

FORCED MIGRATION PROCESSES AND GLOBAL REFUGEES AT THE  
BORDERS OF EUROPE IN UKRAINE

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## Abstract

As of 2013, nearly half of the world's refugees stay in camps adjacent to countries of origin, largely in the Global South. Yet it is those people on the move able to seek asylum near Global North countries that have become objects of control and exclusion. This dissertation explores this asylum paradox with an extended case study of refugee migration to Ukraine, asking why do refugees stay or move again from this buffer country to the European Union (EU). It does so by exploring the impact of social network formation, household resources, and international refugee policy on the capacity, motivation, and execution of either onward mobility or settlement. Using interviews and observation in three Ukrainian cities with urban refugees from 25 countries, triangulated with legal aid case files, this project shows that questions of social action, such as why people move, are best answered by taking seriously first person narrative research methodologies. Specifically, findings demonstrate (1) the security of social networks drives capacity to move or stay; (2) access to different resources influences exit, voice, or adaptation; and (3) refugees seek to settle or move on regardless of EU-funded humanitarian policy for their local integration. This study challenges the transnational paradigm in migration studies, bridging literatures on how migration is sustained with political sociology and refugee studies. The contribution links micro and macro levels in the sociology of migration, building on recent studies of migration trust networks, Bourdieu's view on the transfer of capital in everyday life, and the role of international institutions in the extraterritorial "remote control" of asylum.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **1. Introduction: A Multi-Method Approach**

As many as 100 million people per year worldwide leave their countries because of social or economic necessity. Of these, thirty-five million work in a country other than the one that grants them citizenship (Puri 2004: 227). Their ability to travel is determined by the 192 states that define international borders as a constitutive element of their sovereignty. Many of these people wish to return but those fleeing social strife cannot do so (Cassarino 2004). In the postwar period, 147 countries around the world have signed agreements to protect the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to “seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.” The right for asylum has allowed for isolated infringement of state sovereignty. Perhaps, for that reason liberal democratic states have increasingly developed an array of methods of “remote control” to keep those seeking asylum at a distance beyond and away from their borders (see Zolberg 2003, Fitzgerald forthcoming). A large majority of the world’s refugees reside in informal encampments in Asia and Africa, unable to return to the country of their nationality due to unrest and persecution (UNHCR 2011). However, it is the 2 million forced migrants seeking to access refuge in wealthy Global North countries who have become the object of contention over undocumented migration at the borders of Europe, North America, and Australia. The rise of “migration management” at the borders of Europe is a recent chapter in the international organization of receiving states seeking to criminalize freedom of movement (see Geiger and Pecoud 2014).

Nevertheless, every year strife and military conflicts continue to displace people



from from their homes, whether in Afghanistan or Syria (and on a smaller scale, since the time of this study, from Ukraine as well, the receiving country that is the object of this study). By the end of 2013, the world witnessed the highest numbers of combined internally and internationally displaced people on record, including 16.7 million refugees—those fleeing persecution outside of their country of citizenship (UNHCR 2013). And, for the first time, nearly half (46%) of refugees around the world lived outside of industrialized countries, in countries with a GDP per capita below \$5,000 (UNHCR 2013). Apparently, refugees are being kept away from industrialized countries and retained in poorer countries with more efficiency than ever before, with politicians continue to redouble on their quest to control so-called “transit migration” of those supposedly already on their way to western countries (Wallace, Chmolliour, Sidorenko 1999). Yet, regardless of the methods by which states resolve this extraterritorial “asylum paradox” on their own,<sup>1</sup> the humanitarian and political importance of refugee flows as part of global migration raises sociological questions, particularly about the dynamics of forced mobility, consequences of international policy, and the responses of refugees.

This study provides a transnational account of forced migration, identifying the sociopolitical factors influencing migratory patterns, the consequences of international refugee policy, and the creative responses of people on the move to the constraints and opportunities of shifting political contexts. In 2010 and 2011, I spent 13 months conducting fieldwork in three Ukrainian cities and its western borderlands, speaking with Afghan workers at bustling street markets, accompanying Iraqi families to their

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<sup>1</sup> Extraterritorial control may include the development of visa screenings at consulates abroad, stationing of

appointments with aid groups where I volunteered, and attending African groups' meetings at refugee camps. In all, I spoke with ninety-three refugees and asylum seekers, conducting in-depth interviews with households from twenty-five countries, as well as with officials at international organizations in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

This dissertation uses this data to explore forced migration dynamics, international migration policy consequences, and resource mobilization through refugee responses. By detailing the day-to-day experiences and subjectivity of refugees and asylum seekers at the micro level within the context of macro level policies driving forced migration, it seeks to understand the social forces that structure refugees' intentions to settle or to move on. Its focus is the life histories of refugees from twenty-five countries, who despite their diverse experiences and cultures find themselves in a similar predicament of an unstable refuge in a volatile *buffer country* to the European Union.<sup>3</sup> With original interview, ethnographic, and archival data on refugees to Ukraine, it answers three questions about refugees and forced migration: *how do (1) the content of social networks, (2) the consequences of international policies, (3) and mobilization of resources for survival strategies motivate forced migrants to move on or to settle?* These questions will provide a way to engage key scholarly literatures and burning policy questions on international migration dynamics.

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<sup>2</sup> State and international agencies include but not limited to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and government agencies like the State Migration Service. For a full list of expert interviews see Table 2.

<sup>3</sup> Similar to a "buffer zone" for migration "between East and West" (Chmollour, Sidorenko 1999), a "buffer country" can be defined as a nation-state located through policy within a migration system as a space that slows or halts mobility.

This introduction presents an overview of the research methods and design for the study. The first section reviews the historical background that informed country and field site selection. The second section details the study's design and methods, while the third section positions and reflects on the researcher's position in the field. The fourth section introduces the epistemological approach, focusing on the primary use of personal narrative data in this study.

### **1.1 Case Selection and Background**

A case study of refugee mobility to Ukraine represents an ideal case as a paradigmatic case of forced migration. A buffer country at the borders of the Europe, Ukraine is also located at the crossroads of many migration systems (see Fawcet 1999). The word Oukraina (“оукраина”) in ancient Slavic roughly translates to borderland. Indeed, the territory that encompasses today's state of Ukraine has served as a borderland for ancient Rus and the Russian Empire, Gengis Khan's empire, as well as those of the Ottoman, Lithuanian, Polish, and Austria-Hungarian fiefdoms. Warriors were often sent to these lands for conquest, but they also provided refuge for traders on the Silk Road and for nomads. Exiles who were forced to flee to edges of the worlds they knew found this land and homage from its peoples.. In the late Soviet period Ukrainian cities such as Kiev and Kharkov became central hubs of Soviet student and worker exchanges with people from Arab and African socialist states and later Vietnam and Afghanistan and other countries in the “second world.” Global migration patterns have continued with refugee crises and the opening of Soviet borders that followed the end of the Cold War. Ukraine's

unique legacy of regional migration systems enabled a variety of these newer global mobility patterns.

Although this Soviet legacy is important, the story of refugees and asylum seekers in Ukraine begins with the European Union. There, the Ukraine long fought for a 2014 accession agreement that makes it for the foreseeable future a borderland to the EU. Like Morocco, Turkey, Mexico, and Indonesia, Ukraine represents a country that migrants and asylum seekers seek out in order to transit to a more secure destination in bordering Global North states in Europe, North America, and Australia (Düvell and Vollmer 2009). Thus, while Ukraine hosts hundreds of thousands of tourists and visitors and 40,000 international students per year (Ghosh 2008), it does not at first appear to resemble a country of immigration—and certainly not on the scale of western European receiving states. The only state census data from 2001 accounts for 748,037 foreigners, or about 2% of the 48 million population (see Ghosh 2006).<sup>45</sup> Thus, Ukraine provides at least a “crucial case” (Gerring 2007) for understanding the limits for asylum by social exclusion in new countries of destination (see Calavita 2005).

People from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East come and stay in Ukraine during their search for refuge, opportunity, or a combination of these motivations. However, refugees may not choose Ukraine as a preferred place to settle, as some studies have pointed out (Düvell and Vollmer 2009). Rather, as I also observed, most—although not all—end up more permanently in Ukraine after having fled with hopes of finding opportunities in a “European country” with human rights protections, or as one human

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<sup>4</sup> Some widely cited international estimates of up to 7 million foreigners residing in Ukraine are wildly exaggerated and politicized and miscount Russian ethnic Ukrainians as foreigners (World Bank 2001).

<sup>5</sup> State figures overlook individuals with irregular status.

rights report pointed out “when their plans to get to the EU go awry” (Human Rights Watch 2011). Only 3,022 refugees were granted refugee legal status in Ukraine as of 2010 (UNHCR 2011a); because data on asylum seeking is not available, it is impossible to say what proportion they represent of all who apply for asylum with the state.

To understand how refugees have ended up in Ukraine requires an understanding of not only Ukraine’s geographic position in Europe, but also the country’s relationship to the EU and the international refugee regime. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, newly-independent Ukraine looked west in the hopes of “rejoining Europe” (c.f. Judt 1996). Hoping to lay the foundation for a state building project, Ukraine signed a number of international agreements after 1994. This included the 1951 UN Geneva Convention on the Rights of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. By 1996, after a successful campaign to facilitate the return and reintegration of 200,000 formerly deported Crimean Tatars, the UNHCR instituted an international system of asylum that began granting refugee status to a few hundred refugees per year from all over the world.<sup>6</sup> Like prior Eastern and Southern European acceding to the EU (Leitner 1997), a range of EU external policies have reconfigured political power between the EU and the EU-hopeful member country, demanding Ukraine implement a range of reforms such as in the area of security through the detention of third country nationals. Shevel’s (2012) in-depth study of postsocialist refugee policy demonstrated that weak nation-states like Ukraine—because of their contentious visions of who composes the nation and western international orientation—are more likely than other postsocialist countries to grant status to a diversity of non-“compatriot” refugees from outside the region. However, studies have not yet investigated

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<sup>6</sup> Ukraine has granted refugee status to 3022 individuals from 84 countries (UNHCR 2011).

how this broader range of external migrations and particular refugee policies impact refugees without access to state status. This dissertation focuses on asylum seekers as refugees in order to understand the impact of national and external policy on mobility. Ukraine is an ideal case study to understand why people move since it has attracted a diversity of refugees and is influenced by international policies from both East and West.

Despite many legal reforms demanded by the EU since the late 1990s, tens of thousands of asylum seekers and refugees in Ukraine continue to struggle with undocumented or irregular status.<sup>7</sup> Especially since 2006, Ukraine has been criticized by international groups for violating the human rights of refugees and migrants; they point to hate crime and the absence of social and labor protections, low refugee status recognition rates, and the absence of basic protections from *refoulement*,<sup>8</sup> and targeted extortion of those with the most vulnerable legal status by authorities. Refugees face threats of racial attacks on the street ranging from street violence organized by the far-right to institutionalized violence (see Bocheva 2010). Institutional barriers to accessing housing, work, and basic services multiply these effects (ECRE 2008).

But, is it appropriate to confine a study of international migration to any one country? A burgeoning literature on migrant transnationalism has argued against a “methodological nationalism,” and a research design that naturalizes the global regime of

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<sup>7</sup> There is an updated 2012 law On Citizenship and On Refugees, changed only slightly from its 2002 version.

<sup>8</sup> The principle of non-refoulement refers to the basic right under the Geneva Convention on the status of refugees that bars a country from expelling an asylum seeker to a country where they may face threats to their life. On refoulement in Ukraine, see Human Rights Watch (2010). Reshuffled from Soviet citizenship institutions, what the director of one NGO dubbed “institutional musical chairs. In 1996, the state forged a federal agency, State Committee on Nationality and Religion (SCNR) as the final arbitrator of refugee issues, and Migration Services (MS) to process asylum applications, which was decentralized in 2001 (Malynovskaya 2004). In 2011 both agencies were dissolved, and most matters regarding refugees subsumed under the police authority of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

nation states (see Schiller and Blanc-Szanton 1992). However, as critics have pointed out, alternative transnationalist studies that emphasize the ties of people on the move on their own may reintroduce other forms of methodological nationalism such as overlooking the role of the state as well as discounting national and local social contexts (see Koser 2007, Gabaccia 2005, c.f. Wimmer and Schiller 2003). Transnationalism studies tend to emphasize fluidity of ties with sending countries, overlooking constraints on homeward ties of refugees fleeing persecution. In sociology, immigration studies tend to reintroduce methodological nationalism by examining a group of migrants from a single or set of countries of origin, rather than focusing on social processes across groups. Despite being situated within the borders of one country, this study challenges rather than reproduces methodological nationalism by understanding the mobile and local transnational networks of migrants from many origins (Chapter 3), the impact of foreign states and international policy on refugees in Ukraine (Chapter 4), and refugees' use of resources for transnational and onsite survival strategies (Chapter 5).

### *Defining "Refugee"*

This project takes a broad definition of refugee, including but also moving beyond legal definitions of those who seek asylum from persecution outside their country. I adopt a robust interpretation, broader than the recognition granted by states and the UNHCR. Still, a vast majority of individuals interviewed for this study include international *statutory refugees* as identified by UNHCR, or those granted asylum as *state refugees* in Ukraine. First, according to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, a (statutory) refugee is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of

race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." Statutory refugees applied for asylum with UNHCR partners in the region where I conducted my research. Second, upon ratifying the Geneva Convention, states determine their own regulations for granting asylum that may or may not depart from international practices.

Those judicially defined as asylum seekers are identified throughout this study as refugees. No state or international juridical definitions are sufficient—though may be necessary—to preclude identifying one as a refugee. Statutory refugees refers to those who are identified by UNHCR based on local interpretations of the Geneva Convention. However, as some studies have indicated UNHCR policy is driven by powerful state donors, and even its refugee status determination procedure is far from perfect. It is also noteworthy that European Members of the EU are obliged to provide even stronger protections to refugees than other states under the Geneva Convention, though they have been eroded by its member states negotiations to instead award “temporary protection” to refugees during the late 1990s (see Koser 2007).

While legalistic and state-centric definitions of refugees are necessary, they are not sufficient for understanding international asylum mobility. First, on a conceptual level, relying on host states or current UNHCR practices excludes those who would have been or in fact have recently been refugees in other countries. As other studies have pointed out, refugees form a category that is socially constructed by administrative practice (Hein 1993). Furthermore, the post-Cold War period has witnessed a decline in



refugee protection. Refugee status in western countries has declined along with states willingness to offer asylum absent of viable “victims of communism.”<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile, humanitarian assistance in the Global South has developed into an aid industry for the “management of undesirables” (see Verdirame and Harrell Bond 2005, Agier 2012). Due to this decline of the international regime, refugee status is a part of a “migration-asylum nexus” in which the legal identifications of people on the move are at the mercy of states and vary across time or space (Düvell 2008; Bendel 2007). Other studies have pointed to the need for a non-legalistic definition of refugees as nominal of their migration and adaptation compared to strictly labor migrants (see Chapter 2). While aiming to adhere to this definition, in practice, some UNHCR status determination procedure has been criticized by legal scholars as but a mechanism for excluding asylum seekers with otherwise valid claims from protection in buffer countries like Egypt (Kagan 2006). As Hyndman (2000) pointed out, the invention and use of the legal category of “internally displaced person” in the 1990s coincided with international pressure via UNHCR on countries with humanitarian crises to “manage displacement” within their own borders and limit the exit of would-be refugees beyond their borders. Who is and who isn’t a refugee varies across time and space and is subject to social and political changes. Who is considered a refugee has slowly narrowed in scope since the postwar era even while it has consistently varied across countries.

A second reason I take an expansive definition of refugees is based on my field observations. Of course, at the least the 7% of asylum seekers, who later qualify as

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<sup>9</sup> For example, this decline began in Europe with states granting only limited forms of temporary asylum status to Bosnian Serbs in the 1990s. In the 2000s, states such as the UK also placed limits on granting asylum to those who entered with a documented status (Koser 2007).

refugees, should be considered refugees due to their original experience with flight remained the same. Moreover, in the context of low recognition rates, an unknown number of statutory refugees receiving aid from UNHCR never approach the state with claims to asylum (see Chapter 5). Conversely, the few granted status by the state may not have approached UNHCR for assistance with their application for lack of trust, need, or knowledge of UNHCR assistance. In all, 76% of this study's participants entered Ukraine as a country of first arrival, without any prior refugee legal status, escaping persecution by whatever means and applying for asylum with the state or with the UNHCR only when their visa registration expired. They may have first arrived as one of the 40,000 international student visas issued per year to students from 131 countries, on a short term tourist visa, or until 2014, through the porous borders or via the visa-free regime with all but one other former Soviet countries. Because of this variability, the definition of refugee used in this paper is taken on a case-by-case basis by the researcher out of those who approach UNHCR for assistance, combining a subjective understanding of persecution determined via refugees' personal narratives, as well as secondary sources for the objective conditions in their home countries. For these reasons, I define as a *refugee* an *asylum seeker who has lodged a claim with UNHCR who I have independently determined as having a refugee claim* according to independent objective and subjective evaluations, as considered through my interview process and/or UNHCR's own case files.

## 1.2 Research Methods

Utilizing mixed qualitative methods, this dissertation is largely based on in-depth interviews with refugees. Observation, archival data, and expert interviews triangulated and supplemented these data.

The fieldwork spanned fourteen months mostly from September 2010 through June 2011, but beginning in 2009 and concluding in 2012. Multi-sited field research focused on three of the larger cities in Ukraine: Kiev, Kharkov and Odessa.<sup>10</sup> These three urban areas are located in the center, east, and south of Ukraine, and were selected for their total population size and historic diversity, but largely for their role as the largest hosts of recognized refugees and as cities in regions accepting most asylum applications.<sup>11</sup> In each city, I recruited and conducted interviewees as well as conducted (mostly nonparticipant) observation at the offices of legal and social aid NGOs partnering with the UNHCR. I also conducted fieldwork outside of these institutional contexts, recruited interviewees at various markets and shops where refugees worked, and visited refugee housing centers and homes.

Following this research design, four types of field data were collected: (1) semi-structured interviews with refugees, (2) observation in refugee community and institutional settings, (3) archival data collection at legal rights organizations, and (4) expert interviews and organizational documents. Thus, evidence includes information

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<sup>10</sup> In addition, officials and refugees were interviewed in the city of Vinnitsa and Zakarpattya Oblast that borders several EU countries. For the sake of confidentiality, when discussing rich descriptions of the lives of research participants, the name of the location of each refugee has been removed from all descriptions in addition to giving each individual a pseudonym. An analysis of refugee experiences in each of three cities may be useful for policy and studies based on this research, but would not be able to use rich and accurate descriptions of refugees' past experiences and circumstances.

<sup>11</sup> See UNHCR 2012.

collected from multiple stakeholders, ranging from personal conversations within and observation of refugee communities, observation of the work of organizations providing services to refugees, and expert interviews and documents of state authorities and international agencies. In all however, data collection focused on highlighting the social forces in individual refugees' migration life histories. First, much of the personal narrative data comes from 93 semi-structured and life history interviews with refugees. Interviews with refugees provided the foundational data for this study across research questions on networks, policies, and survival strategies in refugee migration. Participants came from twenty-five countries across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa (three or more respondents originated from Afghanistan, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Russia—especially Chechnya--Iran, Palestine, Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and Ethiopia). A vast majority of interviews were conducted by the author in his native languages English and Russian, though several times trusted volunteer guides and interpreters were used for speaking Farsi, Arabic, and French. Interviews, which varied in length between fifteen minutes and two hours, were recorded when participants provided consent and noise conditions permitted. When recording was not feasible, interviews were typed from detailed notes the same day. Throughout, clear consent and identification of the interviewer's identity as a researcher was given, to preclude any confusion of the interviewer as a representative of UNHCR or the state.

Interviews varied in length and content. The lengthier and detailed interviews included immigrant life histories with seventeen trusted respondents (Chapter 3, 5). One focus group was conducted with a convenience sample of twelve participants from five

African countries (Chapter 4). Most other interviewees were approached with requests for follow-up interviews typically several months after the initial interview, and were successfully conducted with seven participants. The purpose of the follow-up interviews was to enable an in-depth understanding of refugees' migration histories (Chapter 3), experiences with refugee policies (Chapter 4), survival strategies (Chapter 5), and their motivations for settlement or onward mobility (Chapters 3,4, and 5). I paid close attention to a range of emerging themes, though the structure of interviews loosely followed the guide in Appendix 1.

A second—and secondary, for the purposes of this study—method used was observation in community and institutional settings. In all, 300 pages of single-spaced notes were recorded in a journal on a near daily basis. Here, I draw on 300 hours of interviews and ethnographic observation. Observation was conducted in institutional and community settings. On one hand, research in community settings was conducted at homes and refugee centers as well as workplaces and community spaces such as cafes. Observation supplemented refugee interviews as they shed light on a broad range of actors in participants' communities, enabling a deeper understanding of social dynamics structuring the networks and resources that drive the aspirations that participants told me about during interviews (Chapter 3 and 5). On the other hand, an institutional ethnography was conducted during recruitment of participants. The institutional settings included mostly UNHCR partnering NGOs that I had officially approached and obtained access, one in every city. In addition, some independent observation of state centers and camps such as the SMS and TAC in each of the three field sites and in the western border

region of Zakarpattya. I gained entry to NGOs by establishing long-term relationships during my earliest visits. I subsequently visited at least twice per week, volunteering with small issues such as translation. I obtained permission or affiliation from at least one UNHCR independent partner organization working in each city, planning and obviating much of the problems of accessing “invisible actors” and aid groups in international research on refugee policy (Harell-Bond and Voutira 2007). Institutional observations provided an insider view of not only RSD legal interviews, but also on-the-ground international aid policymaking on local integration of refugees (Chapter 4). It also allowed the researcher to discuss direct experiences I observed with participants later on during my independent interviews.<sup>12</sup>

A third and related source and method of data collection included archival data. Some key organizations granted me confidential access to refugee case files or documents from refugee status determination interviews. I also observed some refugee status determination (RSD) interviews by these NGOs providing legal assistance to asylum seekers. For 250 hours, I conducted part-time volunteer interpreting, document editing, and general consulting with NGOs—most of them implementing partners of UNHCR. More important than their archives, these organizations provided access to recruiting recently arrived refugees for interviews. The purpose of these affiliations was largely to provide a space for independent interviews, though the archival materials also proved useful. Interviews in institutional settings enabled the researcher to speak with

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<sup>12</sup> Chapter 4 uses only a small part of this data but begins to apply Dorothy Smith’s approach to understanding the experiences of marginalized people. Institutional ethnography applies a “sociology for people” to study how different gender or other social relations are reproduced through “objectified knowledge” embedded in organizations’ administrative priorities and social schemas, or “ideological codes” (Smith 1990a).

refugees on a semi-official basis before and after the completion of RSD interviews conducted by NGO staff. These positions enabled me to make contact with refugees as an independent researcher.<sup>13</sup> I entered the field through these “safe space” settings (Gitlin 1994). These NGO offices provided a desirable field entry point since they facilitated a point of first contact with many refugees and vulnerable migrants that would not be available through community ethnography. Though I clearly identified myself as an outsider rather than a staff member at each organization for NGO-based interviews (see Table 1), my point of entry limited some of my initial rapport as having ties to an organization associated with the refugee regime. Still, my volunteer work at NGOs also provided for participatory action research opportunities, developing my rudimentary knowledge of local legal processes and thus allowing my consultation and referrals for refugees I spoke to outside these settings to refer to a broader range of human rights groups. The institutional recruitment setting also provided a level of trust such as to demonstrate that the researcher is a state agent. The link to NGOs (rather than UNHCR) allowed me to give back to both organizations and refugees, and provide some limited ad hoc advice and services to NGOs.

A fourth and final method of data collection included expert interviews (see Table 2). These interviews provided a fourth and official view of discourse from top state and international officials. Twenty-one interviews included officials of UNHCR, several of its contracting NGOs and independent NGOs, IOM, Ukrainian and European think tanks, policy experts, refugee associations, as well as state agencies such as the

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<sup>13</sup> In the case of six key informants, I was able to conduct both RSD observation and independent interviews.

border guards (BGU) and offices taking asylum applications (SMS). Follow-ups also yielded secondary data in the form of reports, including NGO program activity reports and UNHCR data on refugee populations and resettlement. These data provided reports towards understanding the intricacies of not only official discourse but also a contrast to policy practices in international as well as state refugee and migration policy (Chapter 4). In all, triangulation of these four types of evidence not only makes these data verifiable and valid, but also provides snapshots of the links between personal, social, and political levels of refugee affairs at the personal and institutional levels.

The twelve refugee personal narratives detailed in the following chapters approximate but do not seek to statistically represent the demographic characteristics of refugees in Ukraine. Instead, they were selected because they provided the best data for describing mechanisms formative of refugee motivations to move.

### **1.3 Researcher position**

Before addressing the epistemological approach informing this study, it is important to locate and reflect on the relationship of the researcher in the field. For more than a year, I spent time in refugee communities and local organizations—at least three months in each city. I spoke with Afghan workers at bustling street markets, accompanied Iraqi families to their meetings with aid groups, and attended meetings of ad hoc refugee groups at camps. I often visited urban centers where many refugees lived and markets and shops where they worked. In one city I was a roommate to several longtime refugees residents. My primary field identities included being an American but



near-native Russian speaker, Ukrainian expatriate, former refugee, racially visible in Ukraine, student, and scholar.

First and foremost, I entered the field facing basic barriers to research abroad. Communication with people to whom I have various cultural barriers and who occupy vulnerable legal statuses in several countries, in addition to trauma as refugees, all made field research difficult. Beyond cultural factors, limits on my time in each of the three major field sites made many kinds of ethnographic research impossible. Thus, I took a two-pronged field strategy of entering the field at both the institutional and community level. However, it was difficult to anticipate the ways in which my very social location would pose ethical puzzles and shape research in this study. Most of the time, I needed to be aware of or negotiate my identity on one hand as a U.S. American, scholar or researcher, affiliate of a refugee NGO, male young adult, and on the other hand as a native Russian-speaker, Ukrainian expatriate, and racially marked, cultural outsider.

My identity and self-presentation had both benefits and drawbacks in community as well as institutional settings. In refugee community settings, particularly with English-dominant refugees, I tended to present myself more as a scholar, asking many questions about not only refugees' culture; I also played up my outsider identity by asking questions about Ukrainian and local customs and events. A measure of openness about my occupational status as a student—especially with longtime resident and Russian-speaking refugees—made up for my disadvantage as an American—an identity that elicits cold war-era tropes that also queues refugees' false hopes about a link to help them across the Atlantic. Tied up in these outsider identities was my “non-Slavic” appearance (olive-toned skin combined

with black and curly hair) likely made me perceived as a racial outsider amongst Russian ethnics. However, it also may have made it easier for some refugees to share their experiences as racial outsiders in Ukraine. In the rare occasions some inquired about my ethnic identity, or “nationality” in post-Soviet space, I found that my mixed Jewish identity had little effect on interviews. An outsider identity partly mitigated issues about not only “racial matching” but also cultural barriers. However, my identity as a younger male made it difficult to gain access to female interview respondents (18% of total).<sup>14</sup>

While my main position was that of an American and scholarly researcher in refugee communities, my insider identity also facilitated other kinds of access. Being a fluent Russian speaker made observation possible, especially in institutional contexts and in interviews with Russian-dominant refugees—who include beyond those from former Soviet countries. My identity as a Ukrainian expatriate and professional, however, combined to lead many refugees and organizations’ staff to assume I had near-native legal, bureaucratic, and cultural knowledge of the legal system. Still, this setback was negotiable when I benefited from revealing my American citizenship. Much of the time, however, neither country of origin nor citizenship denied me access to community respondents given the relatively westward-oriented geopolitical orientation of Ukraine and of the vast majority of those seeking asylum in Ukraine. To give back to communities and some organizations with whom I interacted, I volunteered translation and interpreting assistance at NGOs and provided ad hoc legal referrals for refugees to independent human rights organizations for those who were denied assistance with UNHCR-affiliated organizations.

My malleable distant yet close position to my research subjects also brought up

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<sup>14</sup> On women refugees in Ukraine, see Palascios’ (2012) full length documentary film.

interpersonal issues of power when collecting personal narratives and these could not be resolved on a micro level through service. As a Ukrainian expatriate personally privileged with U.S. refugee status, I found personal relationships to subjects more important than I had anticipated. A motivation for my own journey was to learn from those who fled to a new country and transformed city (and on one occasion even the same neighborhood) from which my own family had departed nearly two decades earlier. For instance, one participant, whom I befriended, lamented to me after an interview:

“Life is crap that we cannot be brothers. Just because we’re born from different wombs? Or is it just this world is such crap that I cannot go anywhere....Its not just because of money, its because of papers. You can come here with your bourgeois passport, and I could never visit you...and I cannot even go home...I will always love Palestine...Though I will live there with my sickness, I cannot die there. Instead I am here in the damn cold. I am *chuzhoy* (foreign/other) for [many] years now....Sometimes I do not even recognize myself.”

Though this particular exchange is an extreme and unique example of power in field research based on my positionality as a Jewish émigré from the former Soviet Union, it illustrates the broader importance of the relationship between researcher and subject for eliciting situated knowledge that can point to broader social processes. But these relationships also point toward an epistemological challenge and an intentional approach taken by this study.

#### **1.4 Epistemological Approach**

The primary method used in this study is analysis of personal narratives of refugees. Epistemological debates in sociology require a discussion on the uses of

personal narrative methods. In postwar American sociology, the use of personal narratives quickly became and today remains relegated to description, often viewed as an illegitimate and unscientific way of knowing. This epistemological Method—with a big “M”—has united the discipline at the cost of limiting the kinds of general scientific knowledge developed (Sayer 1994). Sociological research since the 1950s has been grounded in a series of taken-for-granted assumptions. Here, the Chicago School was central to building an approach that legitimated this epistemology and made it the foundation for the assimilation perspective in immigration studies (e.g. see Thomas and Zaniecki 1919).

Central to positivist epistemology is an approach that relies on assumptions from statistical methods or positivist ways of scientific knowing through generalization, originating in the natural sciences. In this case, characteristics of groups, events, or relationships can be reduced to social structures. Drawing such conclusions becomes possible by preference to the aggregation of a statistically representative number of cases from a population to represent a generalizable pattern that itself composes social theories about that population. Here, a data sample is analyzed by reducing individuals’ group characteristics (e.g., age, citizenship status, gender), in a way that is statistically representative of a broader population. For example, demographers and sociologists in international migration studies have used these methods to try to predict why people move in response to push factors from countries of origin and pull factors from destination countries (see Chapter 2, Massey 1997). In such aggregate-level positivist research, personal narratives become, at worst, anecdotal evidence to be dismissed as

lacking scientific validity, and at best, cannon fodder to selectively illustrate results harvested from legitimate quantitative modeling. While aggregate analysis has the benefit of producing quantifiable measures of macro-level social dynamics, there are several drawbacks to generalization as a method for social analysis. In the social sciences, generalization means seeking an explanation by deducing a theory from aggregate knowledge about groups, events, or relationships. As Sayer (1994: 90-94) points out, positivist aggregate-level research thus risks committing an ecological fallacy of inferring individual characteristics from aggregated descriptions of a group.

Since the 1990s, poststructuralists have mounted a challenge to positivist epistemologies. Post-structuralists criticized generalization as a form of social explanation, arguing that all knowledge is constitutive through social discourse. Social theorists such as Michel Foucault motivated studies that emerged out of the “narrative turn” in history and anthropology and challenged the universality and validity of narrative-based evidence (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslette 2006: 5-8). Critiquing the use of narrative as evidence, such as that of the Chicago School of sociology (Thomas and Zaniecki 1919), they pointed to the cultural particularity of all social phenomena. They questioned the limits of generalization as social explanation, stressing the subjectivity of *all* “stories,” especially those located in what they saw as a novel historical context of post-industrial or otherwise post-modern times. While post-structuralist perspectives point to the subjectivity inherent in narrative data forms, they fail to take into account its other qualities and the value of human agency, and how it can explain social processes (see Maynes, Pierce, and Laslette 2006: 98-100, Burawoy 1998). Poststructuralist

epistemologies overlook how narrative data can point to, not group-based behavior, but observable social processes that uncover vulnerable relations within powerful institutional relations, rendered knowable by observing underlying processes embedded within marginalized social narratives. The methodology in this study draws on traditions of using first-person narrative as evidence in the social sciences and history, locating subjectivities in social institutions from the bottom up (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 2008).

Thus, both aggregate and post-structural methods have overlooked that the purpose of social science is to explain social relationships, to expose underlying social processes. There is a mutual problem with positivist and post-structuralist epistemology that overlooks the importance of revising theory based on underlying social processes. Finding a cause rather than a correlation is a primary goal of social science. A conclusion drawn from a cause of *x on y* may not be valid simply from a correlation between two aggregate variables since generalizability between two different groups can change across space and time and the definitions of variables may vary according to their operationalization by researchers. Due to variation across space, time, political and social context, findings that demonstrate correlation are necessary but insufficient to give a causal explanation. Sayer (1994) proposes that instead of generalization, we can also explain social phenomena through *abstraction*: constructing social theories not by generalizing to groups, events, and structures, but to a pattern that identifies mechanisms driving social processes that can justify or challenge a social theory. As Abrams (1982: 194) first wrote in reference to empirical evidence such as events and social structures,

“Knowledge is achieved by abstraction. In both cases, detail is what is selected as evidence not what is given by the world” (quoted in Maynes, Pierce, and Laslette 2006: 128-9). This study *abstracts to* social processes motivating refugee onward mobility by identifying social network, refugee policy, and resource mechanisms made visible in refugees’ life histories.

