

**“Refugee”:  
Using Information Resources to Understand and Navigate a Liminal Identity Space**

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## ABSTRACT

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 2018 suggested that there are 25.4 million refugees worldwide (1.4 million refugees in Germany and 60,000 in Greece). But what exactly does the “refugee” mean? News media, state actors, and other bodies speak about refugees in ways that emphasize certain aspects of their experiences. What we do not often understand, is how those identified as refugees speak about themselves. In a partial attempt to explore these questions of information and identity, this thesis presents findings concerning its central question: How do self-identified refugee communities in Athens, Greece and Hamburg, Germany engage with information resources to navigate individual and community identity development during liminal phases of their refugee experiences? By adapting Srinivasan et al.’s Diasporic Information Environment Model (DIEM) to frame complex information environment questions in migration-related contexts, this thesis describes how each of reflexive ethnography, social network analysis, and community-based action & information services research can help us understand (1) how people define the liminality of refugee experiences, (2) which information resources individuals use to navigate identity and how, (3) the challenges individuals face in so doing, and (4) why the answers to these questions matter. This work makes theoretical updates to conceptions of liminality as an anthropological and sociological concept, identifies obstacles to using information resources to navigate the liminality of refugee experiences, and outlines concrete policy suggestions and directions for future research.

# Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>II</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>V</b>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
I.1 THE PROBLEM .....	1
I.2 THEORETICAL FRAMING OF THE PROBLEM .....	2
<b>II. BACKGROUND &amp; CONTEXT</b> .....	<b>3</b>
II.1 MOTIVATION.....	3
II.2 UNPACKING “REFUGEE” AND LIMINALITY .....	3
<b>III. STUDY OVERVIEW</b> .....	<b>7</b>
III.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	7
III.2 METHODS.....	7
III.3 STUDY CONTRIBUTIONS.....	7
<b>IV. METHODS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
IV.1 DATA COLLECTION .....	9
IV.1.1 Interviews .....	9
IV.1.2 Surveys .....	12
IV.1.3 Participant Observation.....	14
IV.1.4 Participatory Action .....	16
IV.1.5 Participant Privacy and Confidentiality .....	17
IV.2 DATA ANALYSIS .....	17
<b>V. RESULTS</b> .....	<b>18</b>
V.1 DEFINING THE LIMINAL IDENTITY SPACE .....	18
V.1.1 Stability.....	18
V.1.2 Freedom .....	22
V.1.3 Balancing Stability & Freedom.....	23
V.1.4 Threats to Stability and Freedom in Host Country .....	24
V.2 RAMIFICATIONS OF PROLONGED LIMINALITY & THREATS TO STABILITY AND FREEDOM .....	27
V.3 INFORMATION RESOURCES AS COPING STRATEGIES FOR LIMINALITY .....	29
V.3.1 Information Resource Types .....	30
V.3.2 Information Resource Uses.....	31
<b>VI. DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>38</b>
VI.1 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS.....	38
VI.1.1 Cultural Differences, Discrimination, Racism and Segregation .....	38
VI.1.2 Negative News Media .....	41
VI.1.3 Bureaucratic Limbo .....	41
VI.2 UPDATES TO THEORY .....	44
VI.2.1 New Definition of Liminality .....	44
VI.2.2 CONTEXTUALIZING A NEW DEFINITION IN EXISTING THEORETICAL WORK.....	44
VI.2.3 NEW THEORY IN PRACTICE: PARTICIPANTS EMBODYING AND NAVIGATING LIMINALITY.....	45
VI.2.3.1 Stability: Non-place-based Social Identity.....	45
VI.2.3.2 Stability: Human Identity.....	45
VI.2.3.3 Freedom.....	46
VI.3 IMPLICATIONS .....	46

<b>VII. CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>48</b>
VII.1 KEY FINDINGS.....	48
VII.2 FUTURE WORK.....	49
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>53</b>

# LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: REPRESENTATION OF WHAT HAS BEEN TERMED THE WESTERN BALKAN MIGRATION ROUTE (DELCKER, 2015). THIS FIGURE IS AN OVERSIMPLIFICATION OF A TRAVEL PATH THAT IS OFTEN FAR LESS DIRECT THAN THAT DEPICTED, MAY OR MAY NOT TRAVERSE ALL SUGGESTED COUNTRIES IN THE FIGURE, MAY END ELSEWHERE, OR MAY BEGIN ELSEWHERE. INDIVIDUALS FLEEING TOWARDS SAFETY IN EUROPE HAVE VASTLY DIVERSE EXPERIENCES, AND THIS FIGURE ONLY REPRESENTS A SUBSET OF EXPERIENCES. IT IS, HOWEVER, A HELPFUL GUIDE TO UNDERSTAND GENERAL PATTERNS OF MOVEMENT ACROSS THE CONTINENT IN THE RECENT DECADE. ....	1
FIGURE 2: DATA COLLECTION AT EACH STUDY SITE. ....	9
FIGURE 3: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT AT EACH STUDY SITE. ....	10
FIGURE 4: BLANK SURVEY SHEET SAMPLE. ....	13
FIGURE 5: COMPLETED SURVEY SHEET SAMPLE. ....	13
FIGURE 6: TYPES OF GROUPS INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBED FINDING A FEELING OF BELONGING THROUGH. ....	19
FIGURE 7, FIGURE 8, FIGURE 9, FIGURE 10: EXPRESSING PERSONAL IDENTITY VIA HAND MOVEMENT PHOTOGRAPHY. ....	21
FIGURE 11: ANGER AND IMPETUS THEREFOR. ....	27
FIGURE 12: APATHY AND IMPETUS THEREFOR. ....	27
FIGURE 13: DEPRESSION & PTSD & IMPETUS THEREFOR. ....	27
FIGURE 14: HELPLESSNESS AND IMPETUS THEREFOR. ....	28
FIGURE 15: ISOLATION OR LONELINESS AND IMPETUS THEREFOR. ....	28
FIGURE 16: FEAR AND IMPETUS THEREFOR. ....	29
FIGURE 17: PHYSICALLY-MEDIATED RESOURCE TYPES. ....	30
FIGURE 18: MOBILE TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED RESOURCE TYPES. ....	30
FIGURE 19: PHYSICALLY-MEDIATED INFORMATION RESOURCES DESCRIBED BY PARTICIPANTS IN GERMANY. ....	50
FIGURE 20: PHYSICALLY-MEDIATED INFORMATION RESOURCES DESCRIBED BY PARTICIPANTS IN GREECE. ....	51
FIGURE 21: MOBILE TECHNOLOGY--MEDIATED INFORMATION RESOURCES DESCRIBED BY PARTICIPANTS IN GERMANY. ....	51
FIGURE 22: MOBILE TECHNOLOGY--MEDIATED INFORMATION RESOURCES DESCRIBED BY PARTICIPANTS IN GREECE. ....	52

## I. INTRODUCTION

### I.1 The Problem

This thesis addresses issues associated with the liminality of refugee experiences, how persons that self-identify as refugees are navigating these issues, and dominant narratives’ mischaracterization of what “refugee” means to the people to whom this label is applied. In the last decade, what has become known as the Western Balkans migration route has become a predominant travel route in Europe for individuals fleeing from home countries south and east of the route’s primary European entry point in Greece (UNHCR, “Mixed Migration in the Western Balkans”; European Commission, 2015). Figure 1 provides a visual representation of this route, showing its beginnings in Greece and endings in Germany (Delcker, 2015). At the crossroads of many individuals’ journeys of migration to safety, Greece experiences complex manifestation of these global anxieties. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) suggested that 83,000 what it calls persons of concern (individuals with formal refugee status, asylum seekers, or stateless persons) were in Greece at the end of 2017 (UNHCR, 2017). Due to legislation in the European Union and member states, the more than 50,000 refugees that have arrived in Greece over the last several years will likely remain for the foreseeable future rather than relocating to other European countries (International Rescue Committee, 2019, “Greece”). Similarly, at the tail end of many journeys to safety, Germany experiences an equally complex but contextually different manifestation of the same anxieties. Over 1.41 million persons of concern arrived in Germany by the end of 2017 (UNHCR, 2017), which includes more than 185,000 asylum applicants in 2018 (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2019, “Asylanträge in Deutschland”) approximately 35% of whom are granted asylum (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2019, “Asylentscheidungen und Klagen”). Greek, German and refugee communities alike are now working to understand the realities of what this phenomenon may mean for personal and community identities.

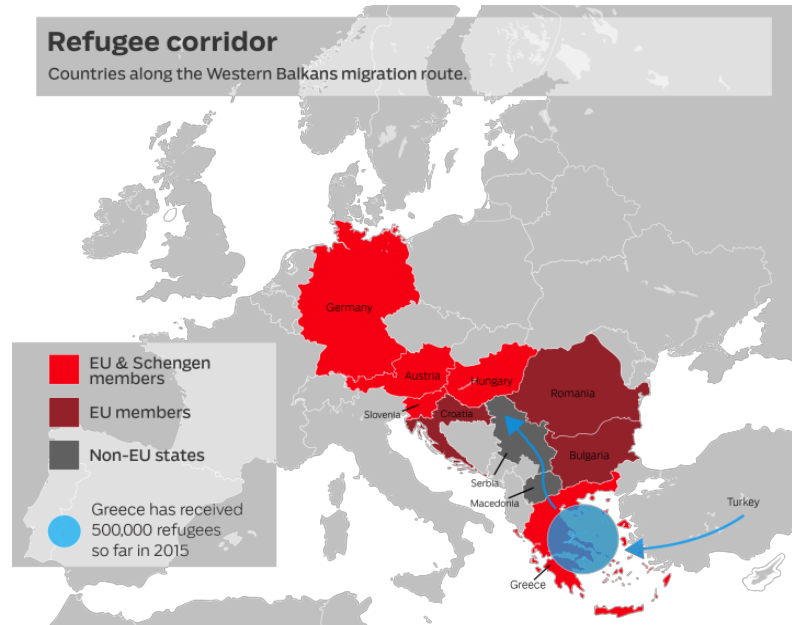


Figure 1: Representation of what has been termed the Western Balkan migration route (Delcker, 2015). This figure is an oversimplification of a travel path that is often far less direct than that depicted, may or may not traverse all suggested countries in the figure, may end elsewhere, or may begin elsewhere. Individuals fleeing towards safety in Europe have vastly diverse experiences, and this Figure only represents a subset of experiences. It is, however, a helpful guide to understand general patterns of movement across the continent in the recent decade.

Product of these processes is a building tension among Greek, German, and refugee populations characterized by incidents of physical, verbal, and psychological violence, and general mistrust and fear (Strickland, 2018). Though contemporary rates of migration are often presented as a new phenomenon or “crisis” (International Rescue Committee, 2019, “Refugee Crisis”; UNHCR, 2019; World Vision, 2019; CARE, 2019), longitudinal research from 1960 to

2014 suggests that these rates have not dramatically increased recently (Czaika et al., 2014). Despite these findings, we still see a dramatic increase in tensions among Greek, German, and refugee communities. We have seen ramifications of these tensions in incidents like the Greek fascist political party Golden Dawn collaborating with national Greek police to kill and attack migrant and activist community members in Greece over the last several years (Strickland, 2018). A collection of scholars in information studies may help to explain this phenomenon.

## I.2 Theoretical Framing of the Problem

Scholars Benedict Anderson and Ian Angus position information transmission at the center of community identity development. Anderson’s formative work on imagined communities (1991) and Angus’ 2016 conceptualization of a “crisis of culture” (2016, 57) help us to characterize this perceived crisis of migration in a way that allows us to ask questions towards better understanding it. In 1991, Anderson published his formative work verbalizing the concept of “imagined communities”, or reflections about how communities develop around imagined boundaries by way of information circulated by government, nation, memory institutions, and media (Anderson, 1991). Anderson places information at the center of community identities. With an exploration of information over time, he suggests that the movement of information is not new. Anderson contextualizes the impact of the movement of people and ideas (information) relative to community identities.

Angus proposes that while this transmission of information is not new, the structure and form of information conduits has changed with the advent of the digital culture realm. Angus proposes that communication of information and the knowledge contained in content are collapsed into a single process and structural unit in the digital realm (Angus, 2005 as cited in Angus, 2016, 54). This collapse removes integral silences and delays in translation or communication of knowledge content from one form to another, which in non-digitized forms allows for more time in which humans can process information and derive cultural meaning (Angus, 2016, 59). Because the speed of translation is so rapid in digital forms, there are less delays and silences in which humans can derive meaning from what is approaching a “transparent” (i.e. delay in translation from physical to digital is 0) digital information landscape (Angus, 2016, 64).

In this regard, Angus suggests that it is not the presence of migrants or people as units of information that is new, but rather that digital cultural information *about* migrants is being passed with such speed that many have not yet found ways to process and derive cultural meaning from this new information. Angus’ explains this phenomenon as a crisis of culture. He writes that, “The problem of the meaning and value of the digitization of culture is in large part contained in the issue of how a plethora of pieces of information might be selected and organized to become a meaningful whole. And the cultural failure to be able to institutionalize this process of selection and organization may indeed be called a ‘crisis of culture’” (Angus, 2016, 57).

In order to understand the building tension among Greek, German and refugee communities, this study uses Angus’ and Anderson’s theoretical frameworks as impetus for a study. In particular, the objective of this research is to explore its central question: How do self-identified refugee communities in along the Western Balkans Migration Route engage with information resources during the liminal phases of their refugee experiences, to navigate individual and community identity development?



## II. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### II.1 Motivation

I begin by offering the context that this research began with my personal journey to understand my own liminality and how to navigate it in our contemporary information atmosphere. Over the last years, I've come to realize that most of my personal and professional life has in some way or another been devoted either directly or indirectly to understanding this liminality. I've turned to my life as a choreographer to investigate deep emotional ideas of self and origin. I've engaged ethnographic practices to understand other's approaches to aspects of self-expressed through culture. I've turned towards films, search engines, Facebook Messenger, online communities, conversations with my neighbors and serendipitous subway acquaintances, and all manner of events to understand who I am and what it means to be in a perpetual state of liminality. As I've sought to answer these questions for myself, I've met many a person and made many a friend who have been working on their own versions of a similar journey. I have learned a lot from these individuals and owe them a large piece of my sense of self. In an attempt to share my gratitude, for those who have wanted it, I hoped to at least in some part be able to give back what I had received: support in the journey to navigate betweenness and finding a sense of self.

It so happens that many of these friends, family, and other individuals have been called or self-identify as refugees at some point in their lives. This experience may in itself be unimportant as any label goes, in the sense that we are all human and every human has their own version of betweenness to navigate. However, I choose to make this refugee experience distinction here because at present, this distinction has profound human impacts. As I have observed, the life state of refugee is often accompanied by a systemically imposed betweenness that can have severe mental and physical health consequences. Anecdotally, I and many others know this to be true, most especially those whose lives it affects. News and media reports also know this to be true. But, somehow, change at a systemic level to alter the situations that make this particular type of liminality possible, seems as elusive and untenable as the steam rising from a hot cup of tea.

This thesis builds on these personal experiences and existing works' theoretical proposals that contemporary information resource formats and different social information value systems shape how we process and derive cultural meaning or identity from information. It considers these theories in relation to how individuals with self-identified refugee experiences engage with information resources to navigate a sense of self in our contemporary information context.

### II.2 Unpacking “Refugee” and Liminality

The label “refugee” has been, is, and will continue to be a loaded word. It carries with it centuries of history, politics, society and experience. Many might know the word according to its legal definition that came about in 1951, which refers to “refugee” as a legal status that may be assigned to a person as asylum status by the country to which a person has fled (United Nations General Assembly). The UNHCR's language states that a refugee is:

“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country

of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (United Nations General Assembly)

This legal definition is problematic in at least three ways. First, why are these reasons for persecution the only ones included in this legal definition? Why not, say, reasons related to identity in general (i.e. socioeconomic, individual identity, gender identity, etc.)?

Second, are all asylum applicants afforded the same privileges? In the European context – the regional area of focus of this study – the answer is, no, owing to a few other legal parameters. In 2013, the European Union passed a law called the Dublin Regulation III, which determined that in the general case, a person seeking asylum in Europe must apply for asylum at the point of entry, in effect the first country an asylum seeker sets foot in (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2013). As may be clear for some, this piece of legislation can have severe consequences, as this means that countries like Greece, Italy, and Spain (also those experiencing domestic economic crises and high unemployment rates) receive the bulk of asylum applications. Among other initiatives, a handy provision in 2015 established by the European Commission tried to mitigate some of this front loading, by saying that of any national group of people (i.e. Iraqi, Afghan, Syrian, Somalian, etc.), if 75% or more of all asylum applications received from that national group are granted, these persons may receive relocation privileges to other European countries (Guild et al., 2017, 20). This is great news for some, but not so great for others. In practice, this differentiation among national groups of how “refugee” a person is according to somewhat arbitrary legal parameters, sets up a new and harmful power differential among groups of asylum seekers based on their nationality. Nationality is a demographic feature that a person is assigned, cannot easily change, and can often be a proxy for other identities.

