Silent Refuge? A Critical Democratic Exploration of Voice and Authorship among Resettled Iraqis in the United States

Jared Keyel

Dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
In
Planning, Governance and Globalization

Max O. Stephenson, Jr., Chair
Christian Matheis
Deborah Milly
Katrina M. Powell

July 9, 2019
Blacksburg, Virginia

Key Words: Refugees, Displacement, Resettlement, Iraq, Democratic Membership, Iraq War

Silent Refuge? A Critical Democratic Exploration of Voice and Authorship Among Resettled Iraqis in the United States

Jared Keyel

ABSTRACT

The 2003 United States (U.S.)-led invasion and occupation of Iraq caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and led to the displacement of millions of individuals in that country. Between March 20, 2003 and late 2017, more than 172,000 Iraqis left their country as refugees and resettled in the United States. This dissertation focuses on a small cohort of that population who resettled in various locations in the U.S. after 2003. This research contributes an empirical and theoretical exploration of the possibilities for political agency for resettled Iraqis in the United States. Grounded in literature suggesting those displaced commonly experience constrained agency framed as "silence/ing" and/or "voicelessness," I identify three requirements to democratic participation: sufficient time to exercise voice, adequate information and attenuating lingering suspicion of (authoritarian) government. Moreover, despite constraints, opportunities for engagement existed including discussion and dialogue; civil society volunteering; and activism. Drawing on 15 semi-structured qualitative interviews, this work first critically explores the American invasion of Iraq and the social and political breakdown that it triggered in that country. I argue that the conflict was an aggressive war and that, consequently, the United States should be held responsible for all of the harm it has caused to the people of Iraq. I describe the violence committed by the American military and I trace the connections between the erosion of interviewees' personal safety and their decisions to leave Iraq and resettle in the U.S. I contend that their various personal decisions to seek refuge were important agentic acts. I then delve into participants' post-resettlement opportunities for belonging in American society and analyze several ways that negative media and government discourses and policies concerning refugees, Arabs, and Muslims contributed to experiences of constraint, unease and precarity. I explore the importance of finding opportunities to engage in personal and cultural exchange with friends, neighbors and colleagues. Thereafter, I examine participants' experiences and understandings of democratic membership. Elaborating several critiques of American political institutions shared by the interviewees, I consider three requirements they identified to democratic participation: sufficient time, sufficient information to make informed decisions and the lingering effects of having lived under an authoritarian government in Iraq. Subsequently, I explore the multiple sites and modes of engagement and participation shared by participants, including dialogue, debate and discussion about the decisions that affect their lives as well as volunteering with community and nonprofit organizations focused on various types of activities, and activism in response to the Trump 2017 Travel Ban. I argue that broad social mobilization and public invocation of norms of welcoming and diversity by native-born Americans can be powerful tools to enlarge spaces for democratic agency for refugees otherwise targeted by discriminatory government actions. I then return to the question of "silence" in refuge that prompted this study and the importance of deliberate, daily interactions and exchange among newcomers and native-born Americans to expand spaces for resettled refugees to engage in American society. Thereafter, I examine the salience of local organizations and activities as sites of engagement and venues for expressions of agency for those I interviewed. I then outline possible directions for future research investigating the role(s) of refugee-led organizations in resettlement and community building. I close by describing the implications this work has for policy and activism.

Silent Refuge? A Critical Democratic Exploration of Voice and Authorship Among Resettled Iraqis in the United States

Jared Keyel

GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

The 2003 United States (U.S.)-led invasion and occupation of Iraq caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and led to the displacement of millions of individuals in that country. Between March 20, 2003 and late 2017 more than 172,000 Iraqis left their country as refugees and resettled in the United States. This dissertation focuses on a small cohort of that population who resettled in various locations in the U.S. after 2003. This research contributes an exploration of the possibilities for political agency for resettled Iraqis in the United States. Grounded in literature suggesting those displaced commonly experience constrained agency framed as "silence/ing" and/or "voicelessness," I identify three requirements to democratic participation: sufficient time, adequate information and attenuating lingering suspicion of (authoritarian) government. Moreover, despite constraints, opportunities for engagement existed including discussion and dialogue; civil society volunteering; and activism. Drawing on 15 qualitative interviews, this work first explores the American invasion of Iraq and the social and political breakdown in that country that it triggered. I argue that the conflict was an aggressive war and that, consequently, the United States should be held responsible for all of the harm it has caused to the people of Iraq. I describe the violence committed by the American military and I trace the connections between the erosion of interviewees' personal safety and their decisions to leave Iraq and resettle in the U.S. I then delve into participants' post-resettlement opportunities for belonging in American society and analyze several ways that negative media portrayals and government policies concerning refugees, Arabs, and Muslims shaped those resettled individuals' life experiences. I explore the importance for interviewees of finding opportunities to engage in personal and cultural exchange with their friends, neighbors and colleagues. Thereafter, I examine participants' experiences and understandings of democratic membership. I then consider three requirements interviewees identified to democratic participation: sufficient time, adequate information to make informed decisions and the lingering effects of having lived under an authoritarian government in Iraq. Subsequently, I describe the multiple sites and modes of engagement and participation shared by interviewees including dialogue, debate and discussion about the decisions that affect their lives, volunteering with community and nonprofit organizations and activism in response to the Trump 2017 Travel Ban. I argue that broad social mobilization and public invocation of norms of welcoming and diversity by native-born Americans can be powerful tools to enlarge participatory spaces for refugees. I then return to the question of silent refuge that prompted this study and the importance of deliberate, daily interactions and exchange among newcomers and native-born Americans to expand spaces for resettled refugees to engage in American society. Thereafter, I examine the importance of local organizations and activities for participants. I then outline possible directions for future research investigating the role(s) of refugee-led organizations in resettlement and community building. I close by describing the implications this work has for policy and activism.

Dedication

For Ilana.

So that she might live in a more peaceful and just world.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the many people who have made this work possible. First and foremost, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the individuals who generously agreed to be interviewed for this project. Each one shared their time and their often difficult and painful experiences with me. Many also went above and beyond to reach out to their colleagues, friends, and family to assist me in connecting with others. This project could not have been realized without them. I hope that I have honored and accurately represented the complexities of their experiences. I want to express my deepest thanks to Max Stephenson Jr. as well for his unfailing support and guidance throughout this project and my time at Virginia Tech more broadly; he has continuously pushed me to become a better writer and clearer thinker. A sincere thank you, too, to Christian Matheis, who, with a dash of gallows humor, has consistently encouraged me to think seriously about liberation and how we reach it. To Deborah Milly and Katrina Powell, I want to say thank you for your dedication and helpful feedback as this project took shape from a rough sketch in 2016 to its final form. Also thank you Deborah, Katrina, and Brett Shadle for a very memorable cab ride and a delicious Ethiopian feast. I would also like to thank Patricia Nickel, whose early support helped shape the direction of this research.