The value of personal narratives then is not in their particularity, but what Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett call “hidden stories.” The sociologist C. Wright Mills observed that analyzing the relationship between biography and history may illuminate broader social forces. Moreover, such hidden stories do typically expose relationships by actors whose social standpoint (Smith 2005) has been marginalized in a society or even across borders. The experiences of categories of marginalized people of relevance here include not only “illegal immigrant” or “failed asylum seeker” but also the mistrusted refugee (Daniel and Knudsen 1995). These standpoints represent what Guinier and Torres (2009) dub a “canary in a coalmine” because such standpoints enable the observation of the underlying toxic environment in as much as it can help identify mechanisms that point to broader social ills (Guinier and Torres 2009). So, hidden stories enable “revisionist understandings of a phenomenon or event” not just because they point to “novel histories or untapped perspectives” from marginalized groups or social categories of people, but since they also have the potential to expose “social processes suppressed or deliberately hidden histories” (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 2006: 8). Abstraction enables reflection on social processes and aims towards a reflexive rather than positivist sociology (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Burawoy 1998).

The use of life histories in sociology and other social sciences has developed tools to draw linkages of immigrants across time and space (Erikson 1978, Thomas and Zaniecki 1919). At the same time, rather than understanding power within social processes (Burawoy 1998), classic immigration studies using life histories risk reducing difference and inequality to a vacuous cultural assimilation or an enveloping migrant transnationalism (to be addressed in Chapter 2).<sup>15</sup> The methodology used in this study seeks to use life histories as a reflexive method, but is guided by semi-structured interviewing, that seeks to build and extend theory rather than construct positivist science (see Burawoy 1998). The theory that this dissertation extends and challenges is *migrant transnationalism*. Given the attack on the refugee regime and remote control of asylum by North states, research on forced migration must begin by rejecting the mistrust of refugees that is endemic to society (Daniel and Knudsen 1995).<sup>16</sup> For this reason, this study uses personal narratives of refugees as its primary methodology, collected through semi-structured interviews, ethnographic observation, or archival data from UN asylum case files. Certainly, much of this case study remains situated knowledge (Smith 2005). However, these personal narratives represent a starting point to better understand mechanisms driving social networks, policy consequences, and survival strategies central to international migration dynamics.

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<sup>15</sup> The immigration life history approach tends to privilege U.S. paradigms on assimilation or more recently focus on globalization, representing migration in terms of individuals planting “roots” or their ties removed from context as “flows” (see Hoerder 2002).

<sup>16</sup> This requires acknowledging but seeing beyond pure trauma and victimhood in expressions of refugee subjectivity, as has been the case of much psychological research on refugees and aid (see Harell-Bond 2002).



The layout of the rest of the dissertation is as follows: Chapter 2 positions its guiding questions within the literature on international migration, focusing on why people move and sustain migration along with policy related to “new migrations” to Europe. Chapter 3 looks at how time, agency, political, and social factors drive the social networks refugees can tap into upon arrival. Chapter 4 looks at international and state refugee policies that confront those seeking refuge at the borders of Europe. Chapter 5 shows how refugees and asylum seekers mobilize limited resources in pursuit of diverse survival strategies.

## Chapter 2

### Studying Forced Migration in Europe: A Literature Review

The movement of people across borders has often been simplified into metaphors about “roots” (see Handlin 1952) or “flows”. In recent scholarship, the broad spectrum of migration debates across the social sciences has conceptualized the causes, processes, and consequences of—and on—migration by stressing spaces as either departure or destination sites. Sociologists in particular focus migration studies in debates about the drivers of assimilation and migrant transnationalism—the maintenance of cross-border ties. Still, alternative directions of sociological research, particularly in Europe, have developed to investigate international migration and refugee mobility as related social processes in global perspective (Collyer *et al* 2012, Van Haer 2008). Citizenship studies have explored the role of asylum for nation building, and have delved into role of international humanitarian institutions in contingent migration processes. This chapter develops these lines of research, reviewing the literature in sociology on international migration and other social sciences, pointing to gaps in research on refugee networks, international refugee policy, and migration survival strategies of refugees.

Migration studies in sociology and history, as well as anthropology, geography, and political science have sought to understand the causes, consequences of, and policies on international migration. Specifically, studies have sought to understand why and how people move, the consequences of movement within societies and across borders, and the causes and consequences of migration policies. Debates among American historians have long focused around the second question, viewing immigration as a process of being

“uprooted” from one location, or on “transplanting” roots to a destination (Handlin 1952, Bodnar 1987). The Chicago School of sociology developed these debates around the conditions that immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe departed and took with them to the U.S., creating a conflict between values of the Old World as a barrier for acculturation in the New World (Thomas and Zaniecki 1919). Their contemporaries, Theodore Blegen and George Stephenson of the “Minnesota School” of immigration and refugee studies (Gabaccia 2005) provided an alternative approach to American immigration, analyzing the personal narratives of letters of working class immigrants to demonstrate how they sustain links with families in Europe. Yet, sociologists in the 1960s and 1970s retained an assimilation view, this time by focusing on immigrant enclaves and the cultural markers immigrants retained there but then left and shed for a “symbolic ethnicity” in the melting pot of the nation of immigrants (Gans 1979).

Revisionist historiography has begun to revisit these problematic paradigms, paying closer attention to the role of empire and colonialism in the history of immigration to and settlement of the U.S. (e.g. Spickard 2009). Though sociologists have developed theories of exclusion based on “segmented assimilation” (Portes and Zhou 1993), immigration sociology today remains dominated by neoclassical debates on migrants’ social incorporation or integration into the the nation (Alba and Nee 2002). This hegemonic approach in migration research in U.S. even copied in Europe (see Brubaker 2001) has often been pitted against an emerging line of studies on how immigrants sustain “transnational” cross-border links to countries of origin (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2006), assuming that integration and transnationalism are mutually exclusive lines of

analysis. Thus, immigration studies continues to rely on assimilation as a paradigm by which immigrants integrate into a “salad bowl” or other model of diversity (Alba and Nee 2002, Brubaker 2001).<sup>17</sup>

Recent transnational migration studies have pointed out that there is a novelty of migration flows in the age of globalization, observing that recent immigrants sustain contact between the “here” of destinations and “there” of places of origin (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2006, Portes et al 1999). One of the central challenges to these debates has come from political sociologists, who have sought to bring the state back into transnational migration studies from the point of sending countries (Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004, Koser 2007), pointing out that migrants’ cross-border ties are not new and never sustained since they are structured by nation-states whose purpose, even in in the age of globalization remains to “cage populations.” Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004) criticize migrant transnationalism perspectives specifically for their failure to see the role of nations and states of exiles’ countries of origin. However, the political sociological literature has not paid enough attention to the role of migration dynamics, agency in refugee decisions, and the globalization of state power in emerging receiving countries. Political sociologists have begun to challenge transnational migration perspectives by looking at refugee mobility in particular (Koser 2007). Yet, few empirical studies have looked at refugee migration and international refugee policy or agency in forced migration. A secondary goal of this chapter is to extend theories that challenge and build on the literature on migrant transnationalism (see Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). It aims to

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<sup>17</sup> Still, critical assimilation theories point to a “segmented assimilation” of social inequality outcomes for different immigrant groups (Portes and Zhou 1993).

fill this lacuna in American debates on immigrant incorporation by linking them with debates on migration causes and policies and studies on the “new geographies of migration” to Europe.

The goal of this chapter is to lay the ground for later empirical chapters with a literature review that links American-oriented debates on migration generalist literatures on the history, demography, economics, and politics of migration, and also develop studies on migration and refugees at the borders of Europe. This first section provides an overview of the hegemony of U.S. immigration studies focusing on the broader question of why people move. The second section introduces and critiques neoclassical perspectives to why people move, with a focus on forced migration and political economy of refugee mobility. The third section examines recent European debates over “new migrations” to Europe since the 1990s and reviews migration management institutions and the role of the international refugee regime. The final section outlines three gaps in migration research that this study addresses. Throughout this review, I give examples of case studies from Latin America and on camps in Africa and South Asia. However, I largely focus on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in order to provide deeper contextual background to the case I present in the following chapters.

## **2.2 Why People Move: Beyond Neoclassical Perspectives**

Why do people move, and how is migration sustained over time? This section focuses on world historical, demographic, and economic literature and identifies their assumptions. Questions of why people move have largely been addressed by demographers and economists. Demographic and neoclassical economic theories analyze

push factors from sending societies and pull factors to receiving societies. Here, social capital and new family theories link push and pull factors with individuals' resources to move.

Scholars have developed a range of theories that have become canonical to studies of international migration, such as network theory and cumulative causation theory (Massey *et al* 1993, 1998, Cohen 2004, Ryo 2013). Many of these explanations have in common contentious neoclassical economic assumptions that motivation for migration can be understood as choices made by rational economic actors who elect to move when such decisions maximize individual self-interest. Rational actor perspectives view mobility as a two-way process between sending and receiving countries and risk overlooking theories of power and the role of forced migration. In order to make the link to forced migration and understand migration as a structured process with multiple outcomes, this section focuses on research that takes into account state power in transnational perspective. After overviewing classical and political sociology theories of why people move, this section reviews the role of EU policy and states in the international refugee regime and recent European perspectives on international migration.

Perhaps the most sweeping studies of long distance human mobility have been undertaken by world historians, who view migration as a natural and largely unchanging feature of societies. Long-distance migration, they have demonstrated, is not an aberration but a constant in social life, as evidenced by premodern history. Today, as in the pre-industrial era, only 3% of the world's population migrates across long distances in their lifetime (Manning 2005). Manning (2005) points to archeological and linguistic

evidence documenting migration between ancient Mesopotamia and east Africa, revealing that long-distance mobility is not only historically common, but universal across societies. The persistence of nomadic societies of pastoralists and herders and existence of circular labor movement demonstrate that long-distance mobility was common before the modern era, despite the regulation of migration by empires and states (Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History 2007). While providing impressive historical depth, one setback of world history accounts is a tendency to ‘naturalize’ human mobility, without specifying *which* people may move, why, and the consequences of policies of the modern state (see Zolberg 1989).<sup>18</sup>

Neoclassical economists and geographers were the first to try to explain why people move. A review of economic and demographic theories is outside the scope of this study. In short, however, it can be said that economic perspectives emphasize the drivers of mobility by either the supply or the demand of labor market forces (Korineck Entwisle and Jampaklay 2005; Piore 1979; Frank 1969), while neo-Malthusians (Teitelbaum 2007) are at odds with other demographers (e.g. Massey 1998) about the population pressures that accumulate to spur mass movements (Teitelbaum 2007: 57). As such, neoclassical economists and demographers largely focus on macro-level push and pull factors as a result of the “invisible hand” of the labor market or population pressures.

Still, developing a socio-economic explanation of pull factors does not necessarily reflect attention to both the role of the state in the control of mobility and the forced

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<sup>18</sup> Nomadism and pastoralism have declined precisely because of the restrictions on mobility placed by contemporary nation-states across and within their borders (Dictionary of Transnational History 2007).

migration induced by states.<sup>19</sup> The focus dominating economic theories of migration ignores the influence of political factors and social networks in sustaining migration processes, as Gramsuck and Pessar (1991) found for Dominican women in the U.S., who found their ties severed between two political and social “islands” of home and destination (see also Mahler and Pessar 2006). Such social networks of pioneer migrants may be developed as resources for refugees during times of crisis and displacement.

### *Theories of Forced Migration*

In addition to demand-driven theories, Wallerstein’s (1974) world systems theory stresses the social reproduction of economic power relations across space and time.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it parts with other economic theories in its global scope as well as its account of the social origins of economic inequality. With “the great U-turn” of the U.S. economy in the 1970s and the emergence of a “Washington Consensus” over U.S.-led development around the world, critical studies turned to investigating the role of dislocation of workers from the global “periphery” due to the spread of neoliberal development projects that linked them ever more to “core” economies of the world (Skeldon 1997, Sassen 1988, 1991, Portes and Walton 1981). Yet, recent migration research based on world systems theory has paid little attention to the processes driving world system development, (Fernandez-Kelly and Massey 2007, Massey et. al. 1998). As Schmitter Heisler argues:

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<sup>19</sup> For instance, employees of the Iowa meatpacking plant raided by U.S. immigration authorities in 2008 had false documents issued to them by their employers. Instead of punishing employers who recruited much of this cheap labor force from war-torn Guatemala from social networks established during refugee flights during that conflict. The U.S. Immigration Customs and Enforcement agency deported hundreds of workers from Postville (Cooper 2007), overlooking the refugee claims had but are rarely acknowledged in the U.S.

<sup>20</sup> See Chase Dunn (1995) for a review of world systems research and theoretical debates.



“although the causes of migration may be primarily economic, in a globalized economy, once set in motion migration patterns are sustained and perpetuated by ‘well-established regional networks of trade, production, investment, and communication’” (Schmitter Heisler 2007: 91-92, also see Massey *et al* 1998).

While the consequences of globalization from above are engaged in this account, the causes of migration may be taken for granted: here the world system may appear as self-perpetuating without account for the political and social causes of international mobility.

Democratization, neo-institutional, and world polity perspectives in both sociology and political science stress the utility of international forces as vehicles for global convergence and local progress. A “boomerang effect” (Keck and Sikkink 1998) and similar effects (Risse and Sikkink 2003) may result from backlash from authorities. Still, transnational advocacy networks are the normative force assumed to be leveraging human rights. These forces push for social change when international organizations lobby for changes in state policies, which are assumed to eventually bring about change to local social relations. The assumptions of neo-institutional analysis thus imply a global march towards human rights in areas such as refugee policy, dependent on a strategic lobbying of international advocates (see Shevel 2011) rather than the unequal global power relations that international institutions may bring with them. Despite the benefits for explaining convergence across states, democratization perspectives are unable to explain retrenchment of human rights that has persisted and expanded alongside international human rights norms in countries undergoing postsocialist change.

A social constructionist perspective provides one way to resolve the problem of retrenchment of refugee protection. Since the postwar period, forced migration has been governed by a refugee regime as part of a system at the margins of the United Nations (Loescher *et al* 2008, Zolberg *et al* 1992, Malikki 1995). Following World War II, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) was created to coordinate the international protection of refugees under the 1951 UN Geneva Convention on refugees—displaced persons who crossed national borders for reasons related to religious, political, or ethnic persecution. Today, UNHCR operates in 120 countries and, especially since the Cold War, has emerged as the international authority over international humanitarian issues. “Illegality regimes” reproduce the criminalization of migrants and disseminate knowledge that strips rights from people on the move (De Genova 2002). This politicization of migration (Castels and Miller 2000) has consequences for the way refugees are labeled in Europe, and the litmus tests placed on forced displacement as opposed to voluntary migration (e.g. UNHCR 2010). Slippage in the way concepts are defined in legal theory and practice (Kagan 2006) may explain the distance between protection and legal practice in the refugee regime.

In addition to discursive reasons for distance between goals and practices of the refugee regime, organizational and structural explanations also have to be considered. Social constructionist theories consider the role of international organizations in reproducing power relations. Sociologists studying refugee governance have pointed out how UNHCR’s dilemma hinges on a balance between its humanitarian mandate and the “realpolitik” interests of donor states (Loescher 2008). International refugee studies

examining the consequences of aid have stressed that the experiences of refugees are mediated by private aid agencies without accountability, resulting in their management of “undesirables” by obscuring irregular mass encampments from public visibility (Agier 2010). Others have identified a gap between the UNHCR’s own self-representation and practices as “janus-faced humanitarianism” (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005). Still, the structural mechanisms producing the disparity between UNHCR’s mandate and outcomes have rarely been studied. While the refugee studies literature is global in scope, the focus of research remains geographically divided. On one hand, covering the work in the making of refugee camps in the Global South, few studies of encampment have investigated reception in transit countries. On the other hand, the applied literature on refugee resettlement looks at how programs in receiving societies in Europe and North America reproduce and contest refugee subordination.<sup>21</sup>

Political sociologists of migration, have pointed out that globalization refers not only to economic interdependencies facilitated by international institutions but also to social processes in the world system. As Aristide Zolberg (1981) pointed out, changes in the world system global cannot be explained without taking into account the forced migration of refugees and its control by nation states. Zolberg’s (1981, 1989) conversations with Wallerstein eventually developed into a debate amongst political sociologists about whether and which capacity states have to control international

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<sup>21</sup> Various debates on the social impacts of refugee and immigrant settlement in western receiving societies revolve around the effects of ethnic and civic organizations in Western Europe (Wahlbeck 1998, Zitter and Pearl 2000, Lawrence and Hardy 1999) and state and NGO involvement in North America (Bloemraad 2006, Nawyn 2008, Ong 2003, Tomlinson & Egan 2002). But these debates do not engage the larger role of international organizations in refugee reception in nontraditional receiving societies. Recent research on Eastern European countries looks at the comparative effects of state building on refugee policy. Comparing Russia and Ukraine, Shevel (2011, 2006) argues that the scope of refugee inclusion depends on the scope of conflict and consensus over inclusion in the nation and a strategic role of international institutions.

migration (e.g. Hollifield 2004, Freeman 1994). Can nation states control the flow of people under certain conditions? If controls on migration are bound to fail, why is that so? Gary Freeman (2004) argues that despite variation across different states, time, and type of migration, governments can enforce control of “unwanted” migration. Despite the liberalization of the movement of capital through globalization, states continue to have control over the movement of people in new ways, and continue to determine inclusion or exclusion in society through national citizenship. This is the view in political science of institutionalists who see the state as retaining control of social membership via national sovereignty (as well as admission and exclusion to state territory, also see Joppke 1996) by limiting the definition of citizenship in terms of who is desirable and who is undesirable—i.e. “illegal.” Other scholars argue that states are caught in a bind between liberalization and control. Here, a “liberal paradox” results between states’ interests to maintain an open society to retain a “competitive advantage,” while at the same time maintaining legitimacy in the face of “powerful political forces that push them towards closure” (Hollifield 2004). Critical political scientists and sociologists have pointed to a contradiction between states’ restrictive migration policies on one hand and policies that result in states relegating formal citizenship to its subjects as markers of national inclusion and exclusion (Hollifield 2004, Hailbronner Martin and Motomura 1998).

In this setting, the international refugee regime under UNHCR serves to balance between international legitimacy to human rights and political pressures on states (Loescher 2008). Some European sociologists disagree about UNHCR policy as a de facto human rights instrument (Koser 2007; Lavaenex 2006). Instead, such critical

studies have shown that the decreasing rates and quality of refugee protection (such as the negotiation of only temporary protection to Bosnian refugees from Kosovo) reflect the resurgent power of states to limit access to refuge. As Khalid Koser argues (2007:242), in the 1990s, the “balance of power between states and the international refugee regime has shifted” further from human rights obligations to refugee protections rights to privilege national interests (Koser 2007).

*Refugee as Legal and Social Status*

There also remains a longstanding academic debate between legal and political sociologists about the definition of a refugee. The debate revolves around the salience of state status of a refugee status, asylum seeker, or immigrant (as well as other related identities and statuses such as temporary worker, trafficking victim, student, tourist, or “illegal alien”) and how the granting or not granting of refugee status to legal asylum seekers affects their life chances. Most research has tended to assume that the impact lies with the assumed power of states to determine if migration is forced or voluntary. Other commentators argue that the boundary between forced and voluntary migration is more fluid, with many refugees also seeking better economic conditions while economic migrants may be displaced by uneven economic development, and with both needing to rely on human smugglers due to restrictive quotas on both immigration and asylum (Düvell 2005). Some sociologists argue that beyond *nominal* social or legal constructions in receiving states, refugees have a *real* relationship to the state due to their experience with expulsion and flight from the territory of other states. Realists and constructionists have debated whether and to what extent refugees’ experience with mobility and

adaptation varies from that of other migrations (Hein 1993). However, there is little debate that changes to asylum since the late 1990s have largely decimated not only asylum seekers' right to stay but also the right to move (see Hayter 2000, Lloyd, Mitchelson, and Burrridge, 2012).

Hein (1993) and Koser (2007) have argued from a *realist* view, that refugees may be defined not only because a state recognizes them but because refugees share a relationship to the state that is fundamentally different from other migrants, and from legal migrants especially. First, refugees experience forced mobility at the hands of sending states that cannot provide them protection from ethnic, religious, or political persecution, and many then become stateless. Second, limits on the social ties of the displaced disconnect them from communities in home countries available to voluntary migrants.<sup>22</sup> Third, instead of obtaining legal and social benefits from states, state power over the international regime lead refugees to have a disadvantageous relationship to the host state. For example, since the 1990s the UK and some European states have denied asylum claims for failure to present a valid passport that they take to be evidence of use of smugglers to enter. In fact, many refugees fleeing persecution to Europe, since the lowering resettlement quotas and restrictive entry policies do use the services of smugglers at some point on their journey (Koser 2007, c.f. Salt 2000 on economic migrants and trafficking and smuggling). Declining opportunities for both asylum seekers and refugees that are recognized by destination countries may differ in some North countries. At the same time, the decline of the international regime the benefits of state

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<sup>22</sup> On the impact of fractured social ties on refugees' transnational ties see Koser and Lutz (1997) on Bosnian study of refugees across Southern Europe.

refugee status render any appropriate definition of refugees independent that of state and international legal status those displaced across borders fleeing persecution (see Kagan 2006).

Responding to changes since the end of the Cold War, sociologists have engaged debates over migrant transnationalism, arguing that studies need to “bring the state back in” to understand whether and how migrants maintain political ties across borders (Wagner and Fitzgerald 2004). Scholars such as Saskia Sassen maintain that we observe a variation in the erosion of citizenship and the state across different countries. This variation occurs according to the unevenness of economic development policies among Global North countries, with attempts at regulating migration intensifying by those particular countries who perceive they are losing their sovereignty (Sassen 1996). Other scholars of transnational citizenship and migration have argued that across the industrialized world, national states are being replaced by international or transnational institutions as the guarantees of rights by a postnational citizenship (Soysal 1994, see Bloemraad *et al* 2008). They are enabled by the rise of regional global governance bodies that bring states together to set migration policies, such as in the area of refugees through the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (Loescher 2009). However, other scholars argue that political power inequities remain rooted in state power and that what reformers claim as evidence of change in power is only a shift in how states appear to exercise power exerted at and beyond their territories (see Fitzgerald 2014). Favell and Geddes (1999) have pointed out that “both regional agreements such as NAFTA, or intergovernmental institutions such as the EU, are far from emancipatory alternatives to

the state but only rescale the state control to the supranational level.” Thus, the rescaling of governance from the national to a regional and supra-national level may be a new form of control over nation-states’ territory (Brenner 1999). Research on immigration and citizenship in Europe and North America remains largely divided between normative policy-based research on integration and transnational perspectives on cross-border ties (Bloemraad *et al* 2008). However, a common set of limitations persists, which Bloemraad *et al* (2008) identify. They call for European and North American studies to pay closer attention to the agency of refugees and immigrants in the transformation of society and to general sociological concerns with “inequality, state power, and social cohesion” (Bloemraad 2008: 170). This is the work that brings refugees closer to center of a political sociology of migration, and as argued in the introduction, requires new methodological approaches to research.

### **2.3 Asylum and the “New Migrations” to Europe**

During the 1990s, European scholars observed what was dubbed “new migrations” to western and central Europe (King 1993, Koser and Lutz 1999, Wallace *et al* 1996, see Collyer *et al* 2012). Beyond debates of the novelty, these studies looked for new patterns of migration since the collapse of the Soviet Union. These studies identified “migration systems” as longstanding links characterized by two-way mobility to receiving (European) countries from their former colonies, with European guest worker sending countries transformed by a new “geography of migration” of fluid and circular East-West movement (King 1993). The fluidity of migration assumed in these studies introduced concepts like “transit migration” to describe temporary, cross-border



movement through countries on the margins of Europe (Wallace *et al* 1996). However, these discussions of new migrations overlooked the role of the state and power relations in newly acceding countries to the European Union. Focusing on global linkages in transformations after the fall of the “Iron Curtain,” these discussions sounded alarm over “waves” of refugees from emerging conflicts, while at the same time asserting that “certain types” of immigrants—from the third world—must be circular and temporary (see Wallace *et al* 1996). Perspectives on new migrations departed from the political sociology of migration to analyze the novelty of irregular or “illegal,” those who were largely visa over-stayers in Europe.

Recent social contention over immigration provides necessary background for these scholarly debates in Europe. Following WWII, the United Nations—and individual western European countries especially—established social protections for refugees. Though the U.S. maintained slots for refugees earlier and opened channels in response to select refugee crises, it was only after the 1980 U.S. Refugee Act that the U.S. created a comparable asylum system and began admitting refugees under an separate asylum program, but one biased to (by in large at European) “victims of communism,” to parallel its existing executive system of “parole” for asylum seekers already in the U.S. Europe, meanwhile, did not develop a system for admitting refugees, with some countries more generously recognizing asylum seekers upon arrival. This policy followed regularizing those fleeing postcolonial conflicts along linkages built from colonial-era connections (e.g. the UK with Pakistan) or 1960s-1970s guest worker

programs (e.g. Germany with Turkey), maintaining links between countries in Western Europe and the Global South. However, after the collapse of state socialism and the fall of the “iron curtain” debates over immigrants and asylum policy became a mainstay of contentious politics in Europe, as media and politicians fanned public fears of millions of people already “on their way” to Europe due to the rise of “new wars” in a post Cold War new world order (see Düvell 2012).

Why is it important to study “new geographies” of migration to Europe? Under the EU’s Article 45, citizens of EU member countries<sup>23</sup> are allowed to travel and work visa-free, as well as afforded labor protections on par with the host member country’s nationals. It is then no surprise that the EU is often alluded to as an egalitarian alternative to NAFTA by immigration reformers in the U.S. (e.g. Fernandez-Kelley and Massey 2007).<sup>24</sup> Some review of historical migration policies is necessary to evaluate the broader impact of the EU on international mobility beyond the recruitment of labor within the EU. Born out of postwar turmoil to integrate western European countries, the EU extended membership and enlarged its freedom of movement zone in the 1990s and 2000. In 2004 and 2007 the EU moved to include a dozen new member countries in Eastern and Southern Europe and admit most of them to its Schengen Security Area, including former eastern bloc, Baltic states’ of the former Soviet Union, as well as Greece

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<sup>23</sup> More specifically, only citizens of EU countries that have co-signed the Schengen Treaty are allowed freedom of movement.

<sup>24</sup> See Fernandez-Kelley and Massey (2007) for an argument on EU mobility as alternative to NAFTA and U.S. immigration policies. You don’t need this footnote I don’t think. The in text citation is enough

and Mediterranean countries in Southern Europe.<sup>25</sup> However, the project of eliminating internal borders within Europe has been fraught with contention. Along with free mobility within the EU, national states unified and “externalized” restrictions on controls to the outside borders to the eastern and Southern perimeters of the EU (Lavenex 2006). Some new migration analysts understood the externalization of migration controls as a necessary, pragmatic solution to resolve abuse of the EU’s generous labor protections. Political sociologists like James Hollifield (2004) viewed the expansion of external controls as a sufficient but unnecessary solution that also evaded the core issue of liberal states’ paradox, (i.e. states need to manufacture outside threats despite a desire to level inequality from within). Free movement within Europe, critics charged, resulted in the creation of a “Fortress Europe,” with external eastern and Southern borders. Though European countries thought they controlled labor migration before the 1970s, these developments around “mixed migrations,” those that included refugees entering through new borders, fueled a longstanding broader debate that continues today: is the control of international migration “beyond control” of receiving states (see especially Freeman 1994, Jordan and Düvell 2002)?

After 2001, the “securitization” of national politics led on the one hand to the scapegoating of migrants and especially refugees inside EU countries, and on the other hand also to the consolidation of external borders through the criminalization of those seeking to access asylum on EU territory (Huysmans 2006, Hyndman and Mountz 2008). Growing “state insecurity” and problems with guaranteeing the human security of

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<sup>25</sup> Since 2010, Bulgaria and Romania have also been admitted to Schengen.

refugees from Afghanistan and Iraq in their first countries of arrival brought policies that fortified Europe's external border and eroded European standards for asylum protections (Lavenex 2001, Guild 2009). Perhaps the most important policy change was a revision of the 1990 Dublin Agreement on asylum within Europe. Redrafted in 2003, the new Dublin II Protocol demanded that countries of first arrival, in an expanding EU at the southern and eastern boundaries, were tasked with the asylum "burden" of granting refugee status to new arrivals. Immediately thereafter, other EU countries summarily began deporting asylum seekers to the first EU country of entry.

In turn, in the 2000s new member states at the margins of the EU began to "pass the buck" onward and soon the EU as a body had signed a range of return agreements with dozens of countries, giving police officials the right to quickly deport anyone who they deemed "irregular" or unauthorized entrants to the non-EU country through which they had gained access to EU territory. As one scholar observed, practices like these created a contradiction between discourse and refugee protection: "while (officially, at least) the UNHCR still speaks the language of refugee protection, the state signatories to the Geneva Convention [on the status of Refugees] start from an entirely different premise: the need to protect states from the growing international refugee burden" (Fekete 2005: 65). While legal scholars warn of violations of the basic human right to *non-refoulement*, other commentators pointed to the role of European states in "chain deportations" that reached beyond EU borders (Fekete 2005, Bouteillet-Paquet 2003). An externalization of the migration controls, they urged, has been further advanced by pushing responsibility not only onto EU member states, but also to countries just outside

EU borders. This has been accomplished through the EU's European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) along with international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) that carry out EU policies have become instrumental for carrying out the EU's foreign policies to countries largely bordering the EU.

*Characteristics of "New Migrations:" A View from Eastern Europe*

In order to situate the debate over transit migration to asylum and territory, the rest of this section will discuss the historical and geographical characteristics of the new migrations to Europe and their supposed technological and political novelty (also see Collyer Düvell and deHaas 2012: 408-411). Historical perspective suggests the new migrations are not quite new. Postcolonial migration at the borders of Europe is instead part of existing "migration systems" based on the historical circulation of people within and between socio-politically linked regions (Fawcet 1999). In Ukraine, much of central and Southern Ukraine has been part of Turkic and Ottoman migration systems in a Black Sea region since the age of Genghis Khan and his Golden Horde (King 2004). As the northern outpost of the Black Sea, "Little Russia" had also long served as a key location for trade, settlement, and empire not only of Russians since the 12<sup>th</sup> century but earlier also of ancient Scythians and Greeks, remaining a critical point of both maritime and overland migration into the 17<sup>th</sup> century heyday of the Russian empire (King 2004). The Crimean Tatars—who are indigenous to the peninsula whose name they carry and are the descendants of centuries-long circulation of peasants across to the far western outposts of the empire of Genghis Kahn—have

returned in the 1990s after forced removal under Stalin in the 1940s. More recently, temporary movement from “befriended states,” to the Soviet Union was widespread with far-reaching bilateral worker, student, and military personnel exchange programs around the world especially from the 1960s onward. Certainly, until the fall of the “iron curtain” in 1989, the ability of Soviet citizens to leave their country at all, to travel beyond the Eastern bloc was largely restricted to party officials. Contemporary patterns of movement do not exactly replicate these historical movements. At the same time, post-Soviet migration from Ukraine and other former Soviet countries has to be understood in the context of migration systems between former Soviet republics, Soviet-aligned countries in the Middle East and Africa (Afghanistan, Syria, Ethiopia, Angola, etc.), and with Eastern Bloc countries now in the EU (Collyer, Düvell, deHaas 2012: 409).

A second characteristic of “new geographies of migration” is their historical, postcolonial character as reflected not only on Europe, but also its settler states. For Europe and the U.S. especially, inequality in access to asylum and citizenship can be considered part of a system of “global apartheid,” where forced migrants from the South due to North economic and political policies are denied asylum in the North (Richmond 1994). In the U.S., for instance, undocumented migration from Latin America may be considered as a result of uneven development of longstanding policies rooted in the white supremacist settler ideology of manifest destiny (Horseman 1981). Contemporary migration to

Australia (through Indonesia and Oceania), for another recent example, from Vietnam in the 1970s and most recently from Iraq and Afghanistan, should be observed as a precarious form of movement due to displacement in military conflicts in those regions. Migration politics can thus be understood as led by foreign policy, as exemplified by the relationship between the U.S. state, its immigrants, and their home countries have long been at the center of changes in foreign relations (see Gabaccia 2012). In some recent immigration to the U.S., we observe the distancing of “migrants” as foreigners, such as by the labeling of “boat people” from the Caribbean (Haiti and Cuba), Reagan’s “foot people” from Latin America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico) and U.S.-led exiles from Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia) have been precipitated by earlier foreign policies of the destination country of those fleeing origin countries. Most recently, in 1994, the U.S. began implementing border control and militarization policies, starting with Operation Gatekeeper, to prevent the entry of mostly farmers displaced by a trade policy from Mexico (e.g. North American Free Trade Agreement, see Nevins 2001). Such historical and postcolonial character of new migration to Europe and its settler states should provide a guidepost to considering other postcolonial migrations. For instance, Chechen refugees have been displaced by conflict in Russia since the 1990s to other parts of the former Soviet Union. Although they have been found to transit to Europe due to deteriorating local conditions (Düvell 2008), they should nonetheless be understood historically as a native group to the region rather than marginalized as

a foreign “migrant” population—as Chechens often are in Russian popular discourse.