Third, who decides who gets asylum and what that means for a person’s life in practice? Added to the legal framework described, is the reality that *humans* are implementing it. This introduces the necessary but potentially further problematic in some cases, human judgment and all of baggage it carries. We know that the word and idea of “refugee” been politicized in a number of ways to reflect varying political interests and agendas across countries in the last several years (Krzyżanowski et al., 2018; Gianfreda, 2018; Barnhisel, 2016; Kyriakides, 2016). Those agendas can shape the way that human beings with the power to decide “refugeeness” make decisions.

Moving beyond these legal definitions, we also have our social ideas of what “refugee” means. In its present conception, “refugee” is often conceived of as a complete identity itself. By this I mean that when someone calls another a refugee, the person labeled “refugee” is often stripped of all those identities that may have existed prior to the state of flight (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2013 in Martin-Willett, 2005, 8-9). In a human sense, we might say that this erasure of identities is of course illogical and unfair. But, as creatures that rely on categorization to survive, we do it anyway (Lakoff, 1987).

Seminal scholarly work on betweenness or liminality, suggest that the state of betweenness is one of having *no* identity (van Gennep, 1909; Turner, 1987), a tabula rasa if you will (Aristotle, 350 BCE; Haimson, 2018). Some specific work has been done about liminality in relation to the refugee experience (Chavez, 1992; Long, 1993), with one definition suggesting that the refugee experience is one of a constant limbo as decisions are made on these individuals’ behalves by

systems of power (Williams, 2006, 876). This conception starts to get at the idea of careening between different parts of self that still exist. Thankfully, recent work by contemporary information scholar Haimson, takes us one step further and begins to clarify that this space of betweenness isn't without identity, but rather a period of many identities in which some or all of those identities are changing (Haimson, 2018). This updated notion of liminality at least begins to appease our logical selves and can help us redefine current social constructs of “refugee” as blank slates, to one that recognizes the refugee experience as an added identity layer on top of the many identities a person already carries.

A particularly challenging aspect of the refugee experience of liminality, can be that exiting that systemically imposed state of betweenness may often be seen as beyond an individual's control. This feeling of being stripped of agency and control can be deeply dehumanizing (Keenahan, 1990, 27; LeMoncheck, 1985). As such, in this thesis on liminality of the refugee experience, I hope to not only describe liminality, but discuss the extremely challenging work people are doing every day to retain a sense of agency. Anthropologists have written some about these acts of agency, suggesting that in the *absence* of control by traditional *social* authority structures during the refugee experience, people may begin to imagine new communities and cultures where community values are renegotiated and redefined (Williams, 2006, 876; Turner, 1999). Homi Bhabha describes this renegotiation as the “cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation”, combining elements of home and new cultures (Bhabha, 1994, 3). These descriptions of emerging cultural ideas and communities allows us to draw a connection to Anderson's aforementioned imagined communities work, or reflections about how communities develop around imagined boundaries by way of information circulated by government, nation, memory institutions, and media (Anderson, 1991). Anderson's concept returns us to information and the integral role it plays in individuals exercising agency in determining their evolving identities during liminal periods associated with the refugee experience.

A collection of case studies investigates how migrant or diaspora communities exercise agency in reimagining cultural identity at a transnational level by engaging with the digital information space that is the Internet (Mitra, 1997; Kwok, 1999; Srinivasan et al., 2007). Related studies find, that though digital transnational transmission of information may be common across identity groups, the way information transmission occurs in different *local* contexts may actually differentiate how groups develop their own versions of community identities even if they belonged to the same original home community. Fishman et al.'s work to understand cultural consumption choices in Portugal and Spain evaluated differences in information transmission processes in each local context, particularly via education systems (Fishman et al., 2013). Their findings suggest that the processes that each country undertook to make the transition from fascism to democracy, each profoundly shifted cultural consumption choices among youth born after the transition. The study found that youth educated before the transition displayed relatively similar consumption choices across both countries, and after the transition, that youth diverged significantly in their consumption choices with Portuguese youth consuming more broadly and Spanish youth consuming more narrowly. The study attributes this difference to differing transition processes and thus different approaches to institutional education in both countries, with the Portuguese system encouraging non-hierarchical teaching and thought structures (i.e. like the world wide web, bottom-up cultural construction), and the Spanish system encouraging hierarchical teaching and thought structures (common of nationalistic top-down cultural construction).

Fishman et al. propose that non-hierarchical education systems lend themselves to broader consumption, fitting into Angus’ idea of contemporary personal identity as self in relation to the world (“transparent” information systems that seek to construct context for single interpretations), whereas hierarchical education systems lend themselves to narrower consumption, characteristic of what Angus considers notions of identity of self in relation to a locality (obscure information systems that seek one interpretation of an existing context) (Angus, 2016, 29). In this way, this article provides us with a framework for understanding consumer choices about which content to consume in relation to their institutional backgrounds and context (educational, political, sociological, etc.). In summary, the way we choose information is defined by the way we’re taught to value information. In the context of communities with refugee experiences today, though many community members may share transnational ties or common group identities of origin, differing host country local contexts’ information resources and information values may differentiate new communities’ identity navigation processes in host countries.

Returning to Angus’ idea on informational structure affecting our cultural navigation processes, I turn to his earlier work examining the relationship between technology and identity to define “information resources”. In his 2000 work, Angus proposes that both orality and digital technologies (i.e. computers) can be parceled together as technologies used for transmission of information. The forms in which these transmissions happen constitutes the difference in their effects on human identity. Angus provides an abstract definition of the relationship between technology and identity as one characterized by the way in which a technology practically executes its function of content communication. This gives us a framework through which to consider the effect of the digital platform as it compares to the non-digital platform (Angus, 2000, Ch.4). As such, this thesis conceives of information resources as comprised of both digital and non-digital means of transmitting information at local and transnational levels.

All this said, I return to my intention in developing this thesis. I write this piece with the hope that individuals with refugee experiences may tell their own stories of betweenness in these pages, talk about the impact it has had on their lives, and how they have worked to exercise agency by navigating that liminality using available resources. I hope that this document can act as an initial testament to (1) the severity of human impact caused by the powers that be that sustain the systemically imposed refugee state, (2) offer suggestions about what we can do to support each other as humans in the journey to navigate betweenness, and (3) preface potential policy implications that could support removing some of the severest impacts of the systemically imposed refugee state.

I conclude with a statement that all research participants that tell their stories here, have self-identified as having had a refugee experience. Some participants actively reject the label of “refugee” because of its sociopolitical erasure of participants’ humanity. It is for this reason that I stress, when I use the term “refugee”, I am referring to a person that has had or is having a refugee experience as so self-identified by a participant, not to a person devoid of any of the other multifaceted identities all of us carry as humans.

### III. STUDY OVERVIEW

#### III.1 Research Questions

As a reminder to the reader, the research question that I hope to explore with this study is: How do self-identified refugee communities in Athens, Greece and Hamburg, Germany engage with information resources during the liminal phases of their refugee experiences, to navigate individual and community identity development? For purposes of analysis, we might actually think of this question as four smaller questions, namely: Who are self-identified refugee communities in Athens, Greece and Hamburg, Germany? How do they describe the liminality of the refugee experience? Which information resources do they talk about using to navigate liminality? And, how do they describe using these resources to navigate liminality?

#### III.2 Methods

With generous support from the University of Michigan’s International Institute and School of Information, I was able to spend one month at each study site (Athens, Greece and Hamburg, Germany). I could not have carried out this research without the support of formal community organizations, informal community organizations and networks, and a number of individuals. This research embodies a community and collaborative effort. At each site, I used multiple data collection methods including semi-structured interviews, surveys, embedded participant observation, and participatory action research drawing from dance and community practices. I selected these methods in accordance with the Diasporic Information Environment Model (DIEM) (Srinivasan et al., 2007), which provides a framework for thinking about how to study complex information environment questions related to migration questions.

#### III.3 Study Contributions

The UNHCR has conducted research about how different refugee groups use mobile technologies (UK Department for International Development, 2017, “Refugees and Identity”; UK Department for International Development, 2017, “Mobile is a Lifeline”; UNHCR, 2016). Other scholars have done research about how people perceive the label of “refugee” generally, and how the “refugee” label affects a sense of self (Burnett, 2013). O’Reilly’s research on how people negotiate the systemically imposed liminality of being a refugee in Ireland most closely approximates this thesis’ research questions (O’Reilly, 2018). O’Reilly talks about identities that participants in her study turned to in the absence of place-based identities. She discusses the important concept of agency in negotiating these identities, introducing the idea of resources in general being important to this negotiation. She does not elaborate on which resources these are and how they are used. This thesis builds on the stage that these works set up, particularly O’Reilly’s, while contributing new insights about *how* people that self-identify as having had refugee experiences actively navigate personal and community identity development throughout their refugee experiences by engaging with information resources. Further, to my knowledge, no research to date has worked to understand how those who self-identify as refugees (not necessarily those who have had the refugee label applied to them) navigate their liminality. Importantly, this thesis does not conceive of refugee as an identity in and of itself, but rather as a life state or set of experiences. In so doing, this project bridges concepts of “refugee” as identity and liminality as a life-state, contributing a new framework with which to characterize each of “refugee” and liminality. This thesis also contributes suggestions about outstanding research gaps, and potential approaches to address those challenges that participants describe.

## IV. METHODS

This study pursued a multi-methodological approach *in situ*, including semistructured interviews, surveys, embedded participant observation, and participatory action research. Each of these methodologies builds upon diasporic community information behavior research approaches established by Srinivasan et al. (Srinivasan et al., 2007). This study adapts elements of Srinivasan’s Diasporic Information Environment Model (DIEM) to the context of refugee communities’ information needs and behavior at each study site. This study selected methodologies to reflect DIEM’s three-pronged approach: (1) Reflexive ethnography (interviews in this study), (2) Social network analysis (surveys and participant observation in this study), and (3) Community-based action and information services research (participatory action in this study). Each of these three approaches to answering my research question provided additional layers of insight into the complexity of navigating identity while a refugee. I will elaborate on these three approaches and how they mapped to my process in the few following paragraphs, prior to discussing my implementation methodologies in greater depth.

The reflexive ethnography component of the DIEM model asks “the researcher to tell the story of the community from its own members’ points of view, while recognizing that the data they receive will place him or herself into the community and attempt to elicit a detailed understanding of community members’ networks and interactions” (Srinivasan et al., 2007, 1740). This methodology is integral to DIEM under the premise that “by bridging across and working with different community members, more inclusive data can be gathered and common patterns can be identified” (Srinivasan et al., 2007, 1740). For the purposes of this study, I determined that semi-structured interviews would be the best approach to conduct this portion of the research. Interviews would allow me to engage directly with communities, allow each participant to tell their stories in their own words, and would help to clearly communicate my research goals and intentions with the community. The semi-structured component would help to guide conversations in ways that would help me later to identify patterns in the stories shared.

The social network analysis component of the DIEM model aims to “provide a glimpse into the details of community members’ networks,” and “allows researchers to identify which technologies connect members to which other individuals and institutions within the social network... and to trace the constitution and nature of community networks and determine which are important for the provision of information services” (Srinivasan et al., 2007, 1740). The DIEM model proposes use of surveys for social network analysis. I opted to use surveys as suggested, because it allowed me to capture more specific and comparable information about digitally based information networks. I complemented this survey methodology with participant observation in order to study physically based information networks (i.e. community centers, cultural events, hang-out spots, etc.).

DIEM’s community-based action and information services research component is discussed as a process by which researchers and information professionals “can work with diasporic immigrant communities in maintaining local community archives and information sources with attention to the global dimension of immigrant information sources and environments” (Srinivasan et al., 2007, 1741). For this research study, I chose to interpret this DIEM model component as an opportunity to better understand community needs and interests in relation to information resource accessibility and information resource creation and sharing. I pursued a participatory action methodology to

realize this component. This approach helped me to ensure that my research aims were in alignment with community needs and helped me to investigate identity representation in patterns of access and production of information.

Each of the sections that follow expand on my approach to implementing the DIEM model in this study.

## IV.1 Data Collection

<b>Data Collection Approach</b>	<b>Athens, Greece (June, 2018)</b>	<b>Hamburg, Germany (July, 2018)</b>
<i>Interviews</i>	Interviews with 19 participants.	Interviews with 14 participants.
<i>Surveys</i>	Surveys conducted at the beginning of each of the 19 interviews.	Surveys conducted at the beginning of each of the 14 interviews.
<i>Participant Observation</i>	1 month at refugee support centers, community meeting spaces, and community events.	1 month at refugee support centers, community meeting spaces, and community events.
<i>Participant Action</i>	Formal workshops on exploring body and movement as an expression of personal identity.	Informal ad-hoc dance and cooking exchanges.

Figure 2: Data collection at each study site.

In total 19 and 14 individuals participated in interviews and surveys in each of Greece and Germany respectively. Given that participant observation and participant action was ongoing and consisted of environmental observation, it is not possible to say exactly how many individuals participated in each of these methodologies. Though I understand that reviewers of this document may desire a greater level of demographic detail concerning each participant, I intentionally do not provide this information here. I do so in order to respect the narrative of the participants that shared their stories, who expressed that first and foremost they would like to be seen as human beings rather than demographic classifications. I hope that in not providing demographic information up front, I am able to support the participants in defining for themselves who they are and how they would like to be seen.

I do, of course, understand the value of categories and labels to understand specific and unique contexts. I also recognize that I am using the word “refugee” in this capacity here. However, beyond this “refugee” classification which I explore in this document and could in itself be seen as problematic, I opt not to discuss the demographic classifications among participants outside of the use of pronouns that participants used to refer to themselves (i.e. they, she, he, etc.).

### IV.1.1 Interviews

I designed interview protocols to assess participants’ information goals and needs. I asked a core set of questions focused on understanding information networks in contexts specific to each local community like cultural houses, language centers, stores, and other meeting places, as well in transnational digital information contexts like websites, chatting apps, or blogs.

#### IV.1.1.1 Recruitment



<b>ATHENS Recruitment Via...</b>	<b>Number of Interviews</b>	<b>HAMBURG Recruitment Via...</b>	<b>Number of Interviews</b>
Direct Contact (Regular Presence at Women’s Center)	16	Snowballing (Initiated by German Contact Informant)	2
Snowballing (Initiated by Community Meeting Place Informant)	2	Snowballing (Initiated by Interview Participant Informant)	10
Snowballing (Initiated by Greek Contact Informant)	1	Direct Contact (Community Meeting Place)	1
		Direct Contact (Community Seminar)	1

Figure 3: Participant recruitment at each study site.

In Athens, I recruited the bulk of interview participants (sixteen of nineteen) through direct contact at the refugee women’s support center where I spent several days a week conducting participant observation and participatory action. These interview participants were recruited gradually over the course of one month in a number of different ways.

At least once a week, a staff member and a translator at the women’s center would introduce me to the center’s visitors. The staff member would also introduce my research, and my interest in speaking to anyone who may be interested in sharing their thoughts. These regular announcements served to clarify the purpose of my presence to center visitors, particularly in the event that new visitors had arrived. During times in which I was not facilitating workshops, I would spend time in the center’s common space conducting participant observation (see “Participant Observation” section for details). During these times, if it felt appropriate to the energy of the space and of center visitors present, I would ask visitors individually if they may be interested in participating in an interview. Some visitors agreed, some expressed that they would prefer to schedule the interview for another time because they were pressed for time that day, some visitors agreed but only if the interview were to take place in a group context, and some visitors declined. All interviews scheduled for later days took place except for one due to scheduling conflicts.

At two other participant observation sites (see “Participant Observation” for details), I recruited the remaining interview participants (3 total) through snowballing. Two of these interview participants resulted from an informant at one site, and the third resulted from a two-degree chain starting with a contact in the Greek community that I had made, to a volunteer English teacher in a refugee camp near to Athens, and ending with the interview participant.

In Hamburg, I recruited the bulk of interview participants through snowballing. Ten interviews resulted in snowballing starting with one informant who was also the first interview participant. Two interviews, including the first interview, resulted from a contact I had made in the German community. Each of the remaining two interviews resulted from direct contact at a cultural community center in Hamburg, and a cultural seminar I presented at outside of Hamburg. At the cultural community center, I visited twice after making initial contact with the organization by Facebook Messenger communicating my research aims. Two community members at the site expressed interest in participating in interviews after my second visit. One of the two interviews transpired at a later time at a nearby café, and the second did not transpire due to scheduling conflicts. At the cultural seminar, I approached the interviewee directly after three days of seminar sessions and conversations. The interviewee expressed interest in participating in an interview. We carried the interview out on the third day of the seminar.



#### *IV.1.1.2 Translation*

The languages spoken among research participants varied dramatically. A selection of languages spoken by participants included Dari, Farsi, Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish, French, Greek, German, and English. Of these languages, I am natively proficient in English and German, and professionally proficient in French. I am able to understand general context when listening to Dari, Farsi, Arabic, and Greek. I have little to no understanding of Kurdish or Turkish languages.

