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Rachel Citrin March 17, 2018

The Role of Support Services in Refugee Acculturation

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Abstract

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In the course of only the last century, there have been over two hundred million people who have been displaced from their homes, regions, and countries due to political violence (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. x). With the increasing numbers of refugees moving to new homes on either a temporary or often long-term basis, there is a pressing need to understand how refugees can be better acculturated into the societies into which they are displaced.

Based on a literature review and in-depth interview analysis, I develop a preliminary theoretical model of some of the drivers of refugee acculturation. Specifically, I investigated the impact of various refugee support services on the acculturation of refugees, and the efficacy as well as the presence/absence of particular services to aid in the acculturation process. The sample comprised of representatives of a total of nine refugee support services, two experts in refugee law, a refugee, and the current mayor of Clarkston as well as personal examination of several refugee community centers. I placed a particular focus on the role of the support services in helping refugees of Arab descent to acculturate. Through this study, I worked to understand the role of refugee support services in refugee acculturation to determine the key variables to include in my final model.

This research found support for the three propositions set forth after an extensive review of literature related to migrant and immigrant acculturation. First, refugee support services are powerful actors in helping refugees to acculturate. Second, allowing a longer time for refugees to integrate may allow for better acculturation, as opposed to providing funding and resources in a limited time bound fashion. Finally, English (host nation local language) proficiency is one of the greatest aids. The interviews, however, also pointed to a need for more dialogue and greater relationships between refugees and those in the host community. In general, therefore, refugee support services are beneficial over different stages of the acculturation process, but services that help build relationships in the local community and local language proficiency may be the most useful in faster and deeper acculturation.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

At 10 AM, Refuge Coffee is already bustling with people of various ages; the sounds of various languages, some of which I am unable to recognize, and the fragrant smell of coffee, fill the air. Located in a converted gas station in Clarkston, Georgia, this lively coffee shop is run by refugees, who are able to work there on a one-year rotational program designed to allow numerous refugees to gain valuable work experience. I order a hibiscus ice tea—which is half the price of what I would be able to find in downtown Atlanta—and chat with the woman behind the cash register. She is a refuge from Nepal and enjoys working at Refuge Coffee as she finds the customers to be kind and welcoming. Behind us, the mayor of Clarkston, Ted Terry, casually chats with customers. As I look around, I marvel at this idea. Though simple, it is an extremely creative idea, in that it brings Americans from different parts of Atlanta and refugees from around the world together to share a cup of coffee, while helping to employee refugees in an area where employment opportunities are desperately needed.

Millions of people all over the world, such as the refugees working at Refuge Coffee, are forced against their will to leave their homes. Some of this displacement is caused by government policies that target or persecute certain groups of people, while others are forced to flee their homes due to extreme insecurity and poverty (Keen, 1986, p. 1). Other causes of displacement include environmental disasters, civil war, governmental counter-insurgency, armed conflicts, and economic issues (Keen 1986, p. 11-13). This displacement occurs suddenly, may be due to life-threatening conditions, and impacts a mass population. Additionally, when these people, known as refugees, are uprooted, many of them do not even know where they will be going when they flee from their countries of origin (Keen 1986, p. 14).

According to the UN, about 20 million people have been killed in armed conflicts since World War II, the majority of whom have been women and children. Furthermore, the number of refugees and asylum seekers has been increasing in the past few years (Bommes and Morawska 2005, p. 1), resulting in 55.2 million forced migrants globally in 2016. This is primarily due to war (such as the major wars in Afghanistan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine that caused a large increase of refugees) as well as civil unrest and crime (especially in Mexico and Central America). Even more concerning, decreased numbers of refugees have been able to return to their countries of origin (Rivera et al. 2016, p. 320). Surprisingly, the poorest countries, as opposed to the richest ones, are typically the ones who take in the most refugees (Keen 1986, p. 41).

In the course of only the last century, there have been over two hundred million people who have been displaced from their homes, regions, and countries due to political violence (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. x). Even more recently, by the end of 2015, more than 21 million refugees were scattered around the world, which was the highest number of refugees since the end of World War II. Yet these numbers are still increasing due to various regional and in-country conflicts. For example, there were approximately five million registered refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq as of late 2016 (Esses et al. 2017, p. 79). With the increasing numbers of refugees due to various in-country conflicts, there is a pressing need to understand how refugees can be better acculturated into the societies into which they are displaced.

Purpose of Study and Research Goals

Based on a literature review and in-depth interview analysis, I developed a preliminary theoretical model of the drivers of refugee acculturation by using some of Georgia's refugee support services as the preliminary sample to understand the impact of these support services on refugees. Through this preliminary study, I worked to understand the role of refugee support services in refugee acculturation to determine the key variables to include in my final model. Specifically, I investigated the impact of various refugee support services on the acculturation of refugees, by examining the impact of particular services that are provided and those that may be lacking but desirable. My research found that in general, refugee support services are beneficial over different stages of the acculturation process, but services that help build relationships in the local community and local language proficiency may be the most useful in faster and deeper acculturation.

After conducting a literature review of other studies, I found that it appears that refugees from various cultural backgrounds have experiences in their host country that are specific to their cultural background. As a result, refugees from different backgrounds may face distinct challenges or find success in certain fields in the US, doing so within the frame of their preexisting cultural traits and beliefs. This process suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach to refugee acculturation may be ineffective, and that there is value in designing specific accommodations for refugees depending on their backgrounds. In order, therefore, to isolate those factors that may set a group apart from others and the accommodations that might be most effective, I focused on refugees of Arab descent, which encompasses those from Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates,

and Yemen. This focus is illuminating for broader issues that can be studied uniquely in Georgia because the state does have a sizeable population of refugees and immigrants of Arab descent and the reception and services provided to them can be very telling of host-community attitudes (especially in the South in the US) towards acculturation. In fact, in Georgia this past year, 164 refugees came from Syria, 78 from Iran, 47 from Afghanistan, and 42 from Iraq (Peebles, 2017).

I looked to see if culturally specific attention is given by such services to refugees of Arab descent. This is a crucial group of people to study, as refugees of Arab descent (whose traits certainly vary based on country of origin as well as the individual) may bring certain language skills, religious beliefs, gender norms, and cultural practices (among other factors) that distinguish them from refugees of other backgrounds. It is crucial, therefore, to determine if specific resettlement services are designated to this group of people and to what effect. I conducted this research by interviewing individuals that work with organizations that provide refugee support services to gain a better understanding of how these organizations function as well as the role they play in helping a refugee acculturate in his/her host country.

Contributions to Existing Literature and Practical Contributions of This Research

Previous research has focused on the factors of acculturation (such as the role of language, employment, or gender) for refugees. The research, though, has not looked at what specific factors may be *lacking* in helping refugees to acculturate most effectively. Furthermore, limited research has been conducted on the role of refugee support services in the acculturation process. Finally, there is extremely limited research that has analyzed whether culturally specific attention is given by such services to refugees of Arab descent.

This research will help to increase general knowledge about refugees of Arab descent in Georgia, the importance of helping them to acculturate, and the role of refugee support services in the context of refugees of Arab descent. This work fits in with the existing theoretical work regarding acculturation by affirming that the process indeed has nuances and that there are certain factors that can either aid or impede such acculturation.

This study will help to assess specific areas in which refugee support services have been successful in helping refugees to acculturate as well as areas in which more work is needed. Refugee support services could use this information to better provide for refugees as well as highlight areas where more funding, resources, or a focus may be needed. As a result, the findings from this research can be used to have a better general understanding of refugee resettlement in the US as one can take lessons from both the successes in the state as well as work to fix issues that may exist in Georgia that also exist in other states.

Theoretical Framework

Research on the acculturation of migrants has typically focused on the integration of immigrants into a country or culture. According to acculturation theory, one adapts in various ways to one's host culture and country. One does so by incorporating elements of one's own culture with elements of the host culture (Nwosu and Barnes 2014, p. 435; Esses et al. 2017, p. 91; Feyzi et al. 2017, p. 45; Scapocznik et al. 1980; Salo and Birman 2015, p. 396). These drivers of acculturation include categories such as security and stability in employment, housing, education, health, mobility, social protection, and social rights (Feyzi et al. 2017, p. 45). The process, however, is nuanced as one can be acculturated in some areas but not others (Salo and Birman 2015, p. 396). Thus, there are various forms of acculturation. This research focuses on

integration in the host culture as part of the broader category of acculturation, which occurs when one maintains certain aspects of one's own culture in addition to having contact with the host culture in order to adopt certain cultural and lifestyle norms of the host culture (Esses et al. 2017, p. 92).

It is important, however, to note that when compared to other migrants, refugees may face unique challenges when acculturating to their host society. These include dealing with trauma or other mental health issues (for many it is due to experiencing conditions of war or being placed in a refugee camp), being forcefully separated from family members or friends (perhaps as a result of the political climate in their country of origin or because of stringent immigration laws in the host country), facing structural difficulties with regard to the host country's labor and educational systems (which may be exacerbated by their emotional state and their feelings of isolation due to the conditions under which refugees migrate), and the challenges of being uprooted from one's culture and familiarity of life. As a result, a focus on the acculturation specifically of refugees is an important area to be explored.

This research adds to acculturation research and migrant literature by indicating aspects of the host culture into which refugees may be quickly or easily able to integrate as part of the broader process of acculturation. Furthermore, this is an exploratory study to examine the effect of different refugee assistance programs on the refugee acculturation process.

Research appears to indicate that refugees from different cultural backgrounds have experiences in their host country that are unique to their cultural background. Consequently, different groups may have unique experiences in their host country (Zucker 1983, p.186). Refugees from the Middle East may face a unique backlash against them in the US (Esses et al. 2017, p. 95; Horstmann and Jung 2015, p. 5; Volkan 2017, p. 101; Jawrosky, p. 200), resulting in

certain challenges with regard to how they are received by their host community. As a result, refugees of Arab descent may face personal challenges regarding employment, cultural norms (Bratsberg et al. 2014, p. 384; Smith 2008, p. 219), and mental health issues based on the situation in their country of origin that forced them to flee (Connor 2010, p. 378; Haldane and Nickerson 2016, p. 457; Nazzal et al. 2014, p. 477; Behnia 2003, p. 6; Sijbrandij et al. 2017, p. 1). Because of these reasons, I will investigate how resettlement aid provided to refugees of Arab descent affects their acculturation experience.

Outline of Research Method

I chose to conduct my research in the state of Georgia as I am currently studying at Emory University in the city of Atlanta. Georgia also serves as a good location for this research, because the state resettles a sizeable number of refugees who enter the US. In fact, in 2016, Georgia resettled 997 refugees and ranked as the 8th top state in resettling refugees (no author listed, "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Refugees in the United States" 2017). As a result, there are various organizations that work on helping refugees to acculturate. Thus, my personal location, which is well-located both to the sites and refugee support services, as well as my background volunteering with refugees through Project Shine during my time at Emory has helped to facilitate my access to these locations. I have chosen this cultural background because my own skillset (including Arabic language skills and an understanding of the culture and history of various countries in the Arab world) best position me to focus on this group.

I find that Georgia also serves as a good model to better understand the situation more generally in the US for refugees of Arab descent. This is because there are some areas in the state

(such as Clarkston, a suburb of Atlanta) in which refugee resettlement has been quite successful, while other areas reveal that there still is a great deal of work to be done. Furthermore, the large population of refugees in the state means that the population being studied is sizeable and there exist a variety of refugee support services to study.

I used personal interviews and a literature review to help build the preliminary theoretical model. I interviewed staff who work at major refugee support services in Georgia in order to understand what factors and services they have found to best enhance or hinder refugee acculturation. These include state-wide programs, the major refugee resettlement agencies of the state, and local community centers. I talked with a total of nine refugee support services, including Catholic Charities Atlanta, Welcoming America, Welcoming Atlanta, World Relief Atlanta, Lutheran Services of Georgia, Friends of Refugees, the International Rescue Committee, Clarkston Community Health Center and New American Pathways. Besides visiting many of these sites, I also spoke with two experts in refugee law, a refugee, the current mayor of Clarkston, visited Refuge Coffee numerous times, and attended a business accelerator event for refugees in the Clarkston Community Center. There are seventeen interviews in total. This allowed me to highlight the main services that are provided as well as those that may be lacking in the state. Questions focused on the role of that person in the organization as well as his/her thoughts on the types of refugee support services and their efficacy for refugee acculturation. Specifically, the focus was on their role in helping refugees of Arab descent to acculturate (interview questions can be found in Appendices A-C).

The information I gained when interviewing staff at these services highlighted the importance of the work they are doing, some of the common limitations that such organizations face when trying to serve the refugee communities, and of course, many of the hardships (to the

extent that I cannot imagine) that refugees face when trying to acculturate. It is key, therefore, that increased knowledge is gained about the work of support services regarding acculturation in order to guarantee that their work reaches as many people as possible and is done in the most effective way.

Propositions

This is an exploratory study. I will be guided by prior research related to immigrants, but will also use the findings from the analysis of the in-depth interviews that I am conducting to modify these propositions.

Prior research has highlighted the centrality of refugee support services in helping refugees to resettle and acculturate (Annie Wilson in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 226; Nawyn 2010, p. 149; Shaw 2014, p. 285). These support services can help refugees in a multitude of ways to eventually become economically self-sufficient (Shaw 2014, p. 285; Nawyn 2010, p. 151) as well as have the ability to navigate and hopefully succeed in the host culture (Singer and Wilson 2006, p. 19). Initially, these services can help refugees navigate through the cultural norms of their host society, such as providing them with a cultural orientation, helping them to acquire a job (Lanphier 1983, p. 29), increasing English language proficiency, delivering health services, and working to make education opportunities possible (Singer and Wilson 2006, p. 2). Furthermore, these services can facilitate the acculturation process for the refugees through programs that educate the host society about the importance of acculturating refugees as well as the value of diversity that these groups of people can bring (Nawyn 2010, p. 164). Refugee support services, therefore, help refugees in various categories (some focusing on certain categories more than others) including host country language acquisition, employment services, legal services, cultural understanding, medical aid, and basic needs provision (Singer and Wilson

2006, p. 2). Based on this, I present my first proposition:

P_1: The availability of a range of refugee support services will have a positive effect on refugee acculturation.

Despite the presence of refugee support services, the limited time-frame during which refugees are afforded services may work counter to the goals of providing these services that help work towards refugee acculturation. The US Department of State's goal is to have refugees employed within six months of arriving in the US (Mamgain and Collins 2003, p. 116; Nawyn 2010, p. 152; Lanphier 1983, p. 29), which mandates the time-frame for which federal funding is provided to refugee resettlement agencies. Since numerous refugee resettlement agencies depend on federal funding, many organizations stop providing certain services after the six-month period or demand self-sufficiency within this quick time-frame. Consequently, refugees may feel pressured to take a low-paying job immediately, while not devoting sufficient time to their mental health, skills recertification, or English language acquisition (Cannedy 2011, p. 33). This can then decrease the future opportunities for refugees to find higher paying jobs that may require certain skill certification, which can keep refugees in positions of low pay. Furthermore, because of this extreme time pressure, refugees may have to accept certain jobs or roles that only reinforce existing gender, ethnic, and racial hierarchies in the labor market (Nawyn 2010, p. 163), further limiting their chances for employment promotion. Based on this, I present my second proposition:

P_2: The demand for refugee self-sufficiency to occur in a quick time-frame may result in economic self-sufficiency, but will not allow for complete acculturation, as acculturation also includes feeling comfortable navigating the host culture, forming relationships with natives of

the host culture, and having the ability to capitalize on their full potential. A longer time-frame is required for fuller refugee acculturation.

This quick time-frame also means that refugees have less time to devote to certain skills, such as English-language acquisition. This is significant, because in terms of specific services provided regarding refugee acculturation, various research has pointed to the importance of English language acquisition as a critical determinant of refugee acculturation (Lee et al. 2015, p. 339; Rivera et al. 2016, p. 323). This is because acquisition of the host country language helps with numerous aspects of acculturation. This includes academic success, as refugees are better able to stay on track academically or gain necessary certification for employment. (Carlos Suarez-Orozco and Francisco Gaytan in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 161). Language ability also can result in increased employment opportunities and higher wages as refugees are better able to understand the employment process, interview well, and work in better positions that might have pathways for promotion (Chang 2017, p. 119; Mamgain and Collins 2003, p. 113). Finally, language acquisition can result in improved communication with those in the host country, which can help to build stronger relationships with natives of the host country and increase the refugee's understanding of the host country's culture (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 43; Esses et al. 2017, p. 97). Refugee support services frequently help refugees with English acquisition through English language classes as well as working to engage refugees with native-English speakers. Based on this, I present my final proposition:

P_3: Amongst the range of refugee services typically offered, aid regarding acquisition in the host country language provides the greatest aid to refugee acculturation.

This research will build on the theoretical framework using the literature reviewed and the personal interviews. These propositions guide my interviews to help develop my theory, which can later be tested through surveys and additional interviews in a future study.

Paper Organization

This thesis is organized as follows: Chapter 2 consists of a literature review, Chapter 3 details the research methods, Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis, and Chapter 5 contains the discussion and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to better understand the role of refugee support services in the acculturation process for refugees of Arab descent, I analyze prior research that has been conducted on refugees in general, the history of refugees and migration in the US as well as specifically in the state of Georgia, the factors of acculturation, and the role of refugee support services in the acculturation process.

Section 1: Definitions

Section 1, Subsection A: Refugee

According the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which is the UN body that focuses on refugees, a refugee is, "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries" (Frykman 2001, p. 59; no author listed, "*What Is a Refugee?*"). In other words, refugees are forced to leave their country, which distinguishes this group of people from migrants, especially since they are not selected to be received by the host country based on any social or economic class (Connor 2010, p. 377). It is worth noting that a migrant is, "any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born, and has acquired some significant social ties to this country" (no author listed, "Migrant/Migration", n.d.). In

international policy, the term ‘refugee’ focuses on one’s legal status, which is a status that allows one to flee to a different country (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 24).

The UNHCR’s definition of refugee is frequently used to refer to “humanitarian” refugees (in other words, those who have fled their country due to war or political or religious oppression). A subgroup of this classification is that of “convention” refugees, who are people who have fled their country due to fear of persecution originating from their home state. This group is protected by a convention that requires signatories not to return these refugees to the country from which they fled (known as non-refoulement). Finally, there are those who are internally displaced (in other words, they are displaced within their own county), who are called internally displaced persons (IDP) (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. 64). It is worth noting that Palestinians do not fall within the jurisdiction of the UNHCR but are instead aided by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. This is because various Middle Eastern actors (supported by both Israel and the Arab states) requested that this issue be attended to separately (Keen 1986, p. 21). My research will focus on refugees (including Palestinians since they still fall under the UN definition of refugees) as opposed to other migrants and will specifically focus on refugees of Arab descent since refugees of Arab descent face unique trials upon and after arrival in the US.

Refugees face difficult challenges when they are uprooted from their country of origin (Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 1). Those who are the most likely to become refugees are those who do not have a great deal of money or political influence. Many are also part of minority groups and/or are widows, children, orphans, elderly, or handicapped, which can make displacement even more challenging (Keen 1986, p. 15).

There are criticisms of the UN’s definition of refugees, as the definition may be vague

and may not meet the current needs of refugees. Specifically, with regard to the statement that says that the refugee must have a "well-founded fear," the applicant would have to provide 'objective' and 'subjective' reasons, which are extremely difficult to demonstrate (Keen 1986; Cannedy 2011, p. 29). Furthermore, fear itself is subjective, making it even more of a difficult term to establish, especially as individuals can react differently to the same condition (Frykman 2001, p. 43). Finally, the 1951 Convention allows the states, to which refugees are fleeing, to individually determine if someone meets the definition of a refugee, which can be problematic as definitions can be crafted according to the resources and abilities of the acting states (no author listed, "Asylum & the Rights of Refugees" 2017).

Section 1, Subsection B: Displacement, Diaspora, and Exile

One can become a refugee for various reasons: some are naturally occurring and due to the environment, while others are caused by humans. Displacement, therefore, is a result of numerous factors including armed conflict, natural disasters, and economic changes. It is "the forced movement of people from their locality or environment and occupational activities" (no author listed, "Displaced Person/Displacement" n.d.). When there are many people who are displaced, a term frequently used is 'diaspora'. Diaspora "refers to members of an ethnic group who live away from the country in which they or their ancestors were born, but maintain strong ties with it. It is an immigrant group whose proportion in numbers and activities makes it visible and its activities felt in both the actual and the ancestral country" (Frykman 2001, p. 19-20). A diaspora results in people attempting to reform a community in a new territory (Frykman 2001, p. 19).

Some people become refugees because they have been exiled from their country of origin. All people who have been exiled are refugees, but not all refugees have been exiled. Exile

is “the forced uprooting of the person from a community and of inhabiting a place while wishing for another” (GarceÌs 2007, p. 55). Political exile is not a natural phenomenon, but is instead a human construct, produced by humans for other humans (Said 1983, p. 138). According to Said (1983), “the word ‘refugee’ has become a political one, suggesting large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance, whereas ‘exile’ carries with it… a touch of solitude and spirituality” (Said 1983, p. 181). Largely as a result of exile, one is denied much of one’s previous identity (Said 1983, p. 139), forcing the exiled person to forge a new identity in a foreign environment. In fact, many exiles compensate for the loss of their old life by creating something new, resulting in some exiles becoming novelists, political activists, and intellectuals (Said 1983, p. 144).