This issue of historical linkages brings us to the third, and novel, characteristic of recent “new migrations” to Europe—globalization, and, specifically, the technological changes that enable the development of new migration strategies. Communication technologies have allowed the maintenance of contact with family members and transnational social linkages across borders that allow communities to be both “here” and “there.” In addition, the Internet, mobile phones, as well as money transfer systems have allowed people on the move to share resources and information and communicate across several countries. While these new technologies, along with the development of transportation infrastructure, have enabled movement across longer distances, these technological changes have become necessary in response to use of border security and other migration control technologies.

Finally, the fourth characteristic, and one most pertinent to this study, of new migration to Europe is the proliferation of the ways in which people on the move have been labeled, especially as either labor migrants or refugees, legitimate and documented or clandestine and irregular. Immigrants have historically reflected and resisted states’ foreign policies (Gabaccia 2012). For example, following the Cold War policy of resettling “victims of communism” even after the fall of the “Iron Curtain,” over half of a million evangelical Christians were given priority and resettled to the United States from Ukraine



through the 1990s (Wanner 2007). Moreover, the “politicization of migration” in Europe (Castles and Miller 2000) since the 1990s has been a new phenomenon by which to shrink states’ refugee resettlement quotas but also deny admission to European territory to asylum seeking refugees. This is reflected in a process through which states and international organizations have expanded the plurality of ways they delimit the legal categorization of recent migrants as “temporary asylum status”; undocumented, irregular or “illegal migrants;” refugees or asylum seekers, as well as a host of temporary statuses (Huysmans 2006, Koser 2007). Here, historical legacies are also at play. Since 1924, the U.S. National Origins Quota system provided the basis for limiting immigration by the “nation of immigrants” to select Europeans deemed “white.” As Zolberg (2008) has detailed, the U.S. had favored white settlers before and after the quota system, from forced migration of racialized chattel slavery of Africans to the promotion of policies like the Bracero guest worker program from 1943 to 1964.

Furthermore, Zolberg’s foundational study of the history of U.S. immigration policy shows how the legitimacy of remote control policies originates in a humanitarian legitimacy. Zolberg (2003) showed that the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1924-1968) witnessed the creation of new categories of undesirables through a new form of migration control. Zolberg observed that “a largely neglected aspect of the history of this period” entailed “a vast expansion of the American state’s capacity to regulate movement across its borders,” not only at its borders but even “within the territory of other sovereign states”

(Zolberg 2003: 9). Still, it was some hundred years before visa screenings at consulates abroad, Zolberg found, that the foundation “remote control” was established. The U.S. Supreme Court’s 1838 *New York City vs. Miln* decision provided the legitimacy for the first federal immigration policy, one that also extended beyond its borders. Parts of the resulting 1847 Passenger Act ensured not in border controls, but rather in pressure on the shipping industry who were accused of bringing “convicts” or “paupers” to the U.S. Ships bringing too many Irish and German undesirables per ship were heavily fined. One important finding overlooked in Zolberg’s account is that companies were sanctioned on humanitarian grounds; those who could not provide passenger comfort such as requirements regarding distance between decks, and a “death tax” for carrying passengers in excess of permitted volumes (about one in five died on the journey). By providing “incentives for the shipbuilding industry to reject as passengers persons deemed ‘ill or weak,’” the law made “unsanitary ships unprofitable,” leaving the administration of control to non-state agents beyond U.S. borders (Zolberg 2003: 216). Though the law was rarely enforced, with mass migrations of central Europeans continuing into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the political development provided a framework for pushing migration control beyond a state’s sovereign borders through operationalizing new categories of unwanted migrants.

Despite these historical parallels, what remains somewhat novel about the labeling of people on the move in contemporary Europe are the ways in which

both sovereignty over territory and legal status have been used to codify the “deportability” of migrants (DeGenova 2002). As Huysmans (2006) argues for the case of the EU, regulations such as readmission agreements and Dublin II that allow for asylum seeker passage to a “safe third country,” constitute a form of Foucault’s biopolitics beyond traditional forms of power: “despite the spectacular nature of walls and fences....modern states use more sophisticated technologies that channel people through procedures that determine....specific conditions of entrance” (Huysmans 2006: 95). Though the Geneva Refugee Convention prohibits party states from criminalizing asylum seeking refugees as “unlawfully resident,” industrialized immigrant-receiving countries of the North developed systems to exclude asylum seekers in exactly this manner (Keeley 2001). The way states and international organizations categorize people on the move are ever more salient as modes of control at and beyond the external physical boundary of EU territory.

*The Refugee: Victim and Object of “Migration Management”*

The “externalization” of migration policies by Global North states to “buffer countries,” like Morocco and Mexico, just beyond their borders has restricted the admission policies of countries which most vulnerable migrants are forced to navigate (Kimball 2007). Beyond international relations, ongoing research has looked at whether North states’ own extraterritorial policies aimed at thwarting entry may be indispensably linked to countries internal policies on admitting refugees (Fitzgerald forthcoming). The goal of such remote control of asylum is to prevent asylum seekers from entering

European countries where refugees have a more robust right to asylum and better protections. Policy debates about who is a “refugee” versus a voluntary “illegal” migrant have been poignantly polarized in the 2000s (Lavanex 2004), identifying as refugees only those who have gained asylum on the territory of the EU and its member states. For this reason as well, this study uses a broader definition of refugee as a general marker of asylum seekers, rather than the ones used by states or the UNHCR.<sup>26</sup>

Refugees proper—including asylum seekers—have been the subject of debates on the role of state control over mobility and social incorporation (Hyndman 2000, Nawyn 2009, Bloemrad *et al* 2008, Agier 2011, Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005). On one hand, debates about the international “management” of encampment in first countries of reception in the Global South focuses on refugees’ contentious relationship to aid as control. In her pioneering study of camps in Sudan, Barbara Harrell-Bond (1990: 15) argues that the arrangement of aid administration of millions in refugee camps constructs an “ideal refugee” as docile and helpless, producing subjects similar to “patients in a hospital,” submissive to their humanitarian “helpers” in positions of international authority. The modes of control of international aid seek to instill welfare, whereas they depart from in the way state and nongovernmental aid systems in North American contexts have attempted to discipline refugees under meritocratic ideals (Nawyn 2009, also see Bloemraad 2009). Though refugees have been studied in this manner in the South and North, their relationship to the state in buffer states remains ambiguous and understudied. Countries like Mexico, Morocco, and Ukraine—where neither a developed range of services nor large-scale mass encampment is available—remain understudied

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<sup>26</sup> See Chapter 1.

sites. Thus, chapter 4 of this study develops the concept of “ideal refugee” to understand the ways in which refugees negotiate international policies.

Still, an image as an obedient victim persists in refugee studies (see Harrell-Bond 1990). The rest of the current chapter begins to develop a refugee studies beyond the Global South and Global North dichotomy, expanding its scope to look at asylum seeking in buffer countries by looking at the case of the major eastern buffer country to the European Union.

*Transit Migration and EU policy: The Case of Ukraine*

Since the 1990s, with a decline of international refugee resettlement programs along with restrictions on access to asylum on EU territory and other mechanisms for regularizing legal status across the EU (Koser 2007), policy research followed popular concerns and turned attention to irregular or “illegal” migration (Giubilaro 1997, see Plewa 2007). New migration scholars developed now-popular concepts in demography such as *migration potential* and *migration pressure* to describe not people who in fact reached the EU, but rather potential “illegal” migration to Europe from countries South of the Mediterranean and in Eastern Europe (Giubilaro 1997). While the U.S. was militarizing its Southern border with Mexico after the founding of NAFTA, an expanding EU was developing its own international system of securitization (Guild 2009) with the Dublin Protocol inside the EU and safe third country rules for external policy.<sup>27</sup> Of the more than 300 readmission agreements signed around the world in the 1990s and 2000s, 155 were between western and central European countries with Eastern European

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<sup>27</sup> On the consequences of the European Neighborhood Policy on bordering countries not afforded membership benefits see Vobura (2007).

countries (HRW 2011: 22). While the Dublin II Agreement charges newer member countries inside EU's East and South boundary with the "burden" of admitting asylum seekers, such internal EU policies inspired an anti-immigrant fervor that encouraged countries at its margins to, in turn, "pass the buck" further beyond EU borders with readmission agreements that sidestepped proper asylum protections in order to guarantee swift expulsions of asylum seekers outside the EU (Bouteillet-Paquet 2003).

This growth of EU power as a super state was then consolidated and externalized, at the level of administrative controls through the development of an EU-wide border control organization, Frontex.<sup>28</sup> Not coincidentally, by 2007, the EU reached a comprehensive readmission agreement with Ukraine that went into force with the end of 2009: promising one-day visa free travel for Ukrainian citizens, the EU-Ukraine Accession Agreement outlined next steps for the membership of Ukraine in areas as trade, energy, and migration. In the area of migration and asylum, it required Ukraine to readmit irregular migrants who transited through Ukraine but were apprehended in the EU. Not coincidentally, Frontex began cooperation with Ukraine at the conclusion of 2009.

At the same time, the EU has long been not only negotiating but providing bilateral aid in the "area of migration and asylum" as a key component of its external relations with Ukraine and other countries bordering the EU. For example, between 2000 and 2006, the EU donated over 35 million Euros on migration management projects in direct aid to the state such as for the building of

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<sup>28</sup> To give a sense of the consolidation and rising priority of EU-wide border controls, Frontex budget grew from 19 million Euros at its founding in 2006, to 70 million Euros in 2008, to 85 million Euros in 2012 (Frontex 2012).

Migrant Accommodation Centers for asylum seekers and in support of projects facilitated through the International Organization for Migration (IOM).<sup>29</sup> Despite Geneva Refugee Convention's prohibition of punishment of asylum seekers who may be "unlawfully resident", asylum seekers in Europe and at its borders have come to be criminalized as "illegal" migrants by states and international governmental organizations since the 1990s.<sup>30</sup> As the following chapter confirms, migrants and asylum seekers rarely intend to go to buffer countries like Ukraine, but wind up there when their plans run askew (Koser 2007, Düvell 2006, Kimball 2007).

Seeking to describe changes in both mobility and policy, a wealth of specialized research emerged from European international organizations and think tanks with a "blurry" and misleading conception of *transit migration* (see Düvell 2006). Ironically, the term *transit migration* was first introduced at a UNHCR summit in 1991 in an attempt to explain the life-threatening conditions of overland movement of refugees (UN/ECE 1993). However, the concept was quickly transformed as a concept equated to "illegal migration," and characterized by "criminal networks" of foreigners that quickly smuggle Europe's unwanted through its buffer zones.

Funded by state-led initiatives who saw such "new migrations" as a threat to the European countries, these policy studies sought to explain how people may

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<sup>29</sup> Largely financed under the EU's TACIS program, some border control programs were also subsidized by the US Department Bureau of International Narcotics and Enforcement Affairs (see HRW 2011: 25-29).

<sup>30</sup> Article 31 of the 1951 UN Geneva Convention on Refugees.

move across several borders in order to better control perceived irregular movement (IOM 1994 a, b, c, d). The use of the term *transit migration* was quickly seized by European intergovernmental organizations to be developed into policy knowledge to better “manage” perceived dynamics of “irregular” movement across external EU borders. Specifically, the IOM, a powerful intergovernmental organization driven by Western European states, first funded a series of case studies of transit migration as smuggling organized through criminal networks through Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Turkey in the mid 1990s (IOM 1994a, IOM 1994b, IOM 1994c, IOM 1994d, IOM 1995a, IOM 1995b, IOM 1996). The Vienna-based International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) warned of the importance of “transit countries,” spurring a variety of intergovernmental conferences through existing EU institutions (e.g. see Council of Europe 2004) as well as new state partnerships such as the Soderkoping Process. The latter program targeted Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova and aimed to “tackle the problems of irregular transit migration and asylum problems” (General Directors’ Immigration Service Conference, GDISC 2001). The resulting reports in papers created new terms, such as *mixed migration* of and the *asylum-migration nexus*, which reflected slippage between irregular migrants and refugees even in UN reports and academic studies (e.g. Papadopoulou 2005). In the 2000s, studies of transit migration spread to analyze migration to and through countries in northern and western Africa, the Balkans, and a variety of former Soviet countries including Russia (see Ivakhniouk 2004). The



politicized studies on “potential” migration to Europe were developed by demographers through a close partnership with international organizations funded by EU states.

These policy studies defined transit migration in vague and analytically confusing terms. States often claim there exists a “universally accepted” definition of transit migration in the “international community” but only cite a single IOM publication (Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva 2005: 4). These documents stress the original intention of a migrant to move through a country, “migration in one country with the intention of seeking the possibility there to voluntarily immigrate to another country of final destination.” Others define it as a “stage” or “link” between emigration and settlement (Papadapolou 2008). In this definition, an intention to move from an alleged place of transit is evidenced only by a continuation of a journey. In other words, a foreign national’s presence in a purported transit country combined with a desire to move elsewhere provides a very broad definition of who is a “transit migrant.” Transit migration has been naturalized as an all-encompassing process, without clear definitions about *intent* to move across several borders, the *duration* of so-called “transit,” as well as an identification of a journey’s end and *destination*. This research recycled concepts about mobility assuming but rarely asking the migrant about intention in their migration, regarding neither its spatial (destination) or temporal (duration) components. Thus, one limit of transit migration research is its tendency to shy away from theorizing the very meaning of “transit” as a contingent process that

may vary based on changing factors such as duration of the journey and the original intended destination (see Düvell 2008). Chapter 3 in this dissertation seeks to understand these migration dynamics in order to explain ongoing, repeated, as well as desired migration with an investigation of the reasons refugees arrive in and move on.

### **Refuge, Mobility, and International Policy: Gaps in Research**

A main object of study of international migration that remains overlooked is the outcomes of external migration policy on mobility and aspirations to move. The figure of the “transit migrant” has ignored who it is that moves across borders, or why they do so. The framing of the category of transit migrant has included asylum seekers in order to lend legitimacy to the EU’s Dublin Convention, which unlawfully restricts the movement of potential refugees to the first countries of entry in the EU. In the process of constructing the subject of the transit migrant, definitions of transit migration have treated all refugees as a categorical “threat” to Europe. However, by the 2000s, scholarly and NGO studies sought to redirect studies of transit migration toward a focus on refugees. Such research has argued that transit migration is a political project to legitimate external migration policies of the European Union (see Lavanex 2006). Specifically, NGO studies sought to describe corruption in police and border officials, and consequences of the expansion of controls on refugees’ access to protection in Europe (ECRE 2007, ECRE 2010, Border Monitoring Project 2011, Jordan and Düvell 2002). Later academic studies analyzed how these policies

created precarious transit zones through which refugees and migrants circulate and escape “Fortress Europe” (Hess 2012, Collyer Düvell and deHaas 2012, Düvell 2012). Studies have attempted to specify the analytical utility of transit migration as a concept to describe the dynamics of mobility (Collyer 2007, Düvell 2012, Hess 2012). Though she points to the identification of entire nation-states as “transit countries” instead of destinations as an over-generalization, Sabine Hess (2012) calls for a transnational spatial analysis of various movements within “transit zones,” such as the Aegean sea coast of Turkey. Düvell (2006) has called for a rethinking of multi-stage migration as “onward migration.” Few studies have followed suit in analyzing transit as a contingent phenomenon. Such a perspective is needed since transit countries may often represent unintended destinations, sites where refugees and asylum seekers are abandoned by smugglers on their way to Europe (see Hess 2012, Düvell 2012). This study looks to fill this gap, asking, how reception, international policies, and opportunity structures in a transit zone impact refugees’ aspirations and decisions to move?

Another gap in research has been the agency of asylum seekers, who are often treated as victims, “stranded” in an “involuntary waiting room,” or “trapped in transit” (Dowd 2008). Though critical transit migration research has developed new frameworks for understanding why people move, some has characterized refugees and migrants only by their juridical status. This may reduce representations of either “illegal migrants” or victims helplessly trapped at the hands of either criminal smuggler networks or as perpetual asylum seekers at the

mercy of ungenerous local states unwilling to provide asylum status. Like migration studies that reduce sex work to trafficking, as one commentator observed, research on transit migration “either critically accept transit migration as a given or they introduce another discursive frame that portrays (transit) migrants only as victims” (Düvell 2012: 418). In this way, this study will hone attention of transit migration studies on the issues of refugees and protection in transit countries, pointing to the impact of social networks and resources refugees rely on outside of the refugee regime. Forced migration studies have broken down the voluntary/involuntary dichotomy in migration studies. Van Haer (2008) pointed out that, regardless of state refugee status or mixed economic motivations for migration, social class matters even in forced migration and how far resources will take asylum seekers and refugees as well (see also McDowell and Van Haer 2006). This study seeks to further develop perspectives instead on how different forms of resources influence livelihood and mobility of asylum seekers and refugees, not just immigrants (see Van Haer 2008). Specifically, how do refugees—differentiated by legal status, time in country, and country of origin--negotiate networks, the refugee regime, and their resources towards settlement or onward migration? This study approaches developing this research from three branches of the literature: trust and social networks, the refugee regime, and survival strategies. The following three sections identify the building blocks for the contribution of the dissertation.

*Trust, Human Security, and Social Networks*

The first contribution of this dissertation is to develop a better understanding of migration trust networks for vulnerable migrants and refugees in particular. The study of the social networks of people on the move has been central a range of international migration studies of the causes of mobility as well as adaptation and social incorporation (Massey and Espinosa 1997, Massey et al 1993). *Chain migration*, in which *pioneer* migrants initiate a sustained migration, leads to the formation of *ethnic enclaves* through the expansion of weak ties amongst network members (Gans 1962). These concepts have also been used to explain how people settle, specifically the formation of immigrant enclaves in the U.S. in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This paper will draw on these social network approaches to migration, following Tilly's (2007) call to theorize "interpersonal trust networks" of transnational migrants to understand the structure of strong social bonds in contemporary societies.<sup>31</sup> Tilly (2007) argued that trust between international migrants in the context of globalization constitute the basic components of social bonds. Flores-Yeffal's book (2012) has developed Tilly's contribution, studying social networks of Mexican immigrants to the U.S. The conditions of undocumented life, she has demonstrated, lead people on the move not to accumulating resources based on the "strength of weak ties" (Granovetter 1978), but instead on close-knit networks. "Strong ties" emerge since they ensure security against external threats to their family by the state, such as deportations, and access to their jobs. This provides an important contribution to understanding the role of networks in robust networks of undocumented immigrant communities. This research seeks to develop this line of research to

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<sup>31</sup> Tilly (2007: 7) defines *interpersonal trust networks* as "ramified interpersonal connections, consisting mainly of strong ties, within which people set valued, consequential, long term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of others."

understand how strong ties in such networks impact forced migrants and refugees. Refugees, I will point out, face multiple risks from host state as well as other actors. As Koser (2007) points out on the relationship of refugees and the state, “even where they have legally been admitted, subsequent activities by asylum-seekers and refugees may be significantly hindered by the conditions of their exile.” This research develops this call to bring refugees into migration studies, by asking, how do refugees’ social networks and their security during migration impact their onward mobility aspirations and decisions?

Sociological research on immigration has been geographically focused on destinations in the Global North. Studies have mostly investigated immigrant incorporation in western settings in North American and in Europe (e.g. Portes 1997). Despite a growing literature on immigration to new destinations in the U.S. (Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2006), there are only a few studies that look at the effects for migration dynamics from the perspective of new destinations in international perspective.<sup>32</sup> Two approaches have recently sought to explain why people move in a multi-stage pattern to include *step-wise migration* and *transit migration*. Theories of step-wise migration are rooted in neoclassical economic research that focused on rural-urban migration (e.g. Korineck Entwisle and Jampaklay 2005, Ravenstein 1885). More recently, international development research has expanded the “stepwise” concept to include international migration (see Paul 2010). This literature stresses that migration decisions to move across borders are made by rational economic actors where available opportunities for the

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<sup>32</sup>For one exception see Portes and Rumbaut (2006) for a discussion of how Cuban and Salvadoran transnational migrants to the United States experience social conflict.

accumulation of social capital, such as for developing social networks, which may open opportunities for mobility or settlement. While the stepwise perspective takes into consideration the economic agency of migrants to move from one destination to the next, it assumes that only a material self-interest motivates mobility, and that people on the move possess the information and social capital to execute those decisions. This view tends to overlook a reasons for multi-stage migration such as state policies, social class, to reception conditions in a country of arrival related to forced migration and refugees.

A second perspective on multi-stage migration has been developed in think tanks and among scholars in Europe. Originally coined in studies by the International Organization for Migration, transit migration has been vaguely defined as long distance mobility to a place with the intention of moving to another space (Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008: 3-8). In other words, transit migration is conceived as a “link between migration and settlement” (c.f. Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008). This theory likewise stresses this kind of multi-stage migration as a swift and uniform track through intermediary destinations. Critical approaches to transit migration point to the pitfalls of an inaccurate definition. Researchers have identified how unspecified concepts about social networks promoting transit migration lead to knowledge production that has been misused by policymakers to criminalize migration to the EU, including mixed flows that contain refugees.<sup>33</sup>

Critical approaches to transit migration have sought to move beyond legal categories, seeking typologies that differentiate whether people seek to stay in or move

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<sup>33</sup> For instance, European think tanks such as ICMPD produce knowledge for such policy imperatives in order to legitimate control of east-west and South-north migration through “transit” or buffer countries to the EU (c.f. Düvell 2008).

on. Asylum is much different than a tourist itinerary, a consisting of brief stays lasting several months in a pre-planned travel itinerary. Today's global system of migration control results in extensive periods of time waiting for an asylum or visa application, a gap in border control, or resources such as remittances (Düvell 2008b). Furthermore, refugees especially may have never had the intention of moving on, but move quickly or may stay longer due to enduring conflicts in sending countries or even cross-border persecution in receiving countries.

A third approach that gained currency to explain dynamics of mobility is the migration systems approach (Fawcett 1999). In Europe, the legacy of linkages of empire building and colonialism (the UK with Pakistan) and guest worker programs (e.g. Germany with Turkey) in the 1960s and 1970s led to the development of *migration systems* (c.f. Fawcett 1999) between particular countries in Western Europe with the Global South. The migration systems approach was developed by European sociologists in the aftermath of the fall of the “iron curtain” when migration became a mainstay of contentious politics in Europe. At this time, media and politicians fanned public fears of millions of people already “on their way” to Europe from the former Soviet Union and with the rise of “new wars” in a post Cold War, “new world order.” Focusing on the impact of social networks in refugee communities, Chapter 3 builds on meso-level factors in transit migration to investigate how *time, geopolitics, law, and intention*—(compare to Düvell 2008) that impact motivations to move onwards by refugees in a transit country.



*International Refugee Regime and Extraterritorial Control*

Chapter 4 turns to a policy question to understand international mobility. Despite the emergence of some critical studies on transit migration, a gap in the literature remains concerning the role of cross-border migration in the context of international refugee regime. Thus far, transit migration is understood as a process and policy discourse enforced by European national states through administrative means and policing in order as to prevent irregular migration into the EU. Externalization by the European Union has been studied as involving a host of international organizations in implementing migration management policies beyond the bilateral, state-level geopolitics (Geiger and Pecoud 2010). Meanwhile, UNHCR as a “beleaguered gatekeeper” in buffer countries has come to the center of a contentious system of migration and refugee policies (Kagan 2006). However, outside of UNHCR’s own research and that of its partners, little is understood of the ways in which refugees negotiate the international regime. In particular, one major policy that has not yet been researched--particularly in transit countries—is the role of the refugee integration, as a solution to protracted refugee scenarios within the UNHCR mandate. Thus, Chapter 5 asks how refugees negotiate the changing international humanitarian regime in their search for safe refuge, or as an impediment to finding that safe refuge. Such political sociological questions have been overlooked even in critical studies of transit migration.

By contrast to conventional scholarly and state policy accounts, recent NGO research has pointed out how the policing of transit migration has adverse consequences for refugees (ECRE 2004, Dowd 2010, Border Monitoring Project 2011, Human Rights

Watch 2010). Shevel's exhaustive (2011) comparative study on the impact of national contexts on refugee policies in postsocialist Eastern Europe provides an invaluable comparative perspective of the influence of UNHCR and states' national politics on the diversity of refugees accepted by states. However, studies have not considered international factors such as states' and EU external policies and their consequences for refugees themselves. This study thus seeks to build on Shevel's (2011) seminal work to understand some of the unintended consequences of the international refugee regime in contested postsocialist states.

Anthropologists and geographers have looked at how the global humanitarian regime actually operates to "manage" the containment and destitution of refugees in camps through the policies of UNHCR, private aid groups, and states. These studies are largely focused on the role of policing refugee encampments in the Global South and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, rarely investigating the ways refugee policies at the borders of Europe or North America impact the movement of refugees on the move. Chapter 4 of this dissertation seeks to fill this gap, investigating how refugee policies, such as local integration policies of UNHCR in buffer countries, impact refugees' motivations to stay or move onwards.

Building on Zolberg, an emerging political sociology seeks to understand how states and the EU's collective extraterritorial policies, impact the scope and efficacy of "remote control" (Sassen 2004, von Munster and Sterkx 2008. Hyndman and Mountz 2008, Fitzgerald forthcoming). Other scholars such as Von Munster and Sterkx (2008) have studied the EU project of remote control via the EU's policy in the Area of Freedom

Justice and Security in EU-neighboring countries. They have demonstrated how remote control of asylum takes shape through policies such as carrier sanctions, refugee camps, visa liaison officers at consulates, and remote processing centers of immigration authorities. These technocratic policies, they and other EU asylum scholars have argued, have developed European solidarity between member states rooted in an exclusionary politics based in a fear of asylum (Huysmans 2006), and here the externalization of a shared “risk” of unwanted immigration (von Munster and Sterkx 2008). Studies of asylum and EU external policy have developed a robust understanding of a political theory of remote control. European studies have theorized the legal and administrative policies as policing strategies, few have looked at the broader range of the ways in which remote control is practiced by states in areas outside of those whose primary stated goal is policing and control. A major forthcoming study by Fitzgerald (2014) will look at which liberal Global North states use the range of mostly punitive remote control strategies. The current study seeks to further develop this literature by focusing on the policies of North states via humanitarian institutions contribute to remote control.

International migration studies have argued that immigrant “incorporation” challenges social exclusion in receiving nation states varies along with the “regulatory frameworks” of receiving countries. Still, what is the reverse impact of *external* states’ policy on mobility and aspirations, outside of its territorial boundaries? As such, Chapter 4 takes a political sociological perspective focus on international policies to explain how refugees negotiate their mobility, and how these motivations are related to international policy within the sphere of UNHCR and humanitarian institutions.

*Survival Strategies and the Mobilization of Resources*

Chapter 5 reposes the question of motivations for onward migration by focusing on how refugees deploy resources to respond to adversity. This chapter will use Bourdieu's framework of capital to revise Hirschmann's (1970) exit, voice, loyalty (EVL) theory of social action. The classic EVL framework of responses to opportunity constraints has a long history in the study of the relationship between migration, protest, and citizenship—such as mass movements from East to West Berlin, from Haiti and Cuba to the U.S.—as responses to declining opportunities for social inclusion (Moses 2005). Albert O. Hirschmann first founded the EVL framework for theorizing the relationship between agency and opportunity structures in organizations in his “Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States.” Organizations, firms, and political regimes provide benefits such as services, wages, or guaranteeing rights. However, when benefits decline or are constrained in an unforeseeable manner, Hirschman (1970, 1978) argued, the *loyalty of* members, workers, or citizens is necessarily threatened. Under those conditions, actors are then left with two options: *voice* discontent through protest, or *exit*—leave the organization, firm, or state. This typology, however, includes assumptions that overlay factors internal to a nation-state or organization, as well as a rational actor perspective that privileges exit or voice (see Pfaff 2003). First, Hirschmann assumes social action is constrained internally by powerful groups, whether organizations or states, rather than by external forces. Second, Hirschmann assumes a rational actor model, that exit (withdrawal from a relationship)

and voice (reformist protest) are the main options. However, the resources available to actors vary and are guided by constraints external to organizations or states. Thus, in order to explain survival strategy outcomes, it is important to first understand the resources available to actors.

Scholars of organizations, economists, and political scientists have revised the exit, voice, loyalty (EVL) framework (see Dowding *et al* 2003, Pfaff and Kim 2003). Critiques of the approach have, in all, targeted the individualistic assumptions suggested by the rational choice framework of the original framework. As new economics of migration research has pointed out, factors outside of the calculating individual, largely rooted at the family such as extended family networks structure migration decisions and cultural change (e.g. Busse 2009 Moen and Wethington 1992). The level of analysis of survival strategies is the family—rather than an economically self-interested individual is best understood in the context of social constraints as well as the life stage (Moen and Wethington 1992). In the context of migration, families separated by borders may remain in an uncertain and transitory life stage located “between emigration and settlement” as exit and voice (c.f. Papadapolou 2009). Refugees’ interactions with the state and international authorities represent voice. An analysis using a modified version of the EVL framework is an appropriate way to analyze refugee survival strategies.

Sociologists have applied Hirschmann’s model mostly to analyze the consequences of emigration on countries (Moses 2005, Pedraza 2013). For instance, “brain drain” may result when high-skilled professionals exit the country, impacting the quality of life a state can guarantee. In this conception, however, the definition of loyalty

has been criticized as blurry and vague by political sociologists (see Moses 2005). Much of this debate has conceptualized emigration from a nation state as “exit,” arguing that exit is a result of heightened limits on the benefits of citizenship. Migration studies have assumed that exit is a primary response, resulting in “brain drain” of national resources. Political sociologists, however, have used Hirschmann’s framework to argue that loyalty lead either to voice or exit—that is to seek reform or move elsewhere (Pfaff 2003).

Yet, few studies have investigated how strains and opportunities on resources posed by globalization structure options for voice and exit. The migration studies that have contributed to the EVL remain largely focused on the consequences of migration for states and national economies rather than on how these structures are linked to responses in a transnational context. In the context of transnational linkages, not only voice but also loyalty can contest social relations in are as gender, as Gammage (2004) argues is the case for Haitian women who have the opportunity to maintain their ties in Haiti through dual citizenship. However, cases of migrants with dual citizenship are only one way in which globalization affects the survival strategies of people on the move. Opportunities and constraints engender different forms of social action, with not all migratory contexts pointing to full citizenship.

Who are the actors in Hirschmann’s framework? Historians have utilized a similar framework to Hirschmann adopted from J.S. McDonald to analyze organized protest or migration as central responses to oppression (e.g. Gabaccia 1988, see Pedraza 2013). Ultimately, Hirschmann’s general contribution is that loyalty—to nation, party, or organization—is threatened by declining opportunities, which influences the interplay of

voice and exit options. Hirschmann's approach assumes that actors in a firm or state are full-fledged members or rights-bearing citizens, who have a minimal set of opportunities despite any decline. Some migrant transnationalism studies have pointed to the simultaneity with which these three responses may be agentially utilized by people on the move (Moses 2005, Hoffman 2010). As Hoffman argues for various transnational migration links from Latin America to the U.S., "exit does not mean abandoning the option of voice, but rather a change of the context for its articulation" (Hoffman 2010:68). This study pays particular attention to exit and how it may be articulated at the same time as voice, although in a transnational context.

To develop the EVL approach, Chapter 5 relies on a Bourdieuan approach in order to theorize motivations to move based on limited resources (Bourdieu 1973, 1983; Wacquant and Bourdieu 2005). A Bourdieuan approach differentiates between economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital as transferable forms of resources to explain variations in status attainment (DiMaggio 1982, Bourdieu 1973). Bourdieu's social theory of the mobilization of resources in everyday life enables an understanding of the dialectic relationship of constraint and agency as resource transfer by actors in a *social field*. For Bourdieu, economic, social, and cultural resources and how they are performed through the mobilization of symbolic capital become rendered visible in everyday life such as through ethnographic observation or first person narrative. Resources stemming from households' financial wealth, social networks, and recognition of cultural distinctions provide for different opportunity structures (see Graaf 2007: 383-4). Prominent studies of immigration (Nee and Sanders 1991) have drawn on Bourdieu to

demonstrate the importance of social capital for facilitating chain migration through family ties, with older generations obtaining jobs for newcomers to facilitate the migration of kin. Nee and Sanders (1991) stress the role of “habits” and cultural distinctions, that make the family a “repository of cultural capital, accumulated both prior to immigration and during the process of incorporation” (Nee and Sanders 1991: 11). In this way, migrants’ negotiation of cultural distinctions can explain how newcomers change social relations in a host society. Yet, from a Bourdieuan perspective, newcomers also recreate that “repository” of capital in the social process of migration itself, not just in the context of social integration into a society. Immigrants and especially refugees deploy cultural and other forms of capital by transferring other, limited forms of resources that they bring with them under the constraints provided of *social fields* in the destination country. This chapter thus develops a Bourdieuan approach to migration motivations, explaining social reproduction through the resources leading to the mobilization of survival strategies of marginalized groups (see Bourdieu 1999 *et al*).