Given this linguistic diversity, there are several instances in which I required translation assistance. At the first study site (Athens, Greece), I received translation assistance from each of two community-trusted translators for the women’s support center at which many of the interviews took place. In instances in which these translators were unavailable or the interview participant felt more comfortable with a friend or family member translating, a trusted friend or family member would translate. At the second study site (Hamburg, Germany), one of the first interview participants, to whom I am deeply grateful for his support in recruiting additional participants, was either present if a later participant requested his presence, and assisted with translation from Arabic to German if a participant expressed interest.

On translation, whether translation was necessary or not and who translated certainly affects the information that I, as a researcher, received, recorded, and interpreted. How comfortable a participant felt with me, the translator whether professional or personal friend or family, and their surroundings varied among participants. Some interviewees requested that they share their thoughts through group interviews, which adds another layer of social complexity to the responses interviewees shared with me. These complexities offered valuable insights in themselves as to social dynamics, community norms and practices, and the nature of relationships in group settings. I will discuss some of these differences in interviewees thoughts in the “Discussion” section.

#### *IV.1.1.3 Recording Interviews*

Though initially I had intended to audio record interviews, it became clear after the first four interviews at the first study site that the majority of interviewees were not comfortable with audio recording. Though one interviewee took no issue with audio recording, other participants notably became uncomfortable when I asked. I could see that my asking for an audio recording affected participants’ level of comfort in the minutes following. As such, to avoid causing participants any undue discomfort and for the purposes of consistent data collection methods, I opted to take only take written notes during interviews and not to ask for an audio recording.

It is important to note here, that because interviews would often take place in a blend of different languages – a few expressions in Arabic here, some words in English there, maybe some Greek mixed in, and often with significant use of body language – in order to retain consistency and comprehensibility in the way that I recorded interviewee’s thoughts, I made all written notes in English. In the event that a word was spoken in a non-English language that I did not immediately feel could be translated, I would write this word in the non-English language. In my written records of interviews, I attempted to capture as much detail as possible, recognizing that I would not be able to capture as much nuance or detail as with an audio recording. When possible, I would type up the written interviews in a word processing software on my computer at a nearby café immediately following interviews. If not possible to type up the interviews immediately, I would

type them up at the next available opportunity. Through this practice, I sought to capture as much of the nuance of the interviewee’s comments as possible.

I recognize that much of the nuance afforded by recording in the interviewees’ spoken languages may have been lost through this process. However, given that I was unable to make audio recordings and my own linguistic constraints, I deemed this the best method whereby to capture as much of an interview participant’s comments as possible through written notes.

## **IV.1.2 Surveys**

### *IV.1.2.1 Rationale*

Initially I intended to include questions asked via survey as part of semi-structured interviews. In conducting a few test interviews prior to the field research period as I worked on refining the questions I would ask, it became apparent that a number of questions about digital information network use could be better facilitated with a visual aid in the form of a one-page paper survey. This approach would also help me organizationally when it came time for analysis.

### *IV.1.2.2 Survey Approach & Recording Responses*

I crafted a few different versions of the survey to start with, testing each survey with a few individuals with similar life experiences to those I would be interviewing. Feedback from test surveys helped me craft the final version I would use during field research (pictured in Figure 4). The list of mobile applications that I opted to feature on this sheet reflected my understanding of mobile application use collected anecdotally from community members in Athens, and from summary reports of web traffic on NetHope’s wifi hotspots at refugee camps in Athens and surrounding areas from February 11 to March 11, 2018 (NetHope, 2018).

I conducted surveys at the beginning of each interview after introducing my research aims, confidentiality terms, and the nature of voluntary participation in interviews. I have included a screenshot of the one-page survey for reference (see Figure 5).

Please circle any apps that you use in the boxes on the left. Please describe how you use these apps in the boxes on the right. If you use any apps that are not listed on this page, please write their names into the box at the bottom of the page that says “Other”. When you are finished, please give this sheet to Angela.

Phone Apps	I use this app for these tasks...
WhatsApp	
Facebook Messenger	
iTunes	
YouTube	
Chrome / Safari	
Google Maps	
Others:	

Figure 4: Blank survey sheet sample.

For example, I might ask, “Do you use WhatsApp?” If the survey participant responded “Yes,” I would follow-up with questions like, “How do you use WhatsApp?”, “Why do you use WhatsApp?”, “With whom do you like to communicate on WhatsApp?”, and “If you feel comfortable, can you describe a recent conversation you had with someone on via WhatsApp?” I have included a sample survey page completed with a survey participant in Germany for reference (Figure 5).

As you will notice from the introductory note the top of Figure 4, initially, I had planned that each interview participant would fill out the sheet themselves with either myself or a translator present if desired to support survey completion. After trying this approach with the first two interviews in Athens, it became apparent that participants interpreted the questions being asked in the survey very differently. One of the first two participants was also semiliterate, so being asked to read and write even with the help of a translator present was difficult. After these two initial surveys, I opted to conduct all subsequent surveys differently. Instead of having participants fill out the surveys themselves, I would read out each question, participants would respond, and I would record their response in English so that they could see. If needed and desired, a translator was present to translate the questions and the responses I recorded.

Please circle any apps that you use in the boxes on the left. Please describe how you use these apps in the boxes on the right. If you use any apps that are not listed on this page, please write their names into the box at the bottom of the page that says “Other”. When you are finished, please give this sheet to Angela.

Phone Apps	I use this app for these tasks...
WhatsApp	for me, mostly for telephone family / friends some chatting for friends with school, I use it more for family use more, more for family also for very close friends
Facebook Messenger	
iTunes	pop music in Respublika → hard to come to Syria for the music; easier to come to Germany for the music; easier to listen to music in Germany
YouTube	Decision videos, music, Syrian classical films information for art, to learn Arabic music → German which was hard to learn in Syria
Chrome / Safari	Google to use in Germany comparison if I used in my mother's app. I like to read I use Chrome Zytron, a Syrian newspaper
Google Maps	to find a place in Syria → have an address and need the location in Germany → do not like to use it to find news from Syria. Have GCC on my phone to translate individual words from Arabic to German, prices def. no longer sent in cash, not always correct
Facebook	
Others:	
Arabic	
Google Translate	
German Verbs	
Dictionary w/o internet	
Camera	
Recorder	
Spotify	
Das Erste	
Chess	
Music	

Figure 5: Completed survey sheet sample.

### **IV.1.3 Participant Observation**

#### *IV.1.3.1 Rationale*

DeWalt et al. suggest that, "the goal for design of research using participant observation as a method is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method" (Dewalt et al., 2002). Though I do not agree with DeWalt et al.'s conception of developing an understanding that is "objective and accurate" as I question whether any observation about another human being can be objective or accurate, my decision to use participant observation reflects DeWalt et al.'s ambition of developing a "holistic understanding" of the situation I studied with this project. Researcher Barbara Kawulich further suggests that in participant observation, "the researcher is an observer who is not a member of the group and who is interested in participating as a means for conducting better observation and, hence, generating more complete understanding of the group's activities" (Kawulich, 2015). This description better approximates my intentions and approach as a participant observer. Sharan Merriam helpfully provides another layer of understanding about participant observation, stating that, "...there are situations in which participation is required for understanding. Simply observing without participating in the action may not lend itself to one's complete understanding of the activity" (Merriam, 1998). Indeed, given the nature of this research's focus on individual identity navigation, understanding identity influences among research participants would be very difficult through solely observational (without participation) or interview methods. It is for these reasons that I opted to use a participant observation methodology.

#### *IV.1.3.2 Observation Sites*

In general, I conducted participant observation throughout the entirety of my research visit. Given that the place of research was as much important to understanding information networks as research participants' individual experiences, effectively anything I experienced was game for observation. For example, a subway ride to an interview in Hamburg gave me insights about the trip that an interview participant took every day to attend a German language-learning class that was part of his information network. Similarly, attending cultural events in celebration of International Refugee Day in Athens shared insights about how culture is represented in community settings, who is involved in the representation of different cultural identities, and responses of event attendees to these representations. In this sense, everywhere I went, I was a participant observer.

This said, there are certainly instances of emotional or informational exchange with friends or research participants that I did not record and that I will not include in my writings for ethical reasons. These were often instances in which given circumstance or context, I crossed from the space of researcher to the space of friend or confidante. As such, I do not feel it appropriate, respectful or ethical to include descriptions or analyses of these moments in my writings. Inevitably, those moments have shaped my psychology and my understanding of the world and thus indirectly feed my writings, but I do not allude to them directly.

#### *IV.1.3.3 Observation Approach*

Generally, my observations focused on understanding observing individuals' and small groups' use of information infrastructures, and conversations witnessed about where participants come from and where they imagine themselves going (imagination of culture and self).

Recorded observations I made generally fell into one of five observation approaches I used, namely:

1. Describing the space, I was in;
2. Describing the people in the space;
3. Describing the contexts of the space and people in it;
4. Describing the emotional energies of the space and people in it;
5. Describing my emotional and thought responses to situations involving the space and people in it.

Each of these approaches helped to facilitate my developing a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the context in which I would ask research questions or conduct participatory action activities. This contextual information was vital to my ability to respect community members I engaged with in a research capacity. Through awareness of the situations in which community members existed, I became more aware of my role as a researcher in these situations, and to what extent and how my presence did or did not change the meaning or experience of a situation. The results of this methodology also serve to frame interview and participatory action research results, helping to achieve a more complete response to this project’s research questions

#### *IV.1.3.4 Recording Observations*

Unlike a complete observation, participant observation involves participation in activities. Thus, notes may not be taken immediately on observation but rather at a later time once an activity has concluded (Merriam, 1998). This was very much the case for my own efforts as a participant observer. I did make photographic records with my mobile phone’s camera of some events I participated in. I generally did not take notes while observing or participating, but rather would record observations as soon as possible following an activity or situation. Though this approach has its limitations given that it is nearly impossible to record verbatim conversations or highly specific details accurately, this method allowed me to be fully present, participate, and take store of emotional energies of situations in ways that would have been impossible had I been simultaneously recording.

While in Athens, finding opportunities to record observations was far easier logistically than in Hamburg. In large part, this was due to differences in each city’s communities’ spatial architecture. For example, in Athens, communities that I engaged with were generally organized around a few local hubs within walkable or short public transport distance of one another. This meant that I spent less time traveling between activities, and thus had more time available to record observations. In contrast, communities that I engaged with in Hamburg were generally quite sprawling and distant in their constellations. To move from one activity to another, often required travel times between one and two hours by bus and subway. Though sometimes I was able to record notes while traveling, more often than not busses and subways were full enough to require standing, thus making it difficult to record notes while in transit. As such, in Hamburg I generally had significantly less time to record observations than in Athens and there would be a longer delay between when I would participate in or observe an activity, and when I would write about it.



#### **IV.1.4 Participatory Action**

##### *IV.1.4.1 Rationale*

Coined for the first time as “action research” in 1946 by social psychologist Kurt Lewin, participatory action research (PAR) “seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it” (Lewin, 1946; Baum, 2006, 1). Contemporary PAR practice constitutes a reflective cycle in which researcher and participants together collect data in response to a collective research question, and then determine together which community action for change should be taken in response to new data. Reflection on this action then inspires the next cycle of question asking, data collection, action taking, and reflection. This iterative cyclical, sometimes described as spiral, approach to research “aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people’ in problematic situations and to the academic goals of science ‘by joint collaboration with a mutually acceptable ethical framework’ ” (Rapaport, 1970, p. 499, as cited in Hayes, 2011, as cited in Thomer, 2017). Importantly, PAR understands the researcher as an active contributor to the social construction of knowledge (Thomer, 2017). Different fields have iterated on basic principles of PAR to reflect these fields’ unique needs and interest. Current examples of PAR include “youth participatory action research (YPAR), community-based participatory action research (CBPR), participatory geography (PG)... participatory art (PA),” and street participatory action research (SPAR) (Payne et al., 2018).

Given that this research project’s aim is to understand how refugee communities are navigating identity shifts by engaging with information networks, PAR was particularly well suited as a methodology by which to: (1) ask relevant questions to this context, (2) together – the participant community and myself as a researcher – collect information about how individuals are navigating personal identity shifts in relation to information resources, (3) take action to improve opportunities for healthful personal identity navigation, and (4) reflect on this cycle of actions as impetus for the next cycle of questions, information gathering, action and reflection.

##### *IV.1.4.2 Participatory Action Approach*

The framework for the participatory action methodology used for this study stems from my own and other existing work with dance, theater and storytelling in community-based conflict resolution, social emotional learning, and political participation practices. These methodologies find their theoretical bases work in psychology, sociology, political science, and performance studies. This theoretical work actualized via the aforementioned dance etc. practices, approaches identity first from the perspective of the individual, then as an individual situated in their immediate community(ies), and finally as an individual situated in their imagined community(ies) (i.e. the nation, the globe, the universe). I will discuss the theoretical bases for each of these three identity components in the following paragraphs.

In the last decades, a growing collection of psychologists specializing in movement and dance therapy have begun documenting movement and dance’s role in developing self-awareness – understanding of self and personal identity – and awareness of others among patients (McGarry, 2011; Berrol, 2006; Holdaway, 1994). This work complements a series of studies across fields of comparative psychology, early childhood development, and neuropsychology discussion of self-awareness’ integral role in cultivating empathetic relationships (Gallup et al., 2002; Carruthers et al., 1996; Johnson, 1982). Work with movement, dance and self-awareness can play an important role in preparing an individual to engage in empathetic relationships with others. The premise of

the self-aware individual as a precursor to understanding their identity in relation to a group, forms the basis of the first piece of identity exploration addressed via this study’s participatory action methodology.

The participatory action research methodology’s aim was thus to cultivate a space via a workshop series in which participants could begin to explore personal identity through movement and dance. Initial curricula for the workshops drew from each of six related curricula I have developed or implemented, and the curricular work of community dance professionals Anna Halprin and Suzanne Lacy (Halprin, 1970; Irish, 2010). In particular, I drew from Halprin’s RSVP Cycles iterative community-based participatory action methodology, and from Lacy’s event-based conflict-resolution work. Each of the six curriculum related documents I drew from included:

1. AFCECO Digital Coaching Program Assessment (2016)
2. Move This World Social Skill-Building Curriculum (2012-2013)
3. Melissa Network Workshop Implementation (2016)
4. ESL Elliniko Baseball Camp Curriculum (2016)
5. Embassy Nicosia Bicomunal Support Program Curriculum (2013)
6. Sadie Nash Leadership Project Draft Curriculum: Choreography of Leadership (2017)

Planned curricula for subsequent workshops were developed with community in response to lessons learned from preceding curricula. Following the completion of the 10-workshop series, together with the community we worked to iterate a series of questions and needs we identified through the workshops for a potential future project.

#### *IV.1.5 Participant Privacy and Confidentiality*

I have stored research-related materials on a password protected computer. All physical materials (i.e. handwritten notes) were stored on my person during data gathering activities, and in a locked filing cabinet when not in use. In initial recordings of these materials, I did not include any personally identifying information. Rather than name, I assigned each interview a number for later reference. In participant observation and participatory action notes, I use first initials of first names in certain cases and pseudonyms in others. In incidents in which I describe specific research participants in the “Results” and “Discussion” sections that follow, I have assigned numbers to each person I mention by name. I have also used pseudonyms to refer to specific locations. These are not the participants’ or venues’ actual names.

#### *IV.2 Data Analysis*

I used a Grounded Theory approach to coding interview transcripts (Glaser, 1978; Glaser et al., 1967). For the first phase of interview coding, I used Nvivo 12 for Windows software to perform line-by-line coding, or the process of assigning a written theme or code to each line of the textual data (Charmaz, 2006: 50). After this first cycle of coding, I performed a second cycle of coding, grouping thematically related codes together and developing a higher level of thematic codes (Saldaña, 2009: 78). Each of these second cycle thematic codes has become a section heading in the Discussion section of this document.

## V. RESULTS

First, I will present participants’ descriptions of different ways in which they experience betweenness or liminality and the implications of this liminality on their daily lives. This section will provide context for discussions of information in identity navigation. I will then discuss which information resources participants talk about using to navigate this liminality. Finally, I will present participants’ thoughts about how they engage with these information resources to navigate different aspects of liminality in each of their specific contexts. I describe all interview participants based in Greece with an interview number and the suffix “Gr” (i.e. 1Gr for the first interview that took place in Greece), where I describe all interview participants based in Germany with an interview number and the suffix “Ge” (i.e. 7Ge for the seventh interview that took place in Germany). In cases where I refer to participant observation or participatory action, I will note as much.

### V.1 Defining the liminal identity space

This section will explore how participants understand liminality in order to provide conceptual framework for thinking about how information resources facilitate navigating liminality in later sections. I discerned two common themes among the narratives expressed during interviews about how participants understand liminality as it relates to the idea of “refugee”. In general, descriptions appear to represent the liminal identity space as the absence of balance between what I will here call *stability* in a sense of self, and *freedom* to express self. In the first two subsections following, I present participants’ ideas and how they led me to use the words stability and freedom to describe them. In the third subsection following, I present participants’ descriptions of how the lack of balance between each of stability and freedom constitutes liminality. In the fourth subsection, I present factors that participants outline as further threatening the balance of stability and freedom in their respective host countries. I reiterate that I have derived this stability-freedom framework from a Grounded Theory analysis of participants’ interviews.