Thank you to my partner and wife Zibby, who was game to move sight unseen to a small mountain town in Southwest Virginia and who has regularly prompted me to look up from my work and enjoy the beauty of the area (even if just to take a minute away from studying for preliminary exams to sit together in the grass). To all of the wonderful and diverse friends I have made during my time in Blacksburg; thank you for all of the hikes, the conversations, the TOTS nights, the late-night waffles, the cat sitting, and most especially for the delicious potlucks and Friendsgivings. I cannot list everyone here, for fear of leaving someone out, but I hope you all know who you are. Last, but certainly not least, a huge thank you to the friends and family members who offered me lodging and meals and acted as—possibly reluctant, but always gracious—sounding boards as I conducted this research: My parents Ellen and Wayne, my sister Aryn, Jen Cohn, Rama Issa-Ibrahim, Stephanie Sacco, Sony Rane (and all of the folks at the Bowers House Cooperative) and Tamar Frolichstein-Appel.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Situating the Dissertation: Displacement in Iraq and Resettlement in the United States

The 2003 United States-led invasion of Iraq caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and precipitated, directly or indirectly, displacement of millions of individuals in that country.[1] Between March 20, 2003 and September 30, 2017[2] more than 172,000 Iraqis left their country and resettled in the United States.[3] This dissertation examines in-depth the experiences of agency, belonging, democratic membership and participation in American society and politics of a small cohort of the resettled Iraqi population. This research project arose from a desire to explore the potential incongruence and the contradictions that can exist between legal residence or citizenship status and the lived experiences of newcomers. Relatively few studies to date have examined the experiences of this group of people and I have found none that analyze issues of political agency or democratic membership among Iraqis in the U.S.

This research contributes an empirical and theoretical exploration of the possibilities for political agency for resettled Iraqis living in the United States in the years 2017-2018. Grounded in refugee and forced migration literature suggesting that those displaced commonly experience constrained agency framed as "silence/ing" and/or "voicelessness," I identify three requirements

[1] While other governments sent soldiers to Iraq in support of the invasion and occupation, the war was overwhelmingly conducted by the United States military and American private mercenary forces. Although the United Kingdom was the principal U.S. ally and second largest force in Iraq, the scale of its engagement peaked during the initial invasion in March 2003 with 46,000 troops, compared to approximately 145,000 American soldiers. By May 2003, the U.K. troop level had fallen to 18,000 and it continued to decline until combat operations ended in 2009 (Iraq war in figures 2011). The U.S. "surged" the number of troops it stationed in Iraq to a peak of more than 170,000 in November 2007 (Belasco 2009).

[2] This date coincides with the end of U.S. Federal Government Fiscal Year 2017 and the beginning of interviews conducted for this research.

[3] As explained in the following chapter, I define "refugee" to include anyone seeking safety from instability and/or violence in the country in which they were born or reside, regardless of immigration status or program of entry. The figure quoted here includes 143,165 individuals who arrived through the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), 21,961 Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders, and 7,189 Iraqis granted asylum (Bruno 2019; Refugee Arrivals: From March 20, 2003 through September 30, 2017, Nationality of Iraq 2019; Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2003 2004; Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2013 2014; Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2016 2017).

to democratic participation. First, exercising voice in the decisions that affect one's life requires sufficient time. Second, authorship over the laws, policies and rules that govern one's life requires adequate information. Third, for those who lived under authoritarian regimes, it is necessary to attenuate lingering suspicion of agents of the state and government more broadly in order to trust that political engagement is safe; some may choose to abstain from democratic engagement and/or interaction with state institutions as a result. Moreover, despite constraints to the substantive exercise of voice and authorship, I elaborate on opportunities that exist for engagement and potentially expanding spaces for newcomers in American society including discussion, debate and dialogue about the decisions that affect their lives; volunteering with civil society and community organizations; and activism in response to anti-refugee government policies such as the 2017 Executive Orders banning refugees from predominately Muslim countries from entering the United States.

The study of refuge and refugees is inherently interdisciplinary. It is intertwined with issues of global ethics, war and conflict and democratic belonging and citizenship. As such, I have situated this dissertation within the refugee and forced displacement literature while arguing that this analysis is intrinsically connected to the study of international relations and, in the case of Iraqi refugees, U.S. foreign and domestic policymaking. It is crucial to connect the displacement created by American wars fought abroad to domestic policies of refugee resettlement and democratic citizenship. This connection matters for two primary reasons. First, in order to understand displacement and resettlement, it is necessary to investigate their causes. Second, Americans must reckon with the consequences of their government's policies carried out in their names and work to make reparation for the vast harms caused to the people of Iraq by those actions. Furthermore, the present research is timely and pressing given the large shifts in

refugee resettlement policies that have occurred since the 2016 election of Donald Trump and increased federal government efforts to close the borders of the American state to immigrants.

Shifting American Political Atmosphere

I undertook this study amidst rising anti-refugee sentiment and policies emanating from U.S. Federal Government leaders and expressed by segments of American society. On September 26, 2017, I drove to Buffalo, New York, ready to conduct my first interview for this research the following day. As I drove north on Interstate-80, I passed another vehicle with a decal that read: "Fuck off, We're Full," spelled out in the shape of the continental United States. This incident is illustrative of the sentiments expressed by some segments of American society and among a share of its political leadership in the period leading up to and following the narrow election of Donald Trump to the U.S. Presidency. Echoing the bumper sticker's sentiment, in April 2019, Trump declared, "our country is full," to justify reductions in immigrant admissions and increased militarized border enforcement (Irwin and Badger 2019).

Planning for this project began in the final years of the Obama Administration (2009-2017), which had pursued relatively stable refugee resettlement policies throughout its tenure. Obama's rhetoric about immigration leaned heavily into meritocratic discourses of the contributions immigrants bring to American society and economy (Remarks by the President on Comprehensive Immigration Reform 2010). His administration's policies were a mix of increased legal actions to "remove"—deport in colloquial language—significantly more immigrants than his predecessor, George W. Bush (Chishti, Pierce, and Bolter 2017), and executive actions such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program to provide limited protections for immigrants who had arrived as children without legal status.

The 2016 Presidential Election brought Donald Trump into office. He had targeted refugees in his campaign rhetoric and began implementing policies to reduce resettlement

drastically mere days after his inauguration. Trump campaigned on a nativist, anti-immigrant and anti-refugee platform (Beinart 2018; Huber 2016) that directed ire particularly at Muslims. In late 2015, for example, as a presidential candidate, Trump called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States" (Johnson 2015).[4] Trump's campaign and government have drawn on deeply-rooted Orientalist myths about Islam, and those who practice it, as inherently different, dangerous, and irrational (Said 1995, 40, 44, 57, 59) and played upon the fears, prejudices and nativist sentiments of his supporters.[5]

In one of his first acts as President, Trump signed an Executive Order that attempted to ban refugees from seven predominately Muslim countries from entering the United States, including Iraq (K. Liptak 2017). This "Travel Ban" was initially blocked by legal challenges, and later superseded by additional Executive Orders. At the time of this study's interviews, the Ban's final status was uncertain. However, in late 2017 the Supreme Court of the United States allowed a revised version to go into effect while legal actions continued (A. Liptak 2017) and ultimately upheld its legality (Totenberg and Montanaro 2018). Although Iraq was removed from the final

[4] This call for banning all Muslims from entering the U.S. presupposes and perpetuates the notion that Muslims are essentially outside of or beyond the borders of the U.S., eliding the reality that there is already a sizable Muslim community within the country. Moreover, of the 3.45 million Muslims living in the United States, 24% are "U.S. natives with U.S.-born parents" (Demographic portrait of Muslim Americans 2017). Crucially as well, Islam has been practiced in what is now North America for centuries, as 10-15% of the enslaved Africans transported to this continent were Muslims. Many of those individuals and their descendants were forcibly converted to Christianity by their captors (Islam In America 2014).