In this chapter, a Bourdieuan perspective is used to revise classical theories such as Hirschmann’s and generally about social action as either instrumental or value-oriented (i.e. Weber 1978; see Bourdieu 1983). I define adaptation strategies as a mix of economic, social, and cultural ways to mobilize resources, conforming to constraints within global and local social systems. By contrast, the use of resources stemming from economic, social, or cultural resources as assets to *protest* constraints of a social system,



is identified as voice strategies. Finally, exit strategies *evade* social systems using economic, social, or cultural capital.

In all, this study develops perspectives on “remote control” by analyzing the impact and negotiation of international refugee policy. To do so, this study fills gaps in research on social networks, refugee policy, and refugee survival strategies, conceiving of international migration as a process, and analyzing forced mobility from the perspective of refugees as agents whose motivations and decisions are structured by a range of international factors. The next chapter begins by detailing how intention, time, geopolitics, and law impact the way refugees negotiate types of social networks as recent arrivals to Ukraine. Later chapters, will analyze how these negotiations occur within the socio-political constraints of international governance and a declining refugee regime, and how different types of resources inside and outside of institutions drive refugees’ survival strategies.

### Chapter 3

#### Trust, Networks, and Human Security in Asylum Mobility

In a stuffy apartment, tensions brew over a small business deal between several immigrant acquaintances. The conflict over the resale of a minibus features a Pakistani negotiator and president of a national cultural association, an Iraqi medical student as investor, an Indian buyer, a jobless Ukrainian veteran and his nephew (needed to sign the required documents), and Rabah—a longtime Palestinian refugee and the deal’s broker. Rabah demands a bigger a cut from the transaction. “We are the damned foreigners here getting screwed,” he demands in Russian. Cigarette smoke swirls around empty bottles on the coffee table. “Why do you expect us to pay more now?” By the end of the night, however, hands shake and the deal is sealed with most parties content. Rabah is a Palestinian struggling with his longtime irregular status. He has couch surfed in Ukraine most of his life, living with various locals. He is afraid to return to Gaza, where his family has been in conflict with both Palestinian and Israeli authorities. Rabah depends on social and trade networks to squeak out a subsistence, as demonstrated in this vignette. These networks provide resources that root him to his new home in Ukraine. “This city is very dear to me,” he tells me. “It is more than my home town.”

On a grey and dreary afternoon on the outskirts of another Ukrainian city, a cacophony of passionate voices pierces the windows of a small evangelical church assembled in a dilapidated theater, surrounded by rising brutalist-style apartments. I stand in the back observing Sunday services, led by West Africans and Ukrainians in a mix of Russian, Ukrainian, and French to a diverse crowd of a dozen or so parishioners.

Afterwards, I meet Mozghan and her son Sharif, two Iranians who arrived in Ukraine a year earlier. They tell me their spectacular story of flight, similar to their account I had already heard from UNHCR: escape from an abusive husband in Germany, women's shelter, immigrant detention, conversion to Christianity, return to missionize in Iran, religious persecution and injury, and fleeing to Ukraine in the footsteps of a student relative. Yet, regardless of the truth-value of the story of their flight, it is these two Iranian Christians' experiences in Ukraine that drive their opportunities and hopes to find refuge in the U.S. I notice a recent scar on Mozghan's head, who tells me of her assault for her religious outreach by Iranian international students, whom she suspects are Iranian state agents. Perceiving persecution following her across borders, Mozghan forges ties with transnational religious movements based in the U.S., rather than Iranians or Ukrainians, and hopes of finding links to resettle and to seek refuge elsewhere. While both refugees' networks link them to other migrants, Rabah's network provides him with resources for settlement while Mozghan's network develops resources to aid the hope of onward migration.

What role does the composition of social networks play in driving motivations to stay or move onwards for refugees in transit countries? Policy studies have paid a two-fold attention to buffer countries as, on one hand, sites of illegal transit migration, and in need of "civilizing" to provide better refugee protection on the other hand. This makes questions of social networks important for developing migration theories since it recognizes refugees as people seeking to use their social ties to find solutions for ongoing questions on settlement and mobility. This chapter develops perspectives on refugee

networks using an empirical case study of forced migration, drawing on extensive interview and archival data on refugees to Ukraine from Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine, Ethiopia, and south Cameroon. It demonstrates the importance of policy, temporal, and political factors for the formation of refugee ties, arguing that the trust embedded within refugees' networks is key to understanding resources that drive settlement or onward migration.

Following networks of Soviet student and work exchange programs, refugees from the Global South formed the initial core of emerging “nontraditional” migrant communities in independent Ukraine, whereas in Russia refugees came from former Soviet states and the Eastern bloc (Shevel 2012). Area studies scholars have argued that such “diversity capital” has enriched the society’s ability to mend deep divisions in the country’s contentious politics of national identity (Ruble 2006; Shevel 2011). Yet, the identity boundaries of migrants have not gained attention; most European studies focused on “transit migration” because European policymakers sought to limit new third-country nationals from treating Ukraine as a layover on their journey en route to Europe. A decade after Ukraine’s contentious push to for EU membership little is known about the new immigrant communities in Ukraine and their motivations to stay or move.

This chapter details how the relationship of a refugee’s networks in their communities affects their propensity to stay or seek refuge another country. It adds to broader sociological debates on the role of social networks as not only facilitating but also constraining international migration. It develops a middle-range theory of onward

forced migration, showing how aspirations to move are mediated by networks that could focus resources towards either settlement or onward mobility.

### **Why People Move and Social Networks**

A growing literature on migrant transnationalism has investigated migrants' social, cultural, political, and religious cross-border ties (Basch *et al* 1992). Studies of migrant transnationalism look at how new immigrant and diaspora groups maintain “transnational” ties to communities of origin (see Levitt and Jarowsky 2007). This research has investigated *how* social ties are maintained between “here” and “there,” and has abstained from debates on *why* people are motivated to move, and especially with respect to forced migrants and refugees. There is little research on how transnational migrant communities may not only sustain but also limit migration.

Studies of culture, law, and politics have challenged neoclassical assumptions of the causes and motivations of international migration. The culture of migration thesis posits that in communities with high rates of migration, social norms and values constitute or become aligned to social norms that sustain migration (Cohen 2004; Ryo 2013). Legal scholars and behavioral economists, for example, have tried to explain decisions to pursue unauthorized migration by demonstrating the low perceptions of legitimacy of immigration law and practices amongst individual migrants, and a sense of justice that holds migration as a right (see Ryo 2013; Düvell 2006). While legal research shows the centrality of beliefs at the individual level to motivate migration, it lacks perspective on how migration is reproduced or changed through social institutions and networks.

Social network approaches have been central to theories of international migration (Massey and Espinosa 1997, Massey et al 1993). *Chain migration*, in which *pioneer* migrants may find opportunities to initiate a sustained migration that may lead to the formation of *ethnic enclaves*, through the expansion of a broad range of “weak ties” amongst network members (Gans 1962; Granovetter 1978). Network concepts had been used to explain the formation and expansion of immigrant enclaves in the U.S. in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Gans 1978), as well as more recently migrant cross-border ties such as remittances. In this guise, the strength of weak ties between a critical mass of newcomers’ forms the organizational basis that sets up a vast network to facilitate and sustain migration. After publication his final monograph, *Trust and Rule*, Charles Tilly (2007a) identified migrants’ “trust networks” as interpersonal ties central to facilitating and regulate the flow of resources that maintain social ties in the modern world. Specifically, he defines trust networks as “ramified interpersonal connections, consisting mainly of strong ties, within which people set valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failure of others” (Tilly 2007a: 7). Flores-Yeffal (2013) develops Tilly’s theory in her recent book on Mexican-U.S. undocumented migration, emphasizing that a close-knot structure of networks is most important for undocumented migrants. “Migration trust networks” sustain migration by ensuring strong ties and firm boundaries around a secure social network, necessary to protect members against deportation risks. That is, Flores-Yeffal’s (2013) documents the importance of trust in transnational Mexican hometown networks required to protect against the *external risks* faced by undocumented migrants in the U.S. Most close-knit

trust networks to sustain migration are necessary not for all transnational migrants, but particularly for those, who are cut off from accessing the basic rights of citizenship, and the services attached to those rights (e.g. banking, driver license, schools, housing). While her study points to constraints on undocumented migrants' networks, Flores-Yeffal's (2013) study does not sufficiently account for constraints or even risks from within their networks faced by those who are forced to flee from social conflict. I argue that *internal risks* also limit opportunities in the formation of social networks of refugees, who flee ethnic, religious, other social or political persecution. This study seeks to develop the migration trust network theory to better understand the relationship of identities embedded in social networks to "human security" of refugees on the move (see Guild 2009).

By theorizing the factors influencing opportunities for mobility in transit countries, this chapter seeks to contribute to theories about why people move and how "migration systems" are reproduced in the context of forced mobility (Fawcet 1999). It argues that secondary mobility of refugees is driven by how original intentions, geopolitics, law, and duration of residence in a country drives trust networks. How refugees invest trust in certain social networks over others explains motivations for settlement or onward mobility from transit and new destinations. The central questions driving this chapter are: what factors influence the composition of social networks and resources shaping refugees' motivations to settle or move on? That is, this chapter examines (1) how refugees' intentions to either settle or move onwards are driven by the composition of their social networks, and (2) the variables that drive the composition of

rooted or mobile social networks. I will argue that duration of time in spent exile, legal opportunity structures, original intentions to move, and geopolitics with the sending country drive the composition of a refugee's social networks to enable either settlement or mobility.

### **Findings**

The analytic framework uses four meso-level factors to explain the composition of refugee networks: *time*, *law*, *geopolitics*, and *intention*. With this I draw on and revise Düvell's (2008) similar scheme for analyzing transit migration as variable onward mobility. By *time* I am referring to the duration of time spent in a transit country, the temporal dimension of a journey and settlement. The longer spent in a destination, we would expect the more likely a refugees' social networks would be rooted in place rather than aimed at mobility. In other words, the longer a person remains in a place, the more likely they are to settle there. By *law* I refer to the legal opportunity structure resulting from states' policies as well as other authorities. Less restrictive migration policies and more welcoming refugee policies in other countries may lead forced migrants to build networks oriented toward moving to those states. By *geopolitics* I refer to the relationship of a country of origin and its relationship to the immediate country of destination where the refugee stays. So, we would expect that a hostile relationship between the governments of the country origin and destination would result in insecurity and motivation to build resources towards onward migration. By *intention*, I refer to the original intent of the journey and its spatial destination at the time of departure. Here, barring no change in intent to move from country A to country C, despite interruptions to



the journey, we would expect the social networks sought would remain those that facilitate onward movement rather settlement. The following data is presented to analyze how these four factors intersect to influence the trust networks through the biographies of six refugees.

### *Time and Law*

Does the length of time spent in a country influence one's intention to stay in place? Lake is a forty-six year-old Ethiopian man. A rank-and-file member of dissident organizations in socialist Ethiopia in the 1980s, he still went to the army and was sent on an exchange program to study in the USSR in 1988. "I didn't have any questions about leaving," he explains, "I had plans to come back and work for this organization, I didn't think I would need to leave. But then anti-government forces came." He came home briefly in 1991 after completing his degree, but quickly returned to Ukraine. After the subsequent fall of state socialism in Ethiopia, he received death threats for assisting an exiled Ethiopian dissident.<sup>34</sup>

Lake glares at me as he explains how he struggles to support his Ukrainian family by working at an electronics stall he staffs 10 hours a day at a small street market, earning about forty dollars per week. He tells me of his hopes of returning to Ethiopia with his Ukrainian son, but knows there is nothing left there for him: his parents have passed away and many of his relatives fled the country as well. Lake's own mixed ethnic background is another reason he fears persecution in Ethiopia: "When the war came so did the ethnic violence. [The new regime] said you Oromo live there, you Amhara live

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of the civil war in Ethiopia after the fall of state socialism and the regional consequences of refugee movements after civil war see Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006).

there. ...What is there to return to? The country is left empty.” Still it was the political reasons that kept him from being able to return to Ethiopia. “I just read about how students learn abroad,” he recalled, “I never had that motivation and still don't have that motivation. Life just turned out this way, with the war at home, the banditism.” Lake’s case demonstrates that the length of time spent in-country may not change the intention to settle. Lake’s tale of exile furthermore demonstrates the legacy of postcolonial migration in the region. USSR student exchanges since the 1960s have resulted in lasting immigration from Ethiopia to Ukraine (Ivakhnyuk 2006), though on a much smaller scale than in Western Europe. When hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians fled the civil strife in the 1990s, some students like Lake returned to or were forced to stay in Ukraine.

For the aging Ethiopian who has a family in Ukraine, law and state practices also continue to impact migration patterns. Lake is an active participant in local advocacy groups promoting the rights of refugees in Ukraine. His networks are firmly rooted in Ukraine despite his constant connection to new arrivals that he assists in applying for asylum and basic needs. But Lake and his family have increasingly looked for a better life abroad as well. Because of a lack of viable paths to citizenship for refugees and access to visas, Lake is neither able to work in Ukraine nor resettle to another country. The travel permits allotted to the lucky few who obtain refugee passports in Ukraine are of little help in obtaining a job. They are furthermore rarely accepted for visa applications to work in western countries. “But even if the permits were proper, would they let us go? I don’t think so. For example, I tried to apply for a permit to go work [in Sweden] in the summer. \$500 for the invitation, I can’t afford that now. So even if you have a normal

document, it's hard to leave from here. Even if you are lucky as me to have [refugee] status since 1997. Sure we have a travel document but it doesn't work. They don't even accept the Ukrainian one...So what is our children's' future? I am 46, I need to get on pension soon, and not even healthy because of my nerves.” Despite having settled in Ukraine, he is left to ask international organizations for local support, and now grasping at straws for an unlikely bid for international resettlement. “The UNHCR has done a lot, but will ask UNHCR for resettlement, it is their responsibility. That's my plan. I have entered a strange place here, but I can't go here or there.” In this case, Lake's time spent in Ukraine and advocacy in local refugee groups has built up trust in social networks oriented towards settlement. However, these are not the types of networks that provide opportunities for onward mobility, leaving his fate in the hands of an international refugee regime hostile to resettlement despite his ongoing advocacy with local refugees.

### *Law and Geopolitics*

Law and geopolitics also combine to both constrain and enable migration opportunities and outcomes. The impact of law and geopolitics on multi-stage migration is best demonstrated by the biography of Sahel, a 26 year-old Afghan whom I first met a month after he arrived in Ukraine. After studying English in Kabul before the American occupation, he worked as an interpreter and nursing assistant at a coalition hospital, until he was forced to flee Afghanistan at 24. Agreeing to work as a translator for a western development agency in exchange for a good salary, he was also promised a “special visa” to the U.S. if his life became endangered. Several years later, due to his willingness to help translate a pamphlet for “American friends,” missionaries who frequented the

hospital, he and several Afghan hospital staff were discovered with the religious pamphlet and were pursued by the Taliban.<sup>35</sup> He claimed that his coworker's uncle was an informant for the Taliban, and he and several other staff fled to Pakistan. In the borderlands with Pakistan, he spent several months hiding his identity at a dangerous refugee camp of hundreds of thousands.

Unable to obtain refugee resettlement through the UN Refugee Agency, or get good news from his “American friends” about the U.S. Special Visa application, he instead spent a year at the camp in Pakistan, taking care of an ill travel companion. The reason Sahel was not able to move onto safety and the U.S. from Pakistan was due to irregularities in law. Specifically, the implementation of the 2007 U.S. Special Visa Program for Afghan Interpreters, only issued a fraction of the 25,000 visas that were approved by the US Congress (Baker 2010).<sup>36</sup> Instead, his American former employer wired him \$3000, which he used to pay for a smuggler to take himself to safety in Austria. However, due to changes in smuggling routes, perhaps due to shifting border controls, his journey through Ukraine did not go according to plan. Arriving in Ukraine by car, the smuggler announced he could no longer take him to Austria. Sahel was abandoned outside Kyiv, informed he had reached Europe—as common experience among other recent Afghan immigrants with whom I spoke. Sahel's refugee story shows how, in addition to economic and other resources, U.S. and EU policies were a determining factor in his migration trajectory, one that left him stranded in Ukraine.

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<sup>35</sup> His file with the UN Refugee Agency corroborates this narrative, accessed with permission of HIAS Kyiv.

<sup>36</sup> On Afghan and Iraqi interpreters, asylum, and special visas see Baker (2010), or in less detail in a recent news media article on this topic: [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/20/world/middleeast/door-to-us-may-be-closing-for-iraqis-who-helped-the-american-military.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/20/world/middleeast/door-to-us-may-be-closing-for-iraqis-who-helped-the-american-military.html?_r=0)

To facilitate his stay in Ukraine, he finds communities of Afghans as well as Ukrainians. Afghan refugees of a different generation, who fled the Soviet occupation since the 1980s, had lived partially integrated lives in ethnic enclaves in neighborhoods on the outskirts of Kiev (Ruble 2003) as well as Kharkiv. Indeed, Sahel reported that he was accompanied by Farsi-speaking, Afghan smugglers—often referred to as “saviors” by the Afghan migrants I spoke with—across his three month journey from Pakistan. Still, given the post 9/11 context and the legacy of the Soviet war in Ukraine, reports of anti-Afghan sentiment in Ukraine echoed through Sahel’s and other Afghans’ accounts of most Afghans applying for asylum. Geopolitics, in Sahel’s story contributes to his seeking out social networks to facilitate his travel not only to, but also beyond, Ukraine.

Despite finding these networks, Sahel cannot find his place in Afghan communities in Ukraine. At the same time, internal conflicts stemming from tensions between Afghan nationals based on ethnicity, social class, and differences in immigration status also led to constraints on Sahel’s stay in Ukraine. A social worker in a UNHCR partner group applauded “the Afghans” for “taking care of their own.” But, Sahel’s story demonstrates how support networks for recently arrived Afghans remain limited. During his first year in Ukraine, Sahel survived by returning to his first occupation, sewing clothes, joining a group of Afghan Ukrainian women who worked at a street market. However, this barely allowed for any income or community support, only placing the refugee in more danger, as he told me. One coworker got too curious about his migration story, and began contacting him. Hanging up the phone during our meeting, he exclaimed, “I cannot live with Afghans, so I just told her I found a place.” Sahel

continued telling her a lie about where he lives and his immigration story to other Afghans, saying he came here because his uncle was a communist. “I am sure if someone in Afghanistan found out where I am very bad things would happen to me here.” Once we are done speaking, he left to visit the UNHCR and to ask them to schedule a resettlement interview. “The only way I can live here is with Afghan people. And they will only pay me 80UAH for the rest of my life, I don’t have enough to live on.” He lived a quiet life, staying away from a group of rowdy international students he met at his job at the market. Two months later Sahel had to get a new phone because he had a suspicion he was being tracked, “I have to change my number because a boy I bumped into at the market knows my home town. I am afraid he will tell people I am here.” A lack of material resources but also physical security made him consider leaving Ukraine. “I don’t feel free here. I have a lot of language problems here.” Though he takes language courses, his lack of Ukrainian and Russian limits him from most work in addition to cultural barriers and discrimination; he does not develop friendships with Afghans, he said, because he fears revealing too much will endanger his personal security and because he dislikes as ethnic and intergenerational tensions amongst different Afghan immigrant groups. Evidently, Sahel’s networks from Afghanistan led him to Ukraine but did little to help him to settle with established Afghan Ukrainian communities. In this story we see how geopolitical factors may further advance motivations related to original intentions.

Understanding this situation, Sahel invested efforts during most of his two years in Ukraine towards finding a way to reach Europe. After over a year of rejections and appeals to obtain refugee status and international resettlement via the UN, Sahel

attempted to cross the EU border—“with little help”—to Slovakia. Deported back to Ukraine under a 2008 EU-Ukraine readmission agreement, he was jailed in a detention center close to the EU border for near the six month maximum. A year after his release, he admitted himself to a state-run refugee camps in the EU borderland Transcarpathia region. Only after receiving additional funding from his “American friend” coworkers from Afghanistan was he able to pay and wait for a smuggler to get to Austria (see Chapter 5). Sahel’s story shows the unstable influences of law and geopolitics on his migration trajectory. The resources he mobilized for meeting people working for Coalition forces in Afghanistan, as well as the smuggler networks afforded by geopolitics facilitated his journey west, though still ultimately left him stranded in Ukraine. At the same time, legal opportunity structures, specifically European border policies, Ukrainian refugee and citizenship policy, and U.S. Special Visa program drove his inadvertent migration to, and then out of, Ukraine.

### *Geopolitics and Intention*

The case of a recent Uzbek refugee, Nigora, further demonstrates the importance of identity, and specifically national, regional, as well as gender dimensions of identity for migration outcomes. Nigora fled her home in Kyrgyzstan along with four family members amidst the strife that followed the 2009 “interethnic tensions” in south Kyrgyzstan (see Bond and Koch 2010). A twenty-two year old English teacher, she arrived in Ukraine after a brief stay in Russia, first fleeing the war-torn city of Osh. Her asylum interview records reveal that she survived two police beatings, with her family’s house and the entire block burned down in race riots. She suspects she was originally let

go by authorities only because she was a woman, and that she was targeted as a witness to a raid during which police planted political literature at her uncle's home—who was persecuted for suspicion of funding a dissident political party. They first fled to Russia, and—like many refugees—originally had no intentions of coming to their destination in Ukraine.

Nevertheless, though Nigora has lived in Ukraine for nearly a year, she hopes to settle here. “I have nothing left in Kyrgyzstan,” she admits. Certainly, return is not an option, as for a vast majority of refugees. She and her family first spent two months in Russia, too. Her refugee story demonstrates the importance for settlement and migration of intention:

“When my uncle and I came to Russia, we didn't know where to turn to.

We heard about how Russian services kidnap refugees from Uzbekistan.

We waited for our relative. When he came, he found out that it is more peaceful and reliable in Ukraine, and that you can turn to help in Ukraine.

In Russia it is not like in Ukraine.”

So, it was not until arrival in Russia, that their original intentions altered. Fearful of tapping into ethnic networks with Uzbeks in Ukraine in order to find work, her five-person family-in-exile survives on \$80/month of social assistance from the UN Refugee Agency. “In Russia we are called names and put down—in the Migration Service too. Here it's a different mentality.” Although her family barely speaks Russian,<sup>37</sup> she felt accepted in Ukrainian society and institutions compared to the fear she felt for her safety and the open racism she experienced in Russia. Though she has only stayed in Ukraine

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<sup>37</sup> We speak through an interpreter and reviewed her asylum case file with the UN.



for several months and has been denied an application for refugee status, she feels like she belongs in Ukrainian society. Specifically, she cites her relationship with her Ukrainian landlord, whom she met only upon arrival to Ukraine, but who had taken in Nigora's family, recalling memories of her affinity for Uzbeks due to her old life in Soviet Uzbekistan. In later communication, Nigora also expresses her reluctance to go to Europe due to her comfort in a "similar culture" in Ukraine as well as the dangers of "men we don't know" that would facilitate their irregular journey to Europe. This demonstrates how in addition to the ethnic dimension of compatriot status (Shevel 2011), migration systems across post-Soviet space (through which people continue to circulate) also contributed to the formation of local trust networks.

At the same time, geopolitical constraints continued to influence Nigora's social networks. Notably, weeks after we began to speak, Nigora's reluctance to rely on ethnic networks due to security seem confirmed. Through her lawyers, I learned that several of her family friends, refugees from Uzbekistan—rather than Kyrgyzstan—but also living in Kiev, faced deportation, their apartment having been raided by Ukraine's SBU secret police/security services in an apparently politically-motivated extradition attempt made in cooperation with Uzbek security services. Two Uzbek nationals were taken into custody, and according to UNHCR, faced an unlawful extradition where they would be imprisoned without a fair trial. A third resident had escaped Ukrainian authorities, but was being considered for international protection and resettlement by Sweden and Canada. Geopolitics mattered a great deal in this case since cooperation between the

Ukrainian government and Uzbek and Kyrgyz authorities motivated Nigora to rely less on social networks with other Uzbek ethnics and nationals in Ukraine and this city.

Geopolitical and legal opportunity structures combined to influence Nigora's migration trajectory, first to Russia and then to Ukraine. First, her Kyrgyz country of origin and Uzbek nationality were central to why she left Russia as quickly as she escaped Kyrgyzstan: she feared for her security and feared deportation from Russia to face persecution in Kyrgyzstan. By contrast, her Uzbek friends' national identity, which linked them geopolitically to Ukraine, gave them the opportunity for refugee resettlement to the west: the UNHCR prioritized the protection of groups from the former Soviet Union. Nevertheless, her fears of associating with Uzbeks came to fruition with the deportation of her friends. Post-Soviet relations show how "compatriot" identity has as much to do with geopolitics as ethnic relations as envisaged by Shevel (2011). Third, as a carrier of her family's refugee story, gender remains an important influence on her family's decision to go through with their asylum claim in Ukraine as opposed to moving on to EU countries through insecure irregular channels. During her asylum interview, she expressed fears about trafficking within human smuggling businesses. Yet, Nigora's story is most significant because of how geopolitics influenced her aspiration and opportunities to settle in Ukraine. Though she remained reliant on local social networks due to her undocumented status, she refused to trust and associate with Uzbeks due to concern for her family's security and she perceived better opportunities for social integration in Ukraine, as compared to Russia. Her insecurity originated in geopolitics, overshadowing by migration systems that link different peoples more than their governments. Nigora's

case demonstrates Uzbek's capacity to develop local social networks for settlement in Ukraine as a country with longstanding ties with other former Soviet states. Still, the degree to which migration systems and geopolitics can influence settlement varies, as evidenced by her family's persecution in Russia, though not in Ukraine.

*Intention, Law, and Geopolitics*

Geopolitics and intention may also combine to structure the development of a multi-stage migration trajectory. As introduced earlier, Rabah is a longtime Palestinian resident of Ukraine. The youngest child in a large family from Gaza, Rabah first came to Ukraine in 1993 as a medical student. As an informal rite of passage for young Palestinians in the occupied territories, he spent nearly three years in an Israeli prison under administrative detention, during which time he became politicized. After release, he planned to study in Moscow but by then the Soviet Union had collapsed and he ended up in Ukraine:

“I did not come to [this city] intentionally. I'm a communist. I fought for my country. I sat [in jail] in Palestine for three years. Studied politics there, read a lot. I wanted to go to Moscow, and came not through the party, but through a [broker] just needing to get away and study.”

But once he finished his degree in Ukraine, the opportunities of returning to a secure life in Palestine declined further, and his intentions changed towards settlement. Although his family could no longer send financial support after his third year of studies, they warned him against returning, fearing for his safety amongst the repression that followed the second intifada. Thus he decided to stay in Ukraine after college. As he proudly

points out, he was once married to a Jewish woman and worked at a local Jewish deli since he “doesn’t care about anyone’s nationality or religion.” Rabah’s story shows how national and political identity as well as belonging identification may be maintained in unexpected ways across a length of time spent in exile.

Despite the length of time spent in the country, however, experiences related to law have made Rabah consider moving to another destination outside Ukraine. He feels an affinity for his adopted homeland through the city where he lives: “I sometimes like to believe what they say in that song: the best city on earth is Kharkov city.” At the same time, his asylum status and harassment by authorities limits his belonging. “Really it is the city of bandits, where the cops are the real bandits.” While extortion is commonplace, refugees in Ukraine pay some of the largest bribes to maintain a legal status (Border Monitoring Project 2011) and Rabah claims he typically pays a quarter of his personal resources bribing visa brokers, police, and migration officials over his sixteen years living in Ukraine. Since his student visa ultimately expired without renewal he has been rejected for registration renewal along with all asylum appeals, with no other way to obtain citizenship after he divorced. Asked if he has made Kharkov and Ukraine his home, he says, “I want to do this. But this feeling gets lost when I look around and see that the law and many people are against me.” Paradoxically, constraints on legal opportunity structures to become an equal citizen have forced him to improve his local trust networks with corrupt authorities rather than transnational networks towards migration.

Constraints from legal opportunity structures show how building social networks are not? motivated by mere economic self-interest or original intentions. In the mid1990s, Rabah's brother followed in his footsteps from Palestine to Ukraine, but stayed for less than a year, quickly finding a way to Denmark. Rabah regularly laments letting go of this route himself: "I missed my chance to go to Europe way back in 1995. I met a Latvian security agent over a drink with his friend at a Lithuanian airport. We paid him \$800 for the tickets, and he helped us get by security. My brother left, but I stayed in hopes that he would do me the same favor later once I finished medical school." His brother now has residency in Denmark, after having received refugee status. He defends the decision to stay in Ukraine to advance his degree at a time when his family identity was no longer holding him back. Yet, he constantly receives calls from various Ukrainian middlemen to arrange for his and others' documents, and has had easy access to facilitators or smugglers for a clandestine journey to Europe. So, though his intention to move onwards changed once he was living in Ukraine, it did not result in mobilizing his networks to move to another country due to the time spent planting roots in Ukraine.

Intentions and geopolitical factors may interact to produce unexpected migration outcomes. By the time Rabah finished his degree in 1997, he was broke. His visa registration was expiring, he had no more support from his family, and certainly he could not find a medical job in the post-Soviet recession without paying a bribe he could not afford. Trained as a pharmacist, he could not find work like native Ukrainians: "I did not want to work at the market selling medicine," he explains, as many of his Ukrainian friends who went to medical school had to do in the 1990s. He took a brief trip to

Palestine, only to come back to Ukraine six weeks later in the repression that continued in the years following the second Palestinian intifada. Saving face about his national identity, he explained his decision to return to Ukraine: “I am a human being, and as a human being I wouldn’t be able to just sit there, and watch my people suffer. And that’s why I stayed here in Ukraine.” Due to the time he has spent in Ukraine, he is not concerned for his security, suggesting that geopolitical factors may be less important for those who have cut ties with their home countries.<sup>38</sup> His story demonstrates that a strong national identity interacts with geopolitical risks to refugees’ security; the length of time spent in a destination may reduce risks if transnational ties with homeland politics are also reduced. Yet, despite having had no original intention to settle and having faced inopportune conditions for integration in a receiving country, refugees may be forced to stay because of persistent conditions in their countries of origin. Since 2002, Rabah has not been able to return to Gaza since he knows he would not be able to leave the besieged Gaza strip again; Palestinian travel documents are rarely recognized. In the meantime, he has developed a range of trade networks of survival strategies (see Chapter 5). In his particular case, a change intention and time in Ukraine trumped geopolitics leading to improved opportunities for the refugee to develop local trust networks for settlement.

#### *Time, Law, and Geopolitics*

The length of time lived in a country may also intersect with geopolitical conflict and structure refugees’ migration aspirations. “Foreigners do not know how things work here,” said Raba who characterized himself as a local. Asked why he has not gone to Europe himself, he leaned on his class expectations:

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<sup>38</sup> Compare to the case of Palestinian Dirar Abu Sisi cited at the beginning of the following chapter.

“I have not worked for anyone my whole life, and I swear I never will. I was the youngest in a family and my father died young. I am my own boss.....I do not want to go illegally because I would not want to stay forever. Here I can earn money. I don't want to wash dishes in another country. What am I going to do? Sit in a pub and work as a waiter?”

Rabah has been married twice, and brags about once having had a car. Although he explains, “I am used to having a bit of money,” he was now broke and had many debts at the time of our interview. One of Rabah’s Palestinian friends in the city suddenly died at 55 due to his status medical neglect. He slipped into a coma at home after being prematurely discharged from a hospital with severe pneumonia; he had been refused lab testing to diagnose his illness because of his legal status of asylum seeker (unrecognized by many authorities) and inability to pay a bribe. Rabah fears such fate himself, and even though he plans to stay in Ukraine, he hopes to find citizenship and western medical coverage. Still, Rabah never accumulated the opportunities to move on to another country or even the financial or social capital to save his friend’s life, as by a step-wise migration approach might have suggested. Rabah’s story instead suggests that time spent in a transit country may not increase motivation to migrate onwards permanently.

Forced migration does not allow many opportunities for advance planning, as demonstrated by the migration biography of Calvin, a twenty-nine year old refugee from southern Cameroon. His story demonstrates how conditions in unintentional refugee destinations may over time lead to onward migration, no matter what the migrant’s

original intentions. Calvin briefly studied at a University before his life was cut short by another flare-up in a civil war in the southern, English-speaking part of the country.

“I had a problem with my government and saw many of my classmates killed. So it was absolutely necessary for me to leave the country for my own safety. I left with the help of a priest. He negotiated everything, and got a tourist visa straight to Ukraine to seek asylum.”

He fled by going to the Ukrainian embassy in nearby Gabon, which happened to have links to Ukraine harking back to the days of Soviet aid to select third world states. Cameroonian geopolitical relationships—although unrelated to Cold War politics in Africa—gave him a way to flee to Ukraine, but there he discovered that he had misinformed and could not find refuge there.

“I came here to seek asylum here. I thought it would be a place where I could find safety, where I could start my life over again. But it became a total mess for me. I was running away from death, so I had that safety the advantage of just being alive. But looking at it from another perspective, life has only been getting worse for me since I came to Ukraine because nothing is moving, you understand. We just survive, live on a day to day basis.”

