
If "not employed",
Is there any job you wish you had?
(if talks about having searched for a job): Tell me about the process of looking for work since you arrived in the United States.
What were the challenges you faced?

Citizenship
Would you like to become a US citizen at some point?
Did you apply for green card, or are you going to?
Do you think it is easy or difficult to become a US citizen? Is it possible?

Looking forward
Tell me a bit about what you like and don't like about life in Michigan?
And I know you have faced many unexpected challenges over the past few years. Thinking about the near future, how do you hope your life will change or stay the same following a few years from now? Tell me what direction you picture or hope your life will take?

C. Participant Recruitment Script

[Introduce yourself] Hello, this is (your name) from (institution: ACCESS or University of Michigan). I would like to speak with (name of the potential participant) about a research study s/he may want to consider participating.
[If response is "S/he is not here"] Thank you! Is there a convenient time that I could call her/him back?
[If no one answers: you may leave a message on the answering machine] This is (your name) from (institution: ACCESS or University of Michigan). I am calling to see if (name of the potential participant) would be interested in information about participating in a research study about the experiences of immigrants and refugees in the US. S/he is eligible for participation and the study pays a small fee for her/his contribution. If so, please have her/him call me back at (phone number).
[If someone answers: This is s/he"] If you have time, I would like to explain you what this research is about and why we think you might want to participate, and I'll answer your questions. [If they were found through ACCESS: Your participation or non-participation would not affect the services you currently receive from ACCESS.] -- Would you like to hear more about the study?
[If no, thank them for their time and hang up.]
[If yes, briefly describe the research] This study is for understanding the experiences of immigrants and refugees in America. Researchers from University of Michigan want to talk to you about your experiences coming here and settling in Michigan. They will ask you questions about the availability or lack of social and material support, for example, welcoming programs, language courses for adults and children, school and employment integration. What they learn from your experience will be used to improve the current policies and practices about resettlement.
If you want to participate they will visit you in your place. The interview can be conducted in English or in Arabic according to your preference. If you choose to be interviewed in Arabic one researcher and one translator is going to visit you. If you prefer English, only one researcher is going to be present in the interview. The interview is going to take about 1,5 to 2 hours and you will be paid $15 for your contribution to the study.
Do you have any questions about the study?

> **[If they want to learn more]** There are no wrong or right answers during the interview. It is just to learn about your personal experiences. If you choose participating, you should only tell them whatever feels right to you. You do not have to share everything. You can choose not to answer any question, or you can stop the interview whenever you want to (this is not going to affect the compensation fee you will be paid).
> **[If they ask, "Are there any costs for participating?"]** There is no cost to you for participating in this project. They will pay you $15 cash for at the end of the interview, for your contribution.
> **[If they ask, "How are they going to benefit from this study?"]** There might not be direct benefits to you. However, the information you share will help researchers and policy makers to come up with better policies to improve the experiences resettlement.
> **[If they ask, "Are there any risks for participating?"]** Some questions could make you feel uncomfortable. If you experience distress during the interview, you should let them

know. You can stop participating any time without affecting your study compensation. And, all the information you provide to them during the interview will be kept confidential and anonymous.

[After all the questions are answered] Would you be interested in participating?

[If they are not interested, say Thank you, and hang up.]

[If yes] I am going to share your contact information with them if that is OK? They are going to call you to schedule a day/time for the interview in a place where you like to meet. Do you prefer doing the interview in Arabic or in English?

[After making a note of their preferred method of being contacted and preferred interview language] They are going to get in touch with you soon. If you have any questions after we hang up please feel free to call me at (phone number). Thank you for your interest and helping with this study, and have a good day!