[5] In 2015, for example, Trump declared, "Without looking at the various polling data, it is obvious to anybody the hatred [of Muslims for Americans] is beyond comprehension" (Johnson 2015). In this framing, there is no need to verify the statement with "polling data." It is simply "common sense" that they hate us. This loathing, according to Trump, poses both a "dangerous threat" and is irrational as it is held by people who "believe only in Jihad, and have no sense of reason or respect for human life" (ibid.). Again, these claims are asserted, but not proved and appeal to purportedly "common sense views" that Muslims are inherently more violent than other Americans. In fact, polling data suggests that Muslims around the world and Muslim Americans too, are less likely than other groups to justify violence against civilians (Naurath 2011; Views of Violence 2011). In a 2010 Gallup poll, for example, Muslim Americans were the most likely to say violence against civilians is never justified (78%), compared with 38% of Protestants, 39% of Catholics, 43% of Jews, 33% of Mormons, and 56% of atheists (Naurath 2011).

list of banned countries, this changing and uncertain context cruelly affected many of this study's participants' lives and became an important topic of this research.

Persistent Anti-Arab, Muslim, and Refugee Sentiments and Policies in American Society and Government

It is important to underscore that while the Trump Administration has been overtly anti-Muslim and anti-refugee, there is long-standing reluctance among Americans to accept refugees as well as persistent negative stereotypes against Arabs and Muslims, groups of which many Iraqis are members, among many Americans. Consider, for example, long-term Gallup survey data that suggests resistance over time to refugee resettlement. In polls dating back to 1939, Americans have largely disapproved of allowing displaced individuals to resettle in the United States. In only one of eight cases polled, the 1999 proposed resettlement of several hundred individuals from Kosovo, did a clear majority support resettlement (66%). In 2018, a slight majority (51%) indicated support for accepting several thousand Central American individuals fleeing their countries. Only minorities approved in all other cases polled: Syrians in 2015 (37%), Vietnamese in 1979 (32%), Hungarians in 1958 (33%), Europeans in 1946 (16%) and 1947 (24%) and German children in 1939 (26%) (J. McCarthy 2018).

Negative perceptions of Arabs and Muslims are widespread among members of American society as well. For example, a 2010 poll conducted by Zogby International for the Arab American Institute (AAI) found only 43% of respondents had a favorable view of Arabs and only 35% of Americans polled viewed Muslims positively (Zogby International 2010). A later 2017 Zogby/AAI poll that asked additional questions found that less than half of American respondents reported a favorable opinion of Arabs (35%), Arab-Americans (45%), Muslims (34%) or American Muslims (44%) (Zogby Analytics 2017). Moreover, a 2017 Pew Research survey of American attitudes toward various religious groups found that Muslims were viewed

the least "warmly" of any religious group. That poll of 3,000 individuals found an average of 48 on a 100-point warmth scale for Muslims, the lowest-rated group, compared to 67 for the highest-rated group, Jews.[6] Positive feelings toward Muslims increased from 40-48 out of 100 between 2014 and 2017. Nearly all groups included in the survey saw similar increases in that time period (Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings Toward Religious Groups 2017). A 2015 poll conducted by the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution reported slightly higher favorable opinions of Muslims, with 53% of respondents reporting a positive view. However, only 37% reported a favorable view of Islam overall (Telhami 2015).

Finally, in more than 25 Gallup polls conducted between 1991 and 2019, overwhelming majorities of American respondents indicated they held a mostly unfavorable or very unfavorable view of Iraq. In February 2003, for example, 90% of respondents held an unfavorable view of that country; in February 2018, as I concluded interviews for this research, that number stood at 73% unfavorable. Similarly, Gallup asked Americans whether they viewed Iraq as an ally or enemy on several occasions between 2000 and 2013. In 2000, 39% of respondents reported Iraq as 'unfriendly" to the United States and 47% deemed it an enemy. In 2013, those percentages were 40% and 35% respectively (In Depth: Topics A to Z, Iraq 2019).

In addition to negative perceptions of Arabs, Muslims, and Iraqis, significant pluralities of Americans report support for discriminatory policies specifically targeting those individuals, such as the Iraqis who participated in this study. For example, after Trump declared in 2015 that he would require Muslims living in the United States to register with the government (Hillyard 2015), 27% of respondents said that they "strongly" supported and 13% "somewhat" supported a

[6] Similarly, a Democracy Fund survey using a 100-point favorability scale found an average rating of Muslims by nearly 5,000 respondents at 48% favorable. By way of comparison, the average rating for Christians was 71% and that for Jews was 74% (Sides and Mogahed 2018).

national registry of Muslims in a YouGov poll conducted days later (YouGov: November 20 - 23 2015). In the 2017 Zogby poll cited above, 37% of respondents said law enforcement profiling of Arab or Muslim Americans was justified (Zogby Analytics 2017, 10). The same poll found 35% of respondents agreeing the United States should ban immigrants from Middle Eastern nations while 31% said the country should prohibit Muslim immigrants (ibid., 5).

Trump's "Muslim registry" proposal in 2015 and enactment of the 2017 Travel Ban are only the most recent discriminatory policies targeted against Arabs and Muslims living in the United States. In 2002, for example, the Bush Administration created the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) program, which required male immigrants 16-years old and older from 25 countries, all of which, except North Korea and Eritrea, were Muslim majority, to submit to "special registration" and tracking by the now-defunct Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).[7] By the end of 2003, 83,000 individuals had voluntarily done so, nearly 13,800 of whom were then placed in deportation proceedings (Kumar 2012, 142). Similarly, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the New York City Police Department (NYPD) devoted significant resources to surveil individuals and infiltrate Muslim organizations in the years after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks (ibid., 144). Working with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) the NYPD spent at least a decade illegally spying on Muslims in dozens of mosques, restaurants, stores, and schools in New York City, New Jersey, and Connecticut; these activities "failed to produce a single intelligence lead" according to Department officials (A. Goldman and Apuzzo 2012; Pilkington 2018). Thus, while Trump has

[7] In 2003, the Bush Administration eliminated the INS and reassigned the functions it had carried out to three new Federal Agencies: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

certainly imposed brutal and violent policies, he has done so by building upon similarly cruel platforms constructed by previous administrations.

Crucially, the discriminatory and harmful policies directed against Arabs, Muslims, and Iraqis have not been confined to the United States. The CIA, for example, carried out a global kidnapping program euphemistically called "extraordinary rendition" through which its agents captured at least 136 individuals during the George W. Bush presidency (2001-2009) and flew them to secret prisons in 54 different countries to be tortured. The vast majority of the known victims resided in or originated from majority Arab and/or Muslim countries, including Iraq (Singh 2013). Moreover, as explored in Chapter 3 below, the United States has been at war in Iraq for nearly 30 years. It has also launched and participated in wars against several additional majority-Arab and/or Muslim countries since 2001 including Afghanistan, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. (Crawford 2018a; Scahill 2015; Wagner 2015)

It is important to keep in mind, therefore, that I interviewed 15 individuals from Iraq about their U.S. resettlement experiences in this evolving social and political context. Polling before and during the relevant period suggested that a majority of Americans opposed refugee resettlement in the abstract. Pluralities, and in some cases majorities, held biases against, and negative perceptions of, Arabs, Muslims, and Iraqis. Given this situation, it is easy to understand why, as described below, some individuals who have resettled in the United States after leaving their homes in Iraq might believe that most Americans are simply opposed to their presence and participation in American society and politics.