Like other asylum seekers, his opportunities are limited to informal work for other English-speaking West Africans in an exploitative informal ethnic economy. For the last three years he has made less than \$6 per day, selling shoes at a stall and holding only makeshift documents. “This is barely survival. But the bigger question, we ask for



ourselves,” he speaks as a leader of other West African refugees in his city—“is what does the future hold for us? When I look in retrospect at my life, I feel disappointed. I'm searching....There are barely no opportunities to make my life better here....And the UNHCR knows they can't regularize people because they know there is no legal status here.” As Chapter 5 will show, many refugees from West Africa and elsewhere developed transnational religious networks as a resource towards not only settlement but also onward migration. Calvin's story demonstrates how past geopolitical links did not result in sustaining networks for settlement. Though he had spent only three years in Ukraine, legal opportunity structures for settlement and onward mobility have trapped refugees like Calvin in Europe's buffer zone in Ukraine.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has detailed the migration biographies of six refugees in Ukraine. It has argued that geopolitics, time, law, and intention interact to provide opportunities for refugees to develop trust networks for mobility or settlement. *Geopolitical* relationships between the governments of countries of origin and destination create various risks for refugees' human security. Thus experiences of continued persecution in exile figure at the center of migration biographies of refugees like Nigora and Sahel. There are thus international factors other than a refugee's compatriot identity that helps explain settlement in post-Soviet spaces (Shevel 2011). As evident in their diverging aspirations (to stay in Ukraine or move onwards), however, Sahel and Nigora's migration trajectories differed both in their original *intentions* and in their (Afghan Pashtun and Uzbek Kyrgyz) ethnic positions in relation to geopolitics. Rabah's changed intention to stay in Ukraine,

along with the time spent in Ukraine and *legal opportunity structures* afforded by his Palestinian documents, drove him to develop local—rather than mobile—trust networks with Ukrainians as well as immigrants. The stories of the two African refugees from Cameroon and Ethiopia, despite differences in the length of *time* spent in Ukraine, highlight the weaknesses and limits of geopolitics and the specific legacy of Soviet internationalism for forging trust networks that promote settlement rather than onward migration, in addition to legal opportunity structures for refugees to find protection to settle in Ukraine. Thus, *geopolitics, time, law, and intention* constitute competing as well as intersecting causes for the formation of resources that enable or constrain settlement or onward mobility.

The main contribution of this chapter is the development of an approach that might better explain how migration is sustained and finds direction. Specifically, such studies have investigated how the formation of “migration trust networks” that sustain transnational ties and mobility (Flores-Yeffal. 2012; Tilly 2007). This study has looked at how refugees develop these networks either for settlement or mobility. Transnationalism studies have mainly focused on the links of immigrants in Global North destinations with their home countries rather than analyzing migration and lineages as a social process occurring across time and space. Policy research on transit migration has analyzed migration to buffer countries only as stepping-stones of transit to penultimate destinations in the west (see Papadapolou 2008). Yet, the spread of punitive immigration policies and the decline of refugee protections makes studying migration trust networks ever more important for understanding how and why displaced people move from or stay in “transit

zones” (Hess 2012). Refugee security are threatened or rebuffed not only *internally* by domestic immigration policies (see Flores-Yeffal 2012), but also *external* geopolitical mechanisms also through changing legal opportunity structures. I argue that refugee security requires the strongest of “migration-trust networks” when the goal is onward mobility rather than settlement (c.f. Flores-Yeffal 2012). This focus on human security rather than on the needs of states is necessary to analyze migration and refugee protection in the age of securitization (see Guild 2009: 87-107).

This chapter has pointed out that trust networks may either propel the onward mobility of refugees away from transit zones or facilitate settlement in these locations. Developing theories in sociology, this chapter points to a need to go beyond neoclassical approaches in migration, both those that defend the importance of weak ties in social network studies or migrant transnationalism in assimilation theories. This chapter also supports studies that highlight the agency of refugees to form their own networks despite popular discourses that treat them as agentless victims. Future research can investigate how the salience of different social, religious, and political identities motivates people on the move to search for an imaginary “Europe” dedicated to human rights, and thus contribute to the growing literature on European identity (e.g. Judt 1996) that is integral to many migration studies.

## Chapter 4

### Refugee Integration and the Politics of Control at Europe's Borders.<sup>39</sup>

A few years before Russia's military intervention, and Edward Snowden's finding asylum from a Moscow airport, a leader of Russia's Left Front opposition disappeared while in search of a way to asylum in Europe, at the doorsteps of the UN Refugee Agency in Kiev. Facing trumped up charges of organizing mass riots in the protests in Russia that followed the 2012 re-election of President Vladimir Putin, Leonid Razvozhayev soon surfaced in a Moscow courthouse with a confession, after days of alleged torture. A top Russian prosecutor claimed he had turned himself in.<sup>40</sup> While not as well known as the punk rock group Pussy Riot, the Razzhvodayev case demonstrated the *distance* that not only Russia but also other states will go to deny the fundamental right to seek asylum in weak states like Ukraine. Furthermore, refugees find local forms of racism and xenophobia a continuation of persecution, whether legal, racial, or social exclusions. Extrajudicial kidnappings are extreme and rare cases, but they illustrate how refugees—and not only most vulnerable political refugees—often come to transit countries like Ukraine in search of safety but find no protection, neither within their social networks nor from state and international refugee regimes. Nevertheless, international humanitarian organizations, under the international pressure of immigrant receiving countries, operate in Ukraine under the assumption that it represents a “safe

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<sup>39</sup> An preliminary version of this research has been published in Ukrainian in *Spilne*, and presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association.

<sup>40</sup> See Amnesty International on refoulement from Ukraine such as Israeli kidnapping of Palestinians, Sri Lanka of Tamils, and Uzbekistan and Russia of Uzbeks. On Rozzvozhayev's abduction, see a UNHCR report here: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5261040411.html>

third country” for refugees. This chapter examines the latent functions and consequences of local refugee integration programs that are increasingly common in buffer countries.

From glossy brochures in cramped NGO offices to the street markets sprawling outside major cities, talk about local integration spread across various refugee communities in Ukraine. In 2010 and 2011, I observed the rolling out of an international refugee policy that had been spreading across other transit countries. This regime emphatically emphasized the “local integration” portion of the UNHCR mandate far more than its other two policies of voluntary return and international resettlement. But despite a wide range of diversity amongst refugees--in terms of nationality and time lived in Ukraine--I observed that refugees across various communities in three cities vehemently criticized integration as an humanitarian project. Why did the aid policy fail in the views of refugees and their advocates, and how did this policy impact the lives and plans of refugees in this transit country?

A vast majority of states around the world (147, as of 2012) have passed laws protecting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ definition of the right to “seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.”<sup>41</sup> Still, most forced migrants remain isolated by international aid agencies in mass encampments as internally displaced persons (IDPs), or in similar “dangerous sanctuaries” in proximate first countries of destination (Lischer 1999). At the same time, several hundred thousand people seeking asylum at the borders of Global North countries have become subject of

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<sup>41</sup> As of the same year, nearly eleven million people fell under the refugee protection mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR).

scorn as “illegals” or even “illegal asylum seekers”--objects of control not only inside but also beyond states’ borders.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the combination of the spread of guarantees on refugee protection on the one hand and extraterritorial control of asylum on the other can be understood as an “asylum paradox” (Fitzgerald forthcoming). There has been increasing scholarly attention on states’ extraterritorial policy, and the use of “remote control” (Zolberg 2003) of asylum by states beyond their borders (e.g. Sassen 2004, Munster and Sterkx 2008, Hyndman and Mountz 2008). While these studies have made critical contributions, they have yet to explore how remote control policies are experienced at the micro level and their relationship to the global refugee regime institutions. Refugee studies have, to the contrary, relied heavily on the experiences of refugees, by focusing either on “managing undesirables” in the Global South or on social welfare provision in the Global North. Remote control in buffer countries has not yet found a place in migration studies. Debates around the question of why migration policies fail have omitted consideration of extraterritorial policies and refugee studies.

This chapter investigates the case of a refugee project funded by the European Union and its member states as a case study to begin filling this gap. It details the way in which humanitarian policies are negotiated by refugees, NGOs, and the international refugee regime. In this way, it investigates the unintended consequences of this policy, and why it fails as a policy of remote control. The goal is to explore international refugee policy outcomes and consequences through an institutional ethnography. Because discussions of how decisions and aspirations to move are impacted by refugee policy

remain removed from broader discussions about policy failure by political sociologists of migration (Lavanex 2006), this chapter expands the scope of refugee studies to transit countries, investigating the consequences of refugee policies beyond, on the one hand, encampment in the South, and on the other hand resettlement in the North. Using institutional ethnography (Smith 1993a) with practitioners and officials in refugee aid organizations, it focuses on the impact of the decline of international refugee regime and the politics of control in transit countries.

The first section of the chapter details the history of refugee migration and policy in Ukraine. The second section presents ethnographic and interview data on the impacts of the refugee integration program. The third section presents interview findings on the ways in which refugees and NGOs conceive of and contest dilemmas brought up by aid policy. The fourth section provides a summary discussion of these consequences of refugee and external migration policy from a political sociological perspective.

### **5.1 Migration Policy and Refugees in Ukraine**

This section lays out the history of international and state refugee and migration politics and institutions in Ukraine. The UN Refugee Agency<sup>42</sup> arrived to set up a regional office in Kiev in 2001, the year before Ukraine adopted the 1951 Geneva Convention in order to oversee the repatriation of over 200,000 indigenous Crimean Tatars whose families had been deported under Stalin. Due to ongoing negotiations by UNHCR, the government has granted refugee status to 3,022 individuals from 85

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<sup>42</sup> The UN Refugee Agency functions from a tripartite mandate under the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees to oversee international protection of refugees through the durable solutions of return, resettlement, or integration. Unlike most UN agencies, UNHCR's budget comes from donations from governments, especially the EU as well as Japan and the US.

countries since beginning granting asylum in 1996 (UNHCR 2007). Since the 2012 re-establishment of the Ukrainian Migration Service, the number of individuals who had the opportunity to file for asylum rebounded to 1573, back up to the 2010 rate of 1500, but still below the 2008 figure of 2,237 (UNHCR 2012; HIAS 2010). In 2010, partners implementing UNHCR legal protection had a caseload of 1009 asylum seekers, from over twenty countries including Afghanistan, Russia, Palestine, Congo, and Uzbekistan (HIAS 2010). However, my observations revealed that that many would-be asylum seekers may never approach the government or obtain assistance from UNHCR, whether because of a lack of faith in the asylum procedure or because of concerns for their security.<sup>43</sup> It is this broader population of refugees, asylum seekers as well as those registered with UNHCR that are the subject of this study (See Table 1).

Geopolitically, Ukraine remains part of a Russian “sphere of influence,” but—as its 2014 “revolution of dignity” has shown—also has aspirations to become a member of the European Union (EU). As one part of the EU-Ukraine action plans, since 2002 the country has implemented a range of bureaucratic capacity building, border control, and attempted reforms of political institutions to combat undocumented migration by third country nationals (see Smogalska-Follis 2012). Finding neither safety nor opportunities in Ukraine, some migrants and refugees nevertheless have sought a range of ways to move west despite increasingly sophisticated Schengen border controls and

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<sup>43</sup> Vast discrepancies exist in the number of residents in Ukraine. The number of foreigners in Ukraine ranges between 270,000 documented residents and estimates of up to seven million people by the World Bank (State Statistics Committee 2010, World Bank 2010). While flow data on irregular migration from Border Guards is unreliable, the figure of 7 million is an exaggeration since it refers to the large number of Ukrainian citizens born in other Soviet republics who have long settled in Ukraine.



deportation/return agreements with the EU.<sup>44</sup> Most applied migration research in the region has followed suit, producing knowledge on undocumented flows that quantify “secondary movements” from arrivals to Ukraine (UNHCR 2006, ICMPD 2011) of people on the move who come to Ukraine, in order to more efficiently control unauthorized migration further west into the EU. Ukrainian sociologists of law have pointed to, despite recent changes, the endurance of the legacy of tripartite Soviet citizenship institutions requiring registration, work, and housing documents (Pribytkova 2007) for instituting controls on foreign citizens. Still, the EU’s changing policies since the 2008 EU accession of Ukraine’s western neighbors have driven the country’s immigration and police agencies towards modernizing security and administrative apparatus for migration control and securitization rather than towards improving the international protection of refugees (see HRW 2011).

Ukraine’s migration and refugee policies thus start and end with its relationship to Europe. The post-Soviet country not only remains excluded from political membership in the EU, but also lags far behind neighbors on economic and social development and inequality indexes.<sup>45</sup> This uneven development as well as its key geopolitical location between East (Russia) and West (EU and US), results in hundreds of millions in annual aid leveraged by Europe and the Global North states.<sup>46</sup> Increasing migration-related funding, propelled by Ukraine’s neighbors’ to the west (part of the ? 2008 EU-accession),

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<sup>44</sup> Human rights groups have found that more than two thousand migrants (from third countries) have been denied asylum procedure and to Ukraine from Hungary and Slovakia under a consolidated EU-Ukraine readmission agreement (Human Rights Watch 2010).

<sup>45</sup> For instance, a quarter of its own citizens live on less than \$5/day (United Nations 2009).

<sup>46</sup> I use Global North as an alternative to the common misnomer of how Western European and North American states as “developed” and other countries as “developing.”

goes to technical assistance, capacity building, and institutionalization of border control measures. Programs such as EUBAUM, receive what was three fourths of over 200 million Euros (\$287 million) in aid from the 2004-2007 TACIS program towards such technocratic and border control measures (ECRE 2008). By 2010, the International Organization for Migration had built eight Migrant Accommodation Centers, detention facilities using these funds for Ukrainian management. But with increased reports from human rights groups about the conditions in these camps, the European Commission began allocating increasingly more funds for refugee protection (see Human Rights Watch 2011; Border Monitoring Project Ukraine 2010). Only nine percent of the net migration-related aid to Ukraine in the period before its neighbors' EU accession went to refugee protection. As in many Global South countries, most refugee protection services are administered via the UNHCR and through local NGO subcontractors providing legal and social assistance to those who UNHCR determines are refugees under international law.<sup>47</sup>

In this context of development and securitization, the European Commission funded a new program to be implemented by UNHCR: The Local Integration of Refugees in Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova.<sup>48</sup> The program was initiated as an implementation of recommendations based on a 2007 study of social and legal barriers to refugee integration, co-sponsored by the IOM, Soderkoping process (UNHCR 2007). Now extended beyond 2016, the EU earmarked a large majority of funding with the goal of building "real opportunities for integration" for refugees in Ukraine as well as Belarus

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<sup>47</sup> See the generous "Law of Ukraine on Refugees" (2001), but compare to implementation practices.

<sup>48</sup> UNHCR Kiev, personal communication, April 22, 2011. Also see UNHCR (2011a).

and Moldova (UNHCR 2011). The LIP's stated goal is to lay the groundwork for "a favorable environment" for refugees by getting "governments and refugee-assisting organizations to deal with refugees and their integration" (UNHCR 2011a). Speaking with refugees and partnering aid agencies, it first appeared as if program services deeply benefited refugee communities.

However, upon closer look, the numbers of those actually eligible for integration programs and increasingly also for most UNHCR services remained quite small. The integration program serves only the 3022 *state refugees*, the lucky few who have been recognized by the Ukrainian state over the last twenty years and who stayed in Ukraine.<sup>49</sup> This is the only population eligible for assistance under EU regulations.<sup>50</sup> The UNHCR provides some other limited services to a small number of *statutory refugees* it identifies as refugees through status determination procedures--those who fit the parameters of the 1951 convention. These individuals are afforded legal representation to navigate an application through the post-Soviet state's legal system and may receive financial assistance of about \$90 per month for several months. Meanwhile, the increasing majority (UNHCR 2011) of asylum seeking refugees are denied any UNHCR assistance and the Ukraine state also largely ignores them. With many former students and immigrants I spoke mistrusted the refugee regime or considering it inefficient, I would also identify a broader category of *forced migrants*-- hundreds of thousands of would be-refugees who never even approach the state or UNHCR to claim asylum (see Figure 1).

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<sup>49</sup> UNHCR Kiev, personal communication, April 22, 2011.

<sup>50</sup> State recognition rate of asylum seekers' is only seven percent, with 43,172 applicants filing for asylum since the first 1996 refugee law (UNHCR 2011).

As of May 2011, about one third of state refugees received Ukrainian language courses, as well as cultural programs, and consultations on obtaining employment and medical and other services. Second, even those who received program services rejected the idea that they had any social benefits. For example, as one south Asian refugee explained about the stipend given to language course attendants “I don’t need Ukrainian training if I can’t use it, apply it here—or even Russian. Its useless if nobody will give me a job. I just need the [stipend] money to survive in some way.”<sup>51</sup> Program staff in several cities seemed puzzled by the small number of applications for available small business grants under the LIP. Only nine refugees obtained start-up grants by June 2011.<sup>52</sup> The few state refugees I spoke with and who are eligible for the program had never heard of it or dismissed it outright (See Figure 1).

What, then, are the consequences and purpose of integration programs in this transit country? In the next section, I will show how I resolved this puzzle by listening to the personal narratives of refugees as I conducted an institutional ethnography of refugee organizations. From glossy brochures in cramped NGO offices to the sprawling street markets outside post-Soviet cities, “integration” quickly became a buzzword after 2008, with the program’s promotional materials traversing various social networks. The result however was criticism of “integration” in both refugee communities and NGOs.

## **5.2 Model Minorities: Refugee “Integration” as Ideological Account**

Unlike state-supported asylum systems in Western Europe, North America, and Australia, the services funded by international organizations constitute the only material

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<sup>51</sup> <sup>51</sup> Individual refugees’ names, countries of origin and other identifying information has been altered throughout to ensure anonymity.

and legal support available to most refugees in Ukraine. They serve the most basic needs, and thus in many ways challenge refugees' subordination in society. However, integration may be seen, through refugee narratives, merely as an ideological account of assimilation.<sup>53</sup> This is due to (a) international program's policy practices and (b) lack of local opportunity structures due to institutionalized discrimination.

First, while providing critical reception services for a limited number of state refugees, in practice the LIP unwittingly placed blame on various refugees for not "integrating" into their host society. The following vignette demonstrates how the implementation of the LIP reinforces blame on service recipients and even other migrants outside of its refugee mandate:

On the way to visit a UNHCR partner organization, I meet an Eritrean asylum seeker from Kenya, in his third year stranded in Ukraine. He had just been evicted from his home at a makeshift hostel along with hundreds of other refugees on the outskirts of the city. The case worker immediately demands he speaks in Russian to explain his situation, and persistently refuses my offer to interpret. "They need to integrate, that is why we ask them to speak Russian," she explains. Beyond the barrier informs him that if he received a letter that the UNHCR does not find him to be an eligible refugee, she has no ways to help him.

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<sup>53</sup> For Dorothy Smith (2005) an ideological account is a recycling of "ideological codes" that reify dominant discourses of social subordination through social services. With the assimilation ideological account, refugees are identified, rather than as equal citizens in a diverse society, instead as culturally inferior outsiders in need of acculturation or "integration."

Despite not being a recognized refugee who receives services or under the LIP program, this asylum seekers' language ability becomes subject to demands for cultural assimilation. The short-lived Refugee Integration Center, as Sahel, a recent Afghan refugee jealously observed, had almost entirely benefited well-off Afghan ethnics. These were refugees indeed, but those of a different generation—of the era of Soviet conflict—and of a different ethnic background. Many had long ago obtained Ukrainian citizenship and a higher socio-economic status than more recent Afghan asylum-seeking refugees largely of Pashtun ethnic backgrounds. These two vignettes illustrate that the very legal categories assigned to “refugees” and “asylum seekers,” when applied by NGOs—not only construct barriers to integration but may exacerbate refugees' existing social subordination in society.

Staff at UNHCR partners across the country are part of a broader power nexus of NGO, police, legal, and international actors. NGOs remain subsidiary actors between the state and international institutions, and given little resources provided for integration policies in Ukraine compared to integration projects in other EU countries. Refugees and UNHCR partner staff face a range of state authorities as legal “advocates,” tasked with representing those who unlike native citizens are not perceived to have the language, cultural, and legal knowledge to actualize basic civil rights guaranteed under Ukrainian law. Reflecting on her day, one legal advocate commented on her day representing asylum seekers at the State Migration Service (SMS):

It was a long day. SMS is a black hole. You can sit there for nine hours having your soul sucked out. I have a newly registered Ugandan woman,

and Somali man. The head of the SMS curses the refugees in chauvinist profanities, “who are these *chehuntsy*?” He threatens the lawyers with violence. Then there are always some new forms; this one demands the refugee themselves, knowing asylum law without assistance, want them to describe in detail the reason for seeking refugee status (political, ethnic, religious, whatever). Finally, they cancelled it after I protested and was yelled at. Their excuse is that the MS are being checked by SBU [state security services, ex-KGB] for their efficiency, or something like that, so they are especially vicious. Yet this is more of the same as usual.

I found these were commonplace interactions with state agencies responsible for first contacts on asylum matters. First, they reflect a top-down post-Soviet administrative culture that discourages new arrivals from going forward with an application for asylum. This vignette also shows the complex, power-laden, and informal relationships among six state agencies that asylum seekers interact with on a regular basis.<sup>54</sup>

In this way, refugees find themselves caught in the middle of a power nexus that also includes behind the scenes power struggles between state actors and international institutions. Still, refugees recognize themselves as the subjects not only of state but an international refugee regime, where UNHCR is a symbolic powerbroker in their struggle for the “right to have rights” (Arendt 1951). Reacting to another’s rejection from

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<sup>54</sup> As the head of one region’s SMS agency told me, there are typically six federal agencies that asylum seekers typically interact with: SMS, SCNR, BGU, MOI, SBU, as well as the Health Ministry.

UNHCR services, one Afghan explained how he sees his frustration regarding social assistance for refugees:

“Refugees are like a football, they shoot us from post to post but they don’t even know where the goal is. Or maybe they know there is no goal!”

Many LIP staff seemed puzzled by the small number of applications for business start-up grants: only nine refugees obtained grants by June 2011. The questions posed by a recently recognized Ivorian refugee explained how he experienced individualized service structures and social blame:

They called me, and asked me to come to their office. And you know what they told me when I got there? “How can we help you?” Why would you call me over here and ask how you can help me?...Then they tell me its you who has the problem. What kind of mafia are you running? Why would you want us to integrate in this country when I don’t want to be integrated in this country?

By conceiving of integration as a directive to integrate despite the lack of international resources to facilitate integration, the LIP programs unwittingly reproduce refugee subordination by providing social services.

A second reason “integration” refugees criticize policies is due to the pervasive social exclusion and socially institutionalized discrimination they experience. The pervasive threat of racially motivated violence in the host country encourages them to see demands for “integration” by assisting agencies as an insulting directive. Even those who are excluded in their search for legal and social services in are taught that “their own integration,” (as one service provider told me) is a personal, individualized problem. Aid agencies touting refugee integration projects are thus viewed either as deception or as



large institutions' public relations campaigns. In one instance, refugee community leaders were outraged when approached by LIP staff with a proposal for relocation from the city for manual labor at a foreign-owned agribusiness: "they are trying to sell us. Does even the UN think we are slaves? First they propose that we voluntarily deport ourselves to be butchered at home and now they want to send us back where we came from. Are we their serfs now?" After retelling his experiences with racist violence at the hands of police, an African refugee and Ukrainian resident of 18 years conceived of racial exclusion of his children as a fixed limit for "integration":

"My child is starting to understand this, and that is what's scary. Is that integration? If I am a person that has not integrated yet, how can I integrate now? I don't even worry about myself anymore. The problem is my daughter, not me. How can she have a better life here?"

A Guinean asylum seeker similarly explained:

"Just today I had two guys come up to me on the street: where are you from, why aren't you home? I said I'm from here I'm home. And they got confused and wanted to fight: how could you be from here? They want us to integrate but there is no integration people aren't even willing to accept us as one of them."

Refugees read integration as instructions to assimilate into a society to which many feel they belong but are socially excluded due to the pervasive racially motivated harassment and threats to violence.

Beyond blatant instances of victim-blaming, LIP programs also inadvertently project an idealized image of an integrated refugee that is next to impossible to live up to. “Despite difficulties and rejection of refugees in some sectors of society, we see a few successes...when you talk to an employer, tell them this is legal, you get some results,” a local LIP staff explained to me when I asked about the difficulties of the integration project.<sup>55</sup> Yet, speaking to refugees outside of the institutional context provides a different picture. Morris is a single well-educated man from a middle class family in the Ivory Coast. Having been traumatized watching his family killed in front of his eyes, he arrived in Ukraine on a quick student visa through Gabon. Morris is touted as a success story by international organizations in their promotional materials:

“Integration is all I hear, it’s a commercial, and they show me as an example. But my experience is that integration here is impossible. I was taught to give more to my children than I had, that’s impossible here....There are very smart and capable people that come. But in Ukraine people bury their dreams—and themselves. I will not be one of them....Since I moved, I still barely make rent even though I actually found work. But the only reason I was hired was because the [LIP] lawyer personally convinced that employer to “give it a try, may be he’s not as bad as our [people].” I get very strange faces when I travel for work. “Hello, I am here with this company” Some slam doors, many threaten violence, or at least demand my documents and hold them until I agree to leave. And the work is temporary because of my [asylum seeker]

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<sup>55</sup> Rokada charity, personal interview, June 2, 2011.

document...My first reaction when I came to Ukraine was “I’m safe.” But that is before I realized I have to live a life now too. So the only solution I see is resettlement to a third country.”

Four years after coming to Ukraine, even this model refugee is looking for every chance to flee yet again, seeing few ways to settle in Ukraine. I spoke with Morris as he, like thousands others, approached the UNHCR with a desperate appeal for resettlement. The contrast between his determined and defiant personal story and his depiction as a model refugee illustrates an institutional interest to foster the illusion of refugees’ local integration and Ukraine as a safe country. For the others left behind, only the able and resourceful will find irregular paths west. This analysis has demonstrated the detrimental social consequences for refugees of importing idealized models of diversity of European models of “refugee integration,” without resources and with little political will from host states. The next section investigates the international political-economic causes of these dynamics paying close attention to refugees’ narratives on racial exclusion and onward migration.

### **5.3 Escaping Integration: Seeking Refuge in the “real Europe.”**

The international refugee legal regime is based on three “durable solutions:” *repatriation*, *resettlement*, and *integration*. First, in addition to forced repatriation condemned under international law, “voluntary” repatriation after conflicts is encouraged by UNHCR. Increasingly implemented by the IOM as a partner, this policy has been widely recognized by human rights groups as a problematic solution in the context of protracted conflict, with high risks of putting refugees lives at risk, back into conflicts

that continue to drag on in countries they had escaped. Second, given ever-stricter border control policies of western states and their responsibility for refugee-displacing conflicts, demand for international *resettlement* to safe countries in the North has grown, while refugee admission has stalled (just under 10,000 refugees are resettled per year compared to twelve million refugees in the world today—most from Afghanistan and Iraq). Thus, the third policy of refugee *integration* in first countries of arrival has become a popular solution for UNHCR in the new millennium.

For the Local Integration Project, obtaining refugee status from the state is “a first step” to integration, as one of its officials put it.<sup>56</sup> But, as one Cameroonian refugee lamented about his newfound documents from Ukraine, obtaining refugee status seems all but a trap:

“This certificate they gave me guarantees that I die here...Europe and the UN need to come here to help us get away from this country.... They talk about integration, but they forget that it is absolutely impossible at this moment. How can they integrate us without a real document? How can we be somebody when you cannot work? How can you say you are an integrated person but you continue to be abused every day because you are black?”

Lack of opportunities for integration, in the eyes of refugees, motivates them to move onward to safer countries west. While refugee status opens the door for limited opportunities such as legal employment, it all but bars them from the few opportunities to apply for resettlement or asylum elsewhere.

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<sup>56</sup> Personal interview, UNHCR, May 12, 2011

Coming to see Ukraine as an untenable destination, refugees are reluctant to seek out LIP assistance. When I visited a new LIP office, I met hard-working and motivated staff, but no refugees or access to services.

“Ukrainians huddle around a guarded gate, scribbling notes on applications as they await their appointments. This is the Polish consulate in Odessa, which happens to be right around the corner from a new refugee integration program office. Entering a dirt-paved yard off this busy street from bustling visa lines, I find the LIP office hidden behind a car repair lot...A small plaque bearing the names of international funders hangs on the locked gate...The elderly guard that eventually opens the door first insists that there is no UN or social program office here. He tells me to come back later, observing that I do not “look Russian”.<sup>57</sup>

This vignette of “business as usual” illustrates a contrast between emigration and immigration motivations. Ukrainians seek institutional means to leave Ukraine, while refugees have little desire or and support to “integrate” and settle. The program’s office has moved, as another refugee described it after our brief visit, to a “posh and comfortable location.”

Furthermore, refugees’ own understanding of integration programs view LIP not as an alternative to resettlement, but as a mode of social control intended to thwart any search for safe refuge elsewhere. Sitting in his dark room at the TAC, a young Guinean man explained,

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<sup>57</sup> Personal observations, March 15, 2011.

“If you have a refugee passport, they propose that you integrate into this country. They will tell you that your application on resettlement is closed. I told them, please, I’m not a dupe. I plead my case in February as we sit in the refugee camp with your people from resettlement. But now, you want to change my case and put it under the integration plan. I’m the master of my life. Why do you guys want to integrate me to Ukraine, when you know that even Ukrainian people can’t integrate into this country? The government would never do anything for refugees in this country. Ukrainian people don’t know what is the meaning of refugee....And everybody knows I can’t go anywhere else if they give me this status of refugee. I need to live in a country where there is security, because here I am nobody.”

While the UNHCR often, and sometimes appropriately, accuses the state of provoking anti-UNHCR discourses, listening to refugees’ defiant stance on this program shows instead that they see it as another form of control to prevent refugees from seeking protection elsewhere.

What is the relationship between immigrant and refugee social incorporation and onward migration? An asylum seeker from Guinea Conakry explained the risks of migration and how a lack of social opportunities and inability to return home influences clandestine journeys across the EU border.

“Who am I, a black man, risking six months in a gulag, passing through villages with people who have never seen a foreigner?...Only when people

land in Ukraine and find [UN] resettlement impossible do they say I'm tired, I'm fed up, if I lose my life I don't care...Its because they cannot go home....If my own life was not at stake why would I not go back home in this situation: as a refugee, you cannot work or live here either.”

The risks faced by forced migrants on clandestine journeys suggest a failure of both integration and resettlement policies to protect refugees. Integration failed not only at its manifest function of integration, but also in its latent function of remote control. Integration programs may provide very limited material and social support to disincentivize unauthorized migration by ameliorating refugees' destitute living conditions. International organizations' programs—like the state's—take for granted the structural conditions that facilitate migration decisions: refugees are not only forced to leave home countries and cannot return there, but are also forced to leave Ukraine due to the exclusion they experience in their often unintended destination. Worse, LIP and NGO staff working directly with refugees recognize the contradictory positions of social programs for migrants. As one NGO head explained,

“I see that [refugees] have hopes of going to a country where there is some social accommodations...Sure its easy to say, close the border, so they die equally on par with Ukrainians...In order to allow refugees to live here in decency in this country you need to totally transform the economic and social situation for everyone...People do not live here in decency and likewise neither do refugees.”

Despite finding innumerable “obstacles” facing refugees’ “integration” in Ukraine (c.f. Local Integration of Refugees 2008), international organizations dependent not only on European funding but also state demands marginalize refugees, as they continue to seek a way to leave for an ever-elusive “Europe.”

Asked about the intentions of the program, a UNHCR staff member laughed, “It was never written anywhere, but it is understood that the purpose of the program funded from Europe has always been to stop people from going to Europe.” Another refugee NGO staff reflected on the interests of international organizations in Ukraine: “The government just passed a law stopping refugees from being represented in court and the UN refused to confront. Why? The UN won’t pack up and leave. They don’t want to go to the dreadful camps in Africa or go to Afghanistan. Their people like it here and they won’t move a thing for fear of getting kicked out like they did in Uzbekistan.” Thus, without human rights lobbying via transnational advocacy networks, well-intending international institutions may not conform to their aims, but will conform to organizational interests.

## **Conclusion**

An analysis of European initiatives for immigrant social incorporation has shown how--when viewed from an international perspective—humanitarian aid programs for refugees may contest but also reinforce social exclusion in the host society. At the same time, external state’s influence on UNHCR and international humanitarian policy creates a latent form of migration control that seeks to prevent refugees from finding asylum. The aim of this chapter is *not* to advise rolling back aid for social services for refugee. To



the contrary, it is to point to internal political contradictions within existing international refugee policies detrimental to refugees. With the European Union's expansion to include Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland, and to Ukraine's border in 2008, the core of refugee issues is oriented towards European policy that seeks to limit unauthorized "transit migration" to Europe (see Düvell 2008).

This chapter makes several innovative contributions to migration and refugee studies and political sociology. Its first contribution is in the study of social change and global migration. This chapter has demonstrated how power is unevenly constituted even among humanitarian institutions—particularly in UNHCR; this unevenness produces unintended and negative consequences for vulnerable social groups. As interviews with NGOs and refugees demonstrate, even refugee integration practices are structured by the migration policies of Global North states that fund them. Observing how state power operates at the borders of Europe in the area of migration and admission policy, Huysmans (2006: 95-96) argues that control and liberty may not be at odds, but could instead be expressed through one another through what Foucault calls biopolitics. "Despite the spectacular nature of walls and fences," he writes, "modern states use more sophisticated technologies...that determine specific conditions of entrance." As an authority on humanitarianism, UNHCR has also emerged as a stakeholder in a constellation of global governance agencies in the area of migration along with others such as the International Organization of Migration (IOM) and various European think tanks.<sup>58</sup> Migration studies should analyze the reproduction of international political

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<sup>58</sup> Notably, UNHCR has competed but also has increasingly worked alongside IOM. Responsible for "facilitating" international "migration management," the IOM has a controversial reputation as the overseer

economy through expert knowledge not only through organizations whose goal is migration management but also through humanitarian organizations.