#### V.1.1 Stability

Three primary experiences that participants talked about suggest a common underlying desire for what I call stability here. These include: (1) group membership or a feeling of belonging, (2) long term planning capacity, and (3) a feeling of reliability.

##### V.1.1.1 Group Membership or Belonging

Interview participants described how they found a feeling of belonging by participating in different groups. Those groups most prevalently mentioned in this context are outlined in Figure 6. Sample quotations from various interview participants are shared alongside each group type as illustrations of either (1) how belonging to a given group manifested in participants’ sense of self (i.e. identity), and feeling of stability therein, or (2) moments in which participants felt unstable in their sense of self because of the absence of group belonging or discrimination based on their group membership.

Group Type	Sample Comment by Interview Participant
Ethnic Group	“You know, outside of the country, everyone gets along. But inside the country, it’s not good. I am Hazara. Kabulis say that Hazara are bad, but here it’s good. I asked one of my classmates in theater class, when you were in Kabul, how did you treat people not from Kabul? He said, I was normal, but I saw that others beat them badly.”



	In Afghanistan, they kill Hazara people more. My father spend 30 years of his life in Iran, and my mother was born in Iran” (Interview 5Gr).
Family Group	“I wish to visit my home, but I can’t. I miss my family a lot. I haven’t seen them in three years. My sister is in [country name], but I can’t visit because of the political crap that I can’t get a visa from Germany. I am alone in Germany. I want to have fun here, but I can’t” (Interview 2Ge).
Gender Group	“It’s not dangerous here. I feel I like being a girl. In Iran, I always felt, why am I not a boy? Because they can do anything they want. But girls can’t, because we only had one day for rest from work and we would be only with family. Here, with friends and family we do everything together” (Interview 5Gr).
Geographic Group	“I would like to say that I’m very grateful to be here in Germany, and the help that I’ve gotten from this country. I really feel like I’m in my homeland here” (Interview 5Ge).
Group based on Common Experience	“...here in Germany, people are surprised that many Syrian people are not religious... What are the common things between us [country of origin] people in the group at the cafe? None of us are religious, we all experience pain, and we all experience isolation. We don’t want to belong to a group on a religious or political basis” (Interview 14Ge).
Group based on Legal Status	“Whenever I get my papers, I’ll be okay. For 8 months, I paid 5000 euros in taxes, but the asylum services don’t see this. I don’t want to go sell drugs and things. I want to work legally. But here, the asylum services don’t see that. So then next time, if they reject my asylum, maybe I will need to go back to Afghanistan” (Interview 13Gr).
Human Group	One individual I spoke with during participant observation in Greece commented that when people ask him where he is from, he says, “ <i>I am from the same place you came from.</i> ” This participant has lived for twelve years in Greece, has applied for asylum three times and has been rejected each time. He now manages two non-profit organizations that support literacy, education, and cultural initiatives in Athens. Though he carries each of several non-place-based identities as part of himself, he finds the most stability and freedom through his identity as a human being.
Linguistic Group	“I came here because I want to live somewhere safe. I don’t care which country. Some want Germany, but I don’t care. I know English, so maybe it was easier because I could make friends and get to know people” (Interview 10Gr).
National Group	“My friends are Iranians that I got to know here in Athens at centers like Melissa” (Interview 1Gr).
Professional or Education Group	“My future here is secure. If you study and have a job, it’s easier” (Interview 11Ge).
Religious Group	“The mosque I like best is the [name of religious institution] in Hamburg by the [landmark]. It’s also where the [religious institution] is for Shia Muslims. In [location] there is also a mosque for Shia Muslims. In both I have found many friends. Many people from Iran that there - when I was in Iran - I never saw, but now here I can because they’ve also moved to Hamburg. Hamburg is a very special city” (Interview 8Ge).
Socioeconomic Group	“In Syria, I worked all the time without breaks. Then I came here to Germany and I don’t have a job for three years. That is very hard. No one puts money in your pocket. Money is respect” (Interview 4Ge).

Figure 6: Types of groups interview participants described finding a feeling of belonging through.

In one participant action (PAR) workshop in Greece, participants talked about their favorite dance types. People talked about their favorite dances as: (1) Irani (dance from Iran), (2) Afghani (dance from Afghanistan), (3) belly dance, (4) Zumba, (5) any kind of dance that is slow, (6) Korean dance, (7) Salsa dance, (8) Arabic dances, (9) “Come on, come on” dance from music video, (10) Tango dance, and (11) slow partner dances. This range of examples further describes different

participants’ approaches to exploring and expressing aspects of personal identity through dance practices during the liminality of some of their experiences.

Each of figures 7-10 provide visual examples of how participants in PAR workshops decided to express their personal identities via a photograph of a hand movement. PAR workshop participants hoped to express their body work in some way that both preserved their privacy and could be publicly disseminated. We opted to develop photos of hand positions that I took with my mobile phone, shared via Facebook, and that participants could then re-share, download, or disseminate in some other way as desired. Given that the focus of the exercise was to express self via movement and body, these expressions are word-less descriptions of identity that I present here as embodiments of the complexity that each person’s sense of self is.





Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10: Expressing personal identity via hand movement photography.

#### *V.1.1.2 Long-term Planning Capacity*

In addition to finding a stable sense of self through belonging to groups, interviewees discuss the importance of long-term planning capacity. One interviewee who has received asylum in Germany, shared explicitly, *“We also have a life in Germany because our body and future is here”* (Interview 14Ge). Another interviewee shares the opposite experience, describing that he had not yet received notice about whether he would receive asylum, and that consequently *“In Germany there is always stress about the future, always stress about what will be in the future. If I do something wrong or not...”* (Interview 4Ge). Interview participant 4Ge reaffirms 14Ge’s expression that future and long-term thinking to feeling a stability in sense of self, through his experience of the opposite.

#### *V.1.1.3 Feeling of Reliability*

Among the Hamburg interview group, several interview participants alluded to the feeling of stability in the reliability that the German system provided. One interview participant described that *“In [country of origin], it is chaos with no rules or transportation system. I don’t like it”* (Interview 13Ge), but that in Germany a culture of rule-keeping and timely transportation made life feel reliable. Another interview participant echoed this thought, saying that *“Infrastructure, like the bus. That it’s on time is different. I really like that here”* (Interview 14Ge).



### V.1.2 Freedom

Three primary experiences that participants talked about suggest a common underlying desire for what I call *freedom* here. These include: (1) ability to exercise agency, (2) ability to express identity, and (3) access to privacy all *without fear of disproportionate retribution*.

#### V.1.2.1 Ability to Exercise Agency

One interview participant in Greece summarizes the power of agency without fear of retribution she felt in Athens: “...*freedom, even freedom in choosing your clothes. Also, the food is different here, and the way people communicate with each other. So, it made our minds more open when we came. Here, there are more women’s rights and it makes our minds better. Here it’s more comfortable, you have a choice. No one will punish you for your choice.*” (Interview 15Gr). The ability to exercise choice without fear of being punished contributes to this participant’s feeling of freedom in her identity and to her mental health.

A second interviewee from Greece similarly describes agency’s importance to a feeling of freedom. She explains, “*Whatever I want, I can choose for myself. I am free here. I can choose for myself. It’s just my husband that has any say in things, but even that... it needs time to change you know. Changing too fast is not good. I learned a lot from the camps at [location]. The conditions were terrible, and there was no help. [Name of refugee support center] helped me like a mother. Now I have the passion and safety to change, like a baby. When a baby grows up, they can choose whatever culture they want*” (Interview 3Gr). In this example, the participant found the feeling of freedom to choose and develop a strong sense of self with the support of feeling belonging or being cared for (i.e. stability).

#### V.1.2.2 Ability to Express Identity

In addition to agency, several interview participants describe the importance of being able to express their identity to a feeling of freedom. Interview participant 5Ge in Hamburg shared,

*“Here there’s a lot more freedom and openness than [country of origin] culture. That I noticed immediately. For example, we think all the time about what others think in [country of origin]. Here we don’t think about it at all. It doesn’t matter. Freedom, the people are free to criticize politics, religion without problems. But, in [country of origin] these are taboo... When I was in Syria, I always wished to live in a free land, so for me now I feel more at home here because I can be me. But in [country of origin], I had to participate in culture there, even though I didn’t agree with it”* (Interview 5Ge).

Another interview participant in Germany similarly defined freedom, explaining that, “...*freedom of the mind is something I already feel. Freedom is when you can do what you do without others watching or judging, except of course for your spouse if you’re married*” (Interview 9Ge). Freedom in this sense is both agency and ability to express identity without fear of retribution in the form of social judgment or alienation.

#### V.1.2.3 Access to Privacy

Interview participants describe access to privacy as integral to freedom of expression discussed in the preceding section, and to socioemotional wellbeing which in turn contributes to stability.

Interview participant 5Ge in Germany explains that when he is alone, “...*I love going for walks or around the [location] off of the [subway stop] stop. It’s like the sea, or being on a river. I like these places because they feel free and open. You can dream in those places. I think about my memories for what I would like to have in my life here. Different things*” (5Ge). The privacy of the open space allows him the freedom to dream and develop ideas about the future, or an aspect of what I’ve called stability.

In Greece several interview participants talked about how they appreciate going to open spaces alone. They suggest that their spatial openness and the privacy of their aloneness supports their feeling of emotional wellbeing and overall stability. One participant explained, “*[location] is my favorite place. It has a nice big park between the [location] and the ocean. I like to go there mostly alone, sometimes with friends. I go there to be relaxed, so I prefer to go alone*” (Interview 7Gr). Another participant explained, “*I love the sea. I like to go to the sea alone and speak with the sea. I speak personal things there*” (Interview 8Gr). A third participant affirms the importance of freedom of access to open and private space as vital to personal emotional wellbeing, “*I also love the sea and to speak with the sea... To shout angry things at the sea, and to cry. I go alone. I want to do it now but I’m nervous about there being people there*” (Interview 9Gr). Finally, participant 6Gr described, “*on WhatsApp I talk to myself when I’m sad and I can’t talk with anyone. I talk with myself and delete the messages immediately so people don’t see*” (Interview 6Gr). This participant crafted a private space out of a mobile technology in the absence of a physical private space. Access to privacy or private spaces in both physically- or mobile technology-mediated senses supports participants’ ability to express identity without fear of retribution, and as such contributes to a feeling of freedom.

### **V.1.3 Balancing Stability & Freedom**

Interviewees discuss the tension between stability and freedom, and that overcoming the absence of balance between the two is important to achieving a sense of safety. Interview participant 3Gr summarizes this tension relative to her own context: “*Greek people free. Afghan people are not free. I think this makes some Afghans confused. They want to be free, but the past keeps them from being free. In Greece, women can participate in everything, take off scarves, and be social*” (Interview 3Gr). This interviewee here describes the freedom of choice and agency that she experienced in her host country – Greece – and the challenge of navigating agency and the stability of cultural belonging prior to flight.

Several interviewees describe the effects of excess stability in some instances leading to an absence of freedom. Interview participants 2Gr and 4Ge describe having witnessed their feeling of belonging to a religious group being abused by religious leaders to realize political aims. In so doing, they perceived these leaders to be enforcing social norms associated with their religious group to an oppressive degree (Interview 2Gr, Interview 4Ge). In this example, the balance between stability through group belonging, and freedom through agency, tipped too far in the direction of stability. This imbalance prevented the interviewees from expressing themselves freely without fear of retribution.

The inverse, another interviewee describes that having arrived in a new host country, he felt a freedom to grow professionally and be emotionally healthy in a way he hadn’t in his home country. He explains, “*Here [Germany], there is little social contact. On the weekend, you go meet your*

*cousins and friends and go out in [home country], but here not as much. I must say that I like this lonely culture, because nobody bothers me. My future here is secure. If you study and have a job, it's easier. You have a lot of free time for yourself. People here are happy.*” (Interview 11Ge). This participant talks about the benefits of feeling freedom in their new situation. A few moments later, however, he expresses, *“I know a man that is 73 years old, and he lives alone with no wife and no kids. I find that terrible, because if something happens, you don't know. No one calls to ask how he is”* (Interview 11Ge). The interviewee continued to share the story of a former housing unit he had lived in briefly, and that a woman had died in a neighboring apartment. He explained that no one knew she had died, until he and his roommate smelled the stench of a rotting body and called the police. This participant expressed nervousness and fear regarding being alone in his host country. In this example, the balance between freedom via solitude's affordance of time and focus, and stability via belonging to a group has tipped too far in the direction of freedom, preventing the participant from feeling safe and without fear of retribution in the form of perpetual loneliness.

#### **V.1.4 Threats to Stability and Freedom in Host Country**

Though navigating this stability-freedom balance may be an inherent part of arriving in a new place and attempting to rebuild a life, research participants discuss how different factors support or further destabilize this balance. Interviewees allude to several factors that threaten their stability and freedom in their host country, which I have grouped into four overarching areas:

- (1) Bureaucratic limbo (maintaining a perpetual feeling of limbo and in inability to feel legitimate),
- (2) Negative news media (news constantly portray refugees committing crimes),
- (3) Cultural differences,
- (4) Discrimination and racism (on basis of ethnicity, religion, and cultural practice), and segregation (intentional and unintentional).

Each of the following subsection discusses each of these ideas in greater detail.

##### *V.1.4.1 Bureaucratic Limbo*

In my case study in Greece, I observed a group of approximately twelve men who fled their home countries in the mid-2000s as teenagers or young adults prior to the most recent wave of migration. They commented that they had been waiting 10-13 years for asylum in Greece, and many had had their asylum applications rejected, up to three times in some cases. Their lives have been shaped by this limbo. Other interview participants in Germany commented that changes to the asylum process meant that where asylum a few years ago might have meant a longer term assurance of stability and freedom, new temporary asylum issuances for one to three years meant that what might have been an opportunity to build a new life, became hoping for an extension on a temporary asylum issuance for fear of life-threatening consequences in the event of no extension (Interview 5Ge). This time has also been spent in limbo. Finally, one person I spoke with during participant observation in Greece, described the type of self-censorship that they engage in in order that their third attempt at asylum application be approved after ten years. This person actively works for large humanitarian agencies to support the provision of healthcare services to new refugee arrivals in camps. This person also advocates for improved conditions in camps and runs a language school for new arrival families. They commented that their asylum lawyer suggested limiting their human rights advocacy work on Facebook, including via Facebook Messenger, in order to avoid hurting

their chances of receiving asylum. They have taken their lawyer’s advice, and at the time I spoke with them, had already self-censored their advocacy work for one month. This example of overarching liminality contributes to feelings of entrapment and lack of agency and has also directly impacted individuals’ ability to express themselves freely. In this sense, neither stability nor freedom are afforded by host states, and indeed both are threatened by the bureaucratic limbo associated with the host state itself.

#### *V.1.4.2 Negative News Media*

Several interviewees alluded to the challenges that prevalent negative news about refugees makes for them. In particular, they often noticed tropes in news media that talked about refugees as lazy and there only to take money from the host state (Interview 11Ge), as economic migrants there to take jobs from earlier host country inhabitants (Interview 6Ge), as violent religious extremists there to perpetrate terrorism against the host state (Interview 4Ge), or as rapists there to perpetrate sexual violence against host country persons as was mentioned to me during participant observation. One interviewee commented, *“I asked a German person what they used to talk about on the news before refugees being a problem, but they just laughed and couldn’t remember”* (Interview 1Ge). Interviewees described this negative news as contributing to their experiences of discrimination, racism, and segregation (both intentional and unintentional) of refugees in their respective host countries.

#### *V.1.4.3 Cultural Differences*

Many interviewees described the complexity of navigating a new set of social norms in their respective host countries.

Many social norms described are logistical. Some of these have to do with adapting to a host country’s sense of time. Interviewees described social norms associated with time as cultures of keeping appointments (Interview 14Ge) and the cadence of when shops are open or closed (Interview 16Gr), for example. Others have to do with different approaches to handling everyday tasks like washing dishes or the social norms around greeting people one doesn’t know. One interview participant described his exchange with a host country resident about washing dishes. He explained *“... here, when you wash dishes, you fill the sink full, and then wash. It’s to save water, I understand now. In Syria you don’t wash that way. I was invited to eat one time and wanted to help by washing dishes, and I started to do how we do in Syria, and the hostess said we don’t do that way, it wastes too much water”* (Interview 4Ge). Interviewees described that navigating these logistical social norms associated with daily life constituted an important part of how they spent their energy.

A significant proportion of comments concerned social norms associated with legality, employment, and transferability of professional knowledge. One interviewee explained in detail the complexity of transferring his professional knowledge to his host country (Germany) in order to be employable:

*“I was a music teacher in Syria, but here in Germany my certificate wasn’t recognized. I visited the Hamburger [organization name]. I met with a woman for an interview, who told me I could do an exam after a one-year course to be a Sozialpädagogischerassistent. But*

*to be a music teacher, here you study pedagogy, and as a second field you study music. Also, the language. As a teacher, you need to speak the language well”* (Interview 5Ge).