There are also significant reasons to believe, as indeed, some study participants did, and evidence to suggest, too, that U.S. law will not always protect the rights of residents or citizens. As historical examples such as the apartheid Jim Crow system imposed in the American South to

roll back the rights African-Americans won through hard struggle in the Civil War and during Reconstruction (Alexander 2012, 29–40), legal protections, even for citizens, are always contingent and revocable. If and when governments choose to target, deny rights, or expel particular groups or populations they can and will certainly do so.[8] Various U.S. government leaders and agency officials have proven willing to violate and ignore domestic and international law, at multiple times in the past two decades, particularly regarding the rights and treatment of those living in or originating from Arab and Muslim majority countries.

Within this often uncertain and dangerous social and political context for Arab and/or Muslim refugees, this research sought to explore whether and in what ways (if so) interviewees had located and expanded opportunities and spaces to build social belonging, democratic membership and active participation in political struggles. Their experiences point to potential strategies to resist in the strongest terms the xenophobia of the current presidential administration and activities that appear likely to help build just alternatives to violence and exclusion directed at targeted groups within American society.

Dissertation Organization

I have organized this dissertation into seven chapters. Chapter 1 sets out a broad definition of the term refugee that includes multiple legal statuses and programs, including the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), asylum, and the Special Immigrant Visa Program for Iraqi and Afghan Translators/Interpreters (SIV) that I use thereafter. It also synthesizes the scholarly literature on refuge and refugees that suggests those displaced commonly experience constrained agency framed as "silence/ing" and/or "voicelessness." Finally, this chapter sets out definitions for concepts I use to explore this potential silence:

[8] One can point as well to the internment of tens of thousands of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II as a salient example of government authorities violating the rights and protections of citizens on a mass scale.

agency, voice, authorship, *democratic iteration* and belonging developed on the basis of Benhabib's critical democratic theory.

Chapter 2 details my methodological approach. I drew broadly on the critical theory tradition and scholars such as Agger and Antonio to inform my epistemological stance, politically engaged scholarship, and orientation toward understanding where contradictions between the ideal of democratic membership and lived experiences may reveal emancipatory alternatives. I conducted 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews for this study, and I have analyzed them here primarily through the lenses of agency, voice, authorship and belonging. These explored resettled Iraqis' perceptions of the war in their country, the character of belonging in American society, democratic membership and participation, and individual agency.

Chapter 3 explores the 2003 American invasion of Iraq and the social and political breakdown in that country that it precipitated. I argue that the conflict was an aggressive war according to the norms established in the United Nations Charter and that, consequently, the United States should be held responsible for all of the harm it has done to the people of Iraq. I elaborate on the direct violence committed by the American military and unleashed by the occupation, and I trace the connections between the erosion of interviewees' personal safety and their decisions to leave Iraq and resettle in the U.S. Finally, I argue that the various interviewee decisions to seek refuge were important agentic acts.

Chapter 4 delves into interviewees' post-resettlement opportunities for belonging in American society and analyzes several ways that negative media and government discourses and policies concerning refugees, Arabs, and Muslims created constraints and shaped those

individuals' life experiences. I explore the importance for participants of finding opportunities to engage in personal and cultural exchange with their friends, neighbors, and colleagues.

Chapter 5 describes participants' experiences and understandings of democratic membership. It sets out several critiques of American political institutions shared by the interviewees and problematizes the possibilities for democratic governance in the U.S., given the country's position as a global "superpower." This chapter then considers three requirements to democratic participation this study's participants identified: sufficient time to express voice, adequate information to make informed decisions and claim authorship, and attenuating lingering suspicion of government agents as a result of having experienced authoritarian rule in Iraq.

Chapter 6 describes the multiple sites and modes of engagement and participation that participants identified in their interviews. The three primary sites and modes were engaging in dialogue, debate, and discussion about the decisions, policies, and laws that affect their lives; volunteering with community and nonprofit organizations focused on various types of (typically) refugee and immigration-related activities; and activism in response to the Trump 2017 Travel Ban. I argue that broad social mobilization and public demonstration of norms of welcoming and diversity by native-born Americans can be powerful tools to enlarge spaces for democratic agency and voice for refugees otherwise targeted by discriminatory policies and government actions.

Finally, the concluding chapter (7), returns to the question of silence and silencing in refuge that prompted this study and the importance of deliberate, daily interactions and exchange among newcomers and native-born Americans to expand spaces for resettled refugees to engage in American society. It then examines the salience of local nonprofits, religious organizations, and municipal governments as sites of engagement and venues for expressions of agency among

those I interviewed. Thereafter, I outline possible directions for future research investigating the role(s) of refugee-led organizations in resettlement and community building. I close by reiterating the implications this work has for policy and activism.

Chapter 1 – Reviewing the Literature: Defining Refugee and Voicelessness in Displacement, Locating Agency through the Work of Seyla Benhabib

Introduction

This chapter defines key concepts that I will use throughout this study to explore the experiences of a sample of Iraqis who resettled in the United States as a result of the 2003 American-led invasion of their country. I begin by defining the term refugee. I then explore the existing literature on resettled Iraqis in the United States, which focuses primarily on physical and mental health, trauma and individual effects of displacement. This scholarship provides important insights. However, there is a dearth of studies exploring the agency and democratic engagement of Iraqis in the U.S. Following that section, I consider a broader literature on refugees that suggests that such individuals commonly experience "silence/ing" and "voicelessness," presenting a challenge for them to act agentically. Finally, I describe Benhabib's political and democratic theory, which I employ to explore the experience of my small sample of resettled Iraqis' opportunities for the exercise of agency, democratic membership and participation in the United States.

Who is a Refugee?

Scholars and practitioners disagree concerning how to define the concepts of refuge and refugee. A number of overlapping and contrasting definitions of these core ideas exist in scholarship, domestic and international law and popular understanding (Haddad 2008, 26; Lister 2013; Shacknove 1985). Moreover, as Cameron (2014, 6) has argued, the complexity of refuge situations and experiences make building a grand or meta-theory of "refugeeness" difficult. Indeed, as I explain in the following chapter, I sought explicitly to avoid any universal claims regarding the experiences of those classified as refugees.

The modern conceptions, rights frameworks and international regimes governing those displaced from their homes developed in the wake of the mass movements of people caused by World War II. However, displacement due to war, conflict or persecution is as old as human communities and arises when individuals and families seek safety from such situations. As FitzGerald (2019, 1) has noted, the concept of asylum originated more than 2,000 years ago in response to a group of Roman citizens attempting to escape violence by seeking sanctuary and protection in a temple on the Greek Island of Kos. Sites of asylum, what I call *refuge*, then, are any locations in which individuals seek, and hopefully obtain, protection from persecution and safer conditions than those they left.

With this in mind, I define the act of seeking refuge and categorization as a *refugee* to encompass any individual displaced from their home due to instability, conflict or violence and who has sought protection and safer conditions in another location, regardless of the specific legal status or determination for which they qualify or that has been denied to them.[9] This definition informed the recruitment criteria for this research, as explained in more detail in Chapter 2. In the American context, Iraqis may be eligible for three separate programs to relocate to the U.S.: The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), asylum, and the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV), all of which operate on similar definitions of displacement and provide a

[9] This definition is broader than the important and widely adopted 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol and more closely reflects the definition of the 1984 Cartagena Declaration, a regional gathering of Central American states and Mexico convened to discuss this concern. The former specifies individuals must have left their homes due to a "well-founded fear" of persecution based upon the specific areas "of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion" (Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees 2010, 14). The latter broadened that definition to include, "persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances, which have seriously disturbed public order" (Cartagena Declaration on Refugees 1984, 36).

path to legal status. Given this definition of refugee, I also use the term *resettlement* broadly to denote the processes by which those displaced relocated to locations of refuge.