The second contribution of this chapter is for the study of the political sociology of refugee migration. This chapter has demonstrated how humanitarian initiatives are implemented across borders via universalistic models of social change drawn from western European refugee integration. Shevel (2006, 2011) argues that unlike in many other Eastern European states, internal contention over *who* constitutes the nation in Ukraine provided favorable conditions for UNHCR advocacy towards wider social inclusion of new minorities such as recent refugees.<sup>59</sup> However, this study demonstrates that international institutions policies may then exacerbate social exclusion of new minorities in new destination sites in the host society due to the tensions among their objectives and policies.

These consequences, I have argued, are tied to the EU's externalization of western European policies for refugee integration. "Objective knowledge" (c.f. Smith 2005) on refugee integration in Western Europe has supported an increasingly a neo-liberal ideology of "self-reliance" which became instituted in refugee and immigrant services throughout Europe in the late 1990s. In practice, however, integration has worked more as a policy discourse, one that places blame on refugees for structural barriers to social incorporation without seeking to address them with resources and equalizing measures

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of human rights abuses in immigrant detention in the Global South on behalf of donor states in the Global North, seeking restrictive admittance polices (e.g. Georgi 2010). While much critical work looks at the IOM as the locus of power in global migration, UNHCR's role in the contestation and reproduction of migrating refugees' subordination has largely been overlooked.

<sup>59</sup> Shevel (2006, 2011) argues that enduring dissent and contention over the national question provided favorable opportunities for international organizations to pressure states for wider social inclusion

(Fekete, Bouteldja and Muhe 2010: 1). With the European Neighborhood Program, Ukraine is not given full membership in the EU but is expected to integrate politically and regionally. In this context, a neoliberal politics of diversity—with little resources to enforce them—have been passed on to poorer countries to the south and east of the EU without enabling their equal development on par with member states or building from their own experiences with antiracism (for example, its own problematic history, of Soviet internationalism). Thus, not only are restrictive admission policies externalized to the buffer zone in Europe's east, but so are the western European neoliberal discourses on refugee incorporation that reinforce them. Rather than just multiculturalism “retreating” within Europe (Joppke 2004), what remains understudied is how neoliberal forms of multiculturalism as migration policy diffuse beyond EU's borders through policies such as refugee integration. Future research should focus on how neoliberal policies reproduce a weak form of multiculturalism that is tied to migration control in the context of the project of EU externalization of controls and securitization.

Finally, this chapter contributes to theories of social change and human rights. Neo-institutional perspectives develop models of change around a normative assumption of the progressive role played by international laws and institutions in spreading human rights norms (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, Sikkink 1999). However, this research arrives at a contrary conclusion, taking a critical geopolitics perspective that international organizations' policies, practices, and interests are instead unevenly driven by Global North states, whose policies such as on security and border controls may contradict the function of humanitarian institutions (see also Geiger and Pecoud 2014).

The retrenchment of international human rights organizations—with a declining influence of transnational advocacy networks—may result in Global North states “external” collusion in “remote control” policies (Zolberg 2006) that constrain the development of human rights norms.

Thus, I argue, even as immigration states in Europe and North America may sustain the right to asylum inside their borders, countries of immigration in the post cold war era use controls to limit access to asylum outside their territory as well, in buffer countries such as Ukraine. International migration and refugee policy imperatives in countries such as Mexico, Libya, Turkey, and Indonesia can be better analyzed. Coercive remote control such as readmission agreements (see Fitzgerald forthcoming), violence in camps in Bosnia in the 1990s, and Libya in the 2000s, are but one mode of remote control (and a mode we must hope no parties in the current crisis will use). Here, we see the legitimacy of western Europeans, as the arbiters of human rights, threatened when reports emerged of poor conditions in detention centers. As the first section of this chapter showed, such threats encourage the development of what I call *soft remote control* strategies to externalize migration policy. Future research on extraterritorial policies should take into consideration how humanitarian aid plays into receiving countries migration and other externalized domestic policies. Future research can develop studies of forced migration processes in an institutional context by asking questions such as: what are the causes and consequences of refugee policies in buffer countries? Do refugee integration policies in buffer countries contribute to humanitarian protection, or do they contribute to the remote control of forced migration?

## Chapter 5

### Exit, Voice, and Adaptation: Resources and Refugee Survival Strategies

The preceding chapters have demonstrated how social networks and refugee policies impact the ways refugees negotiate migration. This chapter looks at how resources enable and constrain refugees' agentic survival strategies in the context of forced migration. Refugees may resiliently *adapt* to life in a new destination. At the same time, they and others may *voice* discontent—individually or collectively—with authorities at different levels. They and others may also consider different ways to *exit* for another destination altogether. Why do refugees adopt each of these strategies and different combinations thereof? How does different access to resources drive which combination of survival strategies refugees take on? Other studies presuppose that individuals are rational economic actors without considering constraints on their resources and cultural contexts of their decisions to mobilize resources. To the contrary, this chapter takes a Bourdieuan approach to analyze the mobilization and transfer of existing resources refugees bring with them. A study of refugees, those who are excluded from citizenship, provides an opportunity to understand how survival strategies can be mobilized despite wholesale exclusion from any membership in the nation-state.

This chapter analyzes the relationship between resources and the types of survival strategies various households deploy in the context of post-Soviet cities in Ukraine. It seeks to explain relationships among *exit*, *voice*, and *adaptation* strategies by looking at refugees' access, transfer, and mobilization of different forms of resources in pursuit of each. Specifically, the analysis aims to develop and revise Hirschmann's (1970) typology

of *exit*, *voice*, and *loyalty* as tools for understanding why refugee survival strategies vary in the context of increasing global controls on migration and limits to citizenship opportunities. It shows how exit strategies structure voice and loyalty decisions among refugees in Ukraine.

*Exit, Voice, Loyalty Perspectives*

The very concept of mobility in refugee studies is predicated on the idea that the movement of those who are forced to seek asylum is involuntary, forced by civil or political strife. Some studies (Hyndman 2000, Van Haer 2006, Czaika 2009) have also pointed out that conditions of forced migration make access to *economic* resources all the more important for determining success at relocating or adapting. Drawing on David Harvey, Hyndman (2000: 35) points out:

“Those with money can take advantage of time-space compression. Those who are uprooted from their homes and forced to flee with few resources experience migration in a very different way.”

Other studies have pointed out that such non-economic resources as social ties to powerful diaspora communities can enhance group access to knowledge towards finding asylum in western countries (Van Hear 2006). More broadly international migration scholars have argued that only those with enough resources can begin the journey (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). Survival strategies are not negotiated and mobilized by rational economic actors in a vacuum that assumes full membership or citizenship, but instead is negotiated by actors who are marginal in that system. Shevel's (2012) study of postsocialist refugee policy recognizes the particular nation building context in which

“compatriot” or “noncompatriot” refugees are welcomed, but overlooks the mechanisms driving refugee decisions to settle. Looking at how and why refugees in particular mobilize survival strategies can bring agency back into refugee studies as well as revise Hirschmann’s (1970, 1978, Moses 2005) EVL approach to explain how those most marginalized from citizenship respond to adversity.

*Loyalty* is the most widely critiqued concept in Hirschmann’s framework (see Moses 2005). This study is particularly well suited to contribute to a critique of the significance of loyalty since it focuses attention on refugees, many stateless and with limited access to full citizenship in the host country. This framework enables an understanding of the constraints as well as agency involved in exit, voice, or *adaptation* and how these actors are constrained by their limited resources to these survival strategies. Researchers on political contention have already expanded upon Hirschman’s approach. Moses defines exit as emigration, and as “voting with your feet” when declining conditions have combined with a limited access to voice due to a low quality of citizenship (Moses 2005). Yet, Hirschmann’s framework is also limited to understanding exit only as residual or alternative to voice, rather than as a dynamic response that may be constrained by actors who have different citizenship as well as access to resources. For refugees, lack of access to full membership in the host country as well as immigration controls may limit or alter the content of voice and exit depending on their other resources.. Bourdieu’s approach helps understand how a limited sets of resources and their transferability may influence the shape of survival strategies. I argue in the context

of global migration controls on one hand and of limits on opportunities for citizenship on the other hand, make *adaptation*, rather than exit and voice, a primary survival strategy.

This chapter is based on semi-structured interviews conducted independently with refugees and in partnership with the UNHCR. By using Bourdieu's (1973) understanding of the reproduction of social inequities through the transfer of resources, or capital, I analyze why refugees pursue? exit, voice, and adaptation survival strategies.<sup>60</sup> This chapter explains why refugees may move on, protest, and/or adopt strategies other than loyalty that I call *adaptation*. The mobilization of resources to this end, I argue, is not driven by market-based acquisition or transfer of economic, social, or cultural capital, but by constraints and opportunities of international migration controls and openings in the process of migration.

This chapter looks at how refugees respond to adversity, as situated in the context of resources accessible in Ukrainian cities. In the first section I review the way survival strategies can be analyzed from an exit/voice/loyalty (EVL) perspective. Next, I explain why refugees enact survival strategies resembling exit, voice, and adaptation in the social context of post-Soviet Ukraine. I show how the resources refugees have access to both enable and limit the types of lives they are able to lead and strategies they undertake as a result. Throughout, I ask what forms of resources refugees employ towards devising *exit, voice, and adaptation* strategies. Considering these resource

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<sup>60</sup> Economic capital resembles various financial resources. Social capital are "resources based on connections and group membership" that are less institutionalized, including political capital. Cultural capital is "informational capital" and capacity to transmit those values, beliefs, and symbols that have value in society. Symbolic capital refers simply to any of these forms of capital at the moment of transaction, when a resource is "recognized" or misrecognized. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119; see also Graaf 2007 and Bourdieu 1973).



differences, also ask why refugees develop an adaptation, voice, and exit strategies, often simultaneously. That is, what resources influence refugee households to adapt and settle for a life in a new destination, voice protest against authorities, or seek to migrate onwards to another destination?

This chapter again rests on analysis of refugee responses, showing how survival strategies demonstrate agency mobilized to access limited economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital. It shows how diverse religious communities in Ukraine reinforce refugees' social status through social institutions such as family, work, the state, and international humanitarian organizations. I will show how in this post-Soviet context, refugees mobilize social, cultural, symbolic and economic capital to develop three forms of intersecting survival strategies: adaptation, voice and exit.

### **5.1 Adaptation: Localizing Limited Transnational Resources**

How do refugees mobilize resources to different ends in a changing context? The role of human agency and social structure is evident by the survival strategies refugees use, notably the economic and social capital they bring with them, as well as how they transfer these and cultural forms of capital into resources in the context of the host society. As the following sections demonstrate, adaptation is mobilized in different ways but to a similar end—to adjust and come to terms with the vicissitudes of settlement in a liminal space.

#### *Constraints on Economic and Social Capital Transfers*

Unlike voluntary and legal status migrants, those uprooted by conflict across borders as asylum seekers are forced to move but they often bring with them strained or

fewer resources. Yet, studies show that refugees too mobilize whatever resources remain available to them, with their journeys going “as far as money can take” them (Van Haer 2006). Asylum seekers and refugees constrained to clandestine overland travel via transit countries bring with them a limited set of resources they use to select a destination as they move across space, such as money, social networks, cultural resources such as education and other skills (Düvell 2008). Few have studied how conditions in intermediate and transit destinations are suitable for converting resources and driving survival strategies.

Refugees are often mistaken for voluntary migrants in transit and new destination contexts. As a director of one region’s State Migration Service explained, “integration is the exception, not the rule.”<sup>61</sup> This official sees that many asylum seekers who stay in Ukraine must “rely on money sent from home countries or funds from Europe from those who made it.” However, those who flee persecution, as discussed in Chapter 3, have limits to their security to maintain even a few ties with the country of origin. Those who equate refugees with migrants overlook that social and economic capital transfers from kin for refugees remain a very valued but limited resource, and that refugees must often rely on their own resources in transit countries.

While labor migrants build networks to send remittances to families in home countries, refugees’ ties at home may have been strained by the conflicts they sought to escape. One example is the case of Rabah, as discussed in Chapter 3, is a Palestinian and 16-year-long resident of Ukraine. Rabah came to Ukraine from the occupied territories in

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<sup>61</sup> Personal interview, Mykola Toft, head of State Migration Service of Zakarpatskaya region, February 28, 2010.

1993, after being able to leave Palestine and come to Ukraine due to his access to a student visa. Rabah arrived in Ukraine using Ukraine's Soviet-era links with select national liberation movements and as a representative of a student group from a faction of the Palestinian Liberation Organization youth organization.<sup>62</sup> He had stayed in Ukraine, and had been unable to return to Gaza after the blockade that followed the second intifada. Rabah married a Ukrainian and worked odd jobs at a street market while he finished his degree. But after a divorce, he returned to relying on his family for financial support from abroad. "My family's business in Palestine was making furniture from bamboo, going to [Israel] every week to buy materials. But after the intifada we could no longer obtain materials and our business failed. Because of this I no longer had any support after 1998." At that time, he received his only support from his family, about \$6,500, that he stretched out through college for several years. He mobilizes cultural capital and class expectations by bragging of, allegedly, "coming from a very rich family," and that "he was the youngest so he had everything." Nevertheless, his decade-long irregular status in Ukraine as an asylum seeker constrains him from converting his cultural capital into upward mobility. Support from Rabah's family ran out soon after he completed his degree in 1999, and, as we will see, he then mobilized noneconomic resources to maintain his documented status and class-based expectations. Forced migrants must at times rely on limited resources from strained transnational ties, the state and international support, as well as transfer of different types of resources. It is these

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<sup>62</sup> Rabah relied on the community of the Palestinian diaspora that developed in this city at the time of the collapse of the former Soviet Union. While no figures based on nationality are available from Universities or the government, one Arab leader in this city claimed that there were over 5800 Arab students and refugees in Kharkov in the 1990s, a third of whom were Palestinian.

resource constraints that force refugees to develop creative *adaptation* strategies, rather than to develop mere *loyalty* envisaged by Hirschmann's (1970) as a "decision to suffer in silence" (Dowding *et al* 2000: 473).

As Chapter 4 demonstrated, humanitarian aid is also a limited resource for refugees in transit countries. But, the state in buffer countries may also provide transfer for alternative forms of resources—social capital in the form of access to legal status through corrupt officials. The need to re-apply for asylum documentation every few months deepens refugees' dependence over time but builds social capital through relations to officials in the State Migration Service and other agencies. Providing informal services as a middleman with access to state community members is one way that refugees pool their resources towards adaptation strategies in the host society. Rabah, for example, describes how his translation "business" first started while he struggled to maintain his own documented status. Despite having applied for asylum, he was denied access to refugee status (though he continues to appeal his asylum case--now dragging on through the system for over a decade). Seeking access to translation of his own documents, he needed to find a state-sanctioned notary with language credentials. In order to maintain his asylum status, he mobilized his Russian and Arabic language skills, which enabled him to transmit bribes to officials in order to obtain his translated documents rather than pay several hundred dollars. With access to limited economic resources, Rabah learned to utilize the networks with corrupt officials and middlemen, going on to develop his very own "translation business" later as a middleman towards accumulation of social capital.

Mobilizing networks across ethnic and national communities also serves as a collective adaptive survival strategy for both pooling and hoarding resources with other refugees and immigrants who may lack access to employment due to their citizenship status. A vignette (described in more detail in Chapter 2) depicts a “cacophony of petty businessmen” that includes Rabah along with Pakistani, Sudanese, and other immigrants negotiating the resale of a vehicle. At one point, Rabah exclaims, “we are the damned foreigners here getting screwed. Why do you expect us to pay more now?” That scene captures how refugees like Rabah marshal their limited networks, in the context of social exclusion in Ukraine, into solidarities with marginalized and immigrant groups into trade and mutual support networks (on refugee trade networks, see Van Haer 2006). From hustling or even extorting payments for services various foreign students, refugees, and immigrants, Rabah claims to have paid tens of thousands of dollars in bribes to police and immigration officials over his sixteen years in Ukraine to ensure basic protection from immigration authorities. With such costs on adaptation, middlemen like Rabah pursue hustling as an adaptation strategy. Hustling serves as a mechanism through which resources are obtained through the mutual collaboration or extortion of those in social networks, demonstrating the double-edged nature of *pan-ethnic* (see Espiritu 1992) solidarities between marginalized nationalities in the context of inflexible citizenship. Thus, economic capital can be transferred for social capital towards maintaining not only individual but also collective adaptation strategies.

Due to exclusion and lack of protection, some refugees collaborate with corrupt state officials for their income and social protection. Refugees in some cities with flows of irregular migration in cities Odessa and Vinnitsa, are easy targets of extortion by various police and immigration authorities (see Border Monitoring Project Ukraine 2011). One longtime refugee advocate explained, one of two federal police agencies have power in each city and especially with regards to irregular migration.<sup>63</sup> As part of this system, police authorities and other state officials recruit middlemen from more established refugee communities, distributing scarce resources, such as legal status through registration stamps in passports. As human rights reports have pointed out, this informal system that results from a low refugee recognition rates, serves to extort money from the most vulnerable new arrivals and exploits ethnic and language divisions between refugees communities (Border Monitoring Project 2011). At the same time, refugees seeking to secure immigration benefits for themselves and their communities serve as middlemen, such as translators for immigration officials in refugee status determination interviews. “Students and migrants do not know how things work here,” Rabah says, claiming his authority and status as a local with knowledge of post-Soviet bureaucracy. Like middlemen I met in other cities, he claims that his services help refugees get by in an unfamiliar destination. As a middleman, Rabah claims his bureaucratic connections range from helping international students get sick notices from doctors (so they can be excused from class), obtaining housing registration stamps in passports (so migrants and asylum seekers can keep their regular status), meeting

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<sup>63</sup> Personal interview, Dmytro Groisman, January 12, 2012, referring to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD in Kharkiv, Odessa) and State Security of Ukraine (SBU in Kyiv and Vynitsa).

foreigners at airports to smooth entry with border guards, and even filing asylum claims with the SMS.<sup>64</sup> This demonstrates how resources—including petty corruption—may work in complex ways to punish as well as support low-status actors in state as well as international bureaucracies (see Zaloznaya 2014).

While on the one hand refugee middlemen fill a gap in state protection for refugees, they also participate in extortion from migrants and refugees along with state officials. For instance, Rabah says he once “helped” an Iranian student return retrieve his passport from police, who unlawfully confiscated it, thus preventing his deportation. However, Rabah also admits to me that he took a larger cut of the bribe (\$700) than demanded by the police: “the Iranian student walked into [a club] without documents, got into a fight with someone who happened to be a cop. The cop took his passport for ransom, gave it to the [Ministry of Internal Affairs precinct] to stamp for deportation. I got it back for him. I told him to never go back to the University. But he walks right back there the next week, demanding to the world that he be reinstated, after being expelled. So the dean is furious, calls the police. Of course they take his passport again and this time demand \$1100.” Episodes such as this have given Rabah a poor reputation with the Afghan diaspora organizations’ leaders in the city, who have allegedly filed complaints that Rabah is “cutting into this [police] business.” Thus, adaptation strategies by community leaders that result from their irregular status may not only lead to participation in the extortion of other vulnerable foreigners, but also to act as an agent of

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<sup>64</sup> Its important to keep in mind that informal services by refugee middlemen only partially fill the need for a few resourced others to get by in an otherwise broken asylum system, a system that otherwise takes several years to process an application, denying asylum at a rate of 93% (see Border Monitoring Project Ukraine 2011).

divisiveness between different communities. Hustling adaptation strategies may use individual, state, and other collective resources for collective ends but also have unintended consequences that diminish other and vulnerable refugees' resources.

In addition, adaptation strategies such as hustling tend to be taken on by refugees who have spent longer periods of time in the country, often integrating them into Ukraine's informal grey economy—a *segmented assimilation* that isolates recent as well as longtime and second generation refugees and migrants from mainstream networks in society (see Portes and Rumbaut 2006). I met longtime residents acting as middlemen in legal status matters in every city I visited. These refugees have accumulated social and cultural capital, compensating for their lack of access to work and legal status, but enabling them to adapt to settling in a Ukrainian city. At the same time, some of these actors both pooled and competed for resources with other refugees. Constraints on refugees' legal status and limited access to resources even within their networks make “adaptation” a more appropriate strategy than the “loyalty” as conceived in other EVL studies.

*Post-Soviet “Compatriots,” Adaptation, and Cultural Capital*

The evidence presented thus far has focused on refugees from “the far abroad.” But, do the survival strategies adopted by “compatriot” refugees, from former Soviet countries differ from other refugees? Shevel (2012, 2006) has documented that post-socialist states with ambiguous and contested national politics like Ukraine are more likely to grant asylum to a diversity of “noncompatriot” refugees (Shevel 2012, 2006).<sup>65</sup>,

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<sup>65</sup> Shevel's study is an exhaustive documentation the role of national policy and international relations and contributes to our understanding for how national politics and international policy influences who receives



An understanding of the social relations of compatriot refugees in society allows for a more comprehensive picture of settlement and whether some groups refugees, seen as more indigenous, can find resources to adapt—voice, or exit better than others.

The experiences of compatriot refugees from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Chechnya demonstrate the impacts on survival strategies of resources stemming from social opportunity structures that still exist across post-Soviet space. As discussed in Chapter 3, refugee families from former Soviet countries come to Ukraine due to longstanding migration systems across post-Soviet space. At the same time, we would also expect post-Soviet refugees may prefer to adapt to a familiar destination rather than demand refugee status or move on to another country. As expected, I observed that compatriot refugees preferred settlement in post-Soviet space amongst other newly-arrived refugees. Fazima, discussed in Chapter 3 (the twenty six year old woman, who first fled Uzbekistan to Russia), provides one example.<sup>66</sup> Twice detained and beaten by notorious Uzbek police investigators for an uncle's alleged dissident activities, she refused to return to Uzbekistan along with five other relatives for fear of their safety; her family at home informed her that she personally continued to be pursued. All household members were still seeking employment and living on the limited funds remained from the sale of their home in Osh. She and the three other female relatives complained that

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refugee status by the state. Specifically, Shevel (2012) has argued that due to the ongoing lack of consensus over Ukraine's culture as both Ukrainian and Russian, the state has granted asylum at higher rates and has welcomed the policy input of international agencies, i.e. the UNHCR. This is explained by ongoing popular contention in these countries over a common vision of the nation and divisions amongst political elites that allow for policies advised by international agencies like UNHCR.

<sup>66</sup> Personal interview and observation of UNHCR refugee status determination interview, Kyiv, January 17, 2011. We speak through an Uzbek translator after her status determination interview with UNHCR.

they “rarely leave” their apartment— “since arriving” in Ukraine she adds, indicating how traditional gender roles may be reinforced in a migratory context. Nevertheless, Fazima remained optimistic about her family’s prospects in Ukraine, especially compared to her family’s experience in Russia, where she says her family “found no help” for refugees.<sup>67</sup> Whilst in Russia, friends told them that “its more peaceful and reliable in Ukraine, and that you can turn to help in Ukraine.” Thus, though the economic realities may not have met expectations, lower rates of relative deprivation in a destination may— contrary to Shevel’s argument—provide compatriot refugees sufficient motivation to settle rather than move on.

UNHCR offered social services and financial assistance (\$90/month) to a small and decreasing number of families, including Fazima’s (see UNHCR 2011). However, a central resource enabling Fazima’s family’s adaptation relate to her nationality and cultural links across post-Soviet space. Cultural capital exchanged by sojourners across this space enabled her to find inexpensive housing despite discriminatory housing market practices and hostile to foreigners (Ghosh 2008). She attributed her landlord’s “hospitality” and the inexpensive rent it afforded to her landlord’s prior group contact with other Uzbek people, noting that “when she took us as renters, she recalled that I am taking you because you are Uzbeks because I have good impression of Uzbek people.”

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<sup>67</sup> According to a personal interview with a UNHCR implementing partner staff, UNHCR prefers Uzbeks for the \$90/month social assistance they allot for the most vulnerable refugees in Ukraine, due to “local politics” and the vulnerability of Uzbek refugees for illegal deportation by Ukrainian authorities. UNHCR legal case worker: “Uzbeks never get rejected [for legal assistance]. Such is the politics at UNHCR here. There was this one case that lied about his situation, and didn’t tell about his real [refugee] story which had a real claim. We didn’t find this out until he was in detention under threat of deportation back to Uzbekistan where he would have surely perished. After this, all Uzbeks get legal and social services, and many are preferred for resettlement.”

The landlord's non-prejudice towards Uzbeks she attributes to her contact with Uzbeks during her stay in Uzbekistan during a Soviet exchange program: "she says she has great memories of Uzbekistan, since she has stayed in Uzbekistan before." Despite the limitations on international travel in the Soviet Union, the enduring migration systems allowed for compatriot refugees to mobilize cultural capital to better adapt to life in Ukraine. Immigrants and refugee families like Fazima's faced many challenges such as finding work and a retrenchment of traditional gender roles (Pessar and Mahler 2003), which may make adaptation a challenge. However, the landlord's link to Uzbekistan enabled Fazima to mobilize cultural capital in order to obtain an apartment and inexpensive rent, enabling her to adapt to Ukraine. Indigenaaity is tied to migration systems, should be considered an important component of "compatriot" status (c.f. Shevel (2012), even in the context of a fractured post-Soviet space. Thus, contact across migration systems enabled those refugees who were viewed as compatriots in the receiving society to mobilize cultural resources, and social capital from nearby countries of origin more easily.

*Moralizing Symbolic Capital: Religion as Signal of Adaptation*

Post-Soviet Ukraine is arguably the most religious country in Europe, so it should come as no surprise that refugees also mobilized symbolic resources garnered through religious participation. As discussed in Chapter 3, transnational religious networks as well as ethnic and national communities create access to resources. than their. I found that a key source of resources for refugees committed to an adaptation strategy was evangelical Christianity. For example take the case of Mikhail, a 44 year old Angolan

man I met at his work, shining shoes for tips in the lobby of a major hotel (he claimed to make up to fifty dollars a day). As tourists filtered through his corner of the lobby, he joked with familiar faces of businessmen, diplomats, and tourists. “Hey ‘Delhi! What is new?’ he greets an Indian acquaintance. Bathroom—here.’ ‘Your friends go there,’ a European tourist looks up in surprise, “Uh, thanks.” ‘Ok, tomorrow I shine your shoes,’ he retorts, and then again the next day, and again!” Coping with difficult situations with humor is a cultural signal of adaption. Despite his outsider status, such use of symbolic capital demonstrated knowledge of populist Soviet-era dark humor or “laughter through tears” (see Yurchak 2013). His humor mobilized a post-Soviet type of cultural capital and pointed to his adaptation to life in Ukraine.

When the tourist crowd dissipated up the stairways, Mikhail, seemed more content, revealing more about his story to me. He arrived in Ukraine in 1993, bringing nothing with him to this post-socialist society but the symbolic social-political capital as an allied communist fighter in Angola. “I left Angola because communists were followed, there after the war. Africa has many riches, Europe wants to take them.” Considering African socialist states and Angola’s historical relationship to the Soviet Union, Mikhail seemed to draw on his cultural capital in his choice of destination. Places like “U.S., England, and Europe are too expensive,” he explained, detailing how he only had enough “money and friends” to come to Ukraine and how he arrived. Pointing to the shoe brush in his hand, he said, my life is here now. He explained he has lived in Ukraine since 1993, and was able to obtain refugee status in 1996.<sup>68</sup> His story suggests how social

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<sup>68</sup> In the 1990s, refugee recognition rates under the newly-established asylum system were higher, and refugees from African socialist states had a chance of obtaining asylum (see UNHCR 2010).

class constraints on economic resources needed to move to western countries combined with opportunity stemming from social-political capital to result in an outcome of one political refugee's destination in Ukraine.

Mikhail's social attitudes enacted a particular kind of symbolic capital that resonated in emerging religious communities. When I ask him how his life had changed under a recent refugee law, he replied with a telling remark. "What is happiness? Can you tell me what is happiness? There is good and bad everywhere in the world. Happiness is where you are," he reflected. Mikhail then told a story, that there was an [American?] "millionaire" who hung himself at the hotel." Humming the Beatles song, "Money Can't Buy Me Love," he tells me he would not find happiness if he were to move to a wealthier country. As we spoke further, I learned he had a family in Ukraine, a two year old daughter with his Ukrainian wife, who he met at church, though he also kept in touch with "brothers" and some relatives in Angola. In addition to his Ukrainian family, his limited access to financial capital rather than his political identity as a communist drove Mikhail's decision to find haven in Ukraine in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

A conventional, Hirschmannian way to define adaptation is through conformity to the values and beliefs of a society. Mikhail was a proud member of one of four evangelical mega-churches in Ukraine, the Embassy of God. He revealed how the ritual had helped him adapt to life in life in Ukraine, attending "Pastor Sunday's church" every day for six years. An evangelical church rooted in Ukraine, the Embassy of God quickly grew to 200,000 after 1990 under its founding pastor, Sunday Abdaleja, a Congolese

exile who studied in Soviet Belorussia . “I was not a religious man, I was a communist rebel” Mikhail told of a heroic escape from Angola, “but, Sunday changed my life.” I used to be a drug addict. You cannot tell a person is evil and change him like the Orthodox, you can only take the devil out of him.” His narrative of spiritual self-improvement positioned evangelical values of self-improvement against the dominant values of Orthodox Christianity, which he perceived as “punishing those who have sinned.” By challenging these power relations within religious life, Mikhail displayed not only adaptation but also voice, mobilizing his newfound cultural capital, originally transferred from his social (and political) capital as a communist exile in the post-Soviet country. The transfer of this capital marked the darkest moments of Mikhail’s life in Ukraine, when—he explained—he “sinned”: he could not stabilize his legal status in the mid-1990s, and found himself living on a bimonthly temporary registration status and selling shoes at a street market to make ends meet. He attributed the improvement of his social status to his involvement in religious life. His story shows how refugees may be a force of change, despite limited access to economic or social capital; they can voice their grievances about the status quo in the host society through the social field of religion.

Considering such changes of religious participation from an orthodox Marxist perspective would lead us to understand it as a kind of acculturation to the “opiate of the masses.” Yet, considering the “disruptive defiant and unruly” role of religious movements (see Smith 1996: 1), this participation may be considered both an adaptation strategy or a form of voice, an oppositional consciousness to the dominant church in Ukrainian society. New religious communities in late and post-Soviet Ukraine developed

in ways that were “highly local and transnational in orientation,” with an ethos of “separation from the world at the same time as they are increasingly tied to a global community of believers” (Wanner 2004: 732, also see Wanner 2007). Soviet Ukraine was considered the “Bible Belt of the Soviet Union” and refugees to Ukraine have continued to develop the “traveling culture” in this liminal space between east and west (Wanner 2004). Mikhail’s mobilization of cultural capital as an adaptation strategy also represents a voice strategy to change the role of religion in Ukraine’s public life.

### **5.2 Voice: Costs, Citizenship, and Targets**

For Hirschmann, voice is a response to unfavorable conditions that demands a need for change within an organization or state (Dowding 2000). Instead of adaptation, individual or collective protest may result if enough resources and opportunities are available to actors to possibly resolve the matter. But how do resources and opportunities drive whether and how voice is deployed towards state and international targets if actors are not full citizens?

Daily acts of resistance against the state—what James Scott (1985) dubbed “weapons of the weak”—are an individual form of voice. For instance, I observed how refugees with sufficient social capital with authorities often voiced their concerns to those administrative authorities. These strategies were not mutually exclusive or separate from adaptation strategies. For instance, I observed how Rabah, the longtime Palestinian resident, also often spoke back to various court and police officials. He told me one of his asylum interviews at the SMS had been interrupted by SBU federal agents, who attempted to question him about his immigration status. But, after mentioning the names

of local police officials that he had links with, he claimed, the agents quickly departed the interview. “Go to hell. Nobody talks to me that way,” he proudly recalled ending the disruption with a high-ranking police official. I observed the consequences of his outspoken criticism when I accompanied him to the SMS office. The director of the state asylum organization chastised him, and demanded he “keep his mouth shut” in front of the judge (who—I later found—out summarily dismissed one of his final legal appeals in his asylum case). In another case, Hamid, a West African refugee had discussed formal complaints with the police and the Ukrainian Human Rights departments. When I accompanied him to the local police office to file the claim, epithets were hurled at him as we were pushed out of the precinct by a clerk asking me: “who is this negro coming here flexing his rights?” Afterward, Hamid told me that he simply did “not have the right connections” to demand an internal investigation of his friend’s beating at the hands of police. Soon after, Hamid was threatened with eviction from his room by his landlord, who in turn had received threats about losing her apartment’s subsidy from the housing authority due to her “unregistered resident.” Hamid and Rabah were however two of the only refugees I spoke with who articulated a voice strategy with respect to the state. Cultural, social,—not to mention economic (i.e. bribe)—capital resource demands and risks were too high for most refugees to attempt a voice strategy targeting the state.