Section 1, Subsection C: Acculturation versus Integration and Assimilation

This study will focus on the term acculturation, as opposed to other frequently-used terms such as integration and assimilation. Broadly speaking, acculturation is “the process of adapting to aspects of a new culture” (Esses et al. 2017, p. 91). The concept of acculturation emphasizes both integration and multiculturalism and is “a process by which a person or group adapts to a new cultural space by merging elements from their own home culture with other cultures without discarding essential aspects of the former” (Nwosu and Barnes 2014, p. 435). This includes security and stability in employment, housing, education, health, mobility, social protection, and social rights (Feyzi et al. 2017, p. 45). In the US, acculturation has a positive correlation with socioeconomic status and mental and emotional health (Celano and Tyler 1991, p. 373).

There are two main frameworks through which acculturation is defined. According to Berry, a person living in a new cultural environment follows various cultural norms until there is

a conflict due to cultural differences. In reaction to the conflict, one culturally adapts to reduce the conflict by finding similarities between the host culture and the culture of origin. Berry also says that there are four types of acculturation, which are affected by both one's need to have contact with the host society as well as the need to maintain one's own culture. These four types are integration (maintaining certain aspects of one's own culture in addition to having contact with the host society), assimilation (abandoning one's own culture and instead having contact with the host society as well as adopting its cultural norms), separation (keeping one's own culture and not having contact with the host society), and marginalization (rejecting one's own culture as well as not wanting to have contact with the host society) (Esses et al. 2017, p. 92). Full acculturation, therefore, would lean closer to integration as part of overall acculturation. According to Scapocznik et al. (1980), acculturation fits within a bicultural model during which one both adapts to the host culture as well as preserves one's own culture (Scapocznik et al. 1980). Furthermore, with increased time that one lives in the host country, one becomes more acculturated. Certainly, the culture of a host country is not static, and so this adjustment may change with time. Thus, one can be well adjusted within some spheres but less so within others (Salo and Birman 2015, p. 396).

Another term frequently used, though less preferable, is that of assimilation (which is also defined above by Berry). Assimilation can include acquisition of the host country's language and losing one's own language, having jobs and education that are shared by those in the host society, marriage with members of the host society, living in areas where the majority of people are from the host society, and even shifting one's appearance to blend into the host culture (Waters and Jimenes 2005, p. 105). In this way, assimilation can be problematic as it requires that one gives up one's own culture in order to pursue the culture of the host society.

Assimilation, therefore, assumes that the acceptance that occurs is dependent on 'them' becoming like 'us' (Wimmer 2009, p. 256). This is an issue as it puts the full burden on the refugee to discard his/her own culture in order to adopt the host culture.

A final term frequently used in migration literature is that of integration. Generally, integration is "the process by which immigrants become accepted into society" (Penninx, 2017). Yet more specifically, refugee integration encompasses the development of social networks with various groups and services in the community, the obtaining of employment, housing, education, and health, and recognizes the role of language, culture, safety, and stability (Eby et al. 2011, p. 588). Integration includes legal and social protections, residency-based rights, laws to protect migrants and refugees from discrimination, socioeconomic funds directed towards minorities in deprived areas, and multicultural policies (Penninx, 2017). Europeans typically use the term integration as opposed to the term assimilation (which is typically used in the US). According to Favell, integration is "about imagining the national institutional forms and structures that can unify a diverse population; hence imagining what the state can actively do to 'nationalize' newcomers and re-constitute the nation-state under conditions of growing cultural diversity" (Bommes and Morawska 2005, p. 45). As discussed above, integration falls under one of the categories of acculturation.

Acculturation is a preferred term to both assimilation and integration because assimilation is problematic in that it expects the refugee to value the host country culture over his/her own culture and acculturation encompasses integration, understanding that there are different levels and ways with which refugees can resettle in their host country. Acculturation, therefore, is the most useful framework to use in order to best understand the ways in which refugees may or may not adjust to individual aspects of the host country and culture.

The acculturation of refugees is essential to promote and more specifically, acculturation with regard to the form of integration. In fact, there are large benefits for the host community that arises due to acculturation. Refugee acculturation helps to build a more productive society as well as introduces more varied skillsets into the market. Refugees may become entrepreneurs or become active participants in the labor force, helping to revitalize areas as well as expand both local and national economies (Kallick and Mathema 2016, pp. 2-4)

Section 1, Subsection D: Rights-Based Approaches versus Needs-Based Approaches

When analyzing the specific policies, programs, and organizations that focus on refugee acculturation, it is important to understand their structure in order to determine if they are being used effectively and are built on a fair framework. It is imperative that policies, programs, and organizations have an emphasis on the provision of human rights, especially as displaced people have been increasingly demanding the provision of their basic rights as well as raising concerns about the issues with much of the top-down policies to address displacement and resettlement (Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 1-2).

A human rights framework emphasizes equal treatment for everyone (Jaworsky 2016, p. 42). It stresses peoples' empowerment and equal participation, focuses on vulnerable groups of people, and sees how human rights are implemented locally (Munzoul Assal in Mehta and Grabska 2008, pp. 144-145). Finally, it says that economic and social rights are necessary to achieve civil and political rights, and vice versa (Katarzyna Grabska in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 73). A rights-based approach is preferred to a needs-based approach because a rights-based approach recognizes that laws should protect all people's access to basic needs and rights simply because all people are entitled to this. For example, a clinical practice with a rights-based approach would value and include the patient's participation and opinion regarding the delivery

of the services. A needs-based approach, on the other hand, focuses on short-term protection as opposed to the long-term protection that is advocated by rights-based approaches. A needs-based approach in terms of the clinical practice example would value more the medical results as opposed to the patient himself/herself. Yet most refugee policies have a needs-based approach as opposed to a rights-based approach (Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 12), which can be problematic when trying to ensure effective resettlement policies. An understanding of the approach of different policies, programs, and organizations, therefore, can help one to understand their efficacy.

Section 2: Role of UNHCR and International Refugee Law

Section 2, Subsection A: History and Role of the UNHCR and International Refugee Law

The UNHCR is a global agency that is a part of the UN. According to its website, "[The UNHCR strives] to ensure that everyone has the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to eventually return home, integrate or resettle." The UNHCR helps to provide "critical emergency assistance in the form of clean water, sanitation and healthcare, as well as shelter, blankets, household goods and sometimes food" (no author listed, "What We Do"). Overall, therefore, the UNHCR is dedicated to protecting and assisting refugees as well as finding 'permanent solutions' for them. In terms of humanitarian aid, its work is non-political and can occur in an autonomous manner. With regard to material aid, however, it can only act if it is invited to do so by the host government. Thus, the UNHCR typically does not give material assistance directly to refugees, but instead delivers the funds to emergency relief projects and programs that focus on integration and acculturation efforts (Keen 1986, p. 21). The UNHCR creates and shares migration information as well as promotes international and

domestic standards (Robert Muggah in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 32).

International refugee law emphasizes humanitarian aid to others, non-discrimination, and non-refoulement (Robert Muggah in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 29-31). Following World War I, international efforts focused on certain minority groups such as Assyrians and Armenians. It was only after World War II that there was the creation of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency and the International Refugee Organization in order to aid those displaced by the war. The creation of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees created a definition of 'refugee' that did not have limits based on certain ethnic or cultural groups (Keen 1986, p. 44). When the UNHCR was founded, it focused on preventing the forced repatriation of those who feared persecution (as opposed to being focused on the right to return). Specifically, it worked around the repatriation of those to the Soviet Union as many Soviet citizens had fled from Joseph Stalin's rule. In 1967, the UNHCR framework was complemented by the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which extended the framework to all refugees, instead of solely focusing on refugees in Europe (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. 63).

Section 2, Subsection B: Criticisms of the UNHCR and International Refugee Law

Various scholars and organizations have criticized both the UNHCR as well as international refugee law. A large criticism of international refugee law is that it does not prevent actions in a home country that result in refugees. This is because the scope of this type of law is limited in that it only focuses on the treatment of refugees in their host country and not on the root causes that put them in this situation in the first place. The scope is further limited because there are many states that have not signed the UN Convention and, therefore, do not need to abide by its rules. States may refuse to sign the Convention for a variety of reasons such as disagreeing with the definition of a 'refugee', not wanting to take on certain responsibilities if its

geographic neighbors have also not signed the Convention, or not wanting to be bound to comply with international humanitarian standards. The most controversial part of the framework to protect refugees is that it places an obligation on countries to process and ideally recognize refugees who cross into their borders, which many governments view as a violation of their country's sovereignty (Gerard 2014, p. 59), resulting in a refusal of many to aid refugees. Accordingly, there is a collective action problem, in which some states become free-riders while others must deal with a larger share of the costs (Robert Muggah in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 29). Further, some of the actors that deal with refugees are not states, and therefore, there are few ways to prevent these actors from violating international law and norms (Keen 1986, pp. 26-27; Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. 63).

Another issue is that the UNHCR can only act if invited to do so by the state (Robert Muggah in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 31). Thus, even if states have signed the UN Convention and Protocol, there is no mechanism to force states to observe the treaty. In fact, there is no body that monitors whether states are actually following the Convention. This is because in practice, it is the state itself that implements refugee policy. "Current refugee law can be thought of as a compromise between the sovereign prerogative of states to control immigration and the reality of coerced movements of persons at risk. Its purpose is not specifically to meet the needs of the refugees themselves (as both the humanitarian and human rights paradigms would suggest), but rather is to govern disruptions of regulated international migration in accordance with the interests of states" (Samira Trad and Michael Kagan in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 167).

Academics, states, and refugees have criticized the creation and framing of UN resolutions and policies. For example, some policies have viewed refugees as "problems" for the host country (Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 3). Additionally, women were not present during the

creation of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which is problematic as it is then implicitly grounded in the refugee male experience, which may mean that many of the gender-specific issues females face are ignored (Gerard 2014, p. 60). Finally, actors criticize the UNHCR for its needs-based approach, which only provides short-term solutions as opposed to the longer-term solutions advocated for by a rights-based approach (Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 13).

Section 3: Refugees in the United States

Section 3, Subsection A: Migration History in the United States

Migration policy in the US has changed over the years, moving to and from more open policies and strict quotas that have frequently targeted people based on their country of origin. Overall, therefore, immigration in the US has occurred in waves. The first wave was in the 1820s by those from the British Isles, the second in the 1840s by Irish and German Catholics, the third from 1880 to 1914 by European immigrants, and the fourth after 1965 by immigrants from Latin America and Asia (Martin 2013). Furthermore, beginning in the 1850s, there was a major wave of Asian immigrants, who mainly moved to the West Coast during the California Gold Rush (Grigg n.d.). The number of refugees that the US accepts also ebbs and flows depending on the country's leadership and political priorities. Moreover, even though many of the laws and policies discussed below were not directed towards refugees explicitly, refugees would have still been affected by many of these changes as they were frequently part of that time period's trend of distrust of a foreign group.

Also known as the Melting Pot, the US is a "synthetic country" as people voluntarily move to the US from all over the world (Volkan 2017, p. xv). It has a long history of both accepting and denying the entry of refugees and immigrants into its borders. As a result, though

the US has been called a "nation of immigrants", its boundaries have both strengthened and loosened towards foreigners for years (Jaworsky 2016, p. 5; Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 1). Overall, US asylum law relies heavily on the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, which followed the 1951 UN Convention. The US, however, never signed the UN convention, as it is party only to the 1967 protocol (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, pp. 16-17). Because the overall US asylum law relies heavily on the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, it is important to understand the general history of refugees in the context of migration into the US.

From the 1880s to the 1920s, over 23 million immigrants, who were mostly from southern, eastern, and central Europe, immigrated to the US (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 11). The US government had completely opened its doors during its first century, though it began to close them in 1882. It put forth the Liable to become a Public Charge (LPC) provision, which said that denial of entry to prospective immigrants could be justified by their lack of sustainable living means. Furthermore, the president that year, Chester Arthur, signed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which put a ten-year ban on the entry of Chinese workers (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). In addition, many immigrants, specifically Jews and Italians, were seen as "racially district from other whites" and as a result, faced discrimination (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton 2010, pp. 9-11). One can see, therefore, that discrimination against foreigners from different backgrounds stems back many years.

During World War I, feelings of US nationalism influenced President Woodrow Wilson's Immigration Act of 1917, which limited the entry of Asians, banned the entry of those who were illiterate or had mental health problems, and made it easier to deport immigrants. After World War I, President Warren Harding signed the Immigration Quota Act of 1921, which set forth an annual quota of 3 percent of the total number of foreign-born residents from each country that

was recorded in the 1910 Census (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). Other laws, such as California's 1913 Alien Land Law, targeted Punjabi, Chinese, Indian, and Korean farmers (Leonard 1985, p. 549). The next president, Calvin Coolidge, signed the Immigration Act of 1924, which reduced the previous quotas to 2 percent. By this time, the League of Nations had created a legal definition of a refugee in order to distinguish them from other immigrants due to the necessity of their need for special aid. The US quotas, however, did not use this distinction (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). US immigration laws, therefore, continued to limit the entry of immigrants from various countries, lumping refugees into the same category as other types of immigrants.

At the conclusion of World War I, when the Ottoman Empire collapsed, the label of Arab immigrants changed from 'Turks' to 'Syrians', 'Arabians', or 'Syrian-Lebanese'. Many migrated to the US during this time, though they were grouped together as 'Asians.' Due to the quota laws in place, however, it was difficult for Asians to gain entry into the US. As a result, Arab immigrants tried to be classified as 'Whites' in order to gain entry. Once they migrated to the US, many continued to stay in the category of 'Whites,' doing so by acculturating quickly, changing their names to more 'American' names, and teaching their children English instead of Arabic (Suleiman 1999). It seems as though, then, that due to existing discrimination against immigrants, many found it preferable to discard aspects of their heritage to try to fit in with mainstream 'American' culture.

After World War II, many Holocaust survivors sought entry into the US (Connor 2010, p. 379). Thus, from 1933 to 1944, under President Franklin Roosevelt, the US accepted about 250,000 refugees, who were mainly Jews escaping the Holocaust. The US, however, only filled 40 percent of its quota for German immigrations due to the LPC provision. Roosevelt also withdrew the Geary Act exclusion of Chinese immigrants, which had been the first law in the US

that prevented a specific group of people based on ethnicity from immigrating to the US.

At the end of World War II, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) became the first international governmental organization that helped the many European refugees (thirty million people) displaced during the war. The International Refugee Organization (IRO) later replaced the UNRRA, though this was itself superseded in 1950 by the UNHCR (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. 63).

In 1948, Congress passed the Displaced Persons Act (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 18). In 1951, however, Harry Truman refused to sign the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (which was signed by 148 countries), provided a formal structure for the international community's aid to convention refugees as well as provided definitions of the term 'refugee', refugees' rights, and the specific obligations of the international community (Esses et al. 2017, p. 79). In 1952, even though Truman vetoed it, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, which would have opened the door to a large number of refugees from communist countries, though it severely limited entry to everyone else (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). One can see that immigration laws in the US were highly political, allowing entry at certain times to specific groups of people and then preventing their entry at other times, largely based on the political climate and the US's relations with other countries during the time.

Over time, the definition of a refugee took on political meaning (Connor 2010, p. 379). In 1953, the Refugee Relief Act was passed by Congress, allowing 214,000 European refugees to permanently live in the US (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 17). This legislation provided the main basis to allow refugees into the country during the Cold War. Truman did sign the Refugee-Escapee Act in 1957, which exempted those escaping communist or Middle Eastern countries

from immigration quotas (though this was repealed in 1980) (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). Yet US allowance of refugees after World War II continued to be limited (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 17), though these steps widened the understanding of refugee issues in the US.

Due to pressure from the Civil Rights Movement that increasingly demanded equal treatment regardless of one's background, President Lyndon Johnson passed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which reversed earlier quotas from the 1920s. As a result, annual legal immigration numbers rose by more than 110,000 by 1975, continuing to rise until the 1990s (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). Furthermore, refugees made up 6 percent out of the total number of those given entry into the US each year. The US government, however, placed limitations on the entry of refugees fleeing from the Middle East and from communist governments (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 18), again displaying some of the certain political tensions the US had with the Middle East and communist governments.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the focus regarding international refugees shifted from Europe to crises in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This is because various political changes in these regions made their issues salient, while European countries had started to recover from World War II (Keen 1986, p. 33). The 1970s also marked a period in which Indochinese refugees were allowed into the US (Connor 2010, p. 379).

In 1980, Congress passed the Refugee Act, which allowed an increased number of refugees into the US as well as created a new legal status for those with asylum claims (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 19). Furthermore, though the US still had not signed the UN protocol, the Refugee Act nonetheless included the 1951 UN Convention and 1967 Protocol definitions of asylum and refugees. This showed a public commitment from the US government to aid refugees through its funding of the US Refugee Admissions Program (Robert Carey and Jane Kim in

Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 192). In 1986, under President Ronald Reagan, the Immigration Reform and Control Act was passed, which provided amnesty to unregistered immigrants who already were living in the US, though it penalized employers if they hired more (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). Thus, though the US still had various limitations with regard to accepting refugees, great strides were made during this period to increasing the US's commitment to refugee resettlement.

During the 1990s, asylum law was largely altered by Congress in order to restrict immigration (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 20). Along these lines, President George H. W. Bush passed the Immigration Act of 1990, which limited immigration, though it allowed immigrants from select countries to have a protected status. President Bill Clinton passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, which increased border security and amended the parameters on exclusion and deportation (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). Immigration and border security, then, during this time became even more strict.

After 9/11in 2001, the application process for refugees became much more controlled and competitive, as every applicant was viewed as a possible terrorist and fears about national security rose (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 1). President George W. Bush and the House of Representatives, after the 9/11 attacks, passed the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, which increased border security. The Senate also approved the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8). Legislation combined various government agencies into the Department of Homeland Security as well as passed the REAL ID Act in order to increase monitoring of immigrants (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 21). It is worth noting, however, that in 2006, the population of immigrants or US-born children of immigrants in the US was almost 70 million (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton

2010, p. 9), compared to approximately 43.3 million foreign-born people living in the US today (Nicholson and CAP Immigration Team 2017).

President Barack Obama proposed the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minds (DREAM) Act in 2010, which was not passed, though it would have provided an avenue for citizenship for children of undocumented immigrants. In response, he issued an executive order that granted them temporary legal residence. In 2013, he also tried to pass an immigration reform act, though the House of Representatives vetoed it (McAndrews 2015, p. 4-8).

President Trump has taken an especially hardline response to those living in the US illegally, and as a result, gave increased autonomy to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, which has increased immigration arrests by over 40 percent in 2017 alone (Yee 2017). Further, he revoked the executive order, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), protecting the "DREAMERS", making their future stay in the US uncertain (Edelman 2017).

Currently, due to President Trump's executive order that suspended refugee entry for 120 days and reduces the entry of refugees from 110,000 to 50,000 (Krogstad and Radford 2017), the US ranks low when compared annually to other countries such as Turkey, Jordan, and Germany in accepting refugees. Trump has negatively portrayed both those living in the US illegally as well as refugees, calling for tougher stances on illegal immigration (Bonesteel, 2018) and reducing refugee entry numbers. He has specifically targeted refugees who are of Arab descent and/or are Muslim. In fact, when he was campaigning to become President, he said (and was supported by many Americans in saying this) that he would prevent Muslims from entering the US, and provoked fears that terrorists would enter the country posing as refugees (Sacchetti and Sieff, 2018). Not only has this heightened fears in the US regarding refugees, especially those of

Arab descent, but has also made the process to enter to the US as a refugee even more difficult.

Section 3, Subsection B: Process to Become a Refugee in the US

Although the US has accepted the 1967 Protocol on Refugees, the refugee application process is still quite lengthy (Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 12), normally taking 12 to 18 months. The length does, though, vary depending on the individual because each case is processed individually (no author listed, "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Refugees in the United States" 2017). In order to for someone to have access to the US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), the UNHCR, an NGO, or a US Embassy must refer the refugee to the USRAP. This is done based on a person's need for resettlement. A staff member in a Resettlement Support Center (RSC) reviews and processes each case (Eby et al. 2011, pp. 590-591), which is then presented to the US Department of Homeland Security. Next, the applicant is interviewed by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (UCSIS), which is a part of the Department of Homeland Security (no author listed, "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Refugees in the United States" 2017). UCSIS also conducts medical screening and background checks because as part of the application to be admitted to the US, refugees have to have biometric scans as well as give blood and DNA samples. Additionally, family members and other connections are interviewed (Shaer 2016). The International Organization of Migration arranges the refugee's transportation to the US through a loan to the refugee (Cannedy 2011, p. 30).

Once admitted to the US, a refugee has 12 months (during this time, one is expected to be working) to apply for the status of Lawful Permanent Resident. With this status, one can apply for US citizenship (no author listed, "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Refugees in the United States" 2017). Throughout this process, refugees are typically sponsored

by an NGO. Successful applicants can be united with their spouse and unmarried children who are younger than 21 years. Other family members are also sometimes eligible to come to the US (no author listed, "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Refugees in the United States" 2017).