As the interviews I conducted demonstrated, individuals may define or identify themselves as refugees or former refugees with or without a particular legal status. Moreover, the following chapters demonstrate that experiences of displacement and resettlement share many similar characteristics regardless of technical classification. Consequently, I contend this broad definition of the term refugee is appropriate to build scholarly knowledge of displacement. I do not seek here to redefine the legal terms or criteria of asylum, refuge or refugee, as I do not wish to risk undermining the already precarious protections available to those now enjoying or seeking such protection. There is doubtless an urgent need to rethink, reinforce and expand protections for those displaced. However, these concerns are not the primary focus of the present study as I concentrate on those already living within the United States. With this definition established, I turn to the literature exploring the experiences of Iraqis resettled in the United States.

Literature on Resettled Iraqis in the United States

Analysts have developed a growing body of interdisciplinary scholarship addressing issues of displacement and the experiences of refugees since the 1980s (Cameron 2014, 6). Despite this growing literature, according to Shoeb, Weinstein, and Halpern (2007, 442), there are few studies that focus on the lived experiences of refugees from the Middle East who have resettled in Europe and North America. In fact, the authors of a 2013 article on dating violence among Iraqi youth resettled in the U.S. have asserted that analyses focused specifically on immigrants from that country are almost nonexistent (Black et al. 2013, 205). This is something

of an overstatement; I found a number of journal articles focused on resettled Iraqis in the United States.

Nevertheless, this academic literature is limited and clustered around a relatively narrow range of issues linked to emotional wellbeing and mental and physical health. The analyses I have found exploring Iraqis' resettlement experiences in the U.S. have focused primarily on trauma, mental stress and other physical and emotional effects of violence and displacement (Arnetz et al. 2014; Black et al. 2013; Elsouhag et al. 2015; Gangamma 2018; Haldane and Nickerson 2010; Harding and Libal 2012; Hauck et al. 2014; Jamil et al. 2012; Jen et al. 2015; I. Kira et al. 2012; LeMaster et al. 2017; Nelson et al. 2016; Saadi, Bond, and Percac-Lima 2015; Taylor et al. 2014; Willard, Rabin, and Lawless 2014b; Wright, Aldhalimi, et al. 2016; Wright, Dhalimi, et al. 2016; Yako and Biswas 2014).[10] While such inquiries are important and provide much-needed insights, I have found no studies directly exploring issues of political agency or democratic membership among Iraqis in the U.S. Therefore, the present analysis contributes a novel empirical and theoretical exploration of the possibilities for political agency for resettled Iraqis.

Furthermore, much of the extant literature concerning Iraqi refugees resettled in the United States and elsewhere also either completely omits or only obliquely describes the connections between the American-led war that precipitated their displacement and their current situations. Of the literature cited above, only Harding (2012) and Gangamma (2018) substantively address the violence committed and unleashed by the United States invasion as the

[10] Scholars have conducted similar analyses regarding trauma and mental health in other countries of resettlement such as Australia (Haldane and Nickerson 2010; Nickerson et al. 2010, 2014; Slewa-Younan et al. 2012a, 2012b, 2015), the Netherlands (Bakker, Dagevos, and Engbersen 2014), Sweden (Lindencrona, Ekblad, and Hauff 2008) and the United Kingdom (Phillimore 2011). There is also similar literature exploring earlier cohorts of Iraqis who arrived after the 1991 Gulf War (Jamil et al. 2002; I. A. Kira et al. 2009; Rouen 2015; Trentacosta et al. 2016).

principal cause of widespread displacement in Iraq.[11] Espiritu (2014, 5) has argued that a myopic focus on the needs and achievements of refugees locates the problem of displacement within those individuals, rather than in the historical conditions that produced their situation. By focusing strongly on trauma and simultaneously failing to acknowledge the role the U.S. military had in causing it, such research on Iraqi refugees threatens to reproduce *status quo* understandings of the U.S. as a neutral, passive or benevolent country accepting refugees rather than as a state whose policies caused that displacement.[12] The critical stance assumed here and the experiences of study participants shared below in Chapters 2 and 3 directly examine such lacunae.

The Potential Silencing and Voicelessness of Refuge(es)

The extant literature concerning resettled Iraqis, as well as the recurring themes of "silence," "voicelessness" and "speechlessness," in broader refugee and forced migration literature, have each informed this research. A number of such analyses have found that seeking and finding refuge can be spaces of limited agency for those displaced (Agier 2008; Dhaliwal and Forkert 2016; Espiritu 2014; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014; Hochschild and Mollenkopf 2009; Hong 2016; Malkki 1996; Nguyen 2012; Nyers and Rygiel 2012; Szczepanik 2016). Those who are displaced often find themselves silenced, their ability to express voice constrained by

[11] Gangamma opens his article describing the conflict thusly: "An increase in armed conflicts, ethnic tensions, and threats of persecution in recent years has displaced nearly 65 million people from their homelands. … The United States accepts a significant number of new refugees, with Iraqi refugees constituting one of the largest groups resettled in the recent past" (Gangamma 2018). Such a framing casts the United States as responding with humanitarian assistance to increased displacement, while failing to acknowledge the U.S. role in creating that situation.

[12] Consider Wright et al.'s (2016, 539) assertion that "Iraqi refugees arrive in the US after being displaced from a war-torn country that has consistently been rated as one of the worst offenders for human security and safety worldwide." This account says nothing of the American role in causing Iraq to become "war-torn" and its responsibility for worsening security and safety among Iraqis. Several of the studies cited in this section mention a war in Iraq and resettlement abroad without any reference to any of the countries, the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, etc. that waged the conflict (Lindencrona, Ekblad, and Hauff 2008; Nickerson et al. 2010).

governments, aid organizations or prevailing discourses in the societies in which they obtain refuge.[13] This insight from the refugee and forced migration literature supports well-known novelist and activist Arundhati Roy's (2004) incisive observation: "There's really no such thing as the 'voiceless.' There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard."

The term refugee refers not only to a legal category, it also carries descriptive and normative connotations (Haddad 2008). Several analysts have argued that refugees frequently occupy depoliticized positions vis-à-vis the societies in which they seek and/or attain refuge (Agamben 1998; Agier 2008; Espiritu 2014; Hong 2016; Nguyen 2012; Uehling 2015). As those seeking refuge, individuals are often expected quietly to accept their new status without challenging the implications of the assumptions, conditions or policy decisions imposed by the governments and societies affording them protection (Malkki 1996; Szczepanik 2016). Arendt (1996) describes the extreme extent of these expectations among German Jews who had crossed the border into France to escape the Nazi Regime in the 1930s. She argues that a share of those refugees sought to demonstrate their loyalty to their country of refuge by accepting internment as *boches*—a derisive term for Germans—by the French government (ibid., 115).