Collective voice strategies aimed at the state were also few and far between. The former Odessa Association of African Refugees (OAAR), was—according to Hagos, an outspoken refugee and co-founder of the organization—created to “combat racism and discrimination” and conduct service projects to “solve African refugees’ social



problems.” Founded in 2004 and having obtained a few small international grants, the organization was, allegedly, “captured” or coopted by SMS authorities. Ethiopian, Arab, and Congolese and more recent francophone refugees were pitted against each-other. A shadow organization was created under the state Sympathy Fund, a handmaiden of the SMS authorities, taking over the organization’s finances and access to their office. As Hyndman (2008: 138) shows in the case of mass-encampment in Kenya, states try to “simulate” refugee self-determination by erecting state-lead organizations that coopt refugee self-organization. Due to refugees’ limited legal status and social capital as inside links with authorities, the OOAR all but ceased to exist by 2009, one of few independent migrant-led organizations in Ukraine.

Due to the constraints on voice towards the state, refugees—those who do not have a right for voice in a nation-state—target much of their protest at the international level. Entering a UNHCR partner organization, I recognized Obot, a recent refugee I had met at the TAC weeks ago. Within minutes in the waiting room, I heard he spoke up to NGO staff about a recent decision by UNHCR, “Are you supposed to be my advocates? Why am I rejected for help? I am not talking to you as individuals, I am talking to the organization,” he yelled at a new staff member. Obot had spent several weeks in the hospital and was refused medical assistance provided by the state but often mediated via UNHCR. His asylum application remained under consideration with Ukrainian authorities. His objections, however, were aimed at the UNHCR partner organization and his bitterness for his rejection as a refugee was expressed to the UNHCR: “They say these are international standards but they do not follow any standards,” he protested. As

Verderame and Harell-Bond (2008) and Michel Agier (2011) have argued, refugees may direct their claims to international authorities and UNHCR because they see international authorities as working with host states to manage the social control of “undesirables.”

In addition to blaming state authorities from the SMS, many refugees in Odessa in particular also blamed the UNHCR for the decay of independent refugee organizations. “The UNHCR helped destroy the OAR,” Hagos claimed, along with the legal NGO with whom it now partnered. As a 2003 OAR statement declared, “charitable funds operating under the wings of local migration authorities and UNHCR seem to create the impression that refugees are living well in Ukraine (Odessa in particular)” (OAR 2003). Furthermore, Hagos insisted, “the world community has allowed our project organizations to be deactivated by organizations like the Sympathy Fund.” In 2011, the UNCHR removed Sympathy Fund as a working partner, but various advocates in Kiev insisted that African refugees in Odessa were still campaigning against UNHCR, influenced by local authorities. The UNHCR set up regular listening sessions with African refugees in Odessa, which helped lead to the adoption of the 2012-2016 Local Integration Program (see Chapter 4). At least two of the refugees who founded OAR have since been blacklisted from social assistance and other services by UNHCR.<sup>69</sup> Thus, repression by international authorities in urban refugee scenarios—not just camps— may also carry a cost to voice strategies such as state repression and cooptation (also see Agier 2011).

#### *Exit as Voice: Demands for International Resettlement*

Voice and exit are not mutually exclusive strategies in the context of increasingly

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<sup>69</sup> Personal interview, anonymous official, UNHCR Kiev Regional Office;

stringent migration controls worldwide. As in other transit countries at the borders of Europe such as Turkey and Libya, “urban refugees” who address complaints to international organizations typically and unsuccessfully demand resettlement. Some end up returning to mass-encampment situations in Pakistan, Turkey, and Kenya. Included in the demands of the 2003 OOAR statement of “recommendations” to UNHCR, African refugees requested better social welfare, child education benefits for refugees, and an open forum with UNHCR officials. However, at the top of their list, was a request to “institutionalize a resettlement program for all Ukraine-based African refugees.”

The history of refugee organization in Odessa showed how exit as voice targeting the UNHCR developed despite the decline of the original OOAR organization. In Spring 2010, officials from Geneva even flew to Ukraine to respond to a crisis in the TAC in Odessa, which its residents described to me as a “far away prison.” A widely circulated plea by OAAR on behalf of hundreds of refugees at the TAC in Odessa first initiated demands on the international community due to the failure of local authorities (OAAR 2010). Pointing to SMS state officials by name, the letter claimed African refugees in Odessa faced a host of unbearable conditions: extortion by authorities especially in the asylum system; dilapidated housing conditions as well as collective punishment and forced labor at the state TAC; as well as an “ever-present,” daily threat of racially-motivated violence. “We are in danger because we are organized; we are in danger because we are blacks; we are in danger because we talk to insist our right[s].” The emphatic OOAR letter, concluded: “there is a necessity to resettle all Africans from this country, since it is impossible to integrate here.” Pleading with an authority beyond the

state, voice becomes a means to exit in a declining capacity of the international refugee regime.

These voice-exit demands did not change UNHCR resettlement policy in the late 2000s in the region, and a maximum of 120 individuals and fewer than 67 cases were resettled between 2007 and 2010, while the numbers departed for resettlement fluctuated under 100 individuals per year from Ukraine for most of the 2000s (UNHCR 2010).<sup>70</sup> Therefore, as the EVL model suggests, other forms of exit persisted during the decade. In particular, unauthorized border crossings increased. That is, as increased EU border controls resulted in more refusals and apprehensions, asylum seekers from third countries formed an increasing proportion of unauthorized crossings to the EU (HRW 2011: 11). Voice was a strategy for seeking a documented path for exit through refugee resettlement, rather than risking unauthorized exit and criminalization as an undocumented migrant in Europe.

It should come as no surprise then that demands for resettlement on UNHCR continued on behalf of refugees themselves. In 2010-2011, I observed a renewed campaign for resettlement on African refugees in Odessa. On one rainy March afternoon, I accompanied a refugee to the local state passport desk where we huddled under the awning with dozens of other asylum seekers awaiting stamps in their temporary documents. I learned that later in the day African refugees were going to hand in a long-

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<sup>70</sup> Under the resettlement program, UNHCR continued to depart from Ukraine an average of 90 individuals or 43 cases per year between 2007-2011 (Resettlement Statistics UNHCR RR Kyiv 2007-2011). It is reasonable that leading UNHCR policy is responsible for this lacuna, as the region's authorities indicate in their reports that "staff capacity" is a constraint on the implementation for resettlement "in light of the deteriorating protection environment" (UNHCR 2010).

awaited petition to the UNHCR partner office, and I was invited to join the group. As we arrived at a small UNHCR partner NGO office across town, about 30 Africans arrived at the SUASYL office at the same time. This time they came not to ask for help with their individual asylum case, but to demand the attention of UNHCR to the dire conditions at the TAC. It was the end of the workday, and the staff was clearly not prepared for the visit. “What petition?” one lawyer asked. The chatter outside continued. “As soon as we told UNHCR we will come to Kiev [to deliver the petition], they said no, we come there,” one asylum seeker told me. Yet, the goal of handing in the petition in person, I learned, was to present “a united voice” to prevent UNHCR from dividing the collective demands by the group. One leader recalled the previous campaign, “last year the UN came to listen to demands and did nothing.” This time, refugees seem determined to go further than the OOAR campaign in 2010, and to pressure the UNHCR to resettle more African refugees away from Ukraine.<sup>71</sup>

The protestors were a diverse group. When I arrived, about twenty African men and a few women packed the small office; they ranged from youth to middle aged. Some complained about the poor turnout, and many whom I later met had spent several months to a few years in Ukraine—thus this was not the same group as OOAS. Most participants were recent refugees from Guinea, Ivory Coast, Sudan, Cameroon, Sierra Leon, Burkina Faso, and elsewhere in Africa. Many refused to sign the office log, I suspect out of fear of retribution. A few of the group’s representatives spoke to the clerk, with the small office buzzing as more people crammed into the small front room. When one NGO official

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<sup>71</sup>See OAAAR's 2010 resettlement demands to UNHCR, “We are in Danger” at <http://no-racism.net/article/3281/>

asked whether the group had also sent the letter to the Migration Service, some in the group replied “we only want to direct this to UNHCR. We came here because you are our lawyers.” As expected, their demand was denied. As they left the office, the crowd swelled to forty, and some leaders announced that they must now go to Kiev. Clearly, the target of the voice was the international community rather than the SMS authorities.

Even some of the most progressive Ukrainian human rights lawyers found these demands impractical. One advocate from Kiev concluded that campaigns for relocation “will not give any practical results for refugees” because of the limits of “the scope of [the UNHCR] mandate and limitations of the resettlement program.” Instead, she advised the refugees to reform the “poor quality of service” of local NGOs that UNHCR supports, believing they relayed only “positive reports about their work from their clients, and instead blame everyone manipulates.” Reforms at the local level within national capacities of NGOs should be the target of voice, in this view, rather than resettlement at the international level. Given the response, otherwise supportive lawyers discounted the political nature of resettlement requests given the international context, limiting their understanding of refugee demands only to the way the UNHCR mandate was implemented by international policy at that time.

On the other hand, refugees themselves were quite aware of a need to voice their complaints about national and global targets outside of institutionalized mechanisms. After the delivery of the petition to the UNHCR partner in Odessa, I had the opportunity to conduct a focus group with nine of its participants. Their motivations for participating originated in a host of similar, dire complaints: dehumanizing treatment and extortion by

the TAC and immigration authorities, and a lack of access to asylum and thus alternative housing options and dignified work. Detailed accounts of abuse and extortion by authorities, and everyday fear for life due to encounters with racial violence confirmed prior claims made in human rights reports (also see Border Monitoring Project 2012). But beyond the basic claims, the international target and goal of the campaign remained clear:

*Man from southern Cameroon:* “We are writing to UNHCR to ask us to leave this country....So we are asking for help from UNHCR to see the place we are living. So then European and UNHCR will see that them money they are giving to Ukraine they are throwing it into the air. Ukraine only needs refugees to gain money. We are suffering. We want to leave. So we are begging to UNHCR and Europe to come help us.”

*Man from Ivory Coast:* “We are asking UNHCR to come here to help us get away from this country...because they cannot integrate us into this country. They talk about integration. But they forget that it’s impossible....the best thing they can do for us is help us leave this country, just to help us get another opportunity to leave, because we are dying here. Let them find us ways to Europe, to Germany, Austria, Denmark, even Poland is better than here because they know the value of human beings.

*Man from Congo. Can you tell us why you came here today?* “For the same reason we left our country....for all these reasons we are asking, begging UNHCR to come and help us leave Ukraine. Because if there is no problem in Ivory Coast, I would never have put my leg here if I was living well...So I beg UNHCR and decent countries to come help us because we are dying here the same.”

Here, refugees understood the UNHCR as a representative of western states that drove the mechanism of resettlement—the same powers that had also assisted Ukraine with setting up the state TAC. Refugees’ voice strategies certainly demonstrated they are not mere passive consumers of aid as humanitarian institutions sometimes see them. Neither does their activism suggest they were rational individual actors working within in the individualistic framework of EVL and responding exclusively to opportunities within the nation-state. Instead, refugees formed coalitions, such as this pan-African campaign. Their survival strategies reflected creative collective forms of voice, aimed at international actors beyond unresponsive nation-states that unequivocally denied them citizenship.

After seven years of campaigns, UNHCR continued to reject Odessa African groups’ demands for improving resettlement programs. As a response to this campaign, the UNHCR (2012) factsheet on Odessa stated:

“The African community has on several occasions requested to be resettled as a group. Despite two recent town hall meetings (May and June 2011), where identification of resettlement cases and resettlement criteria were properly explained, they still demand resettlement. Some of the most vocal persons in this group have rejected refugee status determination and thus cannot be considered for resettlement.”

The “most vocal” of these group were viewed by authorities as leaders with cultural capital amongst refugees, While I observed that many stalwart OOAR members were respected amongst more recently arrived refugees, their issues with a lack of protection at



the TAC and in Ukraine were not recognized by UNHCR as a legitimate source of persecution. It should be added that, while I could not speak to all refugees, all of the ninety three whom I interviewed only sought out international protection, despite UNHCR “blacklists” which some of the agency’s officials informed me of informally. As legal scholars have pointed out, the agency’s strict and repetitive focus on status determination procedures was counterproductive to refugee protection (Kagan 2006). Furthermore, other groups of refugees in Ukraine, including thousands of Meshketan Turks in the early 1990s, had successfully campaigned for resettlement in Ukraine and elsewhere in the region (see Swerdlow 2006).<sup>72</sup> They were refugees from more remote regions and perhaps posed fewer security risks than Meshketans in nearby Georgia, but the UNHCR response to African refugee campaigns reflected the overall reluctance of UNHCR to consider African refugees as a vulnerable group despite such pan-African organizing across ethnic, language, and cultural lines. This demonstrates how a collective strategy by organized groups, voice may be limited in its effectiveness by the willingness accorded refugees by international authorities’ policies, which may be understood as dependent on financing from Global North states.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> See the case of the Meshketan Turks who fled Georgia and Russia to Ukraine, and were resettled en masse to the U.S. in the mid 1990s (Swerdlow 2006).

<sup>73</sup> It should be noted that it is not UNHCR but ultimately the international community of (mostly) Global North states that give UNHCR resources for resettlement who determine the implementation of its policy (see Loescher *et al* 2001). The landmark human rights report on asylum seekers in Ukraine recognized it is the European countries and the EU, that have the most policy impact over the lives of refugees in Ukraine via UNHCR. A top recommendation to EU member countries: “develop a generous program for the resettlement of refugees from asylum countries, including Ukraine, in a spirit of international solidarity.” It also requested the EU itself to provide “assistance to Ukraine geared toward improving its capacity to receive, accommodate, and properly process the claims of asylum seekers and to protect, integrate, and provide other durable solutions for refugees, *including resettlement to EU member states* (emphasis added).

Refugees in a sense claimed that conditions of life in transit countries enabled a mobilization of voice on one hand as potential members of the Ukrainian nation-state, and on the other hand as global citizens.<sup>74</sup> Voice was a survival strategy mobilized by refugee networks that targeted the nation-state and international bodies; both individuals and households as well as collective refugee groups used voice as a strategy. Collective and individual claims used voice, aimed at UNHCR and drawing on cultural and symbolic capital of refugees as global, rights-bearing citizens in order to also simultaneously seek resettlement as an exit strategy.

### **5.3 Exit: Dreams, Plans, and Onward Migration**

While most refugees end up staying in Ukraine for an extended period of time or even settling, many in my study looked to continue their journeys west. This section looks at the ways in which refugees mobilize resources to develop intentions, plans, and sometimes the execution of internationally facilitated and clandestine journeys to Global North states in the European Union and North America.

Refugees who came with substantial resources, especially those from outside the Soviet Union and those who had spent a medium term between two and five years in Ukraine, especially sought out novel exit strategies that successfully utilized the international refugee regime.

#### *Asylum Before Exit: Vulnerability and Transit*

Asylum in transit countries can be an important temporary solution, particularly for refugees in transit who are most vulnerable. Policy discourse in Europe often

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<sup>74</sup> See Rechitsky (2011) for a discussion of how global and cosmopolitan forms of belonging are transformed by different forms of migration experiences and social exclusion in receiving societies.

overlooks that Russian refugees in Europe are mostly Chechens (Düvell 2008). Observing an asylum interview at a UNHCR, I spoke with a 33 year old Chechen man, Razman, who was validated by UNHCR as a statutory refugee, having escaped trumped up charges by Russian authorities together with his pregnant wife. It became quickly evident he was applying for asylum in Ukraine with hopes of moving on to Europe quickly.

Ramzan had left Chechnya several months earlier without documents because, as he said, “there was a price on my head.” He had been wrongly arrested and tortured the year before, as documented in his case file. He came to Kiev for a few days and then headed west to try to cross the border into Poland. Apprehended by Ukrainian authorities and “deported” to Russia only to return to Minsk, he then continued his unsuccessful attempts to cross to the EU, spending a month in Belarusian villages along the less commonly route at the Poland / Lithuania border. His pregnant wife, “threatened with 3 year sentence once she gave birth” met him in Belarus, from where she was able to cross into Poland. There she claimed asylum and gave birth two weeks after arriving in Belarus. After his failed attempts to go to Europe, Razman’s aunt joined him in Ukraine, and he learned through friends that it might be best to apply. Asked if he would like to stay in Ukraine, he replied, “No. It’s widely known that all Chechens get deported from Ukraine. It’s not safe here. Chechens are deported at the request of Russian police, who may come looking for me [for Chechens].” Some Russian citizens, particularly Chechens, have indeed been kidnapped by Russian secret services and tortured without an

extradition proceeding or trial.<sup>75</sup> Ramzan's application for asylum in Ukraine may appear as an adaptation strategy, but upon closer inspection is a desperate appeal for a temporary asylum on the way to a destination in Europe beyond Russia's reach.

*Praying for Exit: Evangelical Christians and Resettlement Priorities*

While some may mobilize religion as a resource for adaptation or voice in the host society, others use religion to exit. Today's evangelical transnationalism in Ukraine has origins in an earlier migration of Ukrainian exiles to North America. In the first fifteen years of Ukrainian independence (1991-2006), 500,000 Ukrainian evangelical believers relocated to the U.S. due to their privileged position under U.S. refugee policy.<sup>76</sup> These tight-knit communities of Ukrainians settled in the U.S., but have also engaged in transnational "church planting" activities across independent Ukraine (Wanner 2007: 124-128). It should come as no surprise then, that I found mobile refugee and broader migrant communities in Ukraine also attracted to these expanding religious communities, those with links to the west.

After meeting with newcomers and believers like Mikhail—people of all ages from countries ranging from Iran, Ivory Coast, to even Vietnam—I was led to Mathieu, a Cameroonian-Ukrainian leader of a local branch of a global evangelical church. He told me that he organizes groups of foreign students, migrants, and refugees for bible study in dorms, street markets, and homes of various international communities—in both Russian

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<sup>75</sup> See especially the case of Russian dissident Vladimir Razvodayev and Düvell (2008).

<sup>76</sup> The 1989 Lautenberg amendment made religion the cornerstone of Soviet refugee policy, extending the—ethnic-based benefits Jews already had to Evangelical, Catholic, and Ukrainian Orthodox Church members who could "demonstrate a well established history of persecution" (Wanner 2007: 97).

and French. As for returning Ukrainian evangelicals, Mathieu told me the hope is that migrants will subsequently go on missions in their home countries.

I met Mathieu at his church services at a dilapidated 70's Soviet era theater. With church songs blaring through the doors of the small room, I met twenty or so parishioners, most of them recent students from francophone West African countries, as well as a several Ukrainians, an Indian, even a Cuban, and people of other nationalities. Most came to the sermons for moral support offered by the fellowship. The pastor, putting his hand on the shoulder of one international, exclaimed "he just accepted Jesus Christ yesterday when I visited him where he stays at the train station. He has come here for the first time. Jesus, help this man get his documents in order. Oh Jesus hear us!" After the services I spoke briefly with West African students, most of who indeed plan to return home after their study, to Ivory Coast and Cameroon. I also learned about the role of a small branch of this church, of 150 prisoners, in assisting refugees and migrants to find security. "People come and go to this church. We want people to spread the Word of God. We do not grab and hold on to people and want them to stay here and in this church. We are here to help them on their way." The church itself has become a hub of exchange of cultural capital, a safe stopover as part of not only a moral and literal journey.

After the church service, I also met an Iranian refugee, Mozghan, and her disabled teenaged son Sharif, whose spectacular and particular story of religious persecution opened an opportunity for international resettlement. As corroborated by UNHCR (and described in Chapter 3), their conversion to Christianity in Germany, return migration to missionize in Iran, and violent persecution eventually landed them in Ukraine. I spoke

again with Mozhgan when I accompanied her and Sharif to their monthly appointment at a state passport office.<sup>77</sup> As discussed in Chapter 3, I notice a scar on Mozhgan's head, and she tells me of her assault by Iranian international students for distributing religious pamphlets in Kiev. At this time, I also learn of her and her family's abysmal living conditions, a small garage without electricity on the outskirts of the city. Despite these material hardships, she says she has emphasized her religious persecution in Ukraine with her caseworker at the UNHCR. "I just hope they resettle us to another country," she clarified. Mozhgan also recounted how she pleaded her case and was granted access to a resettlement interview: "I am not a businessman or student, or for welfare because Iran is a rich country, a good country, we have everything there. But it is a big prison for Christians who cannot practice their religion." Sixteen months later, I heard from Mozhgan that she successfully arrived and settled in the U.S., though she continued to struggle with depression from refugee trauma.<sup>78</sup> Here, American refugee policy privileging persecution of evangelical Christians over other refugees provided the opportunity for this exit strategy. It is no wonder then that, like Ukrainian evangelicals of the 1990s, this Iranian mobilized her religious persecution (in Iran and Ukraine) towards an exit strategy from Ukraine in the broader *transnational social field* (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2000) of global evangelical movements through the Embassy of God church. In these ways, refugees could downplay their economic reasons for moving. At the same time, developing networks with western religious movement networks and international organizations that catered to religious refugees raised hopes amongst asylum seekers of

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<sup>78</sup> Personal communication, March, 2013.

accumulating social capital via religious experiences that would enable them to gain international resettlement to a more secure destination.

*Undocumented Migration: “It is the only way. The only way is out”*

For Hirschmann (1970) exit is the final option after all opportunities for voice and loyalty have been exhausted. But for refugees, regardless of the kind of capital mobilized for adaptation or voice, an exit strategy is never an option without cost because exit from a nation-state is constrained by barriers to on entry in other states (through receiving states’ migration policies). I argue that access to entry as much as exit depends on a range of resources towards undocumented migration, whose sources range from migration networks to official international migration organizations.

An individual—not just collective—exit strategy used by refugees in Ukraine as other transit countries is to demand resettlement from UNHCR and Global North states that provide them resources and capacity quotas. Take the case of Kamiz. As an Iranian, he also claimed to be fleeing religious persecution, and first converting to Christianity abroad. He lays claim to the legitimacy of religiously-motivated mobility around transnational field around evangelical Christian culture. Yet, unlike Mozghan who was resettled to the U.S., Kamiz never gained international recognition as a refugee by UNHCR. His story sounded somewhat similar to that of Mozghan though he converted only on a recent trip to Ukraine. He attempted to utilize his capital at a refugee status determination interview at a UNHCR affiliate, which I was able to observe as a volunteer at this organization. Speaking through an interpreter, Kamiz explained that he and his tourist companion came to an Iranian pastor they found through a flyer they were given

on the street. Upon return to Iran the next month, his family rejected him, and his friend was reported to the police under religion-related pretenses. They claimed to have received threats and then fled Iran to Ukraine after receiving a visa in Turkey. The UNHCR summarily rejected both of their claims as international refugees. The international refugee authorities questioned the authenticity of their baptismal certificate, garnered from an Iranian-Ukrainian pastor suspected of fraud by UNHCR. While the transnational social field around global evangelism seems to promise cultural capital in western states that particularly value evangelical Christian as victims of religious persecution, Kamiz's experience demonstrated the limits of that exit strategy. Narratives of Christian persecution used as cultural capital to gain access to refugee resettlement, may reify dominant narratives of western refugee policies as privileging certain types of victimhood as resources in the refugee regime (c.f. Oxford 2005). The number of refugees the U.S. and other countries resettled via UNHCR was motivated by politically-driven desires to restrict. In 2012, just over 10,000 refugees out of nearly 11 million worldwide were admitted for refugee resettlement under UNHCR. Also, in an attempt to dissuade undocumented mobility, international policy has been legislated by immigrant-receiving states to privilege refugee resettlement applications from those displaced to the country of first arrival. Due to this decline of resettlement and its shifting priorities, few refugees have been resettled from transit countries, and only 110 from Ukraine in 2010 (UNHCR 2011). Thus, cultural capital remains a limited resource as an exit strategy through the international refugee regime, often leading refugees to clandestine migration as the only viable exit option.



Refugees learn these constraints through migration and refugee institutions. For much of the remainder of this section, I discuss my observations of how one Afghan refugee learned how to use cultural capital towards an exit strategy. Interpreting the UNHCR interview with Khamiz, was Sahel, the young and educated Afghan refugee with whom I had already spoken with several times. Sahel, was the 26 year old Afghan refugee whom I met a month after he was abandoned in Ukraine by a smuggler on his way to Austria. As discussed in previous chapters, I met him at an NGO during his first week in Ukraine. Having been abandoned by a smuggler in Ukraine and told he was in “Europe,” Sahel had already admitted several months earlier that his stay in Ukraine was untenable, telling me “it is impossible to work and study.” Stranded, he first adapted to an unstable housing situation by living with an Evangelical missionary, and then moved in with two Afghan youth who were looking to “leave for Germany.” He was quickly frustrated by his dependence on the Afghan community there.

“I told the two Afghan young men, you are wasting your time, you might as well go back home and be with your families. And they just laughed, ‘you haven’t been here long enough yet. Just wait, once you learn Russian, you will start having girls and having fun here.’ But I don’t want that, I told them.”

Unlike migrants and students, as a refugee Sahel had no way to regularize his status, and his application for asylum was quickly rejected by the state.

By the time I again met Sahel in his fifth month in Ukraine, he was even more restless despite his continued links with international refugee groups. “I feel like I am wasting my time here—I have running away for two years. Finally I come here [but] there is no work, I do not know the language, and they do not like black people here...If

[international organizations] don't help me get [refugee resettlement] to America I have to at least go to Europe [illegally]." By then, Sahel had found a small job as a tailor at the UNHCR Integration Center, but he vowed to leave it as soon as he found financing. At the same time, he received an informal job translating at interviews for UNHCR—part of his quest to demonstrate his loyalty in the distant hopes of being resettled. In order to invest in an exit strategy, Sahel avoided transferring social capital to links that bind him to local Ukrainian and even Afghan-Ukrainian communities, and instead used his language skills to get to know people in international organizations that work in migration-related fields.

Yet despite these connections to organizations in Ukraine, Sahel does not invest his resources for adaptation. He quickly any ties he makes with older Afghan residents in Ukraine, whom he saw as having an unfair advantage over recent refugees like himself who do not benefit from international aid programs:

"The [refugee] integration center ladies are all rich. They all have cars, nice apartments (the director has two). The ladies that sew clothes there, included. One of their husband's owns a stand and employs people at [the market]. They send \$200-300 home every month. They all bring expensive food to the center. These are supposed to be refugees, but they just take money for themselves from UNHCR. The center does not serve anyone but them."

Sahel discounts adaptation due to the intergenerational inequality he sees of older generation Afghans, refugees of the Soviet war. He also feared the kind of clan-based persecution he fled will follow him to the Afghan diaspora in Ukraine (see Chapter 3). So, he often declined invitations to social and religious events. Whilst in Ukraine, he

remained constrained by his dependence on employment and economic capital and social capital from his social networks with Afghans. Still, Sahel was wary of entering into any personal relationships in the more established, largely non-Pashtun ethnic Afghan community. “I met a girl from the [refugee] integration center that keeps calling me. I made a coat for her mother. I can’t respond because it would oblige me to stay here with her. But sometimes I am thinking I should get married just to make sure I don’t get deported. But this is not what I want to do. It’s not love because I want to continue my life away from here.” Adaptation through social capital of networks with Afghans seems possible, but untenable due to ethnicity and identity as a refugee of the Afghan civil war.

Meanwhile, the costs of adaptation continued to mount. By this time, Sahel had already paid out his remaining savings in bribes to police, as he waited without his passport for his asylum application to be processed. He explained, “I went to the [State] Migration Service yesterday to get my document. Will I be doing this every month for the rest of my life? The bureaucrat laughed and hinted at the possibility of a bribe.” His social capital with local Afghan communities did not help him obtain legal status to seek parity with older generations of refugees.

Abandoning an adaptation strategy, Sahel quit his job patching clothes for diaspora Afghans. He then continued informal work cleaning up shops at the street market, but also began to devise an exit strategy as a refugee, taking odd jobs as an English-Farsi interpreter with UNHCR for asylum interviews and with IOM for resettlement interviews. While working at UNHCR, he told me his goal was now to apply for international resettlement. To help the process along, he mentioned that he hoped to

join a Seventh Day Adventist school outside of the city. After six months however, Sahel noticed that his experience with refugee agencies was not helping his resettlement case. Discouraged by the ways others “misused” their experiences with persecution in international refugee resettlement screenings, he gave up on UNHCR resettlement. “How could you lie and say your father was killed when he is really alive,” he criticized another Pashtun asylum applicant whom he claimed had lied about his Afghan nationality.

Even then, Sahel continued to resist dependence on the local Afghan community and was determined to exit. After another failed appeal for asylum in Ukraine, he told me he was in the waiting room at the UNHCR partner that offered to help him with the next steps. He recounted how an Afghan woman in the waiting room consoled him, “do not be upset, you should be happy you got rejected. People pay to get rejected so they come one step closer to resettlement.” Indeed, almost a year after his arrival in Ukraine, he told me, “I feel like I am stuck between two queues: Ukraine and the UN[HCR]. I cannot stay in Ukraine, and the U.N. won’t resettle me.” Using his cultural capital and knowledge of multiple languages, Sahel found work translating for the IOM; it enabled him to gain the knowledge of refugees’ exit strategies. “Right after one Afghan man I talked to got into the [state camp], he quickly got this resettlement interview with the U.S. embassy, whereas before UNHCR did not do anything for him. He is now just waiting for his [U.S.] security clearance to come through. I also heard from someone else that [a smuggler] costs \$4800 to get to Czech Republic. They said from there you can go anywhere, just get some nice clothes, look important, and read a newspaper on the train when you go anywhere, the police won’t bother you.” He concluded, “If am in the camp

may be UNHCR will think of me sooner.” His plans were still set on an exit strategy, but limited opportunities and limited social, economic, and cultural capital from his sparse ethnic networks and within international organizations continued to drive his decisions.

Instead of adapting to life in the city while searching for an exit strategy, Sahel sought out social capital to orchestrate a clandestine exit. This was, in fact, accomplished through knowledge gleaned through his work within the refugee system. When I met him more than six months into his stay in Ukraine, he told me that he recently held a translating job for another refugees’ final resettlement interview with the U.S. State Department representative. Sahel learned that his “friend” had an application for resettlement lodged “for almost a year and could not get resettled.” He also learned the Afghan friend was only granted status after “he was caught trying to make a dangerous clandestine crossing into Slovakia....[H]e spent six months in jail and then more time at a camp. Right after his friend got into [the camp] is the moment that he learns the friend was admitted for refugee resettlement. This demonstrates how Sahel is able to transfer his cultural capital of language ability for insider knowledge of the priorities of refugee resettlement.

Looking to mobilize this social capital, Sahel headed for the western border. I heard from him after finishing fieldwork two years after his arrival in Ukraine. After he had admitted himself to a state refugee camp in the contentious Zakarpattya region that borders EU countries. His hope, he said, was either to get the attention of UNHCR for his resettlement case, seeing as his asylum application in Ukraine was about to expire, or then go west by other means, risking up to a year in detention if he failed. Over a year

later, the last news I heard from Sahel was that, like the man whose interview he interpreted, he was detained at an immigration facility in the western borderlands, far from the city where we had met. Attempting to cross to EU territory, he was apprehended and returned to Ukraine by Slovak guards despite international legal obligations to accept his asylum application.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, having learned that adaptation opportunities and exit options were closed, he vowed to try to cross again: “It is the only way. The only way is out.” Though direct contact has been lost, his former roommates in Ukraine promise that he has made it to Austria (this fact of course, cannot be verified).

Thus, mobile refugees like Sahel who are stranded invest all resources in an exit strategy. Stranded refugees such as Sahel may adapt to new destinations, but are limited by the way they can use their resources towards either adaptation, as Sahel’s experience with Afghan communities in Ukraine demonstrates. Had Sahel had the financial resources to buy his way with a smuggler, he would have likely landed his asylum case in Austria years earlier.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In all, I found that refugees reasons for pursuing an exit strategy vary: some continue to fear persecution abroad such as Mozghan and Kamiz; most never intended to arrive in Ukraine to begin with and seek to continue their journey (as starkly demonstrated by Sahel). Those who seek to move, face poor economic opportunities as well as social and legal exclusion. Yet, the way they do so is by mobilizing their limited resources, transferring between different forms of capital for the goal of exit, whether by obtaining an elusive visa, refugee resettlement, or an opening in migration controls.

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<sup>79</sup> See Human Rights Watch (2011).

Resources are pooled by distancing oneself from society as well as local immigrant communities, while accumulating funds, knowledge, and networks that may help with international mobility. Such resources may take the form of informal wage labor (with hopes of earning enough funds for a smuggler), maintaining asylum papers (and saving face as a legitimate victim in hopes of resettlement), or cultivating relations with migration facilitators in the hopes of finding a cheaper smuggler to cross the border.

This chapter has detailed how refugees consolidate and mobilize their resources towards different survival strategies. Specifically, I have showed how those without citizenship and access to rights transfer limited economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital towards *adaptation*, *voice*, and *exit* strategies. Refugees are able to respond to adversity using more agency than is usually prescribed to them by as victims, but they are also nevertheless constrained in very real ways by the resources and opportunities available to them. Limited and constrained resources include ties with family in receiving countries and emerging pan-ethnic alliances of immigrant communities. Differences in migrant access to resources are driven not only by individual differences in transnational links to the host society but also by constraints and opportunities in transit and destinations. This survey of refugees, of those most marginalized from citizenship in the system of nation states, takes migration studies beyond the question of “who is the subject of the rights of man” (Rancier 2004; Arendt 1973) to what is done by that subject.