The US states that resettled the most refugees in 2016 were (in order from the top) Texas, California, Ohio, Michigan, and Washington (no author listed, "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Refugees in the United States" 2017). The President determines the quota of refugees allowed in the US for a given fiscal year, of which certain numbers are allocated to specific regions of origin (Mamgain and Collins 2003, p. 115). The restrictions on immigration in the US are very much dependent on the size of the immigrant population from specific countries, with smaller immigrant populations typically having less stringent restrictions (Esses et al. 2017, p. 85). In other words, the first challenge for refugees is being granted entry into the US, but they face further issues once they are actually in the US.

Section 3, Subsection C: Challenges of Refugees, Specifically Those of Arab Descent, in the United States

Of the major challenges that refugees, particularly those of Arab descent, face in the US, a fundamental issue is dealing with stigmas about refugees and Arabs. Due to various cultural differences and the process of acculturation, many refugees will find combatting these negative stereotypes to be very difficult.

Countries in general have struggled with the large influx of refugees, especially in the age of globalization, in which various nations have felt as though their sovereignty is shrinking. In response, many of these states have strengthened their border control policies (Gerard 2014, p. 2, Bohmer and Shuman 2008, p. 2) for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, while they have

loosened their policies for others, such as tourists and business travelers (Gerard 2014, p. 33). In other words, refugees are frequently viewed as threats, "placed on the same security continuum alongside not only illegal migrants but also drug traffickers and terrorists" (Gerard 2014, p. 3). According to a 2016 IPSOS poll that surveyed 22 countries, almost 40 % of the countries surveyed said that at that time, they either somewhat or very much agreed that borders should be completely closed to refugees. Furthermore, over 50 % said that they agreed somewhat or very much that terrorists are posing as refugees in order to enter their country (Esses et al. 2017, p. 82).

Americans have mixed views about immigrants and refugees (Jaworsky 2016, p. 2; Frykman 2001, p. 12-13). As discussed above, President Trump denigrates refugees and immigrants (Jaworsky 2016, p. 2). Accordingly, in the US there are social boundaries between foreign-born and native-born, with immigrants often experiencing inequalities based on race, religion, and class (Jaworsky 2016, p. 36).

People of Arab identity particularly experience inequality in the form of discrimination. Unfortunately, many in the US conflate all people of Arab identity as Muslim, attributing stereotypes of Muslims to those of Arab identity (Esses et al. 2017, p. 95). As Said (1978) explained when discussing Orientalism, people of Arab identity frequently face pre-determined labels regarding their character traits and beliefs (Said 1978, p. 16). In other words, in a host country, there are some who view refugees as the 'Other', in which they feel that a large influx of newcomers will pollute their large-scale identity. As such, refugees are often accused of being a threat to cultural integration, nationalistic loyalty, and economic growth (Horstmann and Jung 2015, p. 5). This view especially rises during terror attacks (Volkan 2017, p. 101). For example, one of the ISIS attackers in Paris was found to have a Syrian refugee passport, which

has increased fears in the US that ISIS is sending out fighters who are posing as Syrian refugees in order to gain access into host countries (Volkan 2017, p. xii; Jawrosky, p. 200). It is important, therefore, that host communities become informed about the background of those of Arab descent, since a lack of this understanding can perpetuate hostilities towards refugees, especially to those of Arab descent.

Section 4: Refugees in Georgia

In 2016, Georgia ranked as the 8th top state in resettling refugees, with a total of 997 resettlements that year (no author listed, "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Refugees in the United States" 2017). During this past year, the most refugees came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (235 refugees), Syria (164), Burma (112), Iran (78), Bhutan (60), Afghanistan (47), Iraq, (42), El Salvador (41), and Ukraine (25), though refugees also arrived from other countries including Ethiopia, Moldova, Eritrea, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Burundi, and Sierra Leone (Peebles, 2017). It is important to note, however, that Georgia governor Nathan Deal issued an executive order in 2015 in response to that year's attacks in Paris. This executive order, though later rescinded by Deal, said Georgia would not accept Syrian refugees (Bluestein, 2016). Today, Georgia does accept refugees into the state.

In Georgia, there is a federally funded program called the Refugee Program, which is administered by the Georgia Department of Human Services. Specifically, the Refugee State Coordinator coordinates public and private resources for refugees. The program works with the private sector as well as refugee resettlement agencies. According to the website, "The primary goal of Georgia's Refugee Program is to encourage economic self-sufficiency of refugees after

they enter Georgia. This means the refugees must become self-reliant to meet their basic needs, within the shortest possible period" (no author listed, "Refugee Program").

Perhaps in some ways, the situation in the US may be improving for refugees of Arab descent, as seen in some places in Georgia. For example, refugees may find it easier to acculturate today than in previous years as food, media, schools, and service agencies have developed a more global outlook across the US (Steven Gold in Sonnert and Holton 2010, pp. 87-88). Specifically, Clarkston, a small Atlanta suburb with a population of 13,000, has been one of the top receivers of refugees in the state, receiving more than 40,000 refugees in the past 25 years. Self-titled as the "Ellis Island of the South," it has a large immigrant and refugee population, with shops and restaurants reflecting the mix and diversity of cultures. The town also draws in those who come to specifically work and live with refugees. Many refugees have moved to Clarkston due to its affordable apartment complexes and easy access to transportation (as it is near the interstate) in relation to employment opportunities, such as factories. Many refugees, however, view Clarkston as a starting point, meaning that their goal is to move to a different city once they have resettled (Long 2017).

Though there are large numbers of refugees and immigrants in Georgia, non US-born inhabitants in Georgia still face many challenges. For example, the regional Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office in the greater Atlanta area has seen almost 80 percent more arrests in the first half of 2017 than it did in the first half of 2016, which is the largest increase of any ICE office in the US (Yee 2017).

Section 4, Subsection A: Services Provided to Refugees in Georgia

In the US, the federal government provides funding to refugee resettlement agencies in order to help with refugee resettlement such as with the provision of food, housing, language

instruction, and an education of the local culture (Cannedy 2011, p. 30). Once a refugee has been cleared to come to the US, the refugee's files are sent to resettlement agencies. In Georgia, this could be organizations such as New American Pathways or Catholic Charities Atlanta. These agencies decide whether they will accept or deny the case, though most cases are accepted. It could take many weeks or even years before the agency is actually able to work with the refugee, however, due to the lengthy screening process. The resettlement agency within Georgia then helps the refugee with basic skills and needs such as learning about Social Security, using the transportation system, gaining employment, learning about American culture, and acquiring English. Agencies operate on a rigorous timeline for refugees to complete these steps. For example, New American Pathways seeks to have refugees self-sufficient within six months (Shaer 2016). Georgia's model in terms of provision of aid to refugees is a public/private partnership (PPP) model, in which the state enters into a partnership with local resettlement agencies to deliver aid. This is opposition to a model under which some other states (such as California and Florida) operate, which are publicly-administered programs (Mamgain and Collins, p. 11).

In terms of public assistance, the services that refugees receive are managed by the Department of Family and Child Services (DFCS). Refugees receive food stamps as part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and are given credit for this once a month. Finally, they can receive cash assistance either through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA). TANF is provided for single-parent households with at least one child under 18, while everyone else receives RCA. This cash credit is deposited once a month. TANF can be received for a total of five years, while RCA is for up to eight months. The amount of financial assistance refugees receive is based on their monthly

income and family size. Finally, refugees who qualify to receive cash assistance are medically insured under Medicaid for their first eight months (World Relief, n.d.).

Georgia's Refugee Program includes various services (which are provided by the refugee resettlement agencies, namely: New American Pathways, Catholic Charities Atlanta, Lutheran Services of Georgia, World Relief Atlanta, and the International Rescue Committee) as seen in Table 1:

Table 1: Refugee services offered and provided by the state of Georgia (Source: no author listed, "Refugee Program")

Service Provided	**Service Description**
Immigration services	To help refugees to become self-sufficient through the lawful permanent resident application preparation and orientation, the naturalization and citizenship application instruction, and the civics classes
Domestic Violence Prevention Services	Includes the Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP) for those who commit domestic violence, women's support groups for those whose partners are in the FVIP as well as women and children who need help, community education sessions for both refugees as well as refugee support services, and media outreach
Employability Services	For refugees who have lived in the US for fewer than five years and includes a needs assessment, work plan development and management, job orientation and placement, follow-ups, integration and emotional counseling, on-the-job training, and vocational training
English Language Instruction	For refugees who have lived in the US for fewer than five years and includes English language evaluation and assessment, instruction plan development, instruction, childcare, and transportation
Information and Referral Services	For refugees who have lived in the US for over five years and is in order to help refugees access various programs and services such as Medicaid, low-income housing, and Food

	Stamps and includes assessment and appropriate referral to services as well as assistance with completing forms
Parent/School Involvement Services	Includes orientation for parents on the school system's policies, assistance for school staff, and assistance to parents when they visit schools for their children
Refugee Youth Programs	For youth who have lived in the US for fewer than 5 years, is administered by the International Rescue Committee and Refugee Family Services, and includes after-school programs, summer programs, and gang-prevention programs
Social Adjustment Services	For refugees who have lived in the US for fewer than five years, is administered by the DeKalb Board of Health, International Rescue Committee, and Lutheran Services of Georgia, is targeted for acculturation and self-reliance, and includes a needs assessment, work plan development and management, integration and emotional counseling, home management, emergency/crisis intervention, and health and mental health service

As seen from Table 1, the federal government funds various programs in Georgia that are delivered by the five refugee resettlement agencies. The programs range from youth programs to English language instruction. In theory, these cover a broad range of necessary topics for refugees. I will analyze whether the refugee resettlement agencies are actually able to effectively deliver these services and whether they are adequate for refugee acculturation.

According to Georgia's Office of Refugee Resettlement webpage, the state's main voluntary agency affiliates in the state are the International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Services of Georgia, Refugee Resettlement & Immigration Services of Atlanta, World Relief Atlanta, Migration and Refugee Services, and Catholic Social Services. It also lists the Somali American Community Center in the category of "Ethnic Community Self-Help" (no author listed, "State of Georgia – Programs and Services by Locality"). It is worth noting, however, that

some of the main links on this website (which is supposed to be a resource for refugees in Georgia) have not been updated in the last few years and some of the main web links do not work on the pages itself, which may pose a barrier for refugees who are seeking help or would like additional information regarding what resources are available to them.

Clarkston can be viewed as a success story in the acculturation of refugees and has had positive results regarding the services provided as well as the role of the host community. One major refugee support service in Clarkston is Friends of Refugees, which helps to provide services to refugees as well as aids with their adjustment (Long 2017). A coffee shop called Refuge Coffee in Clarkston provides jobs, English classes, and skill training for the community's refugees (White 2017). Clarkston's mayor, Ted Terry, said that 89 percent of recent refugee families in the town are self-sufficient. In fact, the town has among the highest resettlement rates in the US, while boasting low crime and unemployment rates. Terry said that delegations from towns in Croatia and Germany have visited Clarkston to better understand its work with refugees (Shaer 2017). Other services, such as Catholic Charities Atlanta, New American Pathways, and Refugee Women's Network have also been influential in the state of Georgia itself (Shaer 2016). In this research, I have interviewed various refugee support services which work both in Clarkston and in the greater Atlanta area in order to understand why Clarkston has been such a success.

Section 5: Factors affecting Acculturation

Section 5, Subsection A: Why Refugee Acculturation is Important

Refugees face various difficulties as they adjust to their host country including learning a new language, setting up their home, understanding a different culture, becoming familiar with

unusual forms of food, understanding a new transportation system, communicating with other people of a dissimilar cultural background and with a different language, becoming economically self-sufficient, and dealing with potential mental-health issues (Ives and Sinha 2010, p. 210). Though a long and difficult process, the end goal of this resettlement in the US (as determined by the US Department of State) is refugee self-sufficiency (Eby et al. 2011, p. 592).

Though some refugees, before they move to their host country, are given short courses in order to better understand the culture of their host country, acculturation is still neither automatic nor easy (Esses et al. 2017, p. 110). Refugees typically have three options once they have relocated: they can either choose to return to their country of origin, known as voluntary repatriation; they can try to resettle in a country that is different from their current host country, which is called resettlement; or they can choose to stay in the country where they have been granted asylum, which is termed local settlement (Keen 1986, p. 57). In many cases, the first two options are not possible (Connor 2010, p. 377, Esses et al. 2017, p. 79). This is because typically refugees are only able to repatriate after a political change in their country of origin instead of an increase in the provision of rights (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. x). For example, in 2015, only about 201,400 refugees out of the millions of refugees worldwide were able to repatriate (Esses et al. 2017, p. 80). As a result, it is important that refugees are given the opportunity to acculturate within their host community. Though refugees may not want to acculturate, many inevitably do, and over time lessen their ties to their country of origin. Thus, though the connectedness may remain, it does so only symbolically (Roger Waldinger in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 254).

The outcomes of acculturation can be beneficial for both the host community as well as the country of origin. For example, refugees who successfully acculturate may be able to send

aid or money back to their country of origin to help support family and friends there as well as help to rebuild the country's infrastructure itself (Esses et al. 2017, p. 103). Further, they help to grow and expand the local and national economy of the host country (Kallick and Mathema 2016, pp. 2-4)

Since 1975, over 2 million refugees have been resettled in the US (Robert Carey and Jane Kim in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 192). The acculturation process, however, can be difficult. "Refugees, on average, have less English language ability, less educational experience, different forms of family support, poorer mental and physical health, and generally reside in more disadvantaged neighborhoods than other immigrants" (Connor 2010, p. 377). It is important, therefore, to take a closer look at these various factors that affect acculturation, such as housing, health, and faith-based organizations (Silka 2017), and the difficulties that refugees may face regarding each factor (Celano and Tyler 1991, p. 373).

Section 5, Subsection B: Housing Location and Transportation

An integral factor in the acculturation of refugees is their access to quality housing and transportation. According to Cheung and Phillimore (2017), low-quality housing has issues including overcrowding, sparse furnishing, and poor heating. It is also important that housing is stable, which means that refugees should not have to move twice or more in six months. Location is vital as well, as it should not be far from work and social opportunities. For example, women are adversely affected if housing is far from child services (Gerard 2014, p. 194-195).

Typically, refugee groups are concentrated in certain cities and neighborhoods, frequently living in poorer neighborhoods with higher immigrant populations, even when compared to other immigrant groups (Connor 2010, p. 383). This is critical as better neighborhoods typically have better public schools (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 19), which means that

refugees may not have the same access to high quality services, which affects the long-term success of refugees. These areas can also have higher unemployment and violence levels (Carlos Suarez-Orozco and Francisco Gaytan in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 156). Furthermore, real estate in major cities has become quite expensive, making it increasingly difficult for refugees to find affordable housing near the opportunities one would find in an urban area (Steven Gold in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 79). It does appear, however, that increasing numbers of refugees are starting to settle in areas where higher-quality social services and jobs are becoming more available (Steven Gold in Sonnert and Holton 2010, pp. 87-88). Perhaps, social services are increasingly better located in areas proximate to affordable housing for refugees.

Section 5, Subsection C: Labor Opportunities

Another factor that affects acculturation is the participation of refugees in the labor market in the host country. This is essential, as being able to work can truly aid refugees in the acculturation process (Esses et al. 2017, p. 97). Not only do refugees face downward occupational mobility (Mamgain and Collins 2003, p. 121), many also struggle with entering the labor market as they do not have a great deal of time or resources to acquire US-specific skills prior to their entry (Chang 2017, p. 119; Lee et al. 2015, p. 339). As a result, there is a "brain-waste" among refugees, in which a large human capital potential is not utilized because of language barriers, educational limitations, and discrimination (Hugo 2014, p. 40). Even though refugee participation in the US was found to be higher than or equal to that of US natives, refugees still had a lower income than that of US natives (Capps and Newland 2015, p. 21). This is probably again due to a language barrier (Chang 2017, p. 119).

According to a study by Bakker, Linda et al. (2017) that looked at the labor conditions of refugees in the Netherlands, there is a 'refugee gap' in their career when compared with other

migrants. This is because refugees frequently arrive in their host country with less preparation, may have faced trauma, and are dealing with the residency application process, which means they have a disadvantage in the labor market. The study did, however, find that over a 15-year period, the gap does decrease for certain refugee groups as they catch up with other migrants (Bratsberg et al. 2014, p. 384; Smith 2008, p. 219).

Over time, therefore, it does appear that refugees do, in a sense, catch up to other types of migrants. Cortes (2004) found that though refugees earn less than economic migrants when they first arrive in the US, they do over time start to earn more than economic migrants. This is largely due to their having a greater incentive to do well in their host country (Cortez 2004, p. 465). As a result, refugees tend to economically assimilate over time (Hugo 2014, p. 49; Connor 2010, p. 392). Furthermore, because refugees face difficulties in the workforce, many respond by creating their own small businesses (Clark Claus Abt in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 63).

The background of refugees (including education, gender roles, and religion, all of which can be loosely correlated to national origin) is another factor that attributes to in their economic gap. The same study by Bakker, Linda et al. found that Iranian refugees are more likely to be employed, which may be due to their higher average educational level. Female refugees from Somalia, Afghanistan, and Iraq were the least likely to be employed, which may be because of different cultural views on female work outside of the home. Thus, the refugee's country of origin and background are factors that can determine labor opportunities and wages (Bratsberg et al. 2014, p. 384; Smith 2008, p. 219). Accordingly, previous research seems to indicate that a refugee's country of origin and with this, certain cultural norms and background, can have a central role in the acculturation of refugees. It is important, therefore, to analyze whether specific

cultural attention is given to refugees of Arab descent as they may face unique issues or come with a certain background or cultural beliefs.

In addition to cultural background, immigrants from high-income countries are more able to economically assimilate and receive higher wages than those from low-income countries (Bratsberg et al. 2014, p. 384). Thus, refugees from higher socioeconomic backgrounds have a more positive occupational outcome (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 45-46). The study also found that age is a factor affecting employment, as those who arrived in the host country as adolescents are more likely to achieve a proficiency of the host country language, and are, therefore, more likely to be employed. An additional predictor of unemployment according to a study conducted in Portland, Maine by Mamgain and Collins (2003) is English proficiency. In fact, one's proficiency in English predicts higher wages even more than one's length of time in the US. Finally, the study found that the number of available local jobs is an important predictor (Mamgain and Collins 2003, p. 113).

Section 5, Subsection D: Education and English Language Acquisition

Education is an important source of the economic gap that refugees face in their host country. Various studies indicate that refugees have low levels of education. In fact, on average, refugees have about half as much education in the US when compared to that of other immigrants (Connor 2010, p. 382; Robert Carey and Jane Kim in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 195-196). Yet many schools, specifically public schools, do not have the curricula and staff-to-student ratios to help refugee students, especially those that are performing below their grade level (Robert Carey and Jane Kim in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 194).

In terms of academic adjustment for refugee youth, it is important that within schools, diverse personnel actively develop and promote multicultural lessons and activities (Nwosu and

Barnes 2014, p. 434). This is because refugees come from a variety of backgrounds, which can greatly influence their learning styles and classroom behavior, which in turn affects how they are treated by classmates and teachers as well as their social integration in general (Rivera et al. 2016, p. 323). Teachers should help with the communications between the school and parents (Goh 2007, p. 5) and can have a role in helping parents to become involved in school activities (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2010). Furthermore, after-school programs and additional tutoring can help students stay on track academically (Carlos Suarez-Orozco and Francisco Gaytan in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 163). These roles are extremely important, as a strong American education system can play a large role in helping refugees to successfully acculturate (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 41).

Finally, a low proficiency in English is a major barrier for the social and physical acculturation of refugees (Lee et al. 2015, p. 339; Rivera et al. 2016, p. 323). Learning the language of the host country can be extremely beneficial to helping one adjust to a new society (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 43; Esses et al. 2017, p. 97). Further, fluency in English is the strongest predictor of academic performance (Carlos Suarez-Orozco and Francisco Gaytan in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 161).

Section 5, Subsection E: Social Network and the Host Community's Perception of Refugees

Though advances in technology have made it easier for people to keep in contact with those in their country of origin (Roger Waldinger in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 256), many refugees still struggle with staying in touch with friends and family. This can be especially difficult as refugees frequently continue to relate to their country of origin, both culturally and politically (Frykman 2001, p. 12)**.** As a result, building a new social network in their host country is vital (Cheung and Phillimore 2017; Rivera et al. 2016, p. 320; Ellis et al. 2010, p. 564; Stewart

et al. 2008, p. 126). Acculturation within the community is key for refugee resettlement as these networks can help refugees gain better information about accessing health and social services in their community (Lee et al. 2015, p. 333). This enhances their quality of life as it better allows them to utilize resources and networks within the community (Behnia 2003, p. 15; Mitschke et al. 2011, p. 500). Thus, acculturation within the community includes: physical integration, which means that refugees are able to use community resources and participate in the community; social integration, which means that refugees are interacting with members of the community; and psychological integration in which refugees feel as though they belong in their host community (Lee et al. 2015, p. 333). These can all be crucial to help refugees do well in their host communities (Arnetz et al. 2013, p. 7). Yet the building of these relationships can be quite difficult if refugees are forced to move from one country to another or even from one neighborhood or community to another (Rivera et al. 2016, p. 323).