Occupying a position of assumed or expected passivity can be experienced by those in refugee camps—and as is more common in the American context in asylum-seeker prisons operated by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—as well as by those who have been resettled and granted permanent residence and/or citizenship (Hong 2016; Uehling 2015). Resettlement political discourses regularly frame refugees as good when they quietly and patiently wait for governments, NGOs and international institutions to act on them and bad when

[13] I use the term discourse here and throughout this study to denote the ways in which statements, texts and other "speech acts" originating in government, scholarship, media and popular culture can be read as "systems of signification" that "construct social realities" (Milliken 1999, 229). Discourses, according to Ó Tuathail, help to produce "common sense" understandings about the world (2002, 606).

they behave otherwise and act for themselves (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014, 518). According to Espiritu (2014, 6), the "good refugee" resettled in the United States is understood to desire to assimilate and uncritically and enthusiastically embrace the "American Dream."[14]

Refugee experiences are complex and varied, yet if it is possible to speak of a refugee archetype, it would likely be, as noted just above, that social and political quiescence are central and recurring normative assumptions of that status. Malkki (1996, 386), for example, has argued that understandings of what it means to be a refugee are systematically constituted, intentionally and unintentionally, through a silencing of those who find themselves so classified. This suppression is linked to the construction by governments, NGOs and journalists of those seeking and obtaining refuge as helpless victims in need of protection and the good offices of someone else to speak for them (ibid., 388). According to Szczepanik (2016, 39), the deep assumptions held by many that refugees are first and foremost objects of intervention often effectively prevent them from speaking for themselves allowing them instead to be spoken about and for by governments, NGOs and media representatives. Moreover, the granting and expansion of political rights for those displaced remain in many cases the prerogative of those same governments, national and international institutions and not within the purview of refugees themselves (Agier 2008, 103). In short, this archetype often perpetuates the myth of the displaced as silent victims (ibid.). Individuals seeking refuge may perceive that those assisting

[14] Jamal et al. (2008) have explored similar dichotomous good/bad expectations for Arab-Americans in the years following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*. Shryock argued in the Jamal et al. volume that occupying a position in U.S. society as a good Arab requires acquiescing and remaining silent on foreign policy issues (ibid., 108). Jamal contended similarly that some Arab-and-Muslim-Americans attained "good Muslim" status by accepting profiling and surveillance by government and law-enforcement agencies (ibid., 127).

them expect them to behave passively and to accept what befalls them with gratitude and silence.[15]

The pressure to accept refuge without questioning its conditions and challenges can constrain the ways in which those who resettle are able to advocate for themselves and engage in various forms of political activity that would change such conditions. I approached this research as a way to understand whether and in what ways this held true for resettled Iraqis in the United States. Importantly, as I have set out, I primarily use silence, silencing and the voicelessness this creates to describe the ways in which the expression of agency may be constrained by various actors and situations. However, as I explore in Chapter 6, choosing to remain silent can be an act of agency. I call this *strategic silence*. As the next section elaborates, I employed Benhabib's work in democratic theory to design interview questions to understand more fully resettled Iraqis experiences.

Agency, Authorship and Democracy framed through Benhabib's Democratic Theory

Iraqis who have entered the United States via the USRAP, asylum or SIV are eligible for work authorization, permanent residence (commonly known as the "Green Card" for the color of such registration cards issued before 1976) and eventually, citizenship. In short, this population has obtained legal entry and a path to citizenship in the United States, a status that constitutes legal membership in U.S. society. According to Benhabib (2006, 35), full members of a demos are entitled to participate and exercise voice in determining the laws by which they are

[15] For example, Hong (2016) explored the implications of this expectation in an analysis of the novel *Inside Out & Back Again*. Thanhha Lai's tale shares the experience of a 10-year old girl, Hà, from Vietnam who came to the U.S. as a refugee. In one scene, Hà's older brother questions the generosity of the U.S. government's resettlement of Vietnamese refugees, asserting it is to assuage its war guilt (Hong 2016, 34). Hà's mother replies: "People living on others' goodwill cannot afford political opinions" (ibid.). Hong has argued that Lai's story illuminates the economic, social and political pressures that shape refugee experiences (ibid., 35).

governed.[16] Democratic rule, then, is approached when those under its jurisdiction have a right and substantive opportunities to participate in authoring the rules and laws that govern them.

However, there has never been a perfect overlap between those governed in a given society and those recognized as legitimate members of its demos. Every political community, democratic or otherwise, has disenfranchised some of its members (ibid.). As elaborated above, those who are or were refugees often find themselves silenced in many ways. This potential incongruence and the contradictions that can exist between legal status and lived experiences for resettled Iraqis in the United States served as the underlying rationale for this research project.

I have assumed for this inquiry that "democracies require porous borders" (Benhabib 2006, 68). That is, there must be a way for "outsiders" to cross those boundaries, figuratively and literally. This requires ongoing processes and contestations to determine who has a right and standing to participate and how those formerly excluded can become full members of social and political communities if they so wish. Throughout this work, the central questions at issue involve locating where opportunities exist for newcomers to do so, and identifying what factors may constrain and/or facilitate such processes. I draw on Benhabib's work—which she developed in conversation with, and in part to contribute to, critical theory and feminist scholarship—to explore where opportunities are open for resettled Iraqis in the U.S. to exercise not only legal membership but also substantive, full inclusion in American society and politics and how and whether such (in)formal boundaries can be traversed and enlarged.

[16] Benhabib has used demos in her work on democratic iteration to describe the citizens and voters authorized to influence and establish the content of laws in such societies (2006, 4).

One overriding concern of the present research is individual agency. Benhabib has argued that agency is intertwined with communicative freedom.[17] Indeed, she has asserted that agency and communication are "two sides of the same coin" (2011, 68). Briefly, for Benhabib, communicative freedom is an individual's capacity to say yes or no to an utterance they can comprehend and evaluate for validity and on which they can then act (2011, 67-68). This freedom reflects the exercise of *agency*, according to Benhabib, with that term understood as the ability of individuals to formulate aspirations and goals and thereafter pursue (ibid.). Chapters 3 through 7 of this dissertation examine the experiences of resettled Iraqis and explore whether and where they have found spaces for agency in their lives and the characteristics of those spaces.

I employ Benhabib's related concepts of voice and authorship as well. For Benhabib, *voice* denotes the capacity to engage in dialogue, discussion and debate concerning norms and laws in a given society (2006, 35, 56). It is a precondition of *authorship*. Political authorship, for this theorist, meanwhile, is the essence of democracy. It requires that individuals in such regimes are not only objects governed by law, but also able to affect and influence the content of those statutes (2006, 168). Embedded within both concepts is the notion that democracy requires that those who are governed by particular structures have the right and substantive opportunities to consent to and dissent from those structures.

In addition to these vital concepts, I also employ Benhabib's concept of *democratic iteration* in this analysis. In dialogue with the work of Arendt, Jaspers and Kant, Benhabib (2006, 15) has located this idea in the context of what she has argued is an expansion of cosmopolitan norms in the post-World War II period. In her view, the crafting and adoption of

[17] Benhabib's theoretical development of communicative freedom sought to build on Habermas' work on this construct within his broader examination of communicative action while also integrating feminist insights and critiques, particularly the contention that such an ethic ought to incorporate the experiences and standpoints of both "generalizable" and "concrete" others (Benhabib 2011, 69; Young 2006).

international agreements, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, signaled a shift from international to cosmopolitan norms of justice (ibid., 29). She views the translation of such "human rights codes" into generalizable norms that hold the potential to guide the behavior of sovereign states formally and informally as a promising aspect of contemporary globalized political processes (ibid., 27). Critically, such norms in the realm of transnational migration pertain to individuals when they "come into contact with, seek entry into, or want to become members of territorially bounded communities" (Benhabib 2006, 30).