My argument has three implications for the further development of Hirschmann’s (1970, 1978) theory of social action and specifically theories of responses to declining opportunities. First, this study shows that the ideal type of “loyalty” is better conceived

broadly as *adaptation* to adverse situations, much as Moses argued (2005). Refugees are actors whose commitments to loyalty strategies remain constrained in transit, as they are excluded from citizenship and rights in countries where they cannot settle, and are not provided with the international protection they need and that the UNHCR seems to promise. They may conform to state demands such as police extortion for documents and international groups' programs in order to maintain or cultivate the resources for survival. At the same time, refugees may rely on more limited remittances from friends and family abroad for material support than are available to other migrants, they may or depend on risky business strategies such as "hustling" from other refugees and migrants. They may also cope by immersing themselves in ethnic enclaves, networks, or evangelical religious communities, for the hope of adapting or even gaining status as legitimate victims in the eyes of the refugee regime. Thus, this study remains critical of the transnational perspective for erasing the state since globalization has brought not only "flexible citizenship" for rights-bearing citizens but also inflexible rightslessness for large numbers of refugees (Abdi 2013). Citizenship rights are a privileged position not available for actors such as refugees in transit countries or in many, new destinations. The adversity refugees face in buffer countries like Ukraine due to their non-statutory position demonstrates that adaptation, rather than loyalty, may be a primary survival strategy used by those excluded from citizenship.

Second, this study confirms how *voice* is expressed both at the individual and collective level, as predicted by Hirschmann (see Moses 2005). It also argues that voice can be directed outside of the nation-state, causing the proliferation of transnational



targets of protest (see also Van Dyke, Soule, and Taylor 2005). Here, refugees individually and collectively demand protection from international actors like UNHCR, though their requests continue to depend on the whims of the policies of nation-states to resettle them elsewhere.

Third, refugees' migration strategies and aspirations demonstrate that exit is more complex than an free-choice response of "voting with your feet." An exit strategy is not an option without serious costs and possibly insurmountable obstacles. Today, exit from any nation-state, despite the fall of the iron curtain in the region in question, is constrained by barriers to entry into other states in the form of receiving-states' restrictive migration policies. Exit depends on resources to enter a Global North state (e.g. a successful visa application based on having the right passport—or having any passport at all, social capital of access to a UNHCR resettlement line mobilized by a legitimate refugee background such as evangelical Christian identity in Ukraine, or social capital of networks that link a person to a reliable and reasonably-priced smuggler). So, exit is limited not only by opportunities for voice and adaptation, but also through external constraints on exit in the age of "remote control" of asylum. Therefore, exit should not be assumed as Hirschman did, following Weber, to be a simple a rational and instrumental act. Just as adaptation and voice require resources, so too does exit—especially for refugees. These resources remain intertwined with the "international community" via UNHCR and its promise of refugee protection, whose policy is increasingly driven by Global North states towards controlling the mobility of asylum seekers.

Finally, this chapter has useful implications for the development of future international refugee and migration policy. The persistence of forced migration, despite increasing economic constraints, to come as far as the gates of Fortress Europe shows that UNHCR “durable solutions” to refugee crises are in need of revision. UNHCR policies limit resettlement to first countries of arrival in countries like Kenya, Pakistan, and now Turkey. Understanding the constraints on citizenship of a revised EVL framework can help understand why refugees adapt, protest, and exit—despite, largely not because of, international refugee assistance.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

This study has provided a transnational account of forced migration to and through Ukraine, contributing to debates on the role of social networks, international refugee policy, and survival strategies figuring in explanations of migration processes and motivations. The case study of global refugee migration highlights both post-Soviet and European migration systems, posing the following three questions. First, how does variability in forced migration processes drive social networks refugees will join and develop upon arrival in transit countries towards settlement or onward migration? Second, how do international refugee policies and humanitarian aid for local integration impact aspirations for secondary mobility? Third, what is the role of social, economic, and cultural resources in enabling the mobilization of different survival strategies to stay or move on? This final chapter will summarize the findings and contributions of this study while listing some recommendations for future research, and then provide a brief epilogue.

Chapter three considered the factors that impact the divergent social networks refugees develop. It found that whether households develop social networks tied to settlement or out towards onward migration depends on four macro-level factors: a) *intention* to go to that destination prior to departure, b) the duration of *time* lived in the destination country, c) *law* or the legal opportunity structures for settlement or migration elsewhere, and d) *geopolitics* of the country of residence with the country of origin. First, since refugees are often forced to take dangerous journeys to escape violence and are lead

to unintended destinations in buffer countries, they also tend to continue developing transnational networks for onward migration. This is demonstrated with the case of Calvin, the Afghan nurse who was abandoned by smugglers in Ukraine. Second, a longer duration of time spent in a destination may lead to the development of locally-based social networks, as in the case of the Palestinian, Rabah, who spent more than two decades in Ukraine, and built ties enabling petty trade connections across various immigrant and Ukrainian communities in his home city despite his legal status. Third, legal opportunities such as refugee status in the home state may, surprisingly, may not represent a sufficient cause for developing social ties in buffer countries without social protections and economic opportunities, as is the case of Lake the longtime Ethiopian resident and that of Calvin from Cameroon. Finally, and most significantly, a strong geopolitical relationship of a hosting buffer state and a refugee's country of origin may pose risks to settlement and the development of local social ties towards settlement, as demonstrated by the cases of the Sahel from Afghanistan and Mozghan from Iran. Variability in intention, time, law, and geopolitics thus drive the rooted or mobile character of refugees' trust networks.

Chapter three then has two primary contributions. First, it develops a critical framework for understanding the social forces in transit migration (also see Düvell 2008). It proposes a mechanism driving refugee motivations to stay or move from a transit country: through the development of capacity of informal social networks. It is these social networks that are influenced by variability in the above factors of law, time, intention, and geopolitics. Second, this study expands perspectives on the sustenance of

migration by analyzing the factors that influence the development of trust networks for refugees (c.f. Yeffal-Davis 2012). Specifically, it further develops Tilly's (2007) view of transnational migrant trust networks as providing a template for understanding the structure of social ties in a globalized world. Constraints on refugees' flight and search for asylum leads them to developing two kinds of *strong ties* (c.f. weak ties of Granoveter 1977), those to settle or to move on, leading to either "migration trust networks" or "settlement trust networks." Not unlike Guinier and Torres' (2009) racialized subject as a "canary in coalmine" for social problems in the U.S., the refugee provides an important subject for studying social problems with citizenship at the transnational scale (also see Arendt 1951). The decline of the international UNHCR refugee regime and the expansion of global "illegality regimes" (DeGenova 2002), I argue, have demanded refugees find their own social networks to actualize their needs and motivations to stay or move on.

Chapter four developed this analysis using observations from an institutional ethnography, exploring refugees' negotiation of and consequences of international refugee policy in Ukraine. The timing of an EU-funded aid project seeking the local integration of refugees in Ukraine demonstrated how such policy follows the broader pattern of European aid aimed for the detention and control of migrants in Ukraine. It is not surprising then that this humanitarian initiative resulted in mixed consequences for the refugee system and refugees themselves, with local integration understood by refugees as a way to encourage their stay and limit their options for asylum seeking in other countries. While, it provided some limited capacity to fill services the state would not provide, the initiative narrowed the content of international protection offered by

UNHCR to locally-based language and job training available to only seven percent of refugees, the few recognized as such by the state. Second, refugees negotiated integration as a mocking “ideological account” (see Dorothy Smith 2005) of their social oppression in society, of legal, cultural, racial, and economic exclusion. Third, refugees perceived the few actual economic resources made available to them as an indicator of the limits on opportunities for their settlement in Ukraine, only motivating continuing their migration to seek refuge elsewhere. UNHCR and NGO officials also perceived the integration as one way to prevent refugees “from going to Europe.” Future UNHCR and state policy should take seriously refugees’ accusations about local conditions and needs.

These findings in Chapter 4 also contribute to scholarly literatures on the political sociology of migration. First, this chapter develops perspectives on social change and international organizations in political sociology. World polity and neo-institutional theories in sociology and political science operate under a normative assumption about the positive impact of international laws on human rights of the marginalized such as noncitizens—even as they may admit to a boomerang effect on behalf of states (Kieck and Sikkink 1998, Schofer *et al* 2012). This study arrives to at a contrary conclusion via an interdisciplinary critical geopolitical perspective (see Geiger and Pecoud 2013) about the power inequities perpetuated by many international organizations whose policies, practices, and interests are unevenly driven by the current interests of powerful Global North states. In this manner, the findings develop but also depart from a major recent study on the role of UNHCR as a driver of the diversity of refugees admitted by postsocialist states (Shevel 2012) to a force also controlling their mobility due to the aid

and policies pursued with it by the EU and its member states. The study then points beyond the consequences of migration and security-oriented international organizations (e.g. IOM) that prior studies have investigated (see Geiger and Pecoud 2014), to argue that even humanitarian institutions, those granted moral authority of the global refugee regime such as UNHCR, may be facilitated by powerful states and the EU to the detriment of human rights and international refugee protection across the Global South/Global North divide. The international provision by the EU sets the agenda for UNHCR and aid agencies, yet providing minimal incentives to refugees themselves. IN this way, contemporary refugee regime has been reduced to that of control, attempting to dissuade asylum seeking from seeking safe refuge. Such policy recommendations have been suggested only by politicians but also legitimated through economic demographic models (Czaika 2009). Instead, I develop a critical perspective on asylum in global perspective by showing how even humanitarian aid institutions have been enlisted by states in the project of remote control. In this, I follow Huysmans' (2006:95-96) Foucauldian outlook on the EU migration regime, as states' "sophisticated technologies determining conditions of entrance" may be observed upon in-depth observation "despite the spectacular nature of walls and fences." Future research in the political sociology of migration can further analyze the humanitarian side of Global North states' and aid agencies' roles, such as the US, and the EU and its member countries in in multilateral migration policies in buffer countries such as Mexico, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Morocco, Turkey and Indonesia.

The second contribution of Chapter 4 is to explore the diffusion of neoliberal formations of European multicultural policies. An institutional ethnography of an EU-funded refugee integration project has revealed the spread of administrative knowledge beyond the EU that simultaneously identifies refugees as victims of violence elsewhere and villains for problems with adapting in exile. Service provision on strained funds ends up idealizing model refugees as examples based on western multiculturalism, placing blame on those refugees that fail to conform to such ideals. Meanwhile few refugees find the assistance impacts them directly and in a way that enables them to adapt to life in Ukraine, with African refugees in particular viewing local integration much as a public relations campaign to erase refugee barriers to racial discrimination as well as legal exclusion. Again, not only are restrictive admission policies externalized to the buffer zone in Europe's east, but so are the western European neoliberal discourses on refugee incorporation that reinforce them. What Joppke (2004) calls "the retreat of multiculturalism" can instead be understood as a neoliberal and neocolonial transformation "diffusion of western multiculturalism" beyond European major refugee-receiving countries in order to prevent further asylum seeking there. A setback of this study is that it has focused on refugees and on UNHCR in one country case study. Future research on forced migration and multiculturalism should trace the transnational diffusion of ideology about refugee reception through its dissemination by not only state and international but also private organizations providing humanitarian aid to displaced people on the move.



Finally, Chapter 5 detailed the ways in which refugees consolidate various resources in order to mobilize survival strategies based on exit, voice, and adaptation. Those fleeing home countries and denied citizenship in countries of arrival have limited resources to draw on to determine their plans to stay, protest, or flee elsewhere. For this reason, this chapter has used Bourdieu's framework to understand how refugees transfer and deploy a limited set of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital. It has shown how they do so towards three ends: *adaptation* and settlement in Ukraine, *voice* seeking change of conditions, or *exit* out of this arrangement. Immigrant life histories first point to refugees' adaptation strategies to stay in Ukraine such as in Rabah's pan-ethnic ties with various immigrant communities and corrupt officials as social capital, Fazima's Uzbek nationality and ties as cultural capital of post-Soviet compatriots that opens social capital to access affordable local housing. Voice comes from individual and collective initiatives challenging their legal and social exclusion based on appeals human rights such as the case of Obot and renewed organizing efforts by new waves of African refugees in Odessa. Voice and exit may intersect here when refugees direct their protest towards not only the state but also international targets, demanding exit as international resettlement to a safe country. Finally, though many aspire to exit, successful strategies to leave this buffer country may be developed only with appropriate resources. Here, of key importance is a cultural capital of how to tell their refugee story in a way that emphasizes the types of victimhood that currently resonates with the international refugee regime agencies. Examples included the claim for a temporary asylum by the Chechen Ramzan on his and his family's clandestine route to Europe; the Iranian Mozghan's and her son's

use of social capital stemming from their religious participation in Ukraine transferred towards cultural capital and a successful bid for resettlement to the U.S; and the Afghan Sahel's failed attempt to receive resettlement and subsequent clandestine migration to Austria. Thus, adaptation, voice, or exit may represent intersecting survival strategies, but also require a focused commitment from transferable but limited resources from refugees excluded from the rights of citizenship.

This evidence in Chapter 5 has several implications for understanding the mobilization of resources for household survival strategies in the context of migration and the exit-voice-loyalty theoretical approach. First, "loyalty" in Hirschmann's (1970) framework should be revised with the concept of "adaptation" since members of a community—organization of nation state—carry different degrees of rights. Here, refugees formally excluded from rights of citizenship adapt by using their social capital for adaptation colluding with corrupt state official and extortion of other refugees because of their legal exclusion and its consequences (also see Moses 2005). Second, this study recalls Hirschmann's original contribution often overlooked in studies that apply his framework in that voice may be expressed not only at the individual level, but also at the collective level. Moreover, voice can be targeted towards authorities even outside of the organization or state, a source of the expansion of international targets of protest (Van Dyke, Soule, and Taylor 2005). For example, refugees' collective demands for international resettlement included but also went beyond Ukraine as a host state, to plead with UNHCR and other countries as a next-to-last attempt to exit Ukraine as a transit country. Last, contrary to its use in migration studies as a last-case option; exit includes

costs beyond the national level. Since not all know how to tell their story to the western bias of the refugee regime, in the case of exit for refugees, cultural capital is akin to social or economic capital in order to take refugees “as far as their money can take them” (Van Haer 2008). Exit is limited not only by opportunities for voice and adaptation, but also by external constraints on exit in the age of remote control. A recommendation for nongovernmental organizations follows from these implications. Rather than a purely legalistic approach as social service, advocates should take steps to adopt a solidarity approach by first recognizing the lengths to which displaced people on the move are motivated to—and may go—in search of safety.

This brings up the overall methodological contribution of this study as a whole: the importance of taking seriously refugees’ voices in migration studies. Using interviews and observation in three Ukrainian cities with urban refugees from twenty five countries this project shows that questions of social action, such as why people move, are best answered by taking seriously first person narrative research methodologies. Even global refugee studies rely on a legalistic perspective and definition of asylum, unwittingly reifying on both an image of a refugees as stateless victim at the mercy of states bound to their nation’s anti-immigrant electorates, and also as unruly subjects unwilling to comply with international law by traversing national borders. Taking a broader definition of refugee that includes but goes beyond those rejected by states as well as UNHCR, this study has taken at critical but serious consideration to the personal narratives and motivations of people on the move. Though it suggests similar processes may be at work in other buffer countries, rather than seeking to generalize, the process tracing approach

in this study has enabled different the development of perspectives on how migration is sustained. It has taken this perspective to look at the negotiation of international refugee policy (Chapter 4), the development of refugee social networks (Chapter 3) and the transfer of resources to a set of survival strategies (Chapter 5).

Theoretically, this dissertation bridges literatures on how migration is sustained with the refugee studies linked to political sociology. The retrenchment of asylum is facilitated by the growing power of nation states with respect to the international refugee protection regime (Koser 2007). Yet, as the current study has pointed out, the decline of asylum may start not just within refugee receiving countries, but also with states' externalization of migration controls via international organizations, even UNHCR and humanitarian institutions. Aristide Zolberg (2003) observed states outstretch their borders to attempt to prevent entry via "remote control" of asylum ranging from visa screenings at consulates to the delegation of border policing and detention by other states (Sassen 2004, Munster and Sterkx 2008, Hyndman and Mountz 2008, Fitzgerald forthcoming). I have argued that the spread of local integration policies by UNHCR and private aid agencies in buffer countries bordering Global North countries represent what I call *soft remote control*. The decline of the refugee regime and the development of humanitarian organizations as tools of migration control shows the lengths to which states and the EU will go to prevent access to asylum beyond their borders in buffer countries like Ukraine. The fact that refugees form social networks (Chapter 3) and use scant resources to struggle to adapt in, air protest beyond, and leave Ukraine (Chapter 5) despite refugee

regime policies (Chapter 4) demands change towards a more autonomous and democratic UNHCR and more open refugee admission policies by states.

### *Epilogue*

Since the time of this research and most of this writing, tumultuous events have rocked Ukraine. In 2013-2014, the pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich was forced from power after refusing to sign a plan for EU Accession. Russia responded by occupying and annexing the Crimean peninsula, and as of time of writing civil strife at Ukraine's Eastern border threatened to spill into a full-scale confrontation with Russia. The current study provides insights and implications for analyzing new forced migration processes that resulted from this regional conflict. Examples of topics that can be explored includes the international and local reception of internally displaced from Crimea or Eastern Ukraine; Russia's reception of refugees from the region; Russia's media constructs and extraterritorial humanitarian policy towards ethnic Russians and Russian speakers in Ukraine; another possible displacement of Crimean Tatars; and of course the impact of separatist and far-right violence on refugees in Ukraine. However, since these developments require new research in a transformed political context, they are outside of the scope of this study. What follows then is a cursory discussion of the policy implications of the current study given these developments.

This dissertation will be welcomed and received with heightened attention since perceptions of the EU and the reality of asylum have changed across post-Soviet space. Public perception of the EU in Eastern Europe has changed drastically in the seven months between when the EU-Ukraine agreement was rejected by the now-ousted

president Yanukovich, and the time of its signing by the newly-elected president Proshenko in May 2014. While NATO militarism always carried contentious meanings across the “Russian sphere of influence,” at the time of writing the EU had been previously perceived in Ukraine largely as a neutral and inconsequential political actor. The civil conflict and the Russian intervention and annexation of Crimea have overshadowed the policy decision that originally sparked the fateful Euromaidan protests. Nevertheless, the fateful EU-Ukraine accession plans have politicized the image of the EU in policy and popular perception as an external if not colonial actor in Russia and especially in the Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine where two of three main sites of this research were located (still outside of the areas in military conflict). These characteristics should not be overplayed with Russian meddling in Ukraine. Nevertheless, restrictive EU migration policies towards Ukrainians and in Ukraine as a whole have serious further implications, such as for security and migration policies, possibly creating new boundaries between citizens and non-citizens, continuing the control of mobility of newly-displaced persons from the region to Russia, the EU, or elsewhere. While obliging the government to provide better protections for asylum seekers, the EU agreement will legitimate Russia’s own forced resettlement policies of Ukrainians, while providing Ukraine few resources for human security matters until Ukraine becomes a member country—an event still contingent on the timing of Ukraine’s fulfillment of EU conditions despite of the civil strife. With the emergence of some sort of new boundary between much of Ukraine and its eastern conflict regions demonstrates the importance of a buffer zone for the EU at its eastern boundary—as well as for Russia. The role of new

forms of displacement in Eastern and Southern Ukraine sets the stage for an additional regional Eurasian politics of refugee humanitarianism than European focus taken in the current study.

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## **Appendix**

### **Interview Guide\***

(For interviews with refugees. English – short version; lengthier Life History Interview Guide available upon request).

Hello, my name is Raphi/Konstantin Rechitsky; I am a sociologist from the University of Minnesota. I am writing a book on refugees in Ukraine. Thanks for agreeing to speak with me. While you are free to leave at anytime, may I ask for 45 minutes of your time? First: a few ethical obligations to you. Be assured that what you say here will be confidential and anonymous and no harm will be brought to you with regards to anything you say; I will not share any of this information with other parties, and everything I write will not disclose your identity. This form from my University generally protects your rights as a participant in this project. I am a student scholar and do not have any sway on your asylum case or other aid. I also wanted to get permission to record our conversation—again this is only for me to keep better records. Before we begin I wanted to tell you a bit about myself. I have a migrant experience, but in the different context of the United States, having left Ukraine when I was young. Since I am originally from Ukraine, I am curious in people’s personal experiences in Ukrainian society in particular. So first, I have a few questions.

#### *Migration History*

- 1) Would you tell me a bit about where you are from and why you left your country?
- 2) How did you come here? How was the journey?



3) Why did you come to Ukraine? to this city in particular? How long have you stayed here?

4) Did you personally know anyone here when you came here? What was their relationship to you? Did you come alone, with family, and/or friends?

5) Had you traveled much before you came here? If yes, where have you been?

6) What did you know about this part of the world before you came? What was the first thing that you noticed when you came to this part of the world?

#### *Quality of Life*

7) Can you tell me about your experience with the cost and availability of housing, living arrangements/apartment/flat? How much do you pay? Do you rent? Is it difficult to pay for it all? Who do you live with?

8) What do you do for work? Does your job pay enough for you to get by? Do you have much support from your family and friends? Do you receive any social assistance from charities or migrant associations?

#### *Racism and Social Exclusion*

9) Some people get used to living where they stay for some time. Do you feel like you have made a temporary home for yourself here?

10) Do you feel that people like yourself, of your culture/nationality/religion are respected here?

11) Do you think that you are treated in the same way as Ukrainians? If yes, where, how?

12) Do you think that your experiences are similar as some other local people? Do you think other migrant groups experience their relationship to Ukrainians similarly or differently than you? How so?

13) How do you deal with these issues in your everyday life? How have your experiences affected you and your worldviews?

14) What are the social needs of people like yourself in Kharkov/Kiev/Odessa, and Ukraine? What are the biggest needs for you and your community? Have you tried to come together with others like you to try to make your life better here?

#### *Future Plans*

15) Have your plans changed much since coming here? If yes, what has made you change your plans?

16) Do you have plans to make a home here? Do you plan on staying in this city for much longer? Do you have plans to leave Ukraine? Would you go home or somewhere else?

17) Do you still have plans to go home or go somewhere else from here? Where would you like to go? Why there? Do you have concrete plans to go here? What are some barriers that keep you from going?

19) Is there anything important that you wanted to address that I did not directly ask about?

*Thank you for speaking with me. I have just two final things to ask you.*

20) It would also help me to spend some time talking to people in your community.

Would you be able to introduce me to other [ethnicity/nationality] who would be willing to share their stories with me?

21) Would you be willing to share your contact details with me? This is for a quick follow-up conversation over the phone in a few months.

**Table 1****Interviews with Refugees**

*For reasons of confidentiality, fields that may reveal the identity of respondents have been deleted, such as real name, exact age, and city of residence in Ukraine.*

Mean years spent in Ukraine: 5.5

Median years spent in Ukraine: 4.8

Average age of respondents: 34

<b>Key: Migration Status</b>			Net	male	female
Asylum seeker	AS	Net field Contacts	93	78	15
Perm. Resident	PR	In-depth interviews	44	30	14
Student	S				
Undocumented	UD				
Resettlement					
Application	RS				
Irregular transit	TR				
Work visa	L				
Not in Ukraine	NR				
Visa-free	VFR				

<b>COI - Ethnicity</b>	<b>Years in Ukraine</b>	<b>Status at Interview</b>	<b>Arrival Status</b>	<b>Age*</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Palestine OT - Palestinian	24	Asylum seeker	?	50s	Male
Afghan - Pahstun	1	AS	TR	28	Male
Afghan	5	ND	S, M	40s	male
Russia - Ossetian	5	AS	AS	50s	Male
DR Congo	4?	AS, RS	AS	20s	Male
DR Congo	3?	AS, RS	AS	20s	Female
Sudan - Arab, Berber	0.2	AS	S	40s	Male
Syria - Palestinian	2	AS, RS, F	F	50s	Female
Afghanistan	2	AS	ND, TR	30s	Male
Guinea	1	AS	TR	20s	Male
Ivory coast	3	AS		20s	Male
China - Uyghur	1	L, ND		20s	Male
Sudan	1	AS	S	40s	Male
Afghanistan	8	ND	ND	25	Male
Nigeria - Biafra	12?	L	ND	30s	Male
Palestine	3	AS	S	40	Male
Iraq - Sunni	?	S, AS	S, AS	40s	M and F
Cameroon	0.5	S, L	S	20s	Male

Kyrgystan - Uzbek	0.2	AS	AS	20s	Male
Kyrgystan - Uzbek	0.3	AS	AS	30s	M and F
Kyrgystan - Uzbek	15	AS	AS	30s	M
Angola	15	S	PR	40s	M
Lebanon - Palestinian	12?	PR	AS	40s	Male
Jordan - Palestinian	12	PR	S	40s	Male
Sudan – south Sudanese, Berber	8	PR?	S	40s	Male
Lebanon-Palestinian	23	PR	S	50s	Male
Syria	0.1	PR	S	20s	Male
Pakistan	6	PR	S	30s	Male
Cameroon	N/A	S	S	20s	Female
Pakistan	1	PR	S	20s	Male
Lebanon	15	NR		50s	Male
Tunisia	0.1	PR	S	30s	Male
Iraq - Kurd	10+	S	S	20s	Male
Cameroon	2	L	S	20s	Male
China	20	L		20s	Male
Vietnam	12	L	S	20s	Male
Kyrgystan- Uzbek	3	AS	AS	40s	male
Iraq	5	PR	AS	40s	male
Ethiopia	3	R, PR	S	50s	Male
Azerbaijan	9	R	VFR	40s	Female
Cameroon	0.5	ND, AS	ND	30s	Male
Liberia	11	S, R	AS	40s	Male
Yemen	2	PR	PR	20s	Female
Jordan - Palestinian	3	AS, PR	S	30s	Male
Cameroonian	2	S	S	20s	Male
Angola	2	S	PR	40s	Male
Kazakhstan	2	ND	L	40s	Male
Palestine	20	PR	AS	50s	Male
Afghanistan - Hazara	15	ND	AS	30s	Male
Afghanistan - Hazara	0.5	AS	ND	40s	Male
Afghanistan Pashtun	4	TR	AS	20s	Male
Syria - Palestinian	14	PR	L	40s	Male
Sudan - Arab	7	PR	S	30s	Male
Iran - Afghan/Iranian	3	AS	AS	20s	Male
Guinea Conacry	4	AS	S	20s	Male
Guinea Conacry	5	AS	S	20s	Male
Iran - Iranian	6	S?	AS	20s	Male
DR Congo	7	S	S	20s	Male
Cuba	12	AS	AS	40s	Male
Cameroon	1	S	S	20s	Male
Kyrgystan - Uzbek	8	AS	AS	20s	Female
Russia - Chechen	2	AS	ND	30s	male
Sudan - black African	2	AS	S	40s	male

Afghan - Tajik, Pashtun	0.4	AS	ND	20s	male
Somalia	2	AS	UK	30s	
Nigerian	5	AS	UK		
Sri Lanka - Tamil	0.5	AS	ND	30s	male
Afghan	0.5	AS	UK	30s	male
Pashtun	0.1	AS	UK	40s	male
Iraqi - Shiit	1	AS	AS	30s	male
Afghan - Tajik	1.3	AS	AS	20s	male
Afghan	3	PR	AS	30s	male
Guinea	11	AS	S	20s	male
Palestine, Gaza	22	AS	S?	20s	male
Afghan	0.5	AS	R?	30s	male
Afghan- Tajik	2	AS	L	20s	male
Afghan - Hazara	2	AS	ND	40s	male
Guinea		AS	S	20a	male
Sierra Leon - Liberian	0.2	S	S	20s	male
Ivory coast	15	AS	S	20s	male
Cameroon	0.5	AS	?	30s	male
Kyrgyz - Uzbek	18	AS	VFR	40s	male
Bengladesh	20+	R	AS	30s	male
Cameroon	15+	AS	AS	30s	male
Palestine OT	3	AS	S	30	male
Ethiopia	4	R	S	50s	male
Somalia	1	R	AS	34	male
Ethiopia	2	R	S	40s	male
Somalia	3	R	R, ND	22	male
Iran	8	AS	AS	40s	female
Iran	23	AS	AS	30s	female

\* Exact age of respondents 18 and 19 years old and younger removed for confidentiality reasons.

**Table 2****Interviews with Officials\***

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Position/focus</i>
Ekaterina and director	South Odessa Association of Young Lawyers	Legal staff and director
Valera Viktorovich	Social Service of Assistance	Director of refugee programs
Lyubov Butenko	Social Service of Assistance	voluntary return, minors
Zayts, Natalia	State Migration Service Kharkiv Oblast	Head
Dr. Karimi Pashat and Christoff	Organization of International Students and Citizens (Kharkov).	President
Mridula Ghosh	East Euro Development Institute	Director
Benjamin Barry	U.S Embassy,	
Max Butkevich	UNHCR, Project No Borders	PR officer, advocate
Oksana, Natalia	CAMZ	Director
Shandor, Fiodr Fiodrovich	Uzhorod National University	Professor
Toft, Mikola	State Migration Service, Zakarpattya oblast	Head
Viktor M.	SUASYL	border monitoring
<i>Several staff</i>	Local Integratoin Program, UNHCR,	Local staff
Natalia Gourgij, and Aleksandr	Rokada, Kiev	Director, and social lawyer
Tatyana, Lena	LIP, UNHCR, Kiev	Integration
Matteini, Ignazio	UNHCR, Kiev RHQ	Local integration project
Karoline Gamre	UNHCR, Kiev RHQ	Resttlement chief
Ann Nguyen	IOM	Deputy Chief of Mission
Pribytkova, Irina	Institute of Sociology	Faculty, Migration Expert
Dmytro Groysman	Vinnitsa Human Rights Group	Director

\*see Glossary for list of abbreviations.

**Figure 1****Descriptive Statistics – Rates of Refugee Status Recognition by Ukraine.**

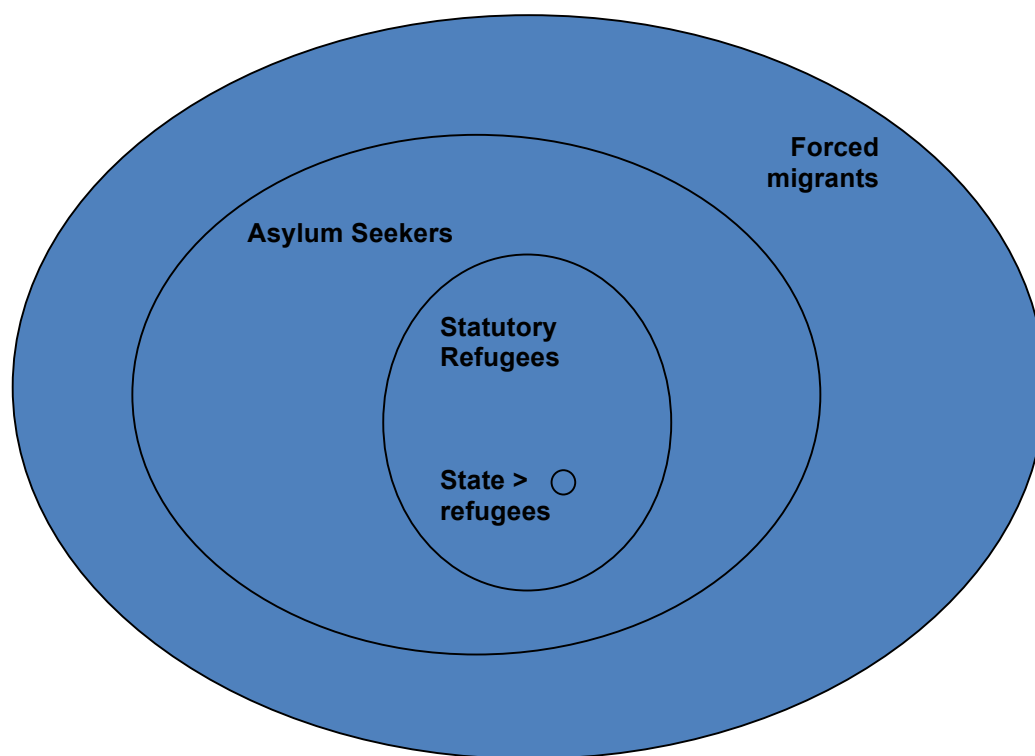
	year(s)	# applications	# status
Government Recognition Rate	2008	2237	121
	2009	1363	126
	2010	1500	135
	2011	890	187
	2012	1860	63*
Net recognized by government	1996 - 2012		<b>3022</b>
Stateless people (UNHCR)	Net by 2012		25,875
Asylum seeker caseload of NGOs	2010	1009	

\*89 persons also received complementary humanitarian protection, introduced by the 2011 Refugee Law

\*\*Number of refugees internationally recognized by UNHCR in Ukraine is unavailable

Sources: Self from UNHCR 2012, 2007, HIAS 2010



**Figure 2****Diagram of Refugees in Ukraine by legal status (1996- 2012)**

*Note: Diagram not proportional to scale*

State Refugees = 3,022

Asylum Seekers = 43,172

UNHCR Statutory Refugees ~ 20,000 (author's estimate)

Forced Migrants without status ~ 65,000- 500,000 (author's estimate)