In order for refugees to gain these benefits from the social network they receive from their host community, it is important that the perceptions from the host country of refugees be positive (van Heelsum 2017, p. 2137; Smith 2008, p. 223; Philip Kasinitz in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 101). Specifically, a host community that is well-organized to receive refugees is extremely helpful (Philip Kasinitz in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 106) as this can help to either provide refugees with the necessary resources to acculturate or point to sources of these resources. This can also help to build a better understanding within the host community of the culture of the refugee. In fact, refugees are more likely to be able to acculturate if they perceive that their host community values their own culture. Yet if they feel that the host community is displaying hostility towards them, refugees will be less likely to initiate contact with members of the host community (Esses et al. 2017, pp. 95-96).

A barrier to the building of this positive relationship between the refugee and his/her host community can be the 'us' versus 'them' mentality. According to Lamont and Duvoux (2014), who interviewed upper-middle-class men in France and the US, respondents automatically characterized people as either "worthy" or "unworthy", resulting in the 'us' versus 'them' differentiation (Lamont and Duvoux 2014, p. 16). Getrich (2008) similarly found that many people in the US drew a 'them' boundary regarding Mexican youth (Getrich 2008, p. 540). In terms of refugees, negative attitudes can arise because refugee influxes can alter the ethnic balance within a country, which can result in negative reactions from local populations as well as amplify nativist responses (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006, p. 343). Voyer (2013) found that in Maine, many viewed Somali residents as a "social problem" before finally accepting them as a part of "life as usual". In other words, it was only after some time that residents began to embrace diversity (Voyer 2013, p. 54). Thus, this viewing of refugees as outsiders can be a real barrier to the development of a positive relationship between the refugee and the host community.

Finally, the existence of other refugee groups from the same background can be imperative in the acculturation process. For example, the high success rates of Asian immigrants in the US can be because of the strong social networks in various Asian communities, which allow a newcomer to learn how different systems (such as health and education systems) work in the country (Nancy Foner in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 16-17). This social support system, then, can be decisive to the success of new arrivals in the US. Certainly, immigrants of the same community can also be helpful in providing this type of support.

Some groups, however, could be wary about an influx of refugees from the same background. For example, some Arab immigrants living in Michigan who were interviewed said

that they were not too thrilled about the incoming large numbers of Syrian refugees because they were worried that it would increase suspicion of themselves as Arabs (Siemaszko and Radford 2015). In other words, minority groups could feel as though increased foreigners of the same background further decreases their influence in society (Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006, p. 343). It is critical, therefore, that the host community, and particularly those from similar backgrounds as the refugees, are welcoming and knowledgeable about the benefit of refugees in their society.

Section 5, Subsection F: Mental Health, Dealing with Trauma, and Physical Health

Another central aspect of acculturation is both mental and physical health, especially as refugee health is closely tied to social integration (Berkman et al., p. 843). A large number of refugees experience physical and mental trauma, which can impede acculturation, especially economic acculturation within their host communities (Connor 2010, p. 378; Haldane and Nickerson 2016, p. 457; Nazzal et al. 2014, p. 477; Behnia 2003, p. 6; Sijbrandij et al. 2017, p. 1). In fact, when compared to other migrants as well as the host population, refugees have significantly higher rates of both mental health and psychiatric problems (Esses et al. 2017, p. 98). Not only does health encompass mental health, but also physical health, which includes affordable access to medical facilities and medicine, protection from disease and infection, and the knowledge about how to stay healthy (van Heelsum 2017, p. 2138). Mental health is affected by age, gender, and education (Esses et al. 2017, p. 99-100), which can have an impact on the issues that refugees face. Refugee youth, specifically, can suffer from feelings of social isolation and have difficulty dealing with discrimination and/or racism if present in their host community (Robert Carey and Jane Kim in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 196). This is a fundamental area for refugee support services to understand as it can better help these services to design effective programs so that refugees can have a smoother resettlement process (Esses et al. 2017, p. 97).

As many refugee families can be separated during their move to a host country, refugees can face depression due to this separation (Connor 2010, p. 382-383). It is only after this mourning period that the refugee can experience full biculturalism (Volkan 2017, p. 5). Yet it can be extremely difficult to get to this stage, as some refugees become so occupied with this grief that they find it very difficult to find new ways of living in their host country (Volkan 2017, p. 28).

In addition to pre-migration trauma and migration stress, Saechao et al. (2016) identified a plethora of other post-migration stressors that can impact refugees' adjustment to life in the US including economic difficulties, the process of acculturation, and employment, which can further increase the risk of mental illness as well as make preexisting conditions even worse (Nazzal et al. 2014, p. 478). Further, refugees face complications that arise due to cultural differences between home and host countries, frequently resulting in refugees having to face varying levels of discrimination. Overall, post-migration stressors may further increase vulnerability to mental illness and exacerbate existing symptoms (Ellis et al. 2010, p. 564).

Section 5, Subsection G: Legal rights

It is vital that refugees have agency, as this allows them to make choices in their various fields in life. As such, it is important that refugees have access to a fair justice system, in which they are able to have the protection of their freedoms of expression and religion (van Heelsum 2017, p. 2138). Access to these rights and being able to use them in practice increases the security and welfare of refugees (Gaim Kibreab in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 116). Lacking a legal status, therefore, can result in refugees feeling passive and powerless (Samira Trad and Michael Kagan in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 175). Furthermore, a lack of rights can redirect responsibility from the host government to the UNHCR and the NGO sector, who may not be

able to implement these rights in-practice effectively (Samira Trad and Michael Kagan in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 159). Certainly, effective access by refugees to the justice system can be quite difficult, as there are issues of who undertakes the procedure as well as the problems with refugees potentially not having an understanding of the legal system in the host society, which is crucial for one to properly respond to a violation of one's rights (Katarzyna Grabska in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 86).

Refugee law and international human rights law are closely related. There are a few rights worth noting. Of course, the extent to which these rights are protected depends on the host country itself. The first is that of non-refoulement (discussed previously), which is protected by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Furthermore, Article 3 of the Convention against Torture and Article 22(8) of the American Convention on Human Rights lists non-refoulement as a human right. The exception to this is if the refugee is seen to be a threat to the host country. The second is freedom of movement, both to leave one's country of origin as well as within one's host country. Article 26 of the 1951 Convention says that countries must allow refugees to decide where they want to live as well as have the ability to move within the countries, while Article 28 says that countries must provide refugees with travel documents that allow them to travel outside of the country. Finally, the third are the rights to liberty, personal security, and family life (as some states grant asylum protect to one's dependent relatives). The 1951 Convention protects rights such as the rights to education, access to justice, property, and employment (no author listed, "Asylum & the Rights of Refugees" 2017).

In the US, refugees have the rights to apply for work authorization, to potentially be with one's family (though one's application can be denied), to reenter into the US (with restrictions), to apply for permanent residency after one year of being admitted to the US, and to receive

benefits such as cash, medical, and food aid. As foreign nationals, refugees have equal protection under the law in the US, though as with all foreign nationals, they are a "suspect" class and may receive scrutiny. They also have the right to bring claims in US courts and can join the US Armed Forces, but do not have the right to vote, hold public office, or serve on a jury (no author listed, "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: Refugees in the United States" 2017).

Section 5, Subsection H: Gender

Female refugees typically face unique challenges in their host country and in the acculturation process. For example, women are often the ones who are responsible to reconstruct life domestically in their host community. Yet they are tasked to do so as they face new social and cultural norms (Koyama 2015, pp. 258-259). As a result, this impacts the experiences of female refugees in their host country economically, socially, and legally (Gerard 2014, p. xiv). Furthermore, there are significant differences between female and male refugees with regard to language skills, health, budgeting for household expenses, access to social networks, and access to good housing, as males in general fair better with these categories (Cheung and Phillimore 2017). In addition, many females experience gender-based violence during their trip to their host country, especially by border patrol agents, which can have further negative effects on physical and mental health (Gerard 2014, p. 62). Finally, female refugees face higher levels of PTSD, depression, and anxiety than men (Haldane and Nickerson 2016, p. 457).

According to a study by Koyama (2015), which looked at the effect of gender on female refugees from Sub-Saharan Africa, Bhutan, and Burma entering the paid workforce in New York, even those who did participate faced various barriers due to limited English language skills, a lack of a formal education, the initial shortage of social connections, gender roles

dictated by one's host country culture, and stereotypes about females (Koyama 2015, p. 258). Another study by Gerard (2014) on refugees in Malta found that female refugees faced poor healthcare quality, meager legal aid, and gender discrimination in employment (Gerard 2014, p. 192). Koyama, however, found that an increased investment in education programs, better workforce training, and programs to educate the host community about refugees could help female refugees both economically and socially integrate (Koyama 2015, p. 258). This points to a need of programs targeted specifically to female refugees.

Section 5, Subsection I: Religion and Faith-Based Organizations

One of the factors that can help with refugee acculturation involves religious identity as well as the involvement of religious groups or institutions with regard to refugee needs in the host country. As previously discussed, refugees frequently experience posttraumatic reactions in their host country due to their experiences within their country of origin that caused them to have to seek refuge in another country. Further, countless difficulties arise in settling into and acculturating to their host country (Orosa et al. 2011, p. 1). Religious communities, therefore, can help refugees understand these experiences (1, p. 5), create new meanings in their host country, and provide refugees with social networks (Hostmann and Jung, p. 1). In other words, religious communities and religious support can "provide a sanctuary and space of relief for vulnerable people, to be a 'compass and itinerary' in the words of Thomas Tweed, and to be a lens for understanding the kinetics of homemaking in often hostile environments" (Hostmann and Jung, p. 1). As a result, diaspora communities frequently form religious communities (termed by Janet Hoskin (2011) "diasporic religion") and sites for worship, both as a symbolic and everyday practice in order to preserve connections with their country and culture of origin (Horstmann and Jung 2015, p. 7).

In addition to the religious communities that refugees themselves may form, already-existing religious institutions and communities in the host country frequently have systems in place to provide social services to refugee and immigrant communities (Ives and Sinha 2010; Eby et al. 2011; Hostmann and Jung). In fact, faith communities in the US have a long history of assisting refugees and promoting refugee resettlement. Even before the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, churches and synagogues were involved in aiding refugees entering the US (Eby et al. 2011, p. 589). Faith-based organizations such as Church World Service, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, World Relief, and Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society have been paramount in this aid provision. As such, faith organizations resettle around 70 percent of all refugees who arrive in the US (Eby et al. 2011, p. 586). Specifically, they can provide social networks for refugees both within the religious community as well as within the broader community (Ives and Sinha 2010, p. 213; Eby et al. 2011, p. 586). Religious communities can be successful in these endeavors due to their typically well-established local networks, long-term involvement in the community, strong service-oriented goals (Eby et al. 2011, p. 587), and because they are frequently the first community site to which refugees turn (Hostrmann and Jung, p. 1).

It is certainly worth noting that some religious groups face criticism for the provision of this aid. For example, refugees could self-convert or be proselytized simply to receive aid from the religious group in "disaster evangelism" (Horstmann and Jung 2015, pp. 8-11). This would violate Principle 3 of the Red Cross Code of Conduct which states that, "aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint" (Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh in Horstmann and Jung 2015, pp. 157-158). Furthermore, the association with religious groups could result in diasporic collectivity as opposed to acculturation, as refugees who share the same religion could

intentionally resist acculturation in order to maintain the group's collective identity (Then-Huong Ninh in Horstmann and Jung 2015, p. 258).

Section 6: Role of Refugee Support Services

Section 6, Subsection A: Overview of the Role of Refugee Support Services

A range of non-governmental agencies aid refugees. At one end are the large international organizations such as Oxfam and *Medicins sans Frontiers*, which work globally to provide various forms of relief and development aid. On the other end, are the smaller and local agencies that only focus on the implementation of one or a few projects (Keen 1986, p. 22). The government, the nonprofit and academic sectors, and for-profit companies are vital for their work on migration issues (Annie Wilson in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 226). In fact, NGOs and organizations dealing with refugee resettlement are often the first American institutions that the refugees encounter (Nawyn 2010, p. 149).

Governments can also have a powerful role in aiding refugees as they can help communities to develop positive outlooks regarding refugees as well as understand the importance of refugee resettlement (Esses et al. 2017, p. 107). The US Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement works on providing refugees with benefits and services, such as medical aid, job placement, and skills development (Robert Carey and Jane Kim in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 192). As discussed previously, in terms of federal aid in the US, refugees can get cash assistance from the RCA program, the TANF program, or the Matching Grant program. They can also receive assistance from Food Stamps and Medicaid (Farrell et al. 2008, p. 9).

Broadly speaking, resettlement agencies focus on protecting the legal, physical, and security needs of refugees and integrating refugees into their host community (Annie Wilson in

Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 229). Resettlement services contracted by the federal government focus on delivering basic needs to refugees as well as working to help households to become economically self-sufficient (Shaw 2014, p. 285; Nawyn 2010, p. 151).

Nonprofits have been lauded for much of their positive work, especially because they are able to provide direct services. They view issues holistically, have worked with and developed relationships with local communities for many years, are able to actively recruit volunteers, and frequently have a strong mission (Annie Wilson in Sonnert and Holton 2010, pp. 226-227). Specifically, some refugee support service workers were actually refugees themselves, who can be extremely beneficial in helping other refugees to acculturate, serving in various roles such as caseworkers, interpreters, helping in the resettlement process, and helping refugees to navigate cultural differences (Shaw 2014, p. 295). Finally, organizations can help to empower refugees to celebrate their culture and beliefs as well as educate the surrounding community about these practices (Nawyn 2010, p. 164).

Section 6, Subsection B: Criticisms of services

Most of the work in helping refugees to acculturate is done by social workers in local refugee service centers as well as mainstream social workers working in a range of sectors including schools and hospitals. Many of these workers, however, do not have specialized training and may not understand the complexity of the issues that the refugees may be facing (Healy 2004, p. 55). Of course, refugees cannot acculturate with just the assistance of refugee support services. They also depend upon the help and attitude of the host community as well as their own strength and self-determination (Keen1986, p. 22). Thus, the acculturation process is both personal and subjective, which cannot happen fully within the framework of solely a resettlement agency. Additionally, although in principle most refugees have various legal

protections and rights, including the right to employment, education, and movement, these rights are often neglected and the major issue for refugees is actually gaining access to the system itself (Adelman and Barkan 2011, p. 65).

Overall, limited research has been conducted into the efficacy of refugee support services and the areas in which gaps may exist. On a more general level, it can be difficult to support the needs of such diverse refugee groups. As a result, better planning is needed (Robert Carey and Jane Kim in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 193). Structurally, some refugee support services may have some other issues. For example, those who may need aid the most may not actually be the ones who are receiving the majority of it. This is because those who are able to seek out such aid may also be those who would have done well regardless (Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 5). Additionally, as stated above, most refugee policies have a needs-based approach as opposed to a rights-based approach (Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 12). As a result, various humanitarian agencies have been criticized for viewing and depicting refugees as weak agents (Samira Trad and Michael Kagan in Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 166) and a lot of services and policies have a top-down approach, in which displaced people are not able to create or implement policy (Mehta and Grabska 2008, p. 17-19). Finally, services provided may not distinguish between the extremely varied background of the refugees themselves. For example, for some refugees, their initial orientation at the refugee support service may be that person's first encounter with the US, while others may have been able to have access to a pre-orientation. As a result, the level of understanding of US policy and culture can vary from person to person. Others have different levels of education, job training, or cultural backgrounds or even arrive with different experiences that may increase their chance of mental health issues (Cannedy 2011, pp. 31-34). Accordingly, it is crucial that refugee support services tailor their assistance for refugees

depending on their specific backgrounds and needs. For example, refugees of Arab descent may need certain language training (such as one that is tailored to those whose native language is Arabic), religious resources, or cultural orientations that might differ from refugees of another descent. Social workers, therefore, need to have a better understanding of the various cultures and unique experiences of refugees (Drachman 1992, p. 68).

At a more case-by-case level, various issues can be found with refugee support services. A major issue of concern is the immediate provision of basic needs to refugees. Many refugees in the US do not have sufficient access to food, clothing, safe housing, and employment (Mitschke et al. 2011, p. 500). Furthermore, it can be difficult to ensure that the local community supports refugee entry or aids refugees in the acculturation process. Specifically, a mentorship program with the involvement of those from the local community can help people to adjust culturally (Carlos Suarez-Orozco and Francisco Gaytan in Sonnert and Holton 2010, p. 164).

Successful acculturation is based on the effective provision of mental health services, however, there do appear to be issues with the services provided. Refugees frequently are not able to access these services due to limited knowledge of the services available, language barriers in gaining information out about such services and communicating with health service providers, and cultural differences (such as stigmas) regarding health. Furthermore, they may not realize the extent of their psychological issues or not be fully informed about the importance of mental health (Nazzal et al. 2014, p. 478; Sijbrandij et al. 2017, p. 1). Additionally, many services lack knowledge and experience to deal with various peoples' unique experiences as refugees (Gateley 2014, p. 1260) and in many places, there are not enough mental health care professionals to help refugees, resulting in large numbers of those who are left untreated, even after asking for help (Sijbrandij et al. 2017, p. 4).

Another issue may be the time pressure asserted by refugee support services on refugees to become self-sufficient (Lanphier 1983, p. 29; Smith 2008, p. 222). The US Department of State's goal is that refugees are employed within six months of arriving in the US (Mamgain and Collins 2003, p. 116; Nawyn 2010, p. 152). Accordingly, many refugee support services and resettlement agencies follow this objective as they are funded by the federal government. As many services are only provided to refugees for a limited amount of time, refugees may feel an extreme pressure to take a low-paying job immediately, while not devoting enough time to their mental health, skills recertification, or English language acquisition (Cannedy 2011, p. 33). Especially with the labor disadvantage as described above, a result of this push for early employment can mean that refugees accept discrimination in the workforce or feel frustrated if they are unable to become employed right away. This can reproduce and solidify already existing gender, ethnic, and racial hierarchies in the labor market (Nawyn 2010, p. 163). As a result, a longer time-frame may be preferable to allowing refugees to both acculturate and become economically independent.

It is also important to consider whether or not the social support service staff are able to speak the mother tongue of the refugee, as not only may many refugees not be fluent in English, others may be most comfortable or able to describe their experiences in their own language (Owen and English 2005, p. 675). On the other hand, those working with refugees who have a deep understanding of the refugee's culture and language can help to develop a sense of trust and open communication with the refugee (Owen and English 2005, p. 686). Furthermore, in line with a rights-based approach, agencies can enlist the help of previously acculturated immigrants to help in the process.

Many of these issues arise with the lack of funding across the board for refugee support

services (Cannedy 2011, p. 32). This is because refugee resettlement services only receive a small amount of funding from the federal government, meaning that they rely heavily on volunteers and donated cash or goods (Mamgain and Collins 2003, p. 116). Furthermore, with shrinking available funds, organizations are able to offer even fewer services (Nawyn 2010, p. 152).

Refugee resettlement services have various factors and limitations that may decrease their efficiency. This is not to say, however, that the work they currently do is not extremely beneficial. I seek, therefore, to investigate what specific factors refugee services effectively provide and what services may be beneficial, but are lacking. Furthermore, I examine whether culturally-specific services are provided to refugees of Arab descent, and why such services may be valuable.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS

This paper uses a grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss, p. 249), relying on both a literature review as well as interview data in order to provide a deep understanding of the role of refugee support services in the acculturation of refugees in Georgia. The literature review focused on migration in the US and acculturation theory. This provides an understanding of the prior research that has been conducted with regard to the history and current political state of refugees and immigrants in the US, the factors that may facilitate migrant acculturation, and the role of refugee support services in the acculturation process. The interview data allows for a descriptive analysis of the specific services provided by refugee support services in Georgia through interviews with staff at refugee support services, government officials, a refugee, and academics in the field.

Section 1: Literature Review

For the literature review process, I began with broad searches regarding refugee integration globally in order for me to gain an overall understanding of refugees and their acculturation process. I met with a librarian at Emory University and we searched key words in different theoretical areas, including sociology, anthropology, history, and political science, to find some of the major articles on the topic of refugee acculturation. I also borrowed from the library, books concerning migration history in the US, the types of refugee services offered, and the refugee application process in the US. Once I had a deeper understanding of the history of refugees and immigration in the US as well as the theory of acculturation, I conducted more narrow searches relating to the specific factors of acculturation, the role of refugee support

services in the US, and the state of refugees in Georgia. Most of this research came from migration journals, academic papers in the field, and both government and refugee support service websites.