For Benhabib, the spread of such norms regarding what she views as the increasing regulation of cross-border migration through international conventions and accords, as well as in areas such as holding individuals accountable for war crimes, point to a new political condition in which local, national and global scales are increasingly overlapping, interconnected and interdependent (2006, 73). Yet, there remains a tension between acceptance by individual states such as the U.S. of the universal human rights principles enshrined in such agreements and their application within their borders (ibid., 32). However, according to Benhabib, this friction can be mediated by renegotiation and reiteration of commitments to human rights and self-determination (ibid., 35).

The continued adoption and spread of cosmopolitan norms have led to what Benhabib has called a disaggregation of citizenship into three dimensions: collective identity, privileges of political membership and entitlement to social rights and benefits (ibid., 45). She argues that changes in residence and citizenship laws in the European Union in recent decades are an example of this phenomenon. These developments have led to conflicts concerning the boundaries of political communities. In Benhabib's view, all of this points to a need to rethink

how citizenship is constituted and to explore ways in which it can be expanded to those formerly excluded. She has argued that this situation has led to new forms of political agency that can challenge distinctions between citizens and residents and insiders and outsiders (ibid.). Benhabib frames these emerging agentic possibilities as democratic iterations.

Both an analytic and normative construct, democratic iterations are "linguistic, legal, cultural, and political repetitions-in-transformation" (Benhabib 2006, 48). Newcomers such as migrants or refugees engage in these processes to work to change accepted understandings and established views of who in societies, including themselves, may claim rights as well as what those rights might entail. Democratic iterations involve what Benhabib has called jurisgenerative processes by which politics are enacted in the "disjunction" between law as power and law as meaning (ibid., 49). Through these processes, those engaged as a "democratic people" work to (re)interpret and (re)appropriate guiding norms and principles, which are thereafter translated into "positive law," i.e., statutes, constitutions, etc. In this way, individuals demonstrate that they are not only subjects of laws, but also their authors (ibid.).

Drawing on Derrida's understanding of iteration, Benhabib has noted that the process of repeating a term or a concept never simply reproduces an exact intended meaning. Rather, every repetition introduces variation (ibid., 47). Therefore, as norms are (re)iterated they change, are added to, and are enriched in subtle ways (ibid.). As those subjected to law engage in public debate, contestation and (re)interpretation, they iterate in this sense and thereby change norms in a given society. Such democratic iterations occur in civil society and are potentially legitimated by public institutions (ibid., 60). Among other means and fora, the norms and principles (re)iterated are brought to the public via schools, courts, non-governmental organizations and social movements, where they are contested, revised, accepted or rejected (ibid., 49).

These processes of public argumentation, deliberation and learning are not always successful, nor do they always yield positive results (Benhabib 2007, 454). Yet fruitful iteration can result in growing political authorship by individuals (Benhabib 2006, 49). By participating in such processes, those so involved learn how to engage with and potentially change the institutions (understood both as formal structures and regnant norms) governing them (ibid., 67). Furthermore, not only can individuals alter rights or customs through these processes, but they also may be changed by their efforts to do so. Indeed, Benhabib has written that often individuals enter public conversations, dialogue and contestations with a self-conception and idea of what they believe that is altered by the process of participating (ibid.).

Benhabib has used the *l'affaire du foulard*—the headscarf affair—that began in 1989 as an example of democratic iteration. In this case, a group of Muslim women in France brought a suit challenging that government's ban on wearing religious symbols in public spaces, a move that disproportionally affected women who wear a *ḥijab* or other head covering. Benhabib has argued that through their engagement these women "talk[ed] back to the state" and engaged with the French Republican norm of *laïcité*, working to enrich and reinterpret it (ibid., 67). Meanwhile, she has predicted that their involvement in this effort would also change those so engaged in democratic iterations, prompting them to "talk back to Islam" as well (ibid., 112).

The democratic iteration construct recognizes complex ties and relationships among migrants and host society institutions and citizens and highlights the ways in which the forms of those connections can be changed through interactions. Immigrants can prompt host societies and native-born citizens to reconsider their existing beliefs and norms and the reverse can also occur. In this way, democratic iterations may call into question and potentially alter norms that foster and perpetuate dichotomous relations between citizens and migrants and "nationals and

foreigners" (Benhabib 2004, 210). In addition to political agency, the democratic iteration frame addresses the questions of who is allowed to belong to a particular society and culture and how is that belonging constituted. I use the term *belonging* throughout this work to denote reciprocal conceptions and feelings of acceptance and processes and possibilities to identify and build relationships with fellow members of society.

The French headscarf affair and Benhabib's other primary examples revolving around a similar prohibition targeting headscarves worn by Muslim women in Germany (2011, 175); voting laws adjudicated by the German Constitutional Court (2006, 62); and a longstanding ban on head coverings in Turkish higher educational institutions (2011, 178) involved national debate, citizen dialogue and governing institutions. Yet, the work of invoking and iterating norms happens in everyday interactions as well. In response to Benhabib, Waldron has argued that understanding the status of universal or cosmopolitan norms requires not only focusing on high profile cases but also on more informal and quotidian examples (in Benhabib 2006, 84). Moreover, Honig has suggested that Benhabib pays too little attention to social movements and informal, agonistic politics. In Honig's view, Benhabib focuses too closely on formal law, (re)inscribing a state-centric focus on institutions and "official public spheres" at the core of her cosmopolitan project (ibid., 115-117, 163). In response, Benhabib has contended that engagement in politics should occur at all levels of the state and within civil society as well (ibid., 163). Rather than pursuing one in lieu of the other, those pressing for change should work within each.

The experiences shared by participants in this study focused strongly on quotidian and informal examples of dialogue, exchange and iteration. Interlocutors also suggested they had been involved in local and city scale initiatives. For this reason, I concentrate here on the

normative underpinnings of laws and less on their enactment. I share Honig's concern that an overreliance on positive law and the "re-authorization of law's authoritative institutions" risks the continued exclusion of affected individuals and groups (ibid., 118). As Chapter 6 explores, for example, the public contestations against the 2017 Travel Ban might have prompted a renegotiation and reduction of the boundaries between refugees and native-born Americans. However, activist and legal challenges to the ban were ultimately unsuccessful, perhaps reinforcing the power of the Supreme Court to act as the final arbiter of the claims refugees have to belong or exercise voice and authorship in the United States. This example, as well as historical experiences such as the mass expulsion of more than 1 million Mexican immigrants in the 1930s, 60 percent of whom were American citizens (Valenciana and Ordoñez-Jasis 2012), leave me personally skeptical that emancipatory movements can rely upon law and institutions to fundamentally change society.