D. Translation Debriefs

Excerpt 1. *Example from one of the debriefing sessions between the Researcher and the Interpreter, after the second interview we conducted together.*

> *Researcher*: I feel like you are really good at connecting with the participants. The way you respond back to them once they finish talking is really helpful. I feel like sometimes I don't even have to say anything back, because by that time you already have said something to them, and I don't feel obliged to address it again. And I think that's really important because if it's onto me to say something back after I understood what the story is, then it means that time will have passed, and it's awkward. So, it's good that you are handling that head on and I think that's helping for building rapport.
>
> *Interpreter*: I think I definitely feel like I'm much more comfortable with them than I thought I would be because I was very intimidated by the situation, like not with them specifically, just in general. But, I definitely felt comfortable and I thought they felt comfortable sharing. I don't know if this is the case with all the refugees in Michigan. They are kind of eager to share their story.

Excerpt 2. *Example from a debrief session between the Researcher and the Interpreter, after the fourth interview we conducted together*

> *Researcher*: This was a difficult one.
>
> *Interpreter*: Yeah. It was very difficult because after everyone sat down it made it difficult to …
>
> *Researcher*: You think it's because of that.
>
> *Interpreter*: I think so, yeah.
>
> *Researcher*: I wanted to ask her to go to maybe somewhere private. But, I couldn't…
>
> *Interpreter*: Yeah yeah. I mean it's very difficult. If we made someone uncomfortable by asking that would potentially skew the way they answer questions too.
>
> *Researcher*: Yeah, if we were interviewing a different group of people perhaps it would be okay to say, I guess. But, in this situation, because of the cultural norms you can not ask people to leave the room or to go somewhere private… I think we still got rich material… But, I'm also sorry because I think we missed something about her experience. To me it feels like she's invisible in the entire interview.
>
> *Interpreter*: The thing is that it is kind of her reality though, if you think about it. Because, I mean, she even said that she plays the role of the mother and the father in the house, and when I asked her about her aspirations she said that she doesn't have anything personal but it's what she wants for her kids. I think maybe the difficulty of her situation with having her husband and her daughter with disabilities, maybe just kind of puts her in a situation where she doesn't think of herself, you know.

Post-debrief researcher's reflection (related to Excerpt 2): I remember feeling exhausted and incompetent after this particular interview because I felt like maybe there were things I could have done differently, such as to ask her go to a room to talk privately; and I felt like if I did that maybe she would have told me all the stories she could not tell in front of her disabled husband, and her children. Even though I would never know if she would tell a different story if others were not in the room, in the debrief session we had after the interview my interpreter affirmed

my conviction that asking to talk privately puts building rapport at risk. More importantly, these recordings were helpful to refer back to during the analyses. After many interviews with many other women who were the head of the households, I started seeing the similarities in how they talked about their experiences and how their interpretations stood in contrast to the interpretations of refugee women with able-bodied husbands.

Excerpt 3. *Example of an integrity check post-*

> *Interpreter:* She was very hopeful when coming to the US because she says you hear a lot about the US being very *progressive*… Progressive not in like the political sense but progressive in like the…
> *Researcher*: Accepting?
> *Interpreter*: No no like not even in that sense progressive in like or modern maybe… Modern is like…
> *Researcher*: Modern?
> *Interpreter*: So like being more advanced than other nations and like people are very accepting of other human beings – sorry progressive was not the right word to use— So, they had this expectation that it would be something and when they came here it did not meet their expectations.

Researcher's note: In this example, the interpreter was not sure which word in English describes best the Arabic word انسانية during the interview. As can be seen in this excerpt, the interpreter had a hard time finding the right translation for the Arabic word. During the integrity check, we went back to the place in the interview where the participant was talking about this and checked the word's meaning in the dictionary to see its best fit in this context. The dictionary meaning of the word was "humanitarian." In this context, we thought the word "humane" met what the participant was wanting to communicate better than words like progressive, modern, or advanced. In order to indicate that this word had been redefined in the post-interview integrity check, we put it in parentheses. Below is what the final transcript looks like (see Excerpt 4).

Excerpt 4. *Example of edited transcription as a result of integrity check*

> *Interpreter*: She was very hopeful when coming to the US because she says you hear a lot about the US being (more humane) than other nations and like people are very accepting of other human beings. So, they had this expectation that it would be something, and when they came here it did not meet their expectations.