Section 2: In-Depth Interviews

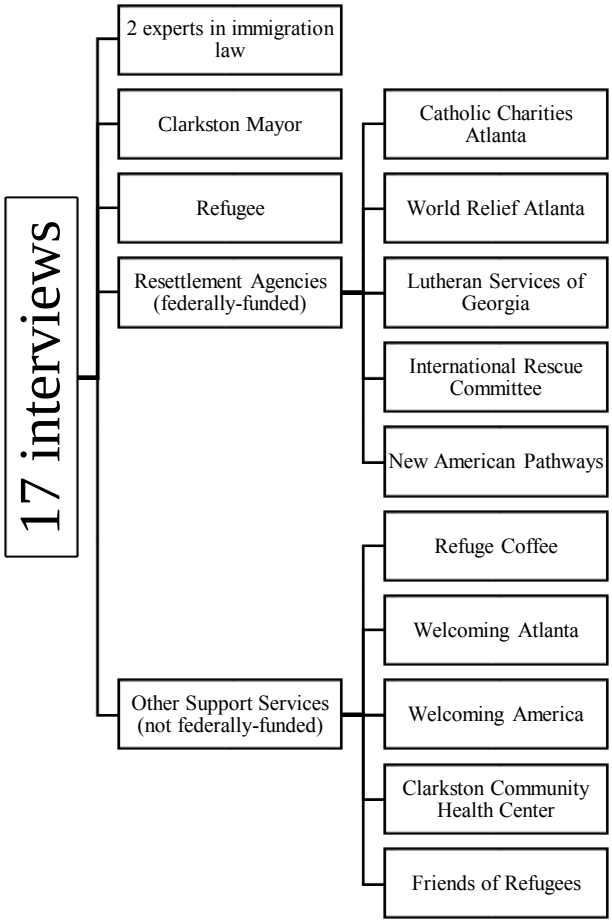
I contacted staff at the five refugee resettlement agencies in Georgia to gain a better understanding of the major refugee services provided. These five agencies are World Relief Atlanta, Catholic Charities Atlanta, the International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Services of Georgia, and New American Pathways and are the services that receive federal funding for refugee resettlement. I also contacted staff at more specialized service providers to understand what additional support services are available to refugees. These additional service providers are Welcoming America, Welcoming Atlanta, Friends of Refugees, and Clarkston Community Health Center. I either contacted each organization's staff directly (by finding their email on the service's website) or used a snowball method to find new participants through my conversations with previous participants. Individuals interviewed at each service center were asked about the specific services offered by their organization, the efficacy of these services, and the role played by these services in the refugee acculturation process.

Each interview was guided by open-ended questions, developed after a review of the literature. Respondents were encouraged to elaborate on their responses. After obtaining the respondent's permission, the interviews were recorded for transcribing later. This facilitated a more natural interaction with the respondent, while maintaining the entire text of the conversation for later analysis. Interviews were either conducted in-person (at the site of the refugee support service, in the interviewee's office, or in Refuge Coffee) or were conducted over

the phone. Most interviews lasted between forty-five minutes to an hour. For a full list of the guiding interview questions, see Appendices A-C.

In addition to speaking with staff at refugee support services, I spoke briefly with the mayor of Clarkston, Georgia to hear about the services present in Clarkston and its successes and failures regarding refugee acculturation. Clarkston serves as an important site for this research, as it has been one of the top receivers of refugees in the state (Long 2017). Furthermore, Clarkston is viewed as a success story for refugee resettlement (Shaer 2017), so it is a valuable location to study to understand what factors have allowed for its positive work regarding refugee acculturation.

I also interviewed two Emory Professors in the Emory University School of Law to gain a better understanding of state and federal laws that might affect refugees. As they are experts in immigration law, this provides my study with a legal perspective, which sheds light as to how certain laws may either help or hinder refugee acculturation. Furthermore, I talked with a refugee who demonstrates an inspiring example of refugee success and acculturation in Georgia. Finally, I visited the Clarkston Community Center to participate in a business accelerator program in which refugees could participate as well as visited Refuge Coffee, a coffee shop in Clarkston that is run by refugees and provides jobs, English classes, and skill training for the community's refugees (White 2017). Places like Clarkston Community Center and Refuge Coffee provide valuable insights as to some of the services provided in Clarkston and how they can help channel refugees towards more successful acculturation, which is more than just being economically self-sufficient, but means that the refugees can reach their full potential in their host community. A visual of the services interviewed is as follows:



The interview responses are used in several ways. I use quotes from my interviewees to provide personal accounts of the effect and role of refugee support services in the acculturation process. The interview responses are also used to indicate various barriers that might exist to refugee acculturation as well as provide potential solutions to these barriers. For the data analysis, I try to identify common themes among the responses as well as find differences between the responses through a system of coding the responses. This is done to identify some common themes and differentiators in order to help provide an understanding of some of the key questions I am trying to address in this research. I also use the literature review and propositions to see whether the interview responses build on these propositions and prior research or whether they contradict them.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Section 1: Introduction

This section provides an analysis of the interviews that I conducted. The interviews include discussions with staff at refugee resettlement agencies and refugee support services, government officials, two legal specialists, and a refugee, all in order to understand the research topic from various perspectives. I begin by providing an overall description of the basic services of the key five resettlement agencies in Georgia (these are the services that receive federal funding to resettle refugees) and then talk about the overall work of refugee support services (which includes services from organizations that are not funded by the federal government). Next, I use the interviews to examine how these services affect various aspects of acculturation, the challenges these organizations encounter, the main barriers to acculturation that refugees face, and the services that are missing. Finally, I examine the extent to which my data supports my research propositions.

The majority of the refugee support services in the state are focused in Clarkston, Georgia as this is where the majority of refugees are resettled. As part of this research, I interviewed the mayor of Clarkston, Ted Terry, in order to better understand the current climate and situation in Clarkston regarding refugees as well as the role of refugee support services in the area. He explained to me that Clarkston has a council-manager form of government, which means that the mayor and the council serve as the policy-making body, while the city manager runs the day-to-day operations of the city. He said that he thinks Clarkston has been a success story in terms of refugee resettlement because it is very small geographically (it is 1.4 square miles), is close to the city of Atlanta, and has a strong family support system. He said that he

views Clarkston as the "perfect starter city" because the refugee apartments within Clarkston are accessible and are not more than a "ten minute walk to a church, a mosque, or a Hindu-Buddhist temple, to the grocery store, to two different MARTA bus lines, to different ethnic shops and restaurants in addition to being close to other support institutions, non-profits and other serving agencies."

In this section, the term 'refugee resettlement agency' refers to any of the five resettlement agencies in Georgia that receive federal funding, 'refugee support service' refers to any of the other organizations that do not receive federal funding but still provide services to refugees, and 'client' is another term used to refer to refugees themselves. Finally, names from all of the interviewees are omitted (apart from the mayor of Clarkston) to preserve confidentiality. Overall, my results support my propositions and add to the general body of acculturation and migration literature.

Section 2: Basic Services of the Five Resettlement Agencies of Georgia

It can be extremely challenging for refugees to be forced to leave their homes and rebuild their lives in a new country. I spoke with a Syrian refugee who resettled in Georgia and is viewed by many as a hallmark of successful acculturation. He explained to me that his family left Syria in 1996 due to political oppression against the Kurds. They first fled to Germany and lived there for six years in refugee camps. They applied to move to the US and after two years of vetting, they were accepted and moved to Clarkston, Georgia just two weeks after 9/11. He was only eighteen years old at this time. Since he had school records from his time in Germany, he was able to be placed in high school when he arrived in Clarkston. His mother, however, had trouble finding a job and his father got sick, so he had to take a job as a dishwasher to support his

family, working thirty to forty hours a week after school as well as on weekends. He told me that their resettlement agency helped them obtain their necessary IDs and documentation as well as helped them with the payment of three to four months of rent. He stressed, however, that they received a great deal of support from a local church, with volunteers who helped them restart their life in the US. He said that they even helped him apply to college and find his mother a job. He told me, "It was a very powerful thing that people underestimate, knowing that you have American friends who can advocate for you when you need it… I think they were very effective because they asked us about our needs." As a result, when he graduated from high school, he went to Georgia State University in Atlanta for his undergraduate degree before attending the Morehouse School of Medicine. In 2012, he began his residency in internal medicine at the Emory School of Medicine and is now a Katz Fellow in Preventive Cardiology at Emory. His success, therefore, provides a model of how refugees can acculturate and reach their full potential as well as the importance of refugee support services in this process.

Keeping in mind this example of the overall process of successful acculturation, it is important to understand the processes and goals of the agencies and organizations that provide these services. In Georgia, there are five federally funded resettlement agencies that help refugees when they come into the state of Georgia. These five agencies are the Lutheran Services of Georgia, Catholic Charities Atlanta, World Relief Atlanta, the International Rescue Committee, and New American Pathways. All refugees that are resettled in Georgia will receive services from at least one of these agencies. I learned from my conversations with employees at three of these agencies (Catholic Charities Atlanta, Lutheran Services of Georgia, and World Relief Atlanta) that the same basic services are provided by all five agencies. This ensures that the services are consistent. As a result, all five of the resettlement agencies provide employment

services, childcare, health services, social adjustment programs, mental health aid, and intensive case management programs.

These services differ only by their location as Lutheran Services of Georgia is in downtown Atlanta, the International Rescue Committee and Catholic Charities share the same building in Tucker, Georgia, New American Pathways is down the street from them, and World Relief Atlanta is in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Overall, the services tend to be accessible by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA, which is Atlanta's public transportation system) and are close to refugee communities. More importantly, the goals of these five agencies are similar: to help refugees to acculturate within Atlanta and the US more generally. An employee at Catholic Charities told me, "My goal is that when we provide services, we teach them to be self-sufficient, and not dependent."

An employee at Catholic Charities explained that the majority of the individual or family cases taken on by these resettlement agencies have an American tie, which means that the refugee knows someone who has already been served by the agency or is in the US. He noted, however, that the process for refugees to even enter the US is extremely long, with about eight to nine months devoted solely for background checks. In fact, Mr. Terry noted that the refugee resettlement program is the most secure and highly vetted of all of immigration entries into the US.

Once refugees have been approved to enter the US, the resettlement agencies go through a bidding system for the different refugees (which is done through an analysis of the individual bios for each refugee). For example, Catholic Charities previously would not take families with over nine members, because finding housing for them in Atlanta is challenging. Additionally, if there are members of a family with certain medical issues, they are placed in other parts of the

US, where they are able to obtain better medical treatment. Mr. Terry clarified these restrictions, explaining that Georgia has a 90 % self-sufficiency rate for refugees, which is partially because Georgia is such a low welfare state. As a result, refugees who are chosen to be resettled in the state have fewer intrinsic issues that need to be addressed by the resettlement agencies, as the general services provided by the state are less generous than those offered in several other states.

Yet even with fewer serious issues compared with refugees settled in some other states, the resettlement process is no easy feat for anyone. As an employee at the International Rescue Committee told me, "I am just amazed by their ability to immediately hit the ground running, get a job, learn to navigate the healthcare system, get really good at knowing how to pick up a prescription, knowing how to schedule their own doctor's appointments, etc.… that's really big."

There is a time limit on the availability of these services. They cannot exceed five years as this is the time during which refugees can apply for citizenship. Funding from the US Department of State, however, mandates that refugees be economically self-sufficient within six months. 'Core' services (such as the provision of basic resources, cultural orientation, education, health services, and help with labor acquisition), therefore, are provided during this six-month period, after which only more limited services are provided.

Overall, the refugee support services play a crucial role in the initial transition of the refugees' resettlement in the US. Mr. Terry explained that Clarkston has a very small budget (eight million dollars), which means that they can only deliver the basic services of any normal city. He explained that "the NGOs, places like Refuge Coffee or the Career Hub at Friends of Refugees: they're providing this extra layer of support and services." The conjunction of the work of refugee resettlement agencies and refugee support services, therefore, are crucial in the refugee acculturation process.

Section 3: Refugee Support Services in Georgia

Apart from the five resettlement agencies in Georgia that receive federal funding, there also exist more niche services that provide aid to refugees and that are not federally funded. Thus, these refugee support services, in conjunction with the five resettlement agencies, constitute the bulk of the services targeted to refugee resettlement and acculturation. This section looks at the various factors of acculturation and how these areas are accounted for by the resettlement agencies as well as the smaller refugee support services. Below are the refugee support services that are not federally funded that will be discussed in this research. I first describe a sampling of these organizations and then also incorporate descriptions of the ones I visited.

- Friends of Refugees works to develop and foster relationships between refugees and the existing US-born residents as well as provides career services to refugees. In fact, Friends of Refugees is one of the only stand-alone employment centers that does not take funding from the Department of Human Services. Its funding model, therefore, is predominantly through faith-based partners and corporations.
- The Clarkston Community Health Center provides medical aid to a large number of refugees. It allows refugees who do not have insurance to obtain medical treatment. The center is primarily able to function due to the support of institutions, such as Emory University and Grady Memorial Hospital, as well as is funded through several grants and donations. The clinic is also largely run by volunteers, whether those are students who help to manage the administrative aspects of the center or medical students who are able to volunteer some hours at the center.

- Welcoming Atlanta provides programming efforts for refugee support services in order for the services to better deliver their aid. This program formed under the previous Atlanta mayor, Kasim Reed (who served as mayor from 2010 to 2018), works with corporations, non-profit, and immigrant and refugee organizations to better involve, include, and integrate immigrants and refugees into the metropolitan Atlanta area. The idea is that these specific services are able to complement the basic services provided by the other resettlement agencies.
- Welcoming America provides and creates information sessions and toolkits to help agencies form better and more creative means of aid. The program has a federal funding grant from the Office of Refugee Resettlement and delivers support to refugee resettlement agencies across the United States on issues including "maintaining leadership, in-person trainings, virtual trainings, and toolkits on issues such as helping schools being more welcoming, capacity and volunteer management, education, mental health and the community, planning, such as how to work with other centers, and communication." They have had various training programs and have created toolkits, such as for K12 educators (they made lesson plans on how to have conversations that bring students together to talk about refugees), for community engagement (they helped communities to assess where they are on engagement), and for volunteerism (they looked at how to manage increased volunteer interest). This can be important as other refugee support agencies such as Lutheran Services of Georgia have about 1000 volunteers and 12 interns, so helping them to harness the power of volunteers can have a large impact.
- Refuge Coffee is a coffee shop in Clarkston that is run by refugees on a yearly rotational program, allowing numerous refugees to gain work experience. I visited Refuge Coffee

quite a few times, not only to just informally talk to people there and sample their coffee, but also for some of my formal interviews. The first time I visited Refuge Coffee, the mayor of Clarkston was actually there, talking to University of Georgia graduate students about Clarkston and Refuge Coffee shop. I walked around the coffee shop, which sold its own concessions including goods such as shirts and coffee mugs. Outside the shop were various flyers to advertise different local services, organizations, and events, including a women's community networking event, legal clinics, book discussions at the Clarkston library, assistance for social benefits, public speaking courses, English as a Second Language (ESL) courses, an after-school program for youth, and a free citizenship clinic. Clearly, this is an environment that not only brings people from different backgrounds together, it also provides various opportunities for the refugee community to integrate and interact with local residents.

- I attended an event at the Clarkston Community Center called "Start:ME Clarkston Center Feedback Night", which is a fourteen-week business accelerator in which many refugees participate. The program includes training (in accounting, marketing, and understanding the market), mentorship (there are 25 mentors), and a seed investment grant pool. The event was hosted by the Emory Business School and Friends of Refugees as well as its partners from Georgia State, Women's Refugee Network, Refuge Coffee Company, and New American Pathways. This is a powerful program to empower refugees and since its founding in 2013 has served 110 ventures, 89 % of its graduates are still operating, has created 186 jobs, 16 brick and mortar stores, generated $5.8 million in revenue, and 51 % of its funded businesses employ others. The night I attended was week nine of the program and during this week, anyone could attend (to represent future

potential customers) to give feedback about the business presentations. It also provided the entrepreneurs the potential to network. While there, I saw a creative array of business proposals including one presented by a woman who creates custom hairnets for medical and culinary professionals, a mother and son who sell handcrafted Ethiopian art, clothing, and accessories, and a man who sells natural specialty Nepalese dog treats. This organization gives refugees the opportunity, funding, and training to be their own employer in their new home.

These various refugee support services complement the aid provided by refugee resettlement agencies. The services are able to work to hone in on the provision of specific assistance categories, providing increased support avenues for refugees to turn. With an understanding of the work provided by both refugee resettlement agencies and refugee support services, it is important to understand their overall work with regard to the various aspects to which refugees have to acculturate. For an overview understanding of the services provided, see Table 2 on the following page.

Table 2: Level of support provided by refugee resettlement agencies and refugee services. Note that refugee resettlement agencies generally provide the same services due to the mandates of their federal contract. 'X' means that services are largely provided, '/' that services are only somewhat provided, and '0' that services are not provided.

	World Relief Atlanta	**Catholic Charities Atlanta**	**International Rescue Committee**	**Lutheran Services of Georgia**	**New American Pathways**	**Friends of Refugees**	**Clarkston Community Health Center**	**Welcoming Atlanta**	**Welcoming America**
Type of service	Resettlement agency	Resettlement agency	Resettlement agency	Resettlement agency	Resettlement agency	Support service	Support service	Support service	Support service
Housing location and transportation	X	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0
Labor Opportunities	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	/	0
Education	X	X	X	X	X	0	0	/	0
English Language Acquisition	X	0 --but provided through the International Rescue Committee	X	X	X	/	0	/	0
Social Network and the Host Community's Perception of Refugees	/	/	/	/	/	0	/	X	X
Health	X	X	X	X	X	0	X	0	0
Legal Rights	/	/	/	/	/	0	0	0	0
Gender	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Cultural Understanding	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	X	0
Services to Refugees of Arab Descent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	/

Section 3, Subsection A: Housing Location and Transportation

When refugees first arrive in Georgia, one of their first stops is their new apartment. An employee at Catholic Charities explained that most of the refugees in Georgia are resettled in DeKalb county, specifically, in Clarkston. The five resettlement agencies organize clients' housing, furniture, and transportation from the airport. An employee from New American Pathways explained that when they are looking for housing, they try to find an apartment that is MARTA-accessible, safe, and affordable. Additionally, since families do not have cars, they find places from which people are able to walk to a grocery store. The agency sets up the apartment with basic furniture and food as well as a ready-to-eat meal on the family's day of arrival.

As an employee from New American Pathways explained, when they meet their clients at the airport, they bring them back to their new home to show them the apartment, how the appliances work, and how to call 911 in the case of an emergency. Some of these lessons are very important. An employee at the International Rescue Committee explained that they have had clients who could not say their address clearly to ambulances, so it has taken the ambulances a long time to get to their house, which could result in a life or death situation.

The employee at New American Pathways said that later during the first week, there is a home management orientation, in which they explain how to use appliances (such as a dishwasher) when cleaning the house, how to use a laundromat, as well as how to be a savvy shopper in the supermarket. Additionally, they help the family create a budget in order to determine how much the family needs to make in order to sustain themselves. The agencies also assist refugees with rent money for 90 days.

Services such as helping refugees navigate Atlanta's transportation system are also provided. For example, Catholic Charities provides clients with a MARTA card and helps them

memorize their address. Initially, they help their clients navigate MARTA. For example, for refugees' primary care physician, they are taken to their first and second appointments via public transportation by a staff member. They have to, however, go alone on the third time. This is done in order to encourage self-sufficiency regarding transportation.

The support agencies provide the basic necessities for housing and transportation, including training on how to use household appliances and navigate the transportation system. There may, however, be challenges regarding transportation, as MARTA can frequently take a long time to get to certain areas or does not even go to certain neighborhoods. Lack of access to adequate public transportation exists at the state level and affects all residents of Georgia, but the issues caused by this may be even more acute for refugees.

Section 3, Subsection B: Labor Opportunities

One of the main priorities is finding employment for refugees as this is one of the central focuses of the State Department's funding contract. The service programs at the resettlement agencies into which refugees are placed is frequently based on their needs. An employee at the International Rescue Committee explained that clients who arrive with families that tend to have a lot of members who can become employed are placed into the matching-grant program, which provides financial assistance for up to three to six months (which is the duration of the program). Anyone in that program has to take the first job that is offered to them, although if the job is not a good fit, they can later find a more suitable job. Another program is the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), which is typically for families in which there are only a few family members who are able work. In this program, the family receives three months of cash assistance based on the number of people in their household. A final category is Intensive Case Management (ICM), in which refugees are only enrolled after the three to six-month initial period of the provision of

core services. This program is typically for those that need additional services because they might have an issue, like a medical, labor, or financial barrier to them being able to be self-sufficient. ICM services last up to five years.

Finding employment is key because it is expected that refugees are working within 90 days. When clients are seeking employment, Catholic Charities (similar to the other resettlement agencies) helps with this based on the client's background, education, work history, available transportation, and childcare needs in order to match them with a company. They provide an employment orientation, which covers work life in the US, cultural aspects and expectations regarding employment, what to expect on the job, their rights as workers, their responsibilities, and how to look for and apply for jobs. The agencies also provide job search trainings as well as help clients build their resumes and practice interview skills. For example, an employee at New American Pathways said that they teach their clients how to sell themselves and their skills and to never say that they do not speak English yet, but instead to say something along the lines of "I speak a little [English] but I am learning." The agencies also typically have relationships with employers, which can help with the quick employment requirement. Catholic Charities, for instance, has a relationship with about 50 to 100 companies in the area to varying degrees and provides clients with transportation and interpretation at their interview and/or orientation

One important service is the follow-up with their clients and the company to see how the job is working out from both sides. This can be central in helping to ensure dialogue between the refugee and his/her company. For example, as an employee at Catholic Charities told me,

> We had Muslim refugees at a company and this was the company's first time employing refugees. During Ramadan, the company manager called because he was confused as to why they were putting their feet in the sink. Catholic Charities explained—and this was an Iraqi woman explaining—why they do it—for prayer. The manager then paid to put in spigots and basins on the outside and provided them with a place to pray. Some companies of course won't be accommodating, but a lot will if they understand what is

> happening. Catholic Charities facilitates the relationship and makes sure that it's off to a good start. We can relay the needs of the refugee to the company and vice versa.