Another interviewee described more generally, *“Here in Germany you need papers to work. In Syria you don’t need anything to work. There’s no black or white work, like here in Germany there’s “Schwarzarbeit” [unreported work], or work that isn’t legal, and then normal Arbeit, which is. In [country of origin], there’s only normal Arbeit. It’s all the same”* (Interview 1Ge). He explains having to navigate this legal and illegal cultural paradigm in a way that he hadn’t had to do in his home country. In Greece, interview participant 13Gr explained a related experience, stating that, *“For 8 months, I paid 5000 euros in taxes, but the asylum services doesn’t see this. I don’t want to go sell drugs and things. I want to work legally. But here, the asylum services doesn’t see that,”* (Interview 13Gr). Though interviewee 13Gr wanted to participate in the work culture of his host country, he faced bureaucratic barriers to doing so. Cultural norms embedded in notions of rightness and wrongness (i.e. legality or illegality), were alluded to frequently during interviews as determinant of a sense of self-worth and safety.

#### *V.1.4.4 Discrimination, Racism & Segregation*

In addition to cultural differences, several interviewees described that they experience certain results of ill-navigated differences – discrimination, racism and segregation. One interviewee commented that since arriving in Greece, she noticed that, *“when I take the bus, when they see my hijab, the Greek people do the cross and look out the window. When I first came and took the bus, I got scared and wanted to leave the bus. They pray and then look away”* (Interview 8Gr). Later, this participant realized that Greek community members that identify with the Greek Orthodox Church often cross themselves several times when they pass by a church building. She realized that the praying or crossing that she had witnessed was not in relation to her. Before understanding this custom, however, this participant experienced fear and a feeling of not being welcome. Another participant explained a similar experience, saying that *“In the metro, or everywhere who they see a Muslim girl with a hijab, people start to pray because they are surprised, or maybe they think that we are infidels”* (Interview 9Gr). In this incident, this participant observed the crossing or praying was directed specifically at them, not to a church as the former interviewee commented. They felt discriminated against and unsafe.

In my case study in Germany, an interview participant commented that *“one time I said to a few people at the cafe here at [location], may I sit next to you? I am a foreigner and I would like to practice my German, but I don’t know any German speakers. But understand, I am married! “You are Muslim?” They asked. I didn’t like that. I’m not, but I said yes just to spite them. Since then, I haven’t tried meeting people like that again”* (Interview 9Ge). In this case, the Germans that this participant mentioned had preconceived assumptions about this participant’s religious identity. These assumptions resulted in the participant not feeling welcome and not desiring to engage with host country communities, in effect segregation facilitated by prejudice. Finally, one participant in Germany talked about what he felt to be at the heart of issues of discrimination and racism: the concept of integration. He described, *“That’s why it’s a problem to say “integration” - which Germans should I integrate with? All Germans are different. I don’t like the word “integration” because it’s like a “come to us” attitude because they’re a stronger culture here. I would like to imagine an interactive integration where everyone moves toward each other. If not, then people just interact with people that look like them. It stays a small, closed community”* (Interview 14Ge).



This participant describes what he has observed as a one-sided resettlement process that fosters an attitude of superiority among host country community, and subsequent disrespect and racism.

Together, each of these items – bureaucratic limbo, negative news, cultural difference, discrimination, racism, and segregation – each contribute to threat to research participants’ feelings of stability, freedom, or both for once arrived in a host state.

## V.2 Ramifications of Prolonged Liminality & Threats to Stability and Freedom

I discuss ramifications of prolonged liminality and threats to stability and freedom here in order to provide a contextual framework for later discussions on how participants use information resources to mitigate these ramifications and threats. At each study site, many research participants independently and unprompted describe psychological or emotional challenges while in their respective host countries. A selection of those challenges described include those outlined in Figures 11-16. The left-most column of each figure represents comments that people shared concerning each of these emotional challenges. The right-most column (“Interpretation”) of each figure describes my interpretation of why interview participants felt these emotions in relation to the situational contexts they described and to the stability-freedom framework derived from participants’ earlier comments on the liminal identity space. Those psychological or emotional challenges discussed include: (1) anger, (2) apathy, (3) depression and PTSD, (4) helplessness, (5) isolation or loneliness, and (6) fear.

Figure 11: Anger and impetus therefor.

Anger	
Interview Participant Comment	Interpretation
<p>“We sometimes fight about things when my siblings do something wrong at home and I get angry. Sometimes, I know it’s stupid, but I just can’t control my anger! Or I take a scarf from my sister and she is upset [easily].” (Interview 12Gr)</p>	<p>Lack of Freedom &amp; Stability                      Absent: ability to exercise agency toward long-term planning, access to privacy                      Exacerbated by: Bureaucratic Limbo                      Context: legal papers required for asylum destroyed by outside forces, without which participant cannot pursue long-term professional or educational goals, family of eight housed in a 2-bedroom apartment.</p>

Figure 12: Apathy and impetus therefor.

Apathy	
Interview Participant Comment	Interpretation
<p>“My day is boring with no activities, nothing to do. I lose the days with nothing.” (Interview 3Gr)</p>	<p>Lack of Stability                      Absent: feeling of reliability, long-term planning capacity                      Exacerbated by: Trauma, Bureaucratic Limbo                      Context: has not received asylum, so unable to plan for the future through realizing professional or educational goals.</p>

Figure 13: Depression & PTSD & impetus therefor.

Depression & PTSD	
Interview Participant Comment	Interpretation

<p>“I’ve had a lot of really low moments, and have had several suicide attempts. I tried not eating one time, but it didn’t work. I am Christian, but it feels as though God doesn’t see me. I believe in reincarnation. I must have done something terrible in my past life to be in this situation now. Why are the people in power not doing better? I wish I could speak English.” (Interview 2Gr)</p> <p>“I am currently being treated by a psychiatrist and have taken medicines for the impact of war, arrest, murder, and blood. It helps a little, but not enough. It would help me to see a psychologist, but I cannot find an Arabic-speaking psychologist. In Harburg, there is an Arabic-speaking doctor, but not a psychologist. I know there is in Hannover though.” (Interview 13Ge)</p> <p>“I’m depressed now. Sometimes I can’t manage my life, so sometimes I don’t have a regular schedule. I don’t have a regular wake up time or sleep time. If I have a plan, I go. If not, I stay home and watch a movie.” (Interview 4Gr)</p>	<p>Lack of Freedom Absent: ability to express agency Exacerbated by: Trauma, Bureaucratic Limbo Context: unable to take steps toward realizing a sense of purpose because of linguistic barriers, and inability to learn language because of trauma.</p> <p>Lack of Stability Absent: feeling of reliability Exacerbated by: Trauma, Bureaucratic Limbo Context: unable to access professional mental health resources because of linguistic barrier.</p> <p>Lack of Stability Absent: feeling of reliability Exacerbated by: Bureaucratic Limbo Context: unable to enroll in school because of age barrier.</p>
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Figure 14: Helplessness and impetus therefor.

Helplessness	
Interview Participant Comment	Interpretation
<p>“Our apartment is near the [location], so everyday I go there to watch people and write stories. I can see people that are from different countries. But I feel sad. Terrorists took our asylum papers and destroyed them, so when I see all the people that travel, I feel sad and say, why I am not like them? I am a girl, I have dreams, but I have nothing to do.” (Interview 6Gr)</p> <p>“I prefer to have my eyes closed on a bad day because it’s too much. I close my eyes and imagine a world that’s not real. When I look at reality, the world hasn’t given me what I’ve knocked on every door for.” (Interview 2Gr)</p> <p>“Sometimes I feel like a bird in a cage and I have no way to escape. I have no way to breathe. We cannot go anywhere else because we don’t have money and we don’t know the language.” (Interview 14Gr)</p>	<p>Lack of Freedom Absent: ability to exercise agency Exacerbated by: Bureaucratic Limbo Context: legal papers required for asylum destroyed by outside forces, without which participant cannot pursue long-term professional or educational goals.</p> <p>Lack of Stability Absent: feeling of belonging Exacerbated by: Bureaucratic Limbo</p>

Figure 15: Isolation or loneliness and impetus therefor.

Isolation or Loneliness	
Interview Participant Comment	Interpretation
<p>“With Germans, there is little social contact, and this is hard... Also, I like people to always be around me. I like having people around, not the loneliness.” (10Ge)</p> <p>“Sometimes I don’t go [to German class]. I don’t like the people. There was a party on last day, but I left quickly</p>	<p>Lack of Stability Absent: feeling of belonging Exacerbated by: Bureaucratic Limbo, Negative News, Cultural Differences</p>

<p>because I don't like the human energy. Sometimes you hello, but people don't say hello back.” (9Ge)</p> <p>“I like being home more than outside, maybe because I don't know a lot of people.” (6Ge)</p> <p>“I miss my family a lot. I haven't seen them in three years. My sister in in [country name], but I can't visit because of the political crap that I can't get a visa from Germany. I am alone in Germany. I want to have fun here, but I can't. I have just one friend, [name of friend], who always helps, but I just don't feel the feeling of fun or celebration here.” (Interview 2Ge)</p>	
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Figure 16: Fear and impetus therefor.

<b>Fear</b>	
<b>Interview Participant Comment</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<p>“In my opinion, I am sad or I suffer, because I see people go to marijuana and beer and leave their religion. I find it sad that this happening.” (12Ge)</p> <p>“Syrian people are afraid that their children will become too German. They want them to keep [country of origin] identity.” (1Ge)</p> <p>“I once read in the Internet that in India or maybe in China, a man had eleven wives and thirty children in a big house that he built. He had his own school for them. This makes me sad, because the people here don't have family. The parent should notice that children need family and more siblings.” (8Ge)</p> <p>“Then four people per container in the arrivals camp... the containers were very small and had four bunkbeds. I wanted to learn German, but I was afraid that people would laugh at me.” (1Ge)</p>	<p>Lack of Stability Absent: feeling of belonging, feeling of ability to preserve a sense of self Exacerbated by: Cultural Differences</p>

Note that comments made in relation to anger, apathy, and helplessness were made only in Greece. Comments made in relation to isolation or loneliness and fear were made only in Germany. Comments concerning depression and PTSD were made in both Greece and Germany. Each of these unprompted challenges discussed suggest the severity of the emotional and psychological toll that liminality associated with the state or idea of “refugee”.

### V.3 Information Resources as Coping Strategies for Liminality

Through interviews and surveys, research participants at each study site talked about how they use different physically- and mobile technology- mediated information resources to navigate different aspects of liminality in resettlement. In the sections following, I begin by describing the specific types of information resources participants described using. I then present participants' thoughts about how they use these information resources to navigate aspects of liminality. I interpret these use descriptions according to the stability-freedom framework that comes from participants' earlier

comments about liminality. Example comments throughout sections provide insights about how I arrived at this interpretation.

### V.3.1 Information Resource Types

This section presents general results about those physically- and mobile technology-mediated information resources that interview and survey participants talked about. Figures in the Appendix shares raw details about which physically-mediated information resources participants talked about. These tables also assign a general information resource type like “Spaces” or “Events”. Figure 17 summarizes details about these types. I present information on mobile technology-mediated information resources according to the same logic in Figures in the Appendix and Figure 18.

Figure 17: Physically-mediated resource types

Information Resource Type	Germany	Greece
<b>Arts</b>	x	x
<b>Organizations &amp; Events</b>		
Organizations	x	x
Events	x	--
<b>Spaces</b>	x	x
Outdoor Spaces	x	x
Public Spaces	x	x
Social & Commercial Spaces	x	x
<b>People</b>		
Social Groups	x	x
Individuals	x	--

Figure 17 summarizes categories of physically mediated information resource types that participants describe using to navigate different aspects of liminality. Though largely the same types of information resources were mentioned or discussed across study sites, interview participants in Greece did not explicitly mention events or specific individuals as important information resources in navigating liminality. This said, conversations and observations during participant observation

suggest that each of events and individuals are still important to these processes, but simply not verbalized as such during interviews. Those principal types of physically-mediated information resources discussed include: (1) the arts, (2) organizations and events, (3) spaces, and (4) people.

Overall, participants in Germany discussed using 63 different apps, with 20 of these apps mentioned more than once. Participants in Greece discussed using 16 different apps, with 12 of these apps mentioned more than once. The app types or uses cases mentioned across study sites is largely the same (Figure 18), with the most notable differences being that participants in Greece did not mention app use cases like commercial transactions, logistics, professional software, recreational, specific translation and language learning apps, or specific transportation apps. Participants in Germany did discuss these app uses.

App Type or App Use Case	Germany	Greece
Commercial Transactions	x	--
Communications	x	x
Logistics	x	--
Music Listening & Search	x	x
Navigation	x	x
News Media	x	x
Photo Sharing	x	x
Professional Software	x	--
Recreational	x	--
General Search	x	x
Social Networking	x	x
Translation & Language Learning	x	--
Transportation	x	--
Video Sharing & Search	x	x

Figure 18: Mobile technology-mediated resource types.

### V.3.2 Information Resource Uses

For reference, I remind the reader here that participants talked about liminality as a lack of balance between feelings of: (1) group membership or a feeling of belonging, (2) long term planning capacity, and (3) a feeling of reliability, which I call *stability* here, and; (1) ability to exercise agency, (2) ability to express identity, and (3) access to privacy all without fear of disproportionate retribution, which I call *freedom* here. Participants talked about how they used each of physically- and mobile technology-mediated information resources in order to navigate each of these six manifestations of liminality. I present participants comments about how they used resources according to the study site (Germany or Greece), and then according to a use’s relevance to navigating either stability, freedom, or both simultaneously.

#### V.3.2.1 Germany

##### V.3.2.1.1 Freedom

In Germany, participants discuss navigation, news media, and transportation applications uniquely playing important roles in facilitating freedom (agency).

Several participants describe using navigation and transportation apps to exercise agency in learning, accessing information, and travel. One interview participant talks about his experience of being lost in Germany, saying, *“I’m always lost in Germany. I live close to Hannover, so sometimes I get lost on the way with my bicycle and I look up where I am [on Google Maps]. Like at [location name] and things. I look it up because I don’t like to ask Germans for help because maybe 20% of Germans are not nice to refugees. But, I’m not afraid, because I know I’m not different. Doing it, life, here alone is hard. But then, later it’s good because I’ve learned everything by myself without help, so I can do more and learn more”* (Interview 2Ge). By using Google Maps, this interview participant found a way to not only navigate his geographic location, but also experiences of racism from his host country’s community. Other participants reinforced that they use transportation applications for similar purposes, describing that, *“I use the Hamburg Stadtplan to navigate Hamburg city”* (Interview 4Ge) and that, *“I use the HVV app for transportation timetables”* (Interview 13Ge). Each of these uses supports these participants’ feeling of self-sufficiency and agency.

Participants also describe being able to exercise agency in choosing which news media information and information sources they search for and review. One participant describes, *“I mostly look at Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya for news about Syria, and then for international news and science news I look at the United Nations News”* (Interview 6Ge). Another says, *“I look up politics and news on Facebook. Usually I am interested in politics about Kurdistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey”* (Interview 9Ge). A third suggests, *“I also look at news on the BBC, or French or German news, but all in Arabic language. I look at many websites to get a general picture of the news”* (Interview 4Ge). Each of these participants explains how they exercise agency in curating their news and information intake, by personally searching for and selecting which news media sources to review.

##### V.3.2.1.2 Stability

In Germany, participants discuss communications, logistics, professional software, recreational uses, social networks, and translation and language learning applications as uniquely supporting a sense of stability (group belonging, long-term planning capacity, and regularity).

Participants talked about chatting applications like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Telegram, and others (see Figure 19) help them maintain or build communities and belonging. One participant describes, *“For a couple of years now, people in Germany use WhatsApp more than any other [apps], so here I have a few groups with people where we talk about different subjects. Also, we exchange information about asylum issues. For example, I telephoned with my brother by video. Or on Monday, a friend wrote that a family just came and is looking for a new arrivals center. I gave the address and telephone number”* (Interview 7Ge). This participant describes how she uses WhatsApp to exchange thoughts about life in general with her community in Germany, as well as to communicate with her transnational family many members of whom are still back in her home country or en route to safety. She also describes how through WhatsApp, she acts as an information resource for other newly arrived individuals that may be seeking information about asylum services. In this way, this participant uses WhatsApp to build or maintain both local and transnational community belonging.

Related to chatting apps, participants also talked about using apps designed specifically to meet new people like Badoo and MeetMe. One participant suggested these apps *“are to make contact with Germans and to learn the language”* (Interview 13Ge). Similarly, another participant describes how *“Tango is an app to meet new people and talk to people you don't know”* (Interview 6Ge). Each of these communication app uses describe individuals' efforts to engage with host country community both to socialize and to practice linguistic skills. These applications help participants to make initial contact with host country community members they have not met before and allows them to follow up with in-person appointments. In this way, using these apps helps participants to build a sense of belonging among local host country community members and its associated linguistic groups. In a similar vein, some participants described using translation and language learning applications to aid interactions with host country community members. One participant described, *“If I'm not able to communicate with a person in German, then I use it [Google Translate]”* (Interview 13Ge). Like Badoo, MeetMe, and Tango, Google Translate supports this participant's ability to develop a new local community and feeling of belonging therein.