Clients may return to the resettlement agencies during this five-year period if they lose their job or want to find a better job, perhaps as their English improves, have saved up money, or buy a car. Agencies can help with this in various ways. For example, last year Catholic Charities held a job fair during which about 20 companies took applications on the spot and around 200 refugees were in attendance.

Another more niche-service is provided by Friends of Refugee's Career Hub. I spoke with an employee of this service and she explained that they help refugees with developing and fine-tuning their resumes, provide internet to those who do not have access to it at home, have lessons on how to network and interview for jobs, and refer refugees to companies with whom they have partnerships. Furthermore, they work to determine the main barriers refugees face regarding employment with the purpose of finding ways to target these issues as well as bring in guest speakers from various trades in order for refugees to network with them. She said that every year, they are able to get at least 250 people employed. She cited part of this success to an influential board of directors as well as connections with a variety of companies. She remarked, "It gives the refugee families an opportunity to expand their professional network beyond going to Walmart or going down the street to Kroger and applying as a cold call. They actually have a connection through us to certain companies."

Both the refugee resettlement agencies and refugee support services actively work to help refugees to become employed. A challenge to this, however, may be cultural norms regarding certain forms of employment as well as limited English skills. The focus that is placed on employment reflects the importance that the State Department places on economic self-sufficiency within the six-month window.

Section 3, Subsection C: Education

Education is compulsory not only for children, but higher education can also open up opportunities for older clients. The refugee I spoke with is extremely passionate about education opportunities for refugees, saying that it is the way to advance refugees in the US because it is replicable and scalable. Recognizing the importance of education, the resettlement agencies help clients navigate the American education system. This includes helping to enroll children and youth in schools. An employee of the International Rescue Committee discussed how they have been able to enroll students into DeKalb International Center, which is particularly helpful for students with low levels of English, prior to being enrolled in the public-school system.

Beyond help with school registration, there are various programs to aid students with their school work, especially as they may struggle with adjusting to a different system and language of instruction. The refugee I spoke with emphasized how education can be a challenge, especially since the education and grading systems are so different from what many people are accustomed to. As a result, agencies have developed programs to help with this adjustment. For example, Catholic Charities has family mentors, who are volunteers that help children with school work at their own home. Additionally, the agency has an after-school program as well as will provide the parents with transportation to the school for any meetings or events.

Refugees can also face various challenges regarding higher education. The refugee I spoke with discussed how it is very difficult for refugees to go to college because it is even difficult for native-born Americans to get into college. Thus, he relied on a local church to assist him with his college application. Recognizing the importance of this help, he has assisted in the creation of a program at Georgia State University called “Mentoring Initiative for New Americans,” in which American college students are assigned to the refugees or immigrants who

aspire to go to college and help these students with the application process. He said, "If I go back, yes I was smart in taking the test, but how do you know that you need to finish the FAFSA… how do you know to make sure your files are complete? So having an advocate for you, or a trainer, helps a lot."

Refugee resettlement agencies and refugee support services help with both early education as well as higher education for refugees. There still may be, though, issues with refugees understanding some of the complicated aspects of the American education system (such as the various forms and documents required to apply to college). Increased help from native-born Americans who are familiar with this process, then, may be beneficial. Furthermore, refugees may have challenges paying for higher education, since the cost is already too expensive for many members of American society. In this case, the opportunity to receive financial aid would be beneficial.

Section 3, Subsection D: English Language Acquisition

In the US, the ability to communicate with each other, understand basic signs and mail, and interview for jobs, among other things, are typically directly related to an ability to speak English. ESL classes, therefore, are a key component of refugee support services. All English language classes are free, which can help to encourage refugees to attend these classes. Catholic Charities is the only resettlement agency that does not provide ESL services itself, but they partner with the International Rescue Committee (which is next door), which provides their clients with ESL classes. The International Rescue Committee holds various English and ESL classes, Mondays through Thursday, which are split into beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. Classes cover an array of issues including English language vocabulary, basic communication skills in the workplace, etiquette, and manners.

As an employee at Catholic Charities explained, during the first year that refugees are in the US, they apply for a green card, which does not require language skills. After five years, they are able to take the naturalization test, which is in English. As a result, the agencies encourage clients to learn English right away.

The refugee I spoke with, however, did say that the way English is taught is not optimal. He explained that from his experience, the way to advance in the US is to be able to read, as opposed to speak, yet classes focus mainly on speaking. Furthermore, he said that if English teaching is just treated as a way for people to pass a class, people will not truly learn English in practice, but will just learn how to pass a test. He said,

> I was washing dishes—there was no need for me to learn English. But my motivation was going to school, so I mastered reading. I was reading everything I could, because I realized all the tests in America—your driver's license test, your applications, your letters, your bills—everything is reading in English. So a lot of focus is placed on spoken English, but to excel in America meaningfully, I think the reading is much more powerful.

English language skills appear to be a crucial determinant of refugee success in the US, both socially and economically. Refugee support services and resettlement agencies focus on helping refugees to develop these skills, but it still may not be a priority for many refugees, especially if their time is limited between being with their family, receiving or pursuing other services, and working long hours. Furthermore, as discussed by the refugee, perhaps more of an emphasis should be placed on English reading skills.

Section 3, Subsection E: Social Network and the Host Community's Perception of Refugees

Another powerful way for refugees to acculturate is through their relationships and connections to native-born Americans in the host community. This is because native-born Americans have a deeper understanding of the various systems in the US, whether it is the health system, the labor system, or the education system, and can, therefore, provide refugees with an

insider view of these processes as well as be a friend and advocate for the refugee. There are various, although limited, programs that can help refugees to develop relationships and connections with members in their host community. For example, the family friend program at Catholic Charities allows volunteers to become a "family friend." An employee at Catholic Charities described it as, "One of the most useful ideas because it can help with all sorts of things, like recommendations, general help, homework, having a friend, and general advice." Another employee at Catholic Charities told me,

> It's good that the goal is to help refugees reach self-sufficiency. This gives them independence and dignity of providing for themselves and their family. It's important that they hold on to their identity and traditions to add to the diversity in the US, but accepting things that will help them get ahead is also important, and getting outside of their own communities—I understand why they don't. We in the US need to make them feel more welcome.

The refugee I spoke with, however, had a slightly opposing view, in that he did not believe that the burden mentioned by the employee at Catholic Charities relies so heavily on Americans. He explained,

> I don't think there's an obligation by the people who live in this country to learn the culture. Then you're adding kind of like an obligation, and when people are *obligated* to learn something, they never learn it truly…. I mean, like when the Sudanese come to Syria, do you think the Syrians are going to learn about Sudan? That's what I'm saying, we expect so much from America… The best way to learn about Muslims, as with any culture, is have them guide you. And that's the beauty about Americans—they actually listen and they are more open to this.

Perhaps, then, this effort needs to be from both Americans and refugees. Yet there needs to be concrete avenues for both sides to do so. One crucial way can be through increased organic interactions between Americans and refugees. The assistance of another refugee support service, Friends of Refugees, kicks in after the initial resettlement period ends (after the first three to six months) and helps with process. As the executive director of Friends of Refugees told me, "We like to say that refugee resettlement takes families from hard to home and we take refugees from

surviving to flourishing." They do so by harnessing the power of volunteers to befriend refugees. He described their goal to me:

> To create this durable scaffold for primarily native-born Americans, but not solely by any stretch of the imagination, to have a way to join the story of refugee families that is going to lead to our community receiving the full court of intelligence ability and ambition that refugees have… You know, our mission is refugees experiencing an abundant life in flourishing communities and our mission to get to that vision is empowering refugees through opportunities for wellbeing, education, and employment… We are trying to deliver optimally executed connectedness, so that at the end of the day, a refugee will make the kind of relationship connection that will lead ultimately to their flourishing in the long-term.

Other services have similar programs. Lutheran Services of Georgia's 'Circle of Welcome' program pairs 5-10 native-Americans with a refugee family, which allows for increased interactions between the two groups. This process includes in-depth cultural training for volunteers and according to an employee at Lutheran Services of Georgia, "results in long-term integration and helps refugees to be connected with Americans."

Mr. Terry noted that the Clarkston community in general has been more welcoming of refugees because he said that the older population who was opposed to them and had lived in Clarkston when it was majority-white have,

> Either moved or died and the ones who have stayed, for the most part I think have chosen to stay and the people who have replaced them have intentionally have moved to Clarkston because they like the international diversity… It's a glimpse at a future America, that's more diverse, skews young, more language diverse, more ethnically diverse, more religiously diverse, and yet it's not like there's wars, ethnic conflicts, and White people haven't been erased from the earth, as the White supremacists will tell you.

It appears as though refugee resettlement agencies and refugee support services do focus on increasing the interactions between United States residents and refugees. These opportunities for interaction, however, occur to a limited extent. From my interviews, it seems as though organizations are realizing the importance of these services and are starting to develop increased

programming efforts to do so, yet the State Department's stringent six-month self-sufficient requirement may be a hindrance to these efforts.

Section 3, Subsection F: Mental Health, Dealing with Trauma, and Physical Health

As an employee from Lutheran Services of Georgia explained to me, for many refugees, such as Syrian refugees, the resettlement process is traumatic, especially since the conflict from which they escaped is ongoing and they are constantly aware of its developments through the use of technology. As a result, making sure that refugees are healthy, both physically and mentally, is a priority for many refugee support services.

The resettlement agencies help refugees to find a doctor, to get to the doctor's office, schedule appointments, and get any necessary referrals. They take clients to get the proper immunizations, especially since this is required to children to attend public school.

More than just physical health, agencies also focus on promoting mental health. An employee at the International Rescue Committee explained to me that clients who are over the age of eighteen have a 'health interview' (which is termed as this as opposed to a 'mental health screening' in order to avoid stigmas regarding mental health treatment). The screening includes looking a history of trauma and torture, anxiety, depression, gender-based violence, and PTSD. Additionally, they screen to see if clients understand the concept of self-care, which includes an understanding of stress management techniques. If the screening does find a need for mental health services, the International Rescue Committee works with an organization called Positive Growth, which provides various family, group, and individual counseling services. For those who screen positive for a history of trauma or torture, the International Rescue Committee refers them to the Center for Victims of Torture, which is conveniently located off the same parking lot.

Furthermore, the Clarkston Community Health Center has been operating for five years and is one of the first systematic health centers in Clarkston. What started as a health fair on Lawrenceville Highway operating only a few times a year, over the years it has expanded from being a basic health clinic to now also running a women's clinic, a dental clinic, mental health services, and an eye clinic. I spoke with one of the founders of the clinic and he said that on a given Sunday, they see approximately 44 to 50 patients, and then numerous patients throughout the week. The Clarkston Community Health Center's policy is that their services are free for individuals who cannot afford healthcare. Importantly, their services seem to be well-liked. He told me,

> People would rather go here than somewhere else… they come here because they just find it more convenient. So, it's good to know that it's at least a place where they feel comfortable going. And that may be because it's such a diverse place and maybe part of acculturation is not to get acculturated rapidly and be able to speak in your language and get it translated without having to struggle.

Yet cultural differences can pose a barrier to American health practices. As an employee at the International Rescue Committee told me,

> It can be kind of concerning because some clients might have the idea that 'You know, I don't need a doctor to heal me, I need a shaman or like a Wiseman to heal me. I don't need medicine'. And so just trying to frame that like, 'Well you know that's good too, but maybe we should take the medicine and also go to a shaman'. So again, maintaining those expectations and really talking to clients about their cultural expectations and saying, 'Hey, I respect that this is how things are done in your country, do you trust me enough to take you through the process of how it might be done here?'

Another employee at World Relief Atlanta faced a similar problem, though this case occurred due to a spread of misinformation about a medical treatment. She explained how a leader in the Burmese community gave medical advice to a family that had just moved to Clarkston and had a common cold. The leader's recommendation was based off an action he had taken one time by accident that worked, but would not be what an American physician would recommend to a

family. In fact, he recommended that the family members drink a whole bottle of Nyquil. Fortunately, the staff at World Relief Atlanta heard about this and were able to step in to give better medical advice.

Refugees also receive medical aid from the state in terms of Medicaid, though refugees can typically only avail of this service for up to eight months, after which they cannot reapply for Medicaid until they become citizens. Unfortunately, in Georgia, Medicaid was not expanded, which has further made it difficult for refugees as they would have otherwise been eligible to receive Medicaid as low-income adults. As a result, after this eight-month period, refugees have to get private insurance either individually or through an employer, or they can work with an agency see what community options (such as Clarkston Community Health Center) might be available.

Transportation can also be a barrier for refugees in terms of health if they have to go to a specialist appointment that is far away and MARTA does not go there. In cases like this, an employee at the International Rescue Committee told me that they will drive the client to his/her appointment.

Both refugee resettlement agencies and refugee support services seem to provide medical care to refugees, especially in a culturally-sensitive manner. Even with this, however, refugees face structural barriers to receiving important medical aid if their Medicaid runs out or if their doctor's office does not provide key interpretation services.

Section 3, Subsection G: Legal Rights

Living in the US requires certain documentation. This documentation is vital as it can result in various public benefits for refugees. The resettlement agencies help refugees apply for a Social Security card, an employment authorization card, and a Georgia photo ID as well as enroll

them in other public benefits. For example, employees at World Relief Atlanta explained how their Integration Legal Services department helps clients with family reunification, green cards, and citizenship applications. The agencies also help enroll the refugees in Medicaid, food stamps, and TANF for single mothers. Assistance is offered to help refugees understand how to pay their bills, rent, and utilities. Agencies like the International Rescue Committee also offer citizenship workshops and clinics for people who want to learn about the citizenship test, how to study for it, or want to understand their responsibilities as a US citizen. Additionally, they occasionally partner with the Clarkston police department so that refugees are able to meet the police and learn about what they should do in cases such as being pulled over by the police.

With regard to legal services such as for litigation, though, these services seem to be more limited. An employee at the International Rescue Committee told me about a unique case that he had during which they did partner with an outside service. In this case, one of his clients was a family from Syria. The oldest son came to the US with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. At their apartment complex, however, there were repairs that were needed that were not being addressed by the apartment maintenance office. These issues were negatively impacting the child's health as his immune system was so weak. The International Rescue Committee eventually partnered with a pro-bono legal service in order negotiate with the apartment complex so that the family would be able to break their lease with no fees in order for them to move to an apartment that was not only within their budget, but was also more responsive to maintenance requests and, therefore, cleaner and better for the child's immune system.

Refugee resettlement agencies provide basic services in terms of helping refugees to understand their rights and American laws, but there seems to be limited services in terms of helping refugees in the case that they are involved in a lawsuit. A legal specialist I interviewed

did say that there are some volunteer lawyers as part of what is called the International Refugee Assistance Project who work with some of the refugee resettlement agencies, but that there are not nearly enough organizations which do so.

Section 3, Subsection H: Gender

Gender roles not only govern female and male relationships for native-born Americans, but can be exacerbated for refugees when they have to move to the US and shift much of their lifestyle. Females, specifically, may face many barriers. Concerning employment, Catholic Charities works to inform families about family dynamics in the US, in which many females work to help support their family or themselves, pushing for families to understand that it is the woman's choice and decision as to whether or not she wants to work. Employees of Lutheran Services of Georgia and New American Pathways emphasized the unique challenges females can face in the US because of cultural differences and different types of valued work. The employee of Lutheran Services of Georgia explained, "Maybe in their host country, the valued work [for women] was actually caring for the family. But here, they can face cultural stigmas for paid work. Or face stigmas regarding driving. So even just getting out of the apartment can be difficult." She did say, however, that they do not have specific services dedicated for women, but are working to do so.

Women can also have trouble learning English, especially since it can be difficult to leave the home if they have children. Furthermore, childcare options can be limited. For example, an employee at New American Pathways told me that there is only one program (with a very long wait), 'Mama and Me,' that provides childcare in the area they resettle. In order to accommodate this, New American Pathways has an adult education group, in which volunteers go to the woman's home to tutor her. They also have a grant funded by Coca Cola that

specifically works to empower women by helping them find a job. Furthermore, they have a medical program that focuses on pregnancy and helps the woman catch and treat any developmental issues. Friends of Refugees also has a pregnancy program for female refugees.

Females appear to face unique challenges in the acculturation process regarding employment, English language acquisition, and navigating new cultural norms. Refugee resettlement agencies and refugee support services work to combat this with programming in which volunteers can go directly to the woman's home to provide services, which is certainly beneficial for women if they are unable to go to the services themselves. Childcare services should also be increased and expanded.

Section 3, Subsection I: Cultural Understanding

A final key issue that refugees can face when moving to their host country is adapting to the host culture. All of the five resettlement agencies provide a cultural orientation for refugees when they first arrive to the US as it is required by their federal contracts to cover fifteen specific topics. A World Relief Atlanta employee said that during this orientation, a teacher will go over workplace norms, the importance of knowing one's address, how to call 9/11, health and sanitation, American laws, rules regarding education and labor, and how the agency works and the aid it provides.

As one of the Catholic Charities employees explained to me, this can be challenging because they may have to provide the orientation quite a few times as well as in various languages before some people are able to process it. To help accommodate this issue, the orientation is broken into parts as to not overwhelm their clients. The International Rescue Committee also breaks down their culture orientation into different days and during each day there is a different focus on topics such as traffic and safety, the health system in the US, and

cultural norms in the US. An employee at the International Rescue Committee also discussed how during their orientation, a member of the health and wellness team will show their clients the Oakhurst doctor's office (which is just across the street from the International Rescue Committee) and during this time, the staff member helps them make their first appointment and fills out all the necessary medical forms.

The refugee I spoke with, however, noted that to help refugees understand a culture, it requires more than just classes. He says instead, one has to actually take part in cultural aspects. He said his experiences being invited by the church to celebrate holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas allowed him to truly understand American culture.

Both refugee support services and refugee resettlement agencies have a large focus on cultural adaption and orientation. As mentioned by the refugee, though, in addition to classes, there should be more opportunities for refugees to actually practice these norms, such as by celebrating certain holidays with American residents.

Section 3, Subsection J: Services for Refugees of Arab Descent

Certainly, people from certain cultural backgrounds may have cultural norms and educational levels that can help or impede certain aspects of their acculturation. For example, an employee at Catholic Charities told me that,

> People from Iraq and Iran don't completely believe in their community [in Georgia], so there's lots of doubt and not a lot of trust. They work with a small circle. But Afghanis are easy to work with… The challenge is finding them a better job because they are educated and most come with savings. So they don't want an entry level job. For example, there was an Iraqi guy who was a dentist, and he kept applying for jobs. But over time, their savings run out. This wouldn't have happened if they took an entry level job first.

Furthermore, as an employee at Catholic Charities explained to me,

> It is difficult for people to leave their home. People come with large expectations… Refugees from Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan are internally displaced refugees; they come

> with very high standards, which is very hard… They waste lots of time looking for high-paying jobs. Some are lucky, because the Iraqi population is big here, but it still takes time. If you have a good network before you come, it can still take two to three months to find a similar job. But we encourage them to take just something, and then they can look for a better job later.

Employees at the International Rescue Committee, World Relief Atlanta, and Welcoming Atlanta noticed a similar trend, saying that a lot of their clients of Arab descent come with higher education and credentials in certain fields, but their credentials do not necessarily transfer over internationally. The International Rescue Committee employee explained,

> So they get here, and they are like, 'Well I was a doctor back in Turkey' and then we say, 'That [the degree] didn't transfer, how do you feel about working in a chicken factory?' So that can be a very hard blow for someone to deal with, that perceived drop in social status.

Yet none of the resettlement agencies had specialized services for refugees of Arab descent. An employee at New American Pathways said that this is because their federal contract states that all people are provided the same services.

There are, though, certain resources that can be useful. For example, an employee at Catholic Charities explained to me that they do have staff who are able to speak Arabic and they,

> Tell people where the mosque is and where halal food is. We have staff from that community who can explain their practices. But nothing specifically geared towards them. Most of the time, Arab men don't want to work with meat, alcohol, or tobacco, which reduces the jobs [available to them].

It is important to note that Welcoming America does have a toolkit on addressing anti-Muslim backlash regarding communication on this issue and what groups are doing to address this.

The executive director of Friends of Refugees, however, noted that perhaps services should not be tailored to ethnic backgrounds, but instead to levels of technology ability as well as level of individual versus collectivist orientation as he said that refugee services can best benefit cultures with the most individualist notions, because "they are going to kind of grab the bull by

the horns and run with it, whereas a collectivist orientation is going to grab one another's hands and only walk toward that opportunity as fast as the slowest person in the group." Additionally, technology as a factor can affect the services one is able to access oneself. He noted that refugees, such as those from Iraq and Syria, "can whip out their smart phone and check that email and see where their job interview is, whereas a refugee from a lower technology environment is not going to have that same capacity and is going to increase the intensity of logistics necessary to serve them well."

There are no specific services provided by refugee resettlement agencies directed to refugees of Arab descent. There may be more local cultural organizations or associations, but refugees would have to seek these out themselves. Perhaps an increased focus by resettlement agencies on certain issues that refugees of Arab descent may face (such as for those who come to the US with higher education levels and skill sets) would allow for their transition and acculturation process to be smoother.

Section 4: Services Provided in General

Based on my interviews, a few interesting points emerged. Interviewees were able to highlight some of the services that they found to be the most useful for refugees (even if they were not necessarily the most used) as well as the specific services that they found to be in high-demand by refugees. Additionally, the interviewees were able to share some challenges that they thought to be prevalent facing their organization. Finally, other important information was revealed to me, either about their work or the services provided, which I have included in the final subsection of this section.

Section 4, Subsection A: Most Useful Services

An employee at Catholic Charities said that the ESL classes as well as their availability of staff are extremely useful. An employee at the International Rescue Committee pointed to its economic empowerment department as well as its employment department. He also discussed its recently-formed microenterprise program, in which clients are economically empowered to start their own businesses and are given advice on business loans and building a business plan. Another employee at the International Rescue Committee pointed to their emergency assistance program, which is used in the case that the only person in the family working loses his/her job and as a result, the family is unable to pay rent. The agency will try to help them pay their rent for a month using these funds. An employee at Lutheran Services of Georgia pointed to English language skills as an indication of a refugee's success in the US. She also noted that their trauma resiliency program for youth in Clarkston (which provides homework help and general support, led by a licensed social worker and refugee) is extremely important, though they do face issues with attendance.

Section 4, Subsection B: Most Used Services

Staff also highlighted some of the services that they found to be the most used by their clients. An employee at Catholic Charities lauded the service's open-door policy, saying that the staff-to-refugee ratio is quite high and that clients are able to come in at any time Mondays through Fridays to talk to case workers. He said, "This is good because newcomers always have questions. Some agencies only see clients two times a week or require appointments. This is not good… The staff-to-client touch is the best in Atlanta. They (refugees) also feel relieved when they see case workers."

Employees at Catholic Charities, Lutheran Services of Georgia, World Relief Atlanta, and the International Rescue Committee said that employment services are highly used because all new arrivals use the service and many people return later to this service.

An employee at the International Rescue Committee also pointed to their English language classes. He did say, though, that some of his most vulnerable clients are those who also need English language training the most, but sometimes are not able to access the English classes to their full extent "because they are more worried about their health or their inability to work."

Another employee at the International Rescue Committee noted that basic necessities and supplies are highly used by their clients. For example, she said that their social adjustment team uses their funds to buy goods such as diapers, which are in high demand for their clients' children. She also said that simply helping people to read their mail is a daily occurrence, whether it is about their food stamps or informing them that they need to pay a bill.

Section 4, Subsection C: Challenges Facing Refugee Support Services

Certainly, refugee support services face various issues that may prevent them from delivering their aid the most effectively. An issue that employees of New American Pathways and Welcoming America noticed is that many organizations have problems regarding capacity because there are a lot of shifts in funding. As a result, dealing effectively with volunteers can be a challenge, as it can be hard to figure out how to use all of them. The executive director of Friends of Refugees seemed to agree with this as he told me,

> You know, it's relatively easy to get materials, and things, and to a certain degree, even space. And it's not that hard to get volunteers, but it is hard to be able to manage volunteers… So, I would say the big constraint is the resources to operate the gears inside the machine of delivering that impact. All other elements are a totally distant second.

Welcoming America noted that they have issues with providing follow-up about their lessons and trainings, simply because of limited funding. Additionally, they do try to work with refugees

themselves in order to include their perspectives and involve them in trainings, but this is a challenge because they are typically often not able to recruit refugees, apart from community leaders, to be involved structurally. Many of the other organizations as well as Mr. Terry also listed funding as a barrier.

Another issue listed by the executive director of Friends of Refugees is that there are not enough clients currently enrolled in their specialized skill training programs, though he speculated that this is mainly because it is a new service.

Finally, an employee at the International Rescue Committee noted that although some of their clients are very forthcoming about their issues and what they need help with, others might not be vocal if they need help. She said, "The other day, we came to a client's house and were checking on a completely different issue and realized they hadn't had food or power for days… We talked to them on the phone and they had not mentioned that." She said she thinks this may depend on the refugee's cultures, as some cultures may promote accepting certain types of help, while other cultures might make one less comfortable accepting assistance.

Section 4, Subsection D: Additional Information or Services Provided

Another aspect of refugee support services is that some case workers may also have been refugees themselves. For example, one of the employees at Catholic Charities I spoke with is a refugee from Bhutan. He also had previous experience working at an another agency, the International Rescue Committee, which reveals that employees may be able to share what they have learned from their previous experiences. For others, it is their first time working with refugees, such as with another employee I spoke with at Catholic Charities or an AmeriCorps member I spoke with at the International Rescue Committee.

In terms of the role of religion in the provision of services, although some agencies, like Catholic Charities, are funded by the Catholic Church, most people who work there are not Catholic. As an employee there explained,

> Catholic faith might be a reason for people to donate, but it doesn't impact how we treat our clients. All are welcome. The State Department has a policy that no agency can proselytize. Catholic Charities abides by this and we don't ask about religion except how it concerns refugee job placement. Most refugee resettlement agencies are funded by religious groups, but that's just where the money comes from. It's not a proselytizing organization—it's just about serving the refugees themselves.

Finally, some of the services are looking into expanding their assistance to other statuses of immigrants, such as asylum seekers or victims of sex trafficking. An employee at World Relief Atlanta said, "Especially at this time, with this current political climate, we're currently pursuing really opening up our services and using our expertise developed serving refugees and immigrants to serve other statuses of immigrants regardless of the amount of time they've been here."

The various organizations, then, have staff who bring in their own unique and varied perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, there is a heavy influence of funding and reacting to the current political climate seen within these services.

Section 5: Barriers to Refugee Acculturation

The staff at refugee support services pointed to a variety of barriers for refugees to acculturate. These barriers are consistent with what was found in the literature review.

Section 5, Subsection A: Role of the State Department and the Federal Government

More than just funding, the federal government has a direct role regarding refugee aid. Employees at Catholic Charities, Lutheran Services of Georgia, the International Rescue Committee, and a law specialist noted that under Trump's presidency, the number of refugees

allowed entry into the US has decreased. This is an issue because as an employee at Catholic Charities told me, "Since there are less refugees, there is less money, which is hard for staff, so we are cutting down our staff." An employee at World Relief further explained this as,

> We historically received, or resettled I should say, in terms of new refugees, around 650 individuals on an annual basis. And then at the end of the Obama administration, we were prepared to resettle 850… but then with this new administration last year, our number that we were assigned was 450 individuals, and this year, our number was 330… Recently, our challenge is with the current political climate and the financial constraint that we've experienced as a result of the limitations of our contract. In terms of our funding provided by our contract, it's determined by the number of refugees we receive. So when that number goes down, so does the funding.

An employee at New American Pathways is looking at this issue more optimistically, saying that since they have fewer people coming to Georgia, maybe now they can focus more on the acculturation of refugees and making sure there are more events to involve them in their community.

Furthermore, employees at World Relief Atlanta and the International Rescue Committee noted that there can be discrepancies or a lack of consistency between how different state and federal agencies engage with refugees or provide services for them. An International Rescue Committee employee said that government staff members are trained in different ways, so it can be hard to know how various government agencies will react to requests, which can be a barrier for refugees. Another employee at Lutheran Services of Georgia also noted that Georgia, compared to some other states, lacks more holistic policies that could benefit refugees. For example, she said that some states pay refugees (such as mothers in a family) for their work taking care of children or family members with medical issues, but that nothing like this exists in Georgia. This probably exists due to the overall hostile policies from the state towards refugees.

A major barrier is also with the federal government's push for self-sufficiency within six months. As an employee at Catholic Charities explained to me, "It is tied to finance. Each

refugee gets $925, but by the time the person gets into an apartment, there is no money left, because it all goes into supplies, clothing, and rent." Another employee at Catholic Charities told me,

> We also expect refugees to acclimate to life in the US far faster than they should. Last year about 97 % of our clients were self-sufficient in less than six months, which means they were working and paying their own bills. But it is unreasonable that we expect this, which is based on Department of State guidelines. Wages aren't high enough for them to aspire to get out of poverty." He continued later, "The Department of State also designed their program so that labor is important. Everything is geared towards working. That's how agencies get judged: how self-sufficient are the refugees, or do they have a job.

Other agencies, such as Lutheran Services of Georgia, World Relief Atlanta, and New American Pathways, shared this opinion. An employee at Lutheran Services of Georgia told me that while 80 % to 82 % of their clients become financially self-sufficient in this time period, "The inherent structure is challenging. Language skills, time in a refugee camp, cultural differences—these are more than just rent." For example, the metrics that Lutheran Services of Georgia uses are on a scale from 'surviving' to 'thriving', which begin with the provision of basic needs, then ensuring stability and safety, then community connectedness and integration, and then finally, self-efficacy and efficiency. In other words, refugees are acculturated in the final stage during which they also have "American friends who can help them and advocate for them on their behalf." Yet this final marker does not seem to be included in this six-month push for self-sufficiency. As an employee of New American Pathways summed up, if a refugee is trying to constantly work to support his/her family and also culturally and mentally adjust to the host country, he/she physically does not have the time to socially adjust and fully integrate within his/her community during this short time-frame. An employee at World Relief Atlanta seemed to share similar opinions on this saying, "The term that's often been dictated by our contract and driving our

services has been self-sufficiency and we think this it's very limited and doesn't necessarily encapsulate everything that comes with the term acculturation."

Perhaps, however, the role of government, especially at the local level can be extremely powerful. As mayor of Clarkston, Mr. Terry has been extremely vocal about the benefits of hosting refugees and has consistently supported their resettlement in the area (though some of the previous political leaders in Clarkston were not as welcoming). He has also tried to publicize Clarkston's role in refugee resettlement. For example, he is going to the United Nations to speak on a panel with the International Organization for Migration. Finally, he operates on the idea that one can aid refugees on a one-on-one basis (for example, he has sponsored a refugee family from Syria for the last two years) as well as on a policy level, working to change systems of government that might negatively target refugees or to make the overall system increasingly for safe and welcoming for everyone. For example, one of the law specialists I spoke with said that there is frequently a push for certain forms of legislation that can target or be used to limit the cultural practices of certain communities. He mentioned that there could be legislation around food preparation or about animal welfare that is actually formed with the motive of limiting halal practices, for example. Yet laws can also provide important rights. Based on my interviews with both of the law specialists, the basic laws in the US that guarantee Constitutional rights (such of freedom of speech and religion) aid refugees by protecting their basic rights, regardless of their status as a refugee.

Section 5, Subsection B: English Language Proficiency

Employees at Catholic Charities, the International Rescue Committee, New American Pathways, Friends of Refugees, World Relief, and Mr. Terry singled out language as a major barrier. An employee at Catholic Charities told me, "We have refugees of all skill levels and

character traits; some are medical doctors and engineers and we also have people who have never been to school. If they do not know English, this rules out a lot of jobs." The refugee I spoke with had a similar opinion, saying that if one does not learn English, one will not be able to get a higher position or higher pay but instead, will be a prime target for being fired or laid off. An employee at New American Pathways said that even for those who are employed, if they do not speak English, are unable to form relationships with their coworkers.

The issues with limited English proficiency can also extend beyond the workplace. For example, even though doctor's offices that accept Medicaid are technically supposed to provide interpretation, staff at the International Rescue Committee said that many smaller and private practices either are not aware of this policy or still do not provide interpretation. This also can happen with the Social Security administration or offices that administer food stamps. Furthermore, the notices regarding these services are all sent in English, so refugees may get vital updates about renewing or applying for services that they do not understand, so they do not take the required actions. As an employee stated,

> Time and time again, I have clients who get their food stamps cut or their Medicaid interrupted because they didn't understand that they had a renewal of their application coming up. And then trying to get involved with the DFCS (the Division of Family and Children Services) to ask them questions about it can be very unpleasant and difficult. Although DFCS does have a refugee unit that specifically handles the refugee food stamps and Medicaid, after six months to a year, those cases move out of the refugee unit into the general county and state unit. And then at that point you know, once you get to them, they're less accommodating to refugee needs.

Even when there are interpreters, an employee at the International Rescue Committee said that there still can be issues. For example, though their agency has their own interpreters, if their clients are not at the office at the time they need interpretation or speak a language for which they do not have an interpreter, they use LanguageLine (which offers interpretation services over the phone). Sometimes, however, she said that she has heard clients who have said that they have

not understood the interpreter (who is speaking in their own language), leading them to believe that some interpreters are just using Google Translate. A knowledge of the local host country language, therefore, is key for acculturation as language affects all aspects of life.

Section 5, Subsection C: Access to Affordable Housing

Access to affordable housing was also cited as a barrier to acculturation by the executive director of Friends of Refugees as well as Mr. Terry as they said that the working wage that most families earn is not enough for most to easily afford to rent housing. The executive director of Friends of Refugees said,

> It's just hysterically laughable that that would be regarded as affordable housing, you know, when the medium household income in our zip code is 45 % below the poverty line. So yeah, that's a big gap as far as I'm concerned, because acculturation is possible most efficiently when there's a certain level of density. You know, where there's a community density. And that is inversely related to affordability of housing.

Mr. Terry also shared this view, saying that the rising costs for housing,

> Stymies that development into greater self-sufficiency because basically once a family is able to get into a home, I think that that tends to be sort of an overarching dream of a lot of families. Because if you think about the definition of a refugee, they've had to leave their home. And getting back to that sort of semblance of ownership and somewhat normalcy I think is a huge goal for most families that I meet.

As a result, Mr. Terry is hoping to create more home ownership opportunities in Clarkston, especially since the majority of refugees live in apartments. In fact, only a tenth of residents live in houses.

Section 5, Subsection D: Connections with Native-Born Americans

Employees at World Relief Atlanta noted that another barrier can be minimal relationships (if any at all) between refugees and native-born Americans. Though an employee at New American Pathways said that this process can take time (that the longer refugees are in the

US, the more connections they can make), this process can still be challenging. As explained by the executive director of Friends of Refugees,

> I think the greatest barrier to acculturation for refugees is a lack of social capital, i.e. a lack of friendships with those who have the privilege of the existing systems. I think that the biggest acculturation barriers are being stuck in your small sub-community, being stuck in whatever sort of social and economic social circles you've just landed in… We know that the reality is that a mother does not get the job at the warehouse that she wants to work at because she is the most qualified person for that job. It's far more likely that she will get that because someone who has trust and social capital with whoever is making the hiring decision knows that that person vouches that she will be a good hire. And that plays out in a thousand different ways—not just in employment.

He also pointed to Refuge Coffee as a way that has allowed people to be brought together, by using an interruptive idea that creates a new space centered around coffee that allows such relationships to form.

Yet another issue can arise is if there is pushback from the local community. An employee at the International Rescue committee said that this can happen occasionally, though fortunately the mayor of Clarkston has consistently expressed support for the refugee population living there. An employee of Lutheran Services of Georgia said that she still finds that some residents in Clarkston and the neighboring areas say negative things about refugees (such as that they are a security threat or are taking public benefits away from others) and do not understand how intense the security screening process is. In fact, one of the law specialists I interviewed said that Georgia "has proven relatively hostile to immigrant populations generally. Probably less so to the resettled refugee population, but overall it is not an incredibly hospitable place."

Conversely, the Lutheran Services of Georgia employee has also found that restaurants in Clarkston, like Katmandu Kitchen, have become gathering points for both native-born Americans and refugees, allowing for increased intermingling. These relationships are key because after the period in which agencies are no longer able to provide direct aid to refugees,

the community or personal relationships can help refugees with a variety of issues from feelings of isolation to aid with transportation. The refugee I spoke with also had a more optimistic view. He said that as a non-white Muslim, coming right after 9/11, he expected he would not be welcomed by the community. Quite the opposite, however, happened. He told me,

> The people who welcomed us were these old white people from the South… I don't think if I went to New York or California, I would have so much love and acceptance. I don't think anything like Atlanta [and Clarkston] exists, with a Christian Southern church welcoming [us] right after an attack that was supposed to be done by Muslims… Still those people were willing to come help us out.

It appears, then, that organic relationships can certainly happen between refugees and Americans, stemming from opportunities such as those created by volunteer groups, religious institutions, or even just restaurants and coffee shops. As a result, working to increase these interactions would be highly beneficial to refugees.

Section 5, Subsection E: Family Dynamics

Refugees may also struggle with the new family dynamics that can arise with resettlement. This is because in many cultures, there is an emphasis on respecting one's elders. Children, however, often acculturate faster than other age groups, but as a result, they sometimes then are the ones who have to interpret medical or financial information, which can turn around the family system. Agencies like Lutheran Services of Georgia have a policy that children should not interpret any medical or financial information, but in practice, especially as many things outside of agencies are not translated, they still do so. Mr. Terry shared a similar opinion of this being a challenge, saying that this "creates sort of a cultural inversion where the child has a bigger power dynamic than the parent does which in some cases, has caused family dynamic issues."

Finally, the splitting up of families when they are fleeing their country of origin (and not immediately allowed to enter a host country together) is a challenge, especially for the family's mental health and the family dynamics. In fact, as explained by employees at World Relief Atlanta, the family reunification process takes a minimum of two to three years. This can disrupt the family, especially if the husband or wife play very distinct roles. Employees at World Relief Atlanta, therefore, viewed family reunification as key in helping refugees to acculturate. Yet, the issue of family reunification has become a very politicized topic, with President Trump notoriously labeling family reunification instead as "chain migration", saying that this would be harmful as it would allow increased refugees into US borders (Gjelten 2018). The reality, however, is that each refugee still goes through the same thorough background checks and that family reunification is vital in helping to restore family units.

Section 5, Subsection F: Medical Issues

Medical issues are also a barrier. An employee at Catholic Charities told me that the process to receive medical treatment can take an extremely long amount of time, so they have to make sure that if there is someone in a family that has medical needs, that others in the family start working immediately. Furthermore, access in general to healthcare in the US is dismal compared to other developed countries, which is further compounded for refugees, especially since the life expectancy for the poor is less than that of the affluent. I discussed the medical system with an employee at the International Rescue Committee and she stressed that the system is complicated enough for those who speak English fluently, so she does not understand how it is expected that refugees, many with limited English skills, are expected to be able to navigate it. There is the Clarkston Community Health Clinic for refugees to turn to as well, but it also faces various difficulties, especially as people come to the clinic with a wide array of medical needs

(as some have never seen a doctor or dentist before) as well as various levels of educational backgrounds about the importance of health. Furthermore, it can be difficult for them to encourage some refugees to prioritize their health when they are also struggling with cultural adjustment, finding a job, and sending their kids to school, among a whole array of other challenges. Finally, I discussed the issue of interpretation at a doctor's office with an employee at the International Rescue Committee. She expressed concern about situations even when interpretation is provided as she said that the doctor's office may not try to make sure the client understands the medical issues or the client may not feel comfortable asking more questions or pointing out other symptoms.

Mental health can also be a major barrier for many refugees. An employee at the International Rescue Committee discussed with me how not only is there a stigma in the US about getting help for mental health, but this can also exist in greater extents in the refugees' countries of origin. As a result, it can be challenging for refugees to ask for or accept mental health aid. An employee at Catholic Charities told me, "It is reasonable to assume that many [refugees] suffer from some type of PTSD. This is an experience that very few acknowledge or ask for services." In fact, one of the founders of Clarkston Community Health Center said that the concept of mental health issues does not exist in many cultures and as a result, he found that some refugees presented their psychological illness as a physical illness. Accordingly, Clarkston Community Health Center provides a detailed questionnaire for patients in order to pinpoint certain illness at the get-go and opened up their mental health clinic on Saturdays in a separate office space, as they are hoping this will prevent patients from being stigmatized. It is important to note, however, that a legal specialist I spoke with said that for refugees to be granted entry into the US, they have to go through a long medical clearance. She said that as a result, refugees in

general "are among the healthiest of all immigrants that we have, and I think the lack of public knowledge of that leads to a lot of discrimination."

Section 5, Subsection G: Cultural Adjustment

Adjusting to a new culture is frequently a barrier. Not only do refugees have to learn a new language and system of laws, but they also have to learn various cultural norms relating to social behavior, education, and labor. When one is dealing with various issues of adapting to a new place, perhaps in combination with mental health issues, acculturating to a new culture can certainly be a challenge. To help with this cultural adjustment, refugee resettlement agencies have cultural orientations for all clients in their native language. For example, an employee at Catholic Charities told me that they have staff that speak a variety of languages, have translators, and before clients arrive, try to find out what the norms they have back home that are acceptable in the US. One aspect that was stressed to me by both staff at Catholic Charities and New American Pathways, is that adjustment in terms of food is not as much of a challenge since both Clarkston and Atlanta have various restaurants and grocery stores with products from around the world.