Finally, participants talk about different applications supporting planning, document storage, and scheduling, each helping them navigate a feeling of reliability and ability to make plans for the short and long term. One participant explains, *“I use the Calendar App to plan everything here. I have another calendar for important things. For me, being on time is important, more so than for the Germans I think! It's important because it shows respect. One time a friend showed up three hours late! It wasn't respectful of me or my time”* (Interview 4Ge). The Calendar application supports this participant's ability to craft a feeling of predictability or reliability in timing. The Calendar app also allows him to model a set of personal values that extends from his life in his home country (the incident with the three-hour late friend) and that he feels is reflected in host country community culture (his experience of German timeliness). Another participant reflects on similar behaviors, commenting that, *“Untis is a scheduling app so I can keep track of my life”* (Interview 7Ge). The first participant also mentioned that, *“I keep scans of all of my official documents like my tax number, my health insurance, and other documents”* in the Adobe Scan application (Interview 4Ge). In addition to reliability and predictability, document storage necessary for employment and receipt of health benefits and other services allows this participant to set up the infrastructure for basic needs in the short and long-term. By facilitating feelings of



reliability and long-term planning, using each of these applications supports these participants in establishing a feeling of stability.

#### V.3.2.1.3 Freedom and Stability

Some applications were less straightforward to classify as either freedom or stability supportive. According to participants' comments, the ways in which these applications support each of freedom and stability were somewhat more entangled and dependent. In Germany, participants talked about photo sharing, search engines, commercial transactions, music listening and search, and video sharing and search applications supporting both freedom and stability.

Participants talked about using music listening and search applications to search for and listen to music types from different cultural origins. One participant described that, *“I listen to Kurdish music, to Julio from Mexico, to singing artist Dilshad - the director is an Iraqi Kurd who played with an orchestra in the Netherlands, to Yani from Greece who plays the piano but doesn't sing”* (Interview 9Ge). This participant here talks about searching for and listening to music from his home culture, from a temporary host country that he had passed through en route to Germany (Greece), and musical cultures outside of his personal realm of experience. In this way, this participant was able to exercise agency in seeking out and curating a collection of sounds and cultural influences that he feels affinity for. At the same time, his selection of music types helped to reinforce a feeling of connection or belonging to his home culture (Kurdish), while allowing him to cultivate feelings of affinity to other cultural group types through sound. Another participant describes a similar approach to using music listening and search applications. He says, *“I listen to classical European music that I absolutely love. I also listen to instrumental Oriental music. By Oriental I mean Turkish and Arabic”* (Interview 5Ge). Like the first participant, this participant talks about listening to music from his home culture and music from his host community's culture. Each of these participants' comments highlight using music apps to both exercise agency in curating their music around their preferences, and using music to explore different group identities to which they feel belonging.

We see similar reflections concerning video search and sharing applications. One participant explains, *“With my brother I watch YouTube. We watch funny baby videos. There's a channel where you have to try not to laugh. Also, I watch videos of dances like the Attan, Korean dances, hiphop dances...or sometimes when I need to show people how to cook Persian food, I don't actually know how! So I look up a YouTube video and show people instead. Some songs also I listen to on YouTube. Sometimes I watch films or shows like the Ellen Show. Also, sometimes I watch videos about how people aren't happy with themselves”* (Interview 7Ge). This participant talks about watching videos on YouTube as a social activity that supports her continued relationship with her brother in one case (watching humorous videos), or with her new host country community in others (sharing Persian cultural practices with YouTube videos). Using YouTube is not an exclusively solitary activity for her, but rather might be used as a tool to build community. This participant also talks about looking up different dance forms from her home culture and from other cultures, each of which allows her to cultivate a stronger relationship or feeling of belonging to different personal cultural identities. Another participant talks about how, *“I like to watch documentaries, songs, follow channels by Arabic YouTubers about the news. Here I choose what I can see, rather than the TV where I can't choose what programs come on”* (Interview 14Ge). This participant describes a feeling of agency in being able to seek and curate the information that

he watches in a way that is not possible with other digital technologies like television. He reflects on a recurring theme that the ability to search for and curate information generally, seems to support a feeling of individual agency or a component of freedom as defined by our framework. Again, each of these participants describes both support of freedom (agency) and stability (group belonging and socialization) from using video apps.

Participants talk about photo sharing applications’ importance to self-expression, or one aspect of the framework participants’ comments defined. One participant describes his general behaviors on Instagram, saying *“If I go to the ocean, I take a photo and share it. Or if there is a party, I take a photo and share it. I share with personal friends, and some other people that I don’t know follow me or I follow them, like from the US or Russia”* (Interview 10Ge). He describes how he uses Instagram to curate his public-facing identity with photos, who is allowed to access this curated identity, and how he builds the community of people he wants to share his photo identity with. He talks about using Instagram for self-expression and to build a community or feeling of belonging. Another participant talks about using Instagram for professional purposes. He says, *“I would like to make a website for my catering business, so I will have an Instagram for that, but at the moment I’m not so active”* (Interview 14Ge). Similar to the first participant, he describes using Instagram to curate a public-facing professional identity with photos. Each of these participants talk about photo sharing as a self-expression tool and building community and belonging, aspects of the stability-freedom framework that participants defined.

Finally, participants talk about using general search applications to seek information to manage life logistics and for inspiration. One participant says, *“Through Google, I manage a lot of logistics, like insurance issues, looking up asylum information, or like if someone mentions something I don’t know, I look it up. I think I’m more dependent on Google than on people for information”* (Interview 14Ge). The same way that a participant talked about using Google Maps for navigation rather than asking physical humans for help, this participant alludes to using Google search to find information rather than talking to people. This practice reflects the same type of agency discussed in relation to other search applications. Topics that this participant talks about searching for support him in navigating logistical aspects of setting up stability via a reliable situation that supports long-term planning. A second participant describes, *“With Samsung Browser, I look up medicine a lot because when I was in Iran, I learned some biology. So, I often look in the Internet at a Farsi site called Tebyan.net for medical advice. Also, I like to look for art, and to learn how to do different things”* (Internet 8Ge). This participant talks about using search functionality to investigate health-related issues, as well as for artistic inspiration and to learn new skills. In so doing, he practices agency and is able to explore aspects of self-expression. In these ways, participants use search to support agency, long-term planning, and self-expression.

### V.3.2.2 Greece

#### V.3.2.2.1 Freedom

In Greece, participants discuss navigation applications uniquely playing important roles in facilitating freedom (agency).

Like in Germany, several participants describe using navigation apps to exercise agency in learning, accessing information, and travel. One interview participant talks about her experience of navigating locations, expressing that, *“I look up locations. Here it is very difficult to ask for*



*directions because people don't often speak English, so Google Maps is helpful”* (Interview 12Gr). Like in the German case of coping with racism using navigation apps, this participant found a way to navigate linguistic barriers using a navigation app to retain agency in travel and movement. Again, navigation apps support this participant’s feeling of self-sufficiency and agency.

#### V.3.2.2.2 Stability

In Greece participants discuss music listening and search applications as uniquely supporting a sense of stability (group belonging, long-term planning capacity, and regularity).

One participant talked about using music listening and search applications to search for and listen to music types from different cultural origins. She explained, *“I love to hear music from my city in Syria, to forget a lot of bad things that I saw, with memories from me as a child. Also love songs, songs in English, Turkish, and Spanish”* (Interview 6Gr). She talks about listening to music from her home culture as a way to connect with a part of self with which she has positive associations. This listening acts as a coping strategy for negative memories that she hopes to forget. At the same time, she explores connections to other parts of self she feels reflected in other cultures’ musics. Using music listening apps lets this participant connect with multiple aspects of identity and community belonging.

#### V.3.2.2.3 Freedom and Stability

In Greece, participants talked about applications serving multiple purposes more prevalently than participants in Germany. Participants discussed each of communications, social networks, photo sharing, video search and sharing, and general search applications supporting both freedom and stability.

Similar to Germany, participants talked about how chatting applications like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Telegram, and others (see Figure 20) help them maintain or build communities and belonging. One participant describes,

*“I use WhatsApp to communicate with people in Germany, Syria, Canada - with my friends and family. Also, I ask for help from people on WhatsApp, for a location or the name of someone on Facebook. WhatApp, I use for one friend from Pakistan who is alone here for two years with no family. The Greek government doesn't give asylum. He writes everyday saying it's really bad. He's in the [name of detention camp] on [name of island]. I talk to him everyday. I learn Urdu with him. Sometimes I teach him Arabic. He asks for help, but I say that the only thing I can do is pray. I have more than 200 numbers from friends in Turkey, more than 300 from friends in Greece. Also, on WhatsApp I talk to myself when I'm sad and I can't talk with anyone. I talk with myself and delete the messages immediately so people don't see”* (Interview 6Gr).

This participant describes how she uses WhatsApp to (1) communicate with her transnational community, (2) seek information from her community, (3) provide socioemotional support to her community, and (4) navigate her own mental health. In these ways, this participant builds or maintains her transnational community, while creating a private space for herself to navigate her mental health. This privacy-crafting behavior reflects an aspect of freedom (access to privacy) that participants expressed.

Another participant talks about using Telegram to “...communicate with my friends everywhere. It is better than WhatsApp because it is open, not controlled by the government in Iran” (Interview 4Gr). Here this participant talks about building her transnational community. She also highlights awareness of censorship risks associated with her choice in which communication app to use. This awareness represents an act of agency to protect her and her transnational community’s freedom of expression.

Similar to Germany but alluding to different platforms, participants talk about exercising agency to choose which news media information they search for and review. One participant describes her use of the Telegram application as both a news media and messaging resource. She explains, “I use Telegram for messaging, and also to look at lots of channels about English, German, hope, happiness... You can read about these topics in channels, or some have voice recordings so you can listen to recordings. I think it has improved my English listening to it, the English group. My first time actually speaking English was in [name] island when I talked to volunteers about their culture” (Interview 5Gr). She uses Telegram for multiple purposes, among them language learning to support navigating host country culture (an aspect of stability) and exploration of personally interesting topics through search (agency in curating information received).

Participants also talk about using platforms like Facebook and Twitter to develop digital and physical social networks. One participant describes that, “I use [Facebook] for group connection, to find people that I like that has nice cooking or interesting fashion and clothes. I use Facebook to connect with everyone, not just my close friends. I use it to find new people” (Interview 4Gr). In this way, she uses Facebook both to engage with existing friends and to meet new people with shared interests. Another participant talks about how, “I make a story for myself to become famous, I want to continue to study and to continue learning” (Interview 6Gr). She very clearly here describes that Facebook is an opportunity for her to craft a public-facing identity, and also for personal growth.

Photo sharing applications were also discussed as important tools for self-expression, connection with family community, and artistic inspiration. One participant talked about Instagram, saying, “I love it so much, because I can share beautiful pictures of myself and of my family. I want to be like people with two million followers. I don’t want to just stay in a house. I really want to be a model” (Interview 6Gr). Instagram was very important to this participant’s ability to express self and cultivate a public-facing identity. A second participant also talks about Instagram, describing, “Instagram I use to see photos that my son takes. My son makes t-shirts and food, and publishes videos on Instagram about them to sell them, so I watch those” (Interview 18Gr). Instagram provided an opportunity to maintain family connections. A third participant says of Instagram, “Beautiful photos and designs. I love Instagram. It’s the best app. I can see clothing designs from a lot of different people, I can see photos of people and their styles” (Interview 12Gr). Photo sharing allowed this participant to explore different aspects of self.

We see similar reflections concerning video search and sharing applications. One participant describes how she learns from YouTube how others make personal channels, which acts as inspiration for her future dream of curating her own channel of content. She explains, “Every day I watch YouTube videos, how people make YouTube channels. I will make my own YouTube

*channel one day” (Interview 6Gr). She explains how she uses YouTube towards self-expression and personal development. Related, another participant explains that, “I watch lessons about how to build HTML websites and about how to do 3D printing. Also, how to build CSS and JavaScript forms” (Interview 13Gr). Like the previous participant, he discusses using YouTube for personal development purposes since he expects to use 3D printing in his personal artistic and self-expressive work. He also talks about using YouTube for professional development, since he anticipates building websites as a next career move. Finally, a third participant expresses, “I like to learn English through videos on YouTube, so like movies with British accents. I like to learn different accents on YouTube, like with Game of Thrones. I sometimes watch movies on Saturdays and Sundays. I love action movies, like Kungfu. I watch some clips about British English on YouTube. On YouTube I search for what stories and news we have in Afghanistan” (Interview 5Gr). Again, this participant here discusses using YouTube for personal development through language learning, for entertainment, and to access news media. Each of these participants discusses how using a video search and sharing platform has supported their ability to self-express (an aspect of freedom), to grow professionally or in language skills which support their participation in host country culture (an aspect of stability), and exercising agency to curate news media information reviewed (an aspect of freedom).*

Finally, participants talk about using general search applications to seek information and aid communication. A participant explains, *“I search about anything, about culture especially because I don't know it very well. In Afghanistan, I don't know what they do for Nowruz, so I Googled about it. Or to learn about a movie or book someone told me about. For example, in Iran and in my family, we celebrate Nowruz over 13 days. In Afghanistan, they celebrate for three days I learned” (Interview 5Gr). This participant uses search engines to learn about different identities she feels affiliation for – ethnic or national, for example – by investigating traditions. Another participant raises different uses and issues, explaining that, “Google Chrome, I don't use in my past country. If you're trying to communicate something to someone in Greece though, and don't know a word, you can look up and share a photo of what you mean so that they can understand. I also find videos and learn about other cultures on Google” (Interview 11Gr). In addition to using Google search to learn about cultural identities, this participant uses Google search as a communication aid in instances where verbal communication with host country community is hindered by linguistic barriers.*

Discussion of each of these physically- and mobile technology-mediated resources provides insight as to different strategies that participants use to navigate aspects of liminality as defined according to participants' comments (i.e. the stability-freedom framework).

## VI. DISCUSSION

### VI.1 Practical Implications and Applications

Participants’ comments, experiences, and insights help us to understand the challenges that refugees face on arrival to each of their respective host countries, where those challenges come from, and how to address those challenges. Generally, we can see that it is essential that the disequilibrated stability-freedom conception of liminality be adopted and internalized across relevant actors, both out of respect for our fellow human beings, and if we have any serious illusions of addressing the dangerous polarized sociopolitical tensions that have grown over the last several years in many host states, that appears to become all the more volatile with time (Foreign Affairs, 2019). Among many other incidents, within the last month we have seen a self-identified white supremacist in New Zealand killing 50 Muslim community members in March 2019, and a New Zealand senator suggesting that the reason for this violence was not white supremacy but rather the presence of immigrants (Noack, 2019; Strickland, 2019). In October 2018 we saw 11 Jewish community members killed because as the killer stated, he felt that "HIAS [a Jewish community support group for migrants in Pittsburgh, US] likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered" (Levenson, 2018). We saw Anders Behring Breivik killing 77 people in Norway in July 2011 “because he believed that the party was facilitating an Islamic ‘conquest’ and ‘colonization’ of Norway and the rest of Europe” via supporting migrants (Wilson, 2019). By returning to the premise of this thesis – what Angus conceptualizes as the crisis of culture product of our contemporary information environment – the subsections that follow explore what adoption of this conception of liminality may look like in relation to addressing each of the threats (bureaucratic limbo, negative news media, cultural differences, and discrimination, racism, and segregation) to the stability-freedom equilibrium from host countries that participants talked about.

#### VI.1.1 Cultural Differences, Discrimination, Racism and Segregation

Cultural differences on their own can be challenging to navigate. In the interviewees’ contexts, this challenge has been particularly acute due to the intransferability of many social value systems whereby they may have lived in life prior to flight. Often host countries appear to exhibit a very different social value system, and the feeling of self-worth that many interviewees built according to home country social norms and identities, no longer hold in relation to a new set of norms. In consequence, participants describe often finding themselves with little to no social capital compared with their past lives (Interview 2Ge; Interview 13Gr). Similarly, discrimination, racism, and segregation each present a significant barrier to interviewees’ abilities to participate in host country society. As a result, interviewees expressed feeling deeply unwelcome, unsafe, and unable to set up a new life (Interview 8Gr; Interview 9Gr; Interview 6Ge; Interview 9Ge; Interview 14Ge;). If not addressed early on, incidents of misunderstandings on behalf of both host country and refugees risk becoming justifications for fear and discrimination.

Research participants’ thoughts and perspectives about how they engage with different information resources, help us to understand practical ways forward in this regard. From participants, we learn that the following mobile technology-facilitated information resources are particularly useful in cultivating a feeling of freedom (agency, self-expression, and privacy) in their host counties:

- (1) Navigation and transportation applications, and
- (2) News media applications.

We also learn that the following information resources are particularly useful for cultivating a feeling of stability (group belonging, long-term planning capacity, and regularity) among participants:

- (1) Communications applications,
- (2) Music listening and search applications,
- (3) Video sharing and search applications,
- (4) Logistics applications,
- (5) Professional applications,
- (6) Recreational applications,
- (7) Social network applications, and
- (8) Translation and language learning applications.

Finally, we learn that the following information resources serve dual purposes in supporting both stability and freedom:

- (1) Photo sharing applications,
- (2) Search engine applications,
- (3) Commercial transaction applications,
- (4) Music listening and search applications,
- (5) Video sharing and search applications, and
- (6) Social network applications.

Generally, participants across sites engaged largely with the same types of information resources. However, in Germany people talked about using a wider range of apps to engage that they used in for a single purpose, and in Greece people talked about a narrower range of apps that they each used for multiple purposes. These different behaviors echo Fishman et al.’s findings in the Spanish and Portuguese context, that local context may impact information behaviors (Fishman et al., 2013). From these findings, we may be able to ask more specific questions about why behaviors in each of Greece and Germany are different and these different behaviors’ ramifications. Could these differences be related to access to data or internet connection? Could they be related to cultural context? Does this say anything about relationships to physically-mediated information resources?

In addition to mobile technology-mediated information resources, we learn that the following physically-mediated information resources are particularly useful for participants in cultivating both feelings of freedom and stability in their host counties:

- (1) The arts,
- (2) Organizations,
- (3) Events,
- (4) Outdoor spaces,
- (5) Public spaces, and
- (6) People.

In addition, we see (7) social and commercial spaces supporting participants’ feeling of stability.

Perhaps it is not surprising that participants’ comments concerning both physical and mobile technology-mediated information resources suggest that people – social groups and individuals – are important resources towards navigating a sense of stability. Participants talk about connecting with humans through communication applications, translation and language applications, photo and video sharing and search applications, social network applications, organizations, events, outdoor spaces, public spaces, and social and commercial spaces. This finding echoes existing psychological and sociological research that social support can be integral to facilitating positive outcomes of life transitions or liminal periods (Schaefer et al., 1998; Tedeschi et al., 2004; Linley et al., 2004). It is also coherent with Angus’ premise that processing time is necessary in order to derive cultural meaning from information (Angus, 2016, 59). Seminal communication theory tells us that communication by nature “concerns the process of meaning creation” and that “people create and use meaning in interpreting events” (van Ruler, 2018, 368; Rosengren, 2000; Littlejohn, 1992, 378). Though Angus’ characterization of a contemporary crisis of culture paints a picture of a world in which we are unable to process information due to the rapidity with which information is translated from knowledge to person, participants suggest otherwise. Their approaches to engaging with both mobile technology- and physically-mediated information resources suggest active efforts to process and derive cultural meaning from information flows.

However, we also learn from participants that there are obstacles to their ability to access and use certain of these resources, each of which is important to cultivating a balance of freedom and stability in their host countries. These obstacles may include:

- (1) Privacy and security risks to self-expression in digital platforms (Interview 4Gr), and
- (2) Travel distance to physically-mediated information resources rendering a feeling of isolation, particularly in Germany (Interviews 2Ge, 6Ge, 9Ge, and 10Ge);
- (3) Though mobile technology-mediated information resources can help to support agency in response to racism or discrimination, at the same time, they may reduce opportunities for positive engagements with host country communities and thus adversely impact stability via group belonging (Interviews 2Ge, 14Ge).

Each of these obstacles and potential solutions therefor are areas of research rife for future work and practical applications. We may consider asking which privacy and security risks to mobile technology use exist that are specific to the refugee experience? Similarly, how do resettlement support initiatives (1) allocate residences, (2) consider residence allocation policies’ spatial implications for access to physically-mediated information resources for individuals with refugee experiences, and (3) consider updating residence allocation policies to improve accessibility of physically-mediated information resources? Finally, we can draw from existing scholarship on online communities to investigate: how can we take advantage of the agency-cultivating capacity of mobile technology-mediated information resources, while at the same time providing opportunities for stability through constructive interactions with host country communities? Answering each of these research questions may help us to take relevant actions to improve individuals’ ability to engage with relevant information resources in navigating the stability-freedom balance of liminality.

### VI.1.2 Negative News Media

We learn from participants that mobile technology-mediated video and photo sharing and search applications, and social network applications can be integral instruments of self-expression for participants. Participants share that they use social media to receive news and updates related to their situations from personal networks and formal news outlets, curate new news media sources, and share their own updates. Participants’ personal networks and participants themselves are engaging in important acts of citizen journalism to express a counternarrative to popular formal news media. We may consider how supporting citizen journalism as acts of agency can reshape negative news media tropes surrounding the refugee experience. Some projects already exist to support individuals in this capacity such as those that participants discuss using, including but not limited to Melissa Network and its video and film workshops or emerging community news organization Solomon’s efforts in Greece, for example, or Migrantopolitan and its cultural exchange events in Germany. We may consider how we might creatively support these organizations and initiatives in maximizing the impact and reach of their work in order to address the negative news media challenge to the stability-freedom equilibrium.

### VI.1.3 Bureaucratic Limbo

Issues of bureaucratic limbo may receive tangential support via initiatives discussed in the preceding sections, but may receive more direct support from policy initiatives to address underlying causes of these issues.

The deeply complex and entrenched issue of bureaucratic limbo associated with long wait times for asylum, temporary asylum processes, and generally opaque asylum processes represents a web of systemic failures to address and consider the human impacts of the policies that support this limbo. From participants’ perspectives, we learn that bureaucratic limbo is often at the heart of a perpetual life state of liminality (Interview 5Ge). We learn from some existing, but limited, literature in psychology about the long-term traumatic effects of liminality in perpetuity (Samuels, 2006; Eades, 2013; Mansouri et al., 2007; Prager, 2006). Bureaucratic limbo describes a fundamental systemic representation of the global securitarian context that forced the refugee life state on many individuals to begin with.

Though seemingly insurmountable, let us consider potential policy adjustments host countries could consider making to at least set up a framework for long-term change in a direction of humanistic respect for life. Different policy initiatives may apply to each of German and Greek contexts given their respective policy frameworks. German policy holds that “Immigrants are obligated on the one hand to acquire German skills and respect the fundamental values of German society, especially the free democratic basic order. On the other hand, German society is obligated to ‘ensure equal opportunity and treatment access to all important aspects of society, business and politics by recognizing and removing existing obstacles’ [*loose translation*]” (Hanewinkel et al., 2018 citing original German text in Bundesministerium des Innern, 2014, 51).<sup>1</sup> As such, we know

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<sup>1</sup> “Zuwandernde sind angehalten, durch eigene Anstrengungen und unterstützt durch staatliche Angebote, die deutsche Sprache zu erlernen und sich mit Rechtsordnung, Geschichte und Kultur sowie Werten, die in Deutschland wichtig sind, vertraut zu machen. Die Aufnahmegesellschaft ist gefordert, den zugewanderten Menschen einen durch Chancen gleichheit und Gleichbehandlung gekennzeichneten Zugang zu allen wichtigen Bereichen von Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft und Politik zu gewährleisten, indem bestehende Barrieren erkannt und abgebaut werden.” (Bundesministerium des Innern 2014, 51)

that Germany’s resettlement support policies theoretically shape a context for both initiatives that prepare individuals with refugee experiences for life in Germany, *and* for German society to “ensure equal opportunity and treatment access to all important aspects of society” (Hanewinkel et al., 2018 citing original German text in Bundesministerium des Innern, 2014, 51).

What we learn from participants, however, is that German society does not appear to be treating individuals with refugee experiences equally from a human perspective. Instead we learn from participants and media reports that often, individuals with refugee experiences feel that their identities are not treated with respect. To reiterate one participant’s comments, he experiences that, *“that’s why it’s a problem to say “integration” - which Germans should I integrate with? All Germans are different. I don’t like the word “integration” because it’s like a “come to us” attitude because they’re a stronger culture here. I would like to imagine an interactive integration where everyone moves toward each other. If not, then people just interact with people that look like them. It stays a small, closed community”* (Interview 14Ge). He describes here what he perceives to be a one-sided resettlement process in which the identities of self-identified refugees are not respected. Echoing comments by participants about not feeling respected or heard (Interview 14Ge; Interview 8Ge; Interview 4Ge; Participant Observation), additional recent media reports highlight similar experiences among others with refugee experiences. For example, Hindy writes, *“Some Syrian people feel frustrated at what they consider the patronizing attitudes of Germans who assume they have nothing to learn from the newcomers, but plenty to teach them (one interviewee called it a “one-way conversation”)”* (Hindy, 2018). These experiences reflect individuals’ experiences of being treated as identity-less blank slates by the Germany host country during the liminal piece of their refugee experiences. They are expected to adopt German ways of being whatever those may be, but are not seen as having anything to offer German society from their existing identities.

In this sense, though a policy framework exists in Germany for German society’s respect of refugees as entire human beings rather than blank slates, this policy is not actualized. This area represents a tremendous opportunity for improved resettlement support initiatives that address host country community issues of nationalism, ethnicism, and supremacy. It provides an opportunity for future work to understand, what will it take and what can be done to support host country communities in navigating their own feelings of identity threat in relation to their personal versions of a crisis of culture? Are there particular information resources or information exchange contexts that may be particularly well-suited for such efforts? Do state-funded media bare any responsibility in adjusting national narratives to reflect less fear-inducing rhetoric surrounding “refugee”? Interview participant 14Ge provides a very clear imperative for this line of future work, stating *“I think it would be good for you to ask the German side these questions, or about their ability to integrate. Talk to more Germans that have more negativity, I think”* (Interview 14Ge).

Greece does not have a specific overarching policy regarding resettlement, but instead has a collection of laws that regulate education, labor, social welfare, and healthcare integration processes (Skeplaris, 2018, 2-6). Given that Greece does not exhibit a clear official position in relation to resettlement support, it is difficult to make a direct analysis of their approach. What we can see with the Greek context, is that both in study participants’ comments and media reports, individuals express a feeling of dehumanization in relation to their experience of Greece exhibited as anger, depression, or helplessness often manifest in public action decrying their deeply



dehumanizing experiences in camps and as newly arrived persons (Bird et al., 2019; Nye et al., 2018; DeutscheWelle, 2018). Though not a direct comment on resettlement support processes in Greece, this context does perhaps comment on the distinct absence of such processes, which in their absence, dehumanize people. Where the blank slate approach does not acknowledge or respect individuals’ existing identities, the *lack* of approach at all appears not to acknowledge or respect individuals’ fundamental humanity.

Since Greece does not have a specific overarching policy regarding resettlement, Greece has an opportunity to develop resettlement support policies that build on lessons learned over the last decade in other host countries, from this study concerning updates to notions of people with refugee experiences as identity-less blank slates, and that respects individuals’ fundamental humanity. Though the implementation of any policy may take several years to manifest, the process of negotiating such a policy by listening to the voices of individuals that live these realities everyday – self-identified Greek persons, refugee persons, migrant persons, human persons, and others – and existing work about best practices can in itself act as a valuable healing and growth opportunity for the Greek nation at large (Chapman, 2007; Kaminer, 2012; Northern Ireland, 2012; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998; Tutu, 1999). Legitimacy of such a policy and its ability to actually affect improvements to tensions would likely depend on the policy process’s inclusion of affected actors across Greece’s community in negotiations (Chapman, 2007; Tutu, 1999; Weber, 2009, 78; Dahl, 1971, 2-3). Provided that this negotiation and legislative process is interpreted as legitimate by Greece’s community at large, even if not implemented immediately, the resulting legal frameworks can provide a direction and vision for community development over time that makes sense for a contemporary context.

With dominant narratives appearing to promote uni-directional information flows from the host communities to refugee communities, organizations and informal collaborative initiatives have begun stepping in to encourage the development of a bi-directional information flow. For example, participant 14Ge in Germany talked about how in response to identity threat and negativity in general, he and a collection of other persons opened a café that encourages multicultural information exchange (bi-directional) through arts and community events. Through participant observation, I learned that in the last year, one self-identified refugee community member and one Greek national have co-founded a multicultural library and café space as an information resource in multiple languages and site for cultural exchange. Concerning asylum-related information services, through participant observation I learned that in the absence of comprehensible information from official channels, informal networks on WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger often acted as primary information resources about how to seek asylum, navigate legal procedures and resource provisions in host countries, and safest travel routes among other logistical information. In the absence of necessary policy frameworks and action at state levels, we see information services filling vital gaps in individual and community identity development. The form that several appear to be taking – multicultural community spaces organized by host and refugee communities together – provide valuable insight to information professionals about the kinds of information services that may be most relevant to support moving forward.

Based on these findings, it is my hope that this thesis is able to provide some guidance to refugees, activists, programming directors, policymakers, and academics in their efforts to (1) support individuals experiencing the liminality of the refugee state in finding a balance of stability and

freedom in their host countries, and (2) support long-term solutions to tensions that continue to build among Greek, German, and refugee communities.

## VI.2 Updates to Theory

### “I’m Safe, But Not Yet Free”

*“This limbo [without asylum] that we have lived in for more than 10 years has no end in sight. Our heads still feel as though they are under a guillotine. I hope to get back to what I really love: journalism. The fight goes on, but I know that returning to Mexico would turn me into a mere statistic in the death toll of journalists. Mexico has become the graveyard of the press, and that’s not where I belong. I still believe justice is possible. I still believe I can be safe and free.” – Emilio Gutierrez Soto (Gutierrez Soto, 2019)*

Liminality provides a useful theoretical framework through which to understand the tensions growing among communities in the European context. First, by listening to participants voices about what liminality means to them, we have a way to break down why current policy frameworks and uni-directional information flows are not succeeding in reducing social tensions. Second, participants help us conceive of theoretical updates to what liminality is, and how those theoretical updates have the potential to practically improve policy and information flow frameworks that reduce these social tensions. The following sections describe these theoretical updates to liminality in greater detail.

#### VI.2.1 New Definition of Liminality

Gutierrez Soto’s comments help us summarize and expand the context of what many research participants have discussed in their comments and experiences of the refugee journey. He echoes participants’ experiences that he may be safe from direct danger – death threats when in home state Mexico in Gutierrez Soto’s context – but he is still not free to live out his vocation because his life remains in limbo at the whim of the U.S. asylum process. Research participants in this study reflect similar sentiments in relation to their experiences of safety in their host countries. They communicate that fulfillment of basic needs (i.e. absence of immediate danger and sufficient food, water and shelter), is only one of three vital components of being able to actualize asylum and resettlement. The other two integral and often forgotten components are a *feeling of stability* (i.e. not being in constant limbo), and a *feeling of freedom*. Imbalance of stability and freedom reinforces feelings of uncertainty and betweenness. Gutierrez Soto reiterates participants’ conception of this framework, or an updated definition of liminality as: *the absence of balance between feelings of stability and freedom*.

#### VI.2.2 Contextualizing a New Definition in Existing Theoretical Work

This definition of liminality as the imbalance of the stability-freedom equilibrium, echoes existing work in social psychology that understands the concept of self as comprised of both “social identity – the collective self, grounded in and associated with group membership and group behaviors, and organized around prototypes”, and “personal identity – the individual self, grounded in the idiosyncratic traits and preferences and in close interpersonal relationships with specific other individuals, and associated with interpersonal behaviors” (Hogg in Sedikides et al., 2001, 138). Hogg’s conception social identity reiterates aspects of participants’ definitions of stability – group membership or belonging, long-term planning capacity, and feeling of reliability. Notions of personal identity here are defined in relation to interpersonal relationships and specific individual contexts. Though less reflective of what participants have defined as freedom – ability to exercise agency and express self, and access to privacy – this idea of personal identity does emphasize the

role of the individual in defining a sense of self similar to concepts of agency and self-expression associated with participant-defined freedom.

Similarly, the stability-freedom and social identity-individual identity tensions mirror those which geographer Entrikin describes in his conception of the relationship between identities and place. He writes that, “...the recognition of the balance between the general forces and the unique circumstances has been a theme in all discussions of regional studies. The unresolved difficulty concerns the working out of the logical relations that can support such a balance between the general and the specific” (Entrikin, 1991, 21). Entrikin here discusses the relationship between general or large group identities like national culture and specific or unique individual or personal identities. He alludes to regional studies’ perennial difficulty in resolving the tension that often exists between these two identity types that every person carries. The following section explores approaches that participants discuss taking to navigate liminality that embody some of the tension Entrikin describes: by finding a sense of self in relation to existing non-place-based identities, or by developing a new relationship to a human identity.