Section 5, Subsection H: Access to Transportation

Transportation is also a barrier, as pointed out by employees at Catholic Charities, Friends of Refugees, and World Relief Atlanta. This is because getting a driver's license and paying for a car can take a long time. The issue of transportation can even exist simply for refugees to access resettlement agencies. Thus, even though agencies are centrally located or proximate to a MARTA stop, the process to get to an agency can still take quite a bit of time. For example, an employee at Catholic Charities said that as a result, "Simple tasks could then take refugees five hours with transportation, waiting time, and meeting us." Furthermore,

transportation issues can be a barrier to geographic resettlement. For example, both employees at Catholic Charities and World Relief Atlanta told me that they would like to also resettle refugees outside of DeKalb, but are frequently unable to because of a lack of access to MARTA in many areas. One of the founders of Clarkston Community Health Center also noted that transportation is an issue for many refugees, which is what limited the location of their clinic as it needed to be within walking distance of where many refugees live in Clarkston.

Section 5, Subsection I: Structural Barriers and Gender

Certainly, many of the issues that refugees may face are only compounded by their minority status and structural barriers. Women in particular can face many issues with caring for their family. An employee at Catholic Charities explained,

> The biggest challenge overall is the systemic problems that all Americans face: access to transportation and childcare… In the US, childcare is not affordable. There is the TANF program, which gives vouchers for childcare, but if you are taken to work early in the morning, who takes your kids to childcare and at that time? If you're a single parent, it is very difficult. Even in two-parent homes, it limits their income because one parent needs to stay at home.

Female refugees, not only face the general challenges that all refugees face when acculturating, but they also face challenges with regard to childcare, physically being able to access different services, coping with new cultural norms regarding gender, and finding employment. Though services do work to accommodate some of these issues, such as going to the house of a female refugee to help with English language instruction, there still remain issues with a lack of childcare and navigating gender norms.

Section 5, Subsection J: Education

Refugees may also struggle to access to higher education opportunities. An employee at Catholic Charities explained,

> If you have to travel for so long to get to your job, you will have less time for ESL or GED training or professional training. And with no healthcare, you are more likely to miss work or your education. This in turn impacts the child. Even if the child finishes high school, how does he/she go to college? He/she cannot pay for it and is under pressure to go to work. Better paying jobs and healthcare can help. The opportunities for education are there, but can refugees access them? For example, you could get your CNA (certified nursing assistant) certificate by passing the state exam, but this is not attainable if you can't take time to do the training.

Though services do provide aid regarding education for younger refugees, it can be extremely difficult for refugees to pursue higher education opportunities or work on GED and professional trainings. Furthermore, the cost of higher education can be too expensive for many refugees. A barrier for refugees to access educational opportunities, then, is frequently a lack of funds and time.

Section 6: Analysis

Section 6, Subsection A: Services that are Lacking or Needed

One way for refugees to better acculturate may be to have increased interactions with those in the host community. As an employee at Catholic Charities told me, "The best way for newcomers to understand all of this is for them to connect with the community. They may listen to them more." This can be difficult to occur, however. Another employee at Catholic Charities explained,

> The issue is that it is easy for people to stick within their group because it's comfortable. They hang out with people from their own country. But that limits opportunities to improve their English or find jobs outside their community. It can hold people back… There is always the need for more opportunities to meet people, to increase refugee interaction with locals. We need to bridge the gap to increase the networks, so that there are more opportunities for these relationships to form.

The refugee I spoke with said that for increased interactions to occur, there needs to be openness from both sides. He explained how he has worked with some refugee families who are very

involved in American culture because they are very open to learning about American culture and invite people to their house. He said that he and his mother work closely with the refugee communities and are able to give them tough love because they are refugees themselves. He told me,

> It's a privilege to be in the United States. Once I recognized that when I came here, I was able to integrate and take advantage of the opportunities. If I was complaining about it being an obligation to be here and was pushed from Syria to be here, then I don't think I would've had the motivation to advance, and I would have this bias towards the US. One of the best things I've heard is a guy who said, 'You know, we all came from different socioeconomic statuses… some people owned land and houses, some people owned nothing. But when you came to the US, you lost all of that so you start with zero and you have the same opportunity to advance as everyone else.'

Certainly, this can be challenging as refugees have various obstacles and structural barriers to overcome, but perhaps having the perspective from refugees themselves in the acculturation process of other refugees can help to push some people to take advantage of various opportunities.

These interactions can also be effective if there is a family or a faith-based institution that sponsors the refugee. Mr. Terry, who has done this, said that it can be extremely effective, but that this only happens for about 10 % of refugee families. He said with a tone of hopefulness,

> I think that in an ideal world, every family that came to America would have a sponsoring organization, either a church, a mosque, or just a group of friends, like me and some of my friends who sponsor a Syrian family. And I think that it makes a really big difference in terms of outcomes and socializing, or socialization I should say… You're basically helping them out when they need help and checking in with them when they have questions and you know, take them to the bowling alley… like do fun things to just make them feel welcome and I think that just really goes a long way.

The refugee with whom I spoke also recommended that when one is trying to aid refugees, one should treat them how one would treat one's neighbor, as opposed to treating them with pity. He said that a way to include someone is by telling them the best places to eat and shop or providing them with recommendations as to where they could find a job. He also said that the process for

refugees to acculturate takes time and that one cannot expect results right away. Mr. Terry had a similar view on volunteering in refugee communities, saying it is not as useful if people just come for a few days or if it is an "academic flyover." He did, though, talk about the involvement of Emory University students, such as those in the medical school volunteering in Clarkston, as well as that of Georgia Tech students helping to create a more detailed census for Clarkston.

Additionally, though there has been criticism of some faith-based institutions for a proselytizing role in refugee services, faith-based organizations can also be extremely helpful, especially in terms of funding and resources, perhaps pointing to a need to involve these institutions more. A New American Pathways employee pointed to their helpful relationships with the Roswell Community Mosque and All Saints Episcopal Church. Moreover, an employee at Catholic Charities detailed the helpful role that some religious institutions can have with refugee resettlement. For example, some resettlement agencies are tied with churches, so when the refugee arrives, the church takes over the majority of the responsibility regarding issues such as housing and transportation, which can greatly cut down costs. He told me, "Catholic Charities doesn't have this happen a lot, but we have had a few families who have sponsored refugees. This is good when this happens, because they normally live in a good part of the city."

Certain crucial services are also lacking. For example, Catholic Charities Atlanta does not have childcare services, mainly due to a dearth of funding and staff to do this. Employees also mentioned that more services to help the elderly to acculturate are needed. Mr. Terry mentioned that there should be additional after-school programs and early learning programs as he believes if there is more investment in children and the youth, not only will they have a better future, but also that petty property crimes will decrease (Clarkston is currently around the top 45th safest cities in Georgia). Furthermore, he mentioned that there should be more work to encourage and

teach refugees how to be civically engaged, especially since refugees can apply for citizenship after five years. He said that many refugees do not even know they can get a fee waiver for the citizenship application or are not aware of the location of classes for practicing the citizenship test. As a result, he has been working with New American Pathways and the Coalition for Refugees Service Agencies (CRSA) to increase civic engagement. Working with CRSA can be beneficial as it is the main coalition of agencies and organizations to support refugees, which includes World Relief Atlanta, International Rescue Committee, Lutheran Services of Georgia, Catholic Charities Atlanta, Clarkston Community Center, Refugee Women's Network, New American Pathways, Refuge Coffee Co., and Friends of Refugees.

Mr. Terry also would like increased civic engagement to create a more tight-knit community as well as a civic entrepreneurship model in Clarkston. For example, one of his ideas is to turn Bond Street (a street in Clarkston) into a Las Ramblas street market, in order to create an environment that welcomes people to become entrepreneurs and showcase their cultural heritage. This idea would be similar to the Albert Cuyp Market in Amsterdam, specifically in the De Pijp district, as many of the stands in this area are owned by the many immigrants who live in the neighborhood.

Another way to aid refugees through refugee service provision is by including them in the aid process. For example, the executive director of Friends of Refugees explained that their volunteer training goes extremely in-depth in order to help people understand the experience and the perspective of what a refugee family has gone through. In doing so, they are working to place refugees in positions of teaching. For example, they have,

> An experience where people learn how to make traditional Ethiopian coffee from our buddy over at Refuge Coffee Company, Leon, and we pay him to do this training time, and it's a time where we bring the volunteers around and they learn from him and they

> get to ask questions and then we look how that impacts their perspective on, you know, foreigners, as it were, writ large.

Moreover, perhaps additional collaboration is needed between the agencies as well as services. When I spoke with one of the founders of Clarkston Community Health Center, he said that he was not sure if they actively worked with other services. He noted that it may be useful to involve more of the community in their work and could do so through the creation of a Community Board, which could also work to increase the understanding of the clinic and its availability to the public. A similar issue exists across the resettlement agencies. An employee at the International Rescue Committee noted that some of the agencies have very similar programs, such as the intensive case management programs and as a result, it might be beneficial for them to collaborate and share data about their clients or best practices. Sometimes, however, especially due to decreased numbers of refugees being accepted to the US, "It becomes a numbers game of people just trying to reach their numbers." There does seem, however, to exist at least a limit a degree of partnership and collaboration between the five agencies, such as seen through the existence of CRSA. As an employee at Catholic Charities told me,

> We have healthy relationships with other agencies. We work together. The directors have a group and the staff have a group—we meet together and share ideas. We are transparent and help each other, especially with resources, such as staff with certain language abilities. We share information, such as housing information.

Thus, it would be beneficial for services to have a larger focus on building civic engagement, including refugees in leadership positions at their organizations, looking for alternate funding sources, and increasing their collaborative efforts with each other.

Section 6, Subsection B: Main Themes

The refugee support services cover all of the basics in terms of the aspects of acculturation (housing, education, language, labor, etc.), though some areas have more of a focus

than others. For example, an additional focus on women's services, civic engagement, and interactions between native-born Americans and refugees would be very useful. Furthermore, at the institutional level, involving more refugees in leadership or decision-making positions within the organizations as well as increased collaboration among the organizations could allow refugees from one service to benefit from the aid at another service or for vital information to be communicated between the organizations. Finally, the issue of a lack of funding was mentioned repeatedly, so perhaps looking to other sources of funding apart from the federal government (such as faith-based institutions or private companies) would be beneficial.

In terms of the specific services, those that were said to be the most useful were ESL classes, the availability of staff, economic empowerment programs, the emergency assistance program, and the employment department. The most used services were the employment services, ESL classes, and the provision of basic supplies.

Regarding barriers to refugee acculturation, all five resettlement agencies (five total) saw the State Department's nine-month self-sufficiency expectation to be limiting and were worried about President Trump's restrictions on refugee entry into the country. For other barriers to refugee acculturation, five refugee support services as well as Mr. Terry and the refugee (seven total) pointed to a lack of English language proficiency, one support service and Mr. Terry (two total) discussed access to affordable housing, five of the refugee support services and Mr. Terry and the refugee (seven total) pointed to a lack of connections with native-born Americans, two refugee support services and Mr. Terry (three total) included family dynamics, three refugee support services (three total) focused on medical issues, one refugee support service (one total) discussed cultural adjustment, four refugee support services (four total) pointed to transportation,

one refugee support service (one total) included gender, and one refugee support service and the refugee (two total) pointed to education.

Section 6, Subsection C: Propositions

My first proposition **P_1** was that the availability of a range of refugee support services will have a positive effect on refugee acculturation. As seen from my interviews, the aid that refugee support services provide is key in helping refugees to acculturate. In essence, they are there with refugees every step of the way. As Mr. Terry had told me in our discussion, Clarkston's budget is so small, so if it was not for these services, refugees may not receive the support that they do. *My data appears to support this proposition, indicating that refugee support services are powerful actors in helping refugees to acculturate.*

My second proposition **P_2** was that the demand for refugee self-sufficiency to occur in a quick time-frame may result in economic self-sufficiency, but will not allow for complete acculturation, as acculturation also includes feeling comfortable navigating the host culture, forming relationships with natives of the host culture, and having the ability to capitalize on their full potential. My interviews showed that although most of the services' clients are economically self-sufficient within this window, they did not believe that the refugees were actually acculturated and saw this narrow time-frame as limiting. In fact, the rigid policies were actually a large barrier to refugee acculturation. *My data appears to support this proposition, indicating that a longer time for refugees to adjust may allow for acculturation, as opposed to simply being economically self-sufficient.*

My final proposition **P_3** was that compared to different refugee services offered, aid regarding acquisition of the host country language will be the greatest support for refugee acculturation. The interview responses show a lack of English proficiency as being the largest

barrier to acculturation, tied with a lack of interactions with those in the host community. Thus, *I can only say that English proficiency is one of the greatest aids, though more dialogue and greater relationships with those in the host community may be just as, if not more, powerful in helping refugees to acculturate.* Relationships with members of the host community is likely tied to English language proficiency, as it would enable these two groups of people to communicate.

These results add to previous acculturation and migration research by indicating that refugees may face difficulty adapting to the US regarding transportation and affordable housing. It also indicates that English language acquisition and forming deeper relationships with members of the host community can help the acculturation process to be smoother. Furthermore, this reveals the important role of refugee assistance programs on the refugee acculturation process as well as the negative effect of the intense pressure on refugees to be self-sufficient within the six-month period. Finally, this supports previous research that indicates that refugees from different cultural backgrounds have experiences in their host country that are unique to their cultural background. Yet my interviews highlight that there is a lack of specific services provided to refugees of Arab descent that might be key in helping them with issues that many may face in the US.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Overall Findings

Acculturation into a different culture is difficult for any immigrant population due to a range of challenges including differences in language, transportation, physical and mental health, education, labor, and culture. This process may often be further exacerbated for refugees who also have to deal with the uncertain circumstances under which they were forced to flee their home country and the suspicion with which they are often viewed by resident populations. This research found support for the three propositions set forth. First, refugee support services are powerful actors in helping refugees to acculturate. Second, allowing a longer time for refugees to integrate may allow for acculturation, as opposed to providing funding and resources in a limited time-bound fashion. Finally, English proficiency is one of the greatest aids. The interviews, however, also pointed to a need for more dialogue and greater relationships between refugees and those in the host community. This can allow refugees to develop friendships and also find advocates who are extremely familiar with the host country's laws and culture as well as can help refugees in a variety of ways such as learning English, finding employment, and learning cultural norms.

Recommendations

Refugee services should ideally have an increased focus on women's and childcare services, civic engagement, and interactions between native-born Americans and refugees as these services are currently lacking and some of my interviewees expressed that there is a need for these. Furthermore, at the institutional level, involving more refugees in leadership or

decision-making positions within the organizations as well as increased collaboration among the organizations could allow refugees from one service to benefit from the aid at another service or for vital information to be communicated between the organizations. There should also be increased outreach efforts to educate the general population about the benefits of refugees in society as well as ways to aid them in their acculturation process. Especially during a time in which the political rhetoric from the US federal government is largely antagonistic to refugees, these educational efforts are critical. Moreover, services should look into providing specific aid tailored to refugees of different cultural backgrounds, as it appears that refugees from different backgrounds (such as refugees of Arab descent) face unique issues.

At the federal and state levels, there should be increased efforts to disseminate information (such as social service notifications and bills) in languages other than English. Increased training for those who work in governmental services should be held on the issues that refugees and immigrants face, such as language and cultural barriers. In Georgia, specifically, work should go into making public transportation more accessible, which would not only benefit the refugee population, but the population at large. The federal government should also be pressured to provide increased funding to refugee resettlement agencies. Additionally, resettlement agencies and support services should look to other sources of funding apart from the federal government (such as faith-based institutions or private companies). Finally, there should be increased pressure on the State Department to not enforce a six-month self-sufficiency expectation, as is a limiting factor to the success and acculturation of refugees in the US.

Future Research

In the future, further research should explore the validity of these findings using a larger and randomly selected sample to test the results. More research on other funding sources for refugee services would be beneficial. Additional insight should focus on finding creative ways for refugees to develop organic interactions with native-born Americans. Finally, further research on the benefits of refugees to the host country, whether it is in terms of security or economics, would be useful.

The acculturation process for refugees appears to be extremely long, tedious, and certainly at many times, discouraging. Yet my interviews with refugee support service staff, a refugee himself, the mayor of Clarkston, and immigration law experts, reveal the incredible strength that refugees have in rebuilding their lives in the US. A combination of the crucial work from refugee support services, increased government support and social services, and the sheer determination of refugees can result in the acculturation of refugees, not only benefiting refugees themselves, but also the host community and country.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR REFUGEE SUPPORT SERVICE/RESETTLEMENT AGENCY STAFF

This will be approximately a 45 minute semi-structured interview using the introduction and questions below to guide the interview:

"Hello, my name is Rachel Citrin and I am a Senior at Emory University. I am working on my Senior Honors Thesis, which is focused on refugee support services and the role they play in refugee acculturation. In this interview, I will ask you questions related to your experience and role with the (Organization Name) and the impact of the services offered on helping refuges to adapt to their new cultural home (Georgia and in the US). Acculturation is "a process during which the refugee adapts to a new cultural space by merging elements from his/her own home culture with other cultures without discarding essential aspects of the former. This includes elements such as language, food, dress, religion, role in the home, labor, education, socializing with people in the host country, and a feeling of comfort in the new country." Before we begin, I will go over the confidentiality statement with you and can also address any questions or concerns you may have.

1. Tell me about your experience working at Organization
    a. What is your role with Organization?
    b. How long have you worked here?
    c. What is the general work that you carry out?

2. What have been some of the challenges related to delivering refugee support services you have seen facing Organization?

3. What have been some of the challenges you have seen refugees face? This can include cultural, legal, social, emotional, family, educational, and work challenges.

4. What types of refugee support services does Organization offer refugees?

5. For how long can refugees avail of this service?

6. What services have you found to be the most used? Why?

7. What services do you think are the most useful? Why?

8. What strategies have you found to be useful to help refugees better acculturate?

9. What barriers to refugee acculturation (this includes economic, social, cultural, and labor integration as well as an acceptance of the refugees by the host community) have you found?

10. Do refugees face acculturation problems from within their own refugee group members? Please describe.

11. Do you find the services provided to refugees adequate for their acculturation? Is there a service that is lacking or that should be improved? Please explain why.

12. What other resources or events do you think could help in the refugee acculturation process? Do you offer these services? Why are these services important to offer (/why are they not offered)?

13. What do you think the role of refugee support services should be regarding refugee acculturation? Do you think this goal is being supported?

14. Do you think refugee acculturation is important? Why/why not?

15. Do you provide different services to refugees based on their cultural/ethnic background? Which ones and why?

16. Do you offer special services based on gender or age? Which ones and why?

17. Is there any other information related to refugee acculturation that you would like to provide given my research goal?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EXPERTS IN LAW

This will be approximately a 30 minute semi-structured interview using the introduction and questions below to guide the interview:

"Hello, my name is Rachel Citrin and I am a Senior at Emory University. I am working on my Senior Honors Thesis, which is focused on refugee support services and the role they play in refugee acculturation. In this interview, I will ask you questions related to your experience and role with the (Organization Name) and the impact of the services offered on helping refuges to adapt to their new cultural home (Georgia and in the US). Acculturation is a process during which the refugee adapts to a new cultural space by merging elements from his/her own home culture with other cultures without discarding essential aspects of the former. This includes elements such as language, food, dress, religion, role in the home, labor, education, socializing with people in the host country, and a feeling of comfort in the new country. Before we begin, I will go over the confidentiality statement with you and can also address any questions or concerns you may have.

1. Describe laws regarding refugees in Georgia

2. Compare these laws to laws in the US?

3. Do laws negatively target refugees?

4. Are laws a source of hindrance or aid to refugee acculturation?

5. Do you think refugees are given the resources/tools to understand their rights?

6. Do you think laws are adequate for refugee protection? Are there laws that should be made?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE REFUGEE

This will be approximately a 30 minute semi-structured interview using the introduction and questions below to guide the interview:

"Hello, my name is Rachel Citrin and I am a Senior at Emory University. I am working on my Senior Honors Thesis, which is focused on refugee support services and the role they play in refugee acculturation. In this interview, I will ask you about the impact of the services offered regarding helping refuges to adapt to their new cultural home (Georgia and in the US). Acculturation is a process during which the refugee adapts to a new cultural space by merging elements from his/her own home culture with other cultures without discarding essential aspects of the former. This includes elements such as language, food, dress, religion, role in the home, labor, education, socializing with people in the host country, and a feeling of comfort in the new country.

1. Tell me about your experience as a refugee in Georgia and acculturating, or adapting to life here.

2. What refugee support services/organizations did you use?

3. What services/organizations did you find very helpful/useful?

4. Were there services/organizations that you found were not as helpful/useful?

5. Were there services that you wish you could have had access to? Were the services overall adequate for your acculturation?

6. What have been some of the challenges you have faced? This can include cultural, legal, social, emotional, family, educational, and work challenges.

7. What barriers to refugee acculturation (this includes economic, social, cultural, and labor integration as well as an acceptance of the refugees by the host community) have you found?

8. Is there any other information related to refugee acculturation that you would like to provide given my research goal?

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