### VI.2.3 New Theory in Practice: Participants Embodying and Navigating Liminality

#### VI.2.3.1 Stability: Non-place-based Social Identity

Navigating the absence of stability in social identity plays out differently for different participants. Some describe the capacity to cultivate aspects of stability more quickly through non-place-based social identities like religious, family, ethnic, or gender groups (Interviews 2Ge, 8Ge, 1Gr). Aspects of these findings relate to existing literature concerning how humans navigate uncertainty or liminality. For example, some studies in psychology suggest that for those who find a feeling of group membership in religious institutions, religious information resources can be deeply valuable in navigating a sense of uncertainty, PTSD, and other life stressors (Henslee et al., 2015; Pargament et al., 1998) perhaps much like participant 8Ge’s experiences. At the same time, we have also learned that in certain circumstances religious information resources can be associated with poorer emotional and physical well-being (Ano et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2000), perhaps more like participant 2Ge’s experiences. This ambiguity underlines this study’s findings that such non-place-based group memberships may be deeply valuable ways to navigate the instability of liminality for some, but not for others.

#### VI.2.3.2 Stability: Human Identity

Participants who expressed not feeling a strong affiliation or even an adverse relationship to the same types of non-place-based social identities, discussed other approaches to navigating uncertainty in a sense of self. One individual I spoke with during participant observation in Greece commented that when people ask him where he is from, he says, “*I am from the same place you came from.*” This participant has lived for twelve years in Greece, has applied for asylum three times and has been rejected each time. He now manages two non-profit organizations that support literacy, education, and cultural initiatives in Athens. Though he carries each of several non-place-based identities as part of himself, he finds the most stability and freedom through his identity as a human being. An interview participant commented “*When I came here, I felt that I am human. When I go outside of my home, I don’t feel like any person disturbs me. People look at me like a human, not Afghan or a girl, but as a human. I am out until eight or nine in the evening, but my father isn’t worried. It’s not dangerous here. I feel I like that I’m a girl. In Iran, I always felt, why am I not a boy? Because they can do anything they want. But girls couldn’t*” (Interview 5Gr).

Rather than finding a sense of stability in non-place-based social identities like gender, nationality, or ethnicity, this participant found a sense of stability and self in a human identity. She describes a feeling of freedom – agency in expression and movement – associated with this human identity. Each of these participants helps us understand one approach that some participants have taken to navigating a liminal sense of self, namely adopting affiliation with a human identity while still supporting aspects of other non-place-based identities.

### VI.2.3.3 Freedom

Each of these approaches to stability can help us understand the contextual origins for participants’ relationships to a feeling of freedom. From participants’ comments, we might begin to see that perhaps those who discuss navigating liminality through identification with existing non-place-based identities feel a greater sense of stability and belonging, reminiscent of Entrikin’s specific identity concept (i.e. ethnic, familial, religious, etc. identities). Similarly, perhaps those who navigate liminality through identification with a non-specific general identity like interview participant 5Gr feel a greater sense of freedom, reminiscent of Entrikin’s general identities. Entriken elaborates on this tendency and tension, writing about the “importance of the moral uniqueness of the individual agent and the source of agency in the local, the particular and the subjective” happening at once (Entrikin, 1991, 26). He here helps us situate each of freedom in generality and stability of specificity as existing simultaneously and dependent on one another.

### VI.3 Implications

This updated understanding of liminality suggests that unlike what previous thinkers have written in this space, refugees *are not* blank slates arriving in a host country devoid of identities and disposed to be molded into their host country’s culture and vision for them (van Genneep, 1909; Turner, 1987). They arrive as full and entire human beings, with past lives, with identities, with thoughts, with ideas, and with dreams. Each of these identities lives in some state of equilibrium or disequilibrium with one another in the stability-freedom paradigm that participants describe.

A recent academic exchange between two researchers Fukuyama and Richeson on understanding contemporary general or collective identities (Entrikin’s verbiage) may help us understand the ramifications of the German and Greek contexts of liminality that we learn about through participants’ voices and media reports. Richeson’s comments that, “...people’s existing identities are important to them, and attempts to dissolve them would likely be met by severe resistance. The potential loss of a group’s identity, real or imagined, is psychologically threatening” (Richeson, 2019, 167). The same way we hypothesized in this document’s introduction that feelings of nationalism and other emerging trends among host country communities may arise courtesy of this threat, we also see this resistance and feeling of threat manifest in participants’ experiences of being conceived of as blank slates or stripped of humanity.

One person that I spoke with during participant observation in Germany, described an experience she had had with the father of two of her female students (she teaches at a schoolhouse in a refugee camp, and herself identifies as a migrant). She explained that when the father first arrived at the camp with his daughters, he was apprehensive but open to his daughters learning German culture and himself expressed interest in participating. She commented that over the following two years, the family both kept parts of their personal identities that they brought with them and took on new identities as they learned about German culture. One day after two years, she said, the father came

by to drop the girls off at school and refused to shake her hand (he had previously always done so). A short time thereafter, the girls stopped coming to school. From what she understood, she explained, the father began to feel more and more that the parts of self that he brought with him from his home country were not acknowledged or respected by his host community. Though he had initially been excited to integrate new identities, once he felt that he was being asked to dissolve other identities, his sense of self felt threatened. To protect this sense of self, he began rejecting those other identities which he perceived as threatening.

If we return to the idea of fear that several participants expressed without my prompting in relation to their experience of Germany, we see similar patterns. One interview participant who finds a strong sense of stability and identity in family said of his experience in Germany, that he observed and felt that, *“Here the young people don’t marry. They just live with each other and then split up. This has damaged the family structure a lot”* (Interview 8Ge). He was afraid that *“Maybe in the future, kids have to look in history books to understand the meaning of “Oma” or of “aunt” or “uncle””* (Interview 8Ge). This participant expressed fear of a dissolving family structure. Related, another participant expressed sadness and fear at his perception that German community members *“go to marijuana and beer and leave their religion”*, where for him religion provides a strong sense of self and stability (Interview 12Ge). Each of these participants express nervousness that important specific aspects of self that they find through the stability of non-place-based group identities, were threatened by aspects of their experience of host country culture.

In the Greek context, community members spoke unprompted about anger, apathy, helplessness, and depression. One interviewee explained that, *“I prefer to have my eyes closed on a bad day because it’s too much. I close my eyes and imagine a world that’s not real. When I look at reality, the world hasn’t given me what I’ve knocked on every door for”* (Interview 2Gr). Another explained that, *“Sometimes I feel like a bird in a cage and I have no way to escape. I have no way to breathe. We cannot go anywhere else because we don’t have money and we don’t know the language”* (Interview 14Gr). As introduced earlier in this document, feelings of being stripped of agency and control can be deeply dehumanizing (Keenahan, 1990, 27; LeMoncheck, 1985). We witness in these participants’ voices the threat to freedom in ability to exercise agency.

Richeson suggests that this fear only becomes problematic when presented as a binary choice that *“either they [a community member] can embrace a broad creedal identity [Entrikin’s general identity] or they can cling to narrow identities based on race, ethnicity, gender, or ideology”* (Richeson, 167). This problematic representation of a binary choice echoes participants’ ideas of feeling restricted freedom in ability to exercise agency in group belonging. When agency is removed, the equilibrium tips too far in the direction of stability and the self moves back to a space of liminality and uncertainty. Richeson suggests, however, that *“There is no reason to think that this [binary choice] is true. Political leaders can address the sense of psychological vulnerability triggered by shifting demographics and social change and also respect rightful claims for inclusion and fair treatment on the part of members of marginalized groups”* (Richeson, 2019, 167). The idea of the stability-freedom equilibrium that comes from participants in this study helps us understand the legitimacy of this claim. If we understand a disequilibrium between stability and freedom to be the state of liminality as participants describe, then it is the equilibrium of both – or the coexistence of the general and specific selves as Entrikin suggests – that fosters a balanced sense of self and personhood.

## VII. CONCLUSION

*“How do we live with cultures that are not by choice, and cultures that are by choice? Many belongings form your identity, but one identity becomes the whole identity if that’s all you know. We define ourselves according to the things that feel most threatened. How do we cope with this threat or negativity in general? For me, it is to become active. That’s why I was motivated to start the Cafe group together with the other group members.” – Interview 4Ge*

### VII.1 Key Findings

I begin this section with a comment from an interview participant in Germany that adeptly restates both the issues this work seeks to frame, and the agency that participants describe in their actions to find solutions to these issues. From this thesis’ work we can take away a few overarching theoretical findings and several concrete recommendations about next steps to support participants in their efforts to independently navigate these issues.

First, we learn about how participants are exercising agency in using information resources to navigate liminality and some logistical obstacles to doing so. These obstacles include: privacy and security risks to self-expression in digital platforms, particularly in Greece; travel distance to physically-mediated information resources rendering a feeling of isolation, particularly in Germany; though mobile technology-mediated information resources can help to support agency in response to racism or discrimination, at the same time, they may reduce opportunities for positive engagements with host country communities and thus adversely impact stability via group belonging. Each of these areas outlines outstanding logistical issues to participants realizing a balance of stability and freedom and suggests that there may be structural differences to each local context that affect this balance differently.

Second, participants help us to conceptualize liminality of their refugee experiences as an *absence of balance between stability and freedom*. I derive this theoretical suggestion from analyzing participants’ thoughts using a Grounded Theory approach. This suggestion at once challenges existing concepts of how liminality has been anthropologically and sociologically conceived for over a century and complements new work in this area. In practice, it means that participants talk about themselves as individuals of multiple identities that have agency in navigating a sense of self.

Third, participants also help us to understand that this conception of liminality can have detrimental psychological effects if prolonged, and can be exacerbated in each host country context by threats like bureaucratic limbo, negative news media, cultural differences, discrimination, racism, and segregation.

Finally, we learn from participants more about the human implications of inadequate policy and sociopolitical frameworks to address this new conception of liminality. From participants, we hear that in their respective host countries, they experience being treated as blank slates or without identity outside of “refugee”, or subhuman in some cases, which we hear can be psychologically detrimental. This blank slate reception echoes how much existing work conceives of liminality. We can see this treatment echoed in existing policy frameworks (or lack thereof) in each host country studied here.

## VII.2 Future Work

Each of these four key findings outlines clear directions for future work. In relation to those obstacles to using information resources to navigate liminality that participants discuss, we may consider asking which privacy and security risks to mobile technology use exist that are specific to the refugee experience? Similarly, how do resettlement support initiatives (1) allocate residences, (2) consider residence allocation policies’ spatial implications for access to physically-mediated information resources for individuals with refugee experiences, and (3) consider updating residence allocation policies to improve accessibility of physically-mediated information resources? We can also begin to ask more specific questions about local contexts affecting different behaviors in general. Could mobile application behaviors for identity navigation purposes be related to access to data or internet connection? Could they be related to cultural context of host countries? Do these behavioral differences say anything about mobile technology-mediated information resources’ relationships to physically-mediated information resources? Finally, we can also draw from existing scholarship on online communities to investigate: how can we take advantage of the agency-cultivating capacity of mobile technology-mediated information resources, while at the same time providing opportunities for stability through positive interactions with host country communities?

In relation to policy frameworks, we may begin to ask, what kinds of policy development processes can each of Germany and Greece engage in to update its conception of the refugee as a blank slate? Related, though this work focuses on the perspective of the refugee, more work is needed to understand the perspective of the host country community’s process in navigating the liminality of cultural change as hosts. What are host country community members feeling in relation to hosting new community members? Why do they feel as such? What are they doing to navigate these feelings? Any long-term and sustainable solutions to our contemporary cultural crisis (as Angus calls it), must consider the divers forces and actors involved in what we may hope to be an emergent community with social norms promoting mutual respect.

I conclude by writing, it is my hope that this document can express the depth of my gratitude for those individuals – friends, family, and acquaintances – that have shared their thoughts with regards to this thesis and otherwise, in helping me to navigate my own liminality. I further hope that this work can contribute to making the navigation of liminality a less dehumanizing process in the future. This process will require effort on every involved actor’s behalves – the policymaker, our neighbors, our friends, and perhaps most significantly, ourselves. I hope that this thesis can contribute to that long and collective journey that we have ahead of us.



## Appendix

Figure 19: Physically-mediated information resources described by participants in Germany.

<b>Germany</b>	
<b>Information Resource</b>	<b>Type</b>
Arts School	Organizations
Asylum Services	Organizations
Books	Art
Café	Social and Commercial Spaces
Colleagues	Social Groups
Cultural Celebrations	Events
Culture Center	Organizations
Disco	Social and Commercial Spaces
Family	Social Groups
Transnational Family	Social Groups
Transnational Friends	Social Groups
Food	Art
Friends	Social Groups
Local Family	Social Groups
Local Friends	Social Groups
Hiking Trails	Outdoor Spaces
Historical Sites	Art
Host Country Community African Jazz Musical Group	Social Groups
Job Center	Organizations
Language Learning Center	Organizations
Library	Organizations
Local Host Country Community	Social Groups
Mail	Misc
Multicultural Café and Center	Organizations
Music	Art
Musical Institution	Organizations
Other Individuals with Refugee Experiences	Social Groups
Particular Street	Outdoor Spaces
Parties	Social and Commercial Spaces
Professional Organization	Organizations
Public space	Outdoor Spaces
Public Square	Public Spaces
Public Square	Public Spaces
Refugee Camp	Public Spaces
Rehearsal	Art
Religious Institution	Social Groups
Restaurant	Social and Commercial Spaces
Restaurant Quarter	Social and Commercial Spaces
School	Organizations
Seminars, Professional Growth Opportunities	Events
State Educational Academy	Organizations
Storytelling Events	Events
Television	Digital Resources
Transnational Professional Contacts	Social Groups

Vocational Training Institute	Organizations
Wedding Salon	Social and Commercial Spaces

Figure 20: Physically-mediated information resources described by participants in Greece.

Greece	
Information Resource	Type
Battered Women's Center	Organizations
Bazaars	Social and Commercial Spaces
Books	Art
Café	Social and Commercial Spaces
Cinema	Social and Commercial Spaces
Cultural Celebrations	Events
Family	Social Groups
Local Family	Social Groups
Transnational Family	Social Groups
Food	Art
Friends	Social Groups
Local Friends	Social Groups
Transnational Friends	Social Groups
Gym	Organizations
Intercultural High School	Organizations
Language Learning Center	Organizations
Local Host Country Community	Social Groups
Metro Train	Public Spaces
Museum	Public Spaces
Music	Art
Other Individuals with Refugee Experiences	Social Groups
Park	Public Spaces
Parties	Social and Commercial Spaces
Perspective Arts	Organizations
Public Square	Public Spaces
Refugee Camp	Public Spaces
Refugee Support Center	Organizations
Restaurant	Social and Commercial Spaces
School	Organizations
Sea	Outdoor Spaces
Shops	Social and Commercial Spaces
Teacher	Individuals
Transnational Professional Contacts	Social Groups
Vocational Training Institute	Organizations
Vocational Training Institute	Organizations
Walking, Sightseeing	Outdoor Spaces
Wedding Salon	Social and Commercial Spaces

Figure 21: Mobile technology--mediated information resources described by participants in Germany.

Germany			
Information Resource	Type	Information Resource	Type
Adobe Scan	Professional	KaufDa	Commercial Transactions
Al Arabiya	News Media	LinkedIn	Communication
Al Jazeera	News Media	Magic Dic German	Translation Language
Amazon	Commercial Transactions	MeetMe	Communication
Arabdict	Translation Language	Metronome App	Recreational

Badoo	Communication	Microsoft Office (Word and Excel)	Professional
Calendar	Logistics	Music App	Music
Cambly	Translation Language	Naspa Bank	Logistics
Chess	Recreational	Netflix	Video Sharing
Chrome	Search Engine	Outlook	Communication
Das Erste	News Media	R2B	Transportation
DeutscheBahn	Transportation	Safari	Search Engine
DHL Post	Logistics	Samsung Browser	Search Engine
Dictionary	Translation Language	Saturn	Commercial Transactions
Duolingo	Translation Language	Skype	Communication
E Music EG	Music	Snapchat	Communication
eBay	Commercial Transactions	Soundcloud	Music
Email	Communication	Sparkasse Online	Commercial Transactions
Facebook	News Media	Spotify	Music
Facebook Messenger	Communication	SR Bros Entertainment	Video Sharing
German Verbs	Translation Language	Tango	Communication
Gmail	Communication	Telegram	Communication
Google Maps	Navigation	Tuning App	Recreational
Google Play	Music	Twitter	News Media
Google Translate	Translation Language	United Nations News	News Media
Hamburg Stadtplan	Transportation	Untis	Logistics
HVV Transportation	Transportation	Verben	Translation Language
iGap	Communication	Viber	Communication
Imo	Communication	WhatsApp	Communication
Instagram	Photo Sharing	XING	Communication
International Space Station	Recreational	YouTube	Video Sharing
iTunes	Music		

Figure 22: Mobile technology--mediated information resources described by participants in Greece.

Greece	
Information Resource	Type
Chrome	Search Engine
Email	Communication
Facebook	Social Network & News Media
Facebook Light	Social Network & News Media
Facebook Messenger	Communication
Google Maps	Navigation
Imo	Communication
Instagram	Photo Sharing
Music	Music Listening and Search
Skype	Communication
Spotify	Music Listening and Search
Telegram	Communication & News Media
Twitter	Communication
Viber	Communication
WhatsApp	Communication
YouTube	Video Sharing

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