Finally, I share Benhabib's goal of decoupling democratic citizenship from nationality (2006, 173–74). Particularly in the context of revanchist efforts to re-establish and reinforce the idea of the United States as a white supremacist project, it is essential to find ways in which the boundaries between a demos and ethnos can be renegotiated and reconstituted to allow former "outsiders" to claim equal membership in multicultural social and political communities. In view of the potential for law simply to reinforce the boundaries between insiders and outsiders, I remain circumspect about fully taking on Benhabib's conceptualization as a normative guide for emancipation. Additional modes of organizing power against, and outside of, the state are necessary not only to resist the present rightward lurch in American society but also to build liberatory alternatives. In any case and these concern notwithstanding, I believe Benhabib's work offers a strong empirical guide by which to explore these issues.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided the definitions for important concepts that I use throughout this study, including that of refuge, refugee and resettlement. It has also elaborated the key concepts drawn from democratic theory that I used to analyze the interviews I conducted. To summarize: In view of the recurring themes of governments, aid agencies and other authorities silencing those displaced and the attendant voiceless condition this creates in the refugee and forced migration studies literature surveyed in this chapter, I employed Benhabib's work on agency, voice, authorship and democratic iteration to explore whether and in what ways Iraqis in the U.S. can not only obtain legal membership, but also substantive authorship of the norms that inform the laws by which they are governed. I examine the ways in which the boundaries between insiders and outsiders are and can be expanded and how such can occur throughout this work. The next chapter outlines the research design and methods I employed for this inquiry.

Chapter 2 – Resettled Refugees in Their Own Words: A Critical and Qualitative Methodological Approach

Introduction: Re-centering Refugee Voices in Forced Migration Studies

As noted in the previous chapter, scholars have identified a tendency among analysts and policy-makers alike to talk *about* refugees, rather than listen to those individuals' needs, desires and experiences (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014, 463; Szczepanik 2016). Reacting and responding to this point, I approached this research with a small group of resettled Iraqis as a way to engage with the narratives of those I interviewed and to foreground their thoughts and perspectives about their displacement and resettlement experiences. I did so to build knowledge of their personal histories and how those are connected to widely accepted social and political norms, values and structures.

I view (re)centering and (re)valuing personal experiences as essential to acknowledging those displaced as individuals with agency and to examining their predicaments critically. On that rationale, I undertook in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews. This information gathering method allowed me to enter each conversation with standardized questions related to belonging and democratic membership while retaining the flexibility to allow individuals to share the displacement and resettlement experiences they found most salient and important, whether or not I had initially asked about those.[18] This approach also allowed me in the following chapters to weave together narratives and examples shared by interviewees concerning a range of subjects.

As I describe in greater detail below, I adopted an empirically-grounded critical approach to structure this study. Drawing from this tradition permitted me to accept as true interviewees'

[18] I found Rubin and Rubin's (2004) contention that subsequent and follow-up questions sparked by initial conversation are as important and as rich as the questions prepared ahead of time to be accurate.

situated and contextualized knowledge and to engage deeply with the normative and political nature of war, displacement and democratic membership. I used this approach to explore the contradictions between international ideals, such as prohibitions against aggressive war, and the lived context and experiences of resettled Iraqis (Antonio 1981, 338).

The remainder of this chapter first describes the critical perspective I adopted for this study and the research questions that structured it. I then detail my participant recruitment strategies and interview process, followed by a description of the backgrounds and demographics of those I interviewed. Thereafter, I explain the thematic approach used to organize and analyze the interviews I undertook. I then set out my assumptions concerning the accuracy and representation of interviewee experiences and sketch the limits of this form of analysis. I close the chapter by discussing the lessons I learned about working with individuals who have experienced trauma, comment on secondary traumatic stress and describe how both sets of insights informed the remainder of this dissertation.

Critical Intellectual Stance

As I have noted, I assumed a critical intellectual stance in this project; my ontological and epistemological commitments and understanding of reflexivity were informed by the critical theory tradition. This approach also informed my analysis of the experiences of Iraqis in the U.S. broadly as a practice of immanent critique, with an eye toward identifying the contradictions between formal and/or legal democratic membership in the U.S., and interviewees' experiences. Critical approaches in social science are comprised of a heterogeneous set of intellectual traditions, methodologies and research foci. However, I drew particularly, but certainly not exclusively, from a group of scholars, including Benhabib, who fall into what Nickel (2012) has

called North American critical theory after postmodernism.[19] Although this group is itself diverse, I understand its members' work to share several key features.

First, this body of thought is predicated on an enduring opposition to positivism (Agger 1998, 4). Positive social science attempts to theorize social laws and universal concepts that explain social behavior (Agger 1998, 25; Horkheimer 2002, 224). Such studies seek to freeze into "ontological ice" the historical concepts and patterns they describe (Agger 1998, 6). Post-positivist scholars generally stipulate that perfect knowledge of an objective world may not be possible, but they nonetheless maintain that through careful empirical study probabilistic assumptions can be tested, developing ever more robust approximations of objective truth (Bailey 2007, 52).

Conversely, a critical analyst attempts to understand the historical constitution of the concepts and phenomena he or she studies (Benhabib 1986, 152). Structures and trends such as capitalism, socialism or the voicelessness of refugees are neither inevitable nor necessary (ibid.). Critical theorizing, then, attempts to understand contemporary societies and institutions in and through their historical context and processes (Horkheimer 2002, 225–26). While a material world exists in this view, those embracing this orientation contend that various social phenomena and processes are shaped by relations of power and can be changed (Agger 1998, 7).

[19] The term North American critical theory originated in a 1994 article by Luke, "Toward a North American Critical Theory." Luke used the phrase to explore the work of scholars associated with the journal *Telos* and what he has argued is that journal's consistent politically engaged approach to critical theory. Nickel (2012, 6–7) has employed the term more broadly to explore not only scholars affiliated with *Telos*, but also those involved in other critical theory cohorts as well as the scholars who left *Telos* because of tensions with its founding editor, Paul Piccone, and founded *Praxis International*. Some members of this latter group, including Benhabib, would go on to leave *Praxis International* due to concerns over its connections to Yugoslav nationalism and found *Constellations* (ibid., 95). Importantly, this broad and by no means cohesive group of scholars, has approached critical theory not only in conversation with the Frankfurt School, but also in dialogue with (post)structuralism, post-modernism, feminism, American pragmatism and other intellectual traditions.

Moreover, what Horkheimer (2002, 229) has called traditional positivist theories in social science maintain a sharp subject/object divide. Such analysis assumes that theories are independent of the objects they study. Conversely, critical social scientists maintain a self-reflexivity that aims to understand how theorists and their theories are intertwined (Benhabib 1986, 282). This self-reflexivity requires interrogating the context of the creation of theories as well as that of their application (ibid.). The former implies awareness and analysis of the conditions that have informed the standpoint of the researcher and the latter requires sensitivity concerning who is served when scientific knowledge is constructed. As I undertook this work, I was committed to practicing reflexivity concerning the ways my situated background as an able-bodied, white, cis-gendered American male influenced my understandings and others' perceptions of me. I was also committed to considering thoughtfully who would be affected by the knowledge I produced through this research.

Second, critical analyses are straightforwardly political in the sense that they (attempt) to contribute to social change (Agger 1998, 4). Whereas positivists purport to describe existing conditions and institutions in a value-neutral way (Antonio 1981), critical social scientists seek to understand social history in order to change it (Agger 1998, 25). According to Agger (1998, 12), critical social theorizing is critical *precisely* because it presumes that historically situated knowledge can be mobilized for emancipatory aims. Scholars adopting this approach do not accept existing conditions as necessary or predetermined. Rather, they aim to illuminate ways in which societies could be otherwise and where opportunities for change exist (Nickel 2012, 79).

Third, such analysts pursue this goal through *immanent critique.* According to Antonio (1981, 332), immanent critique is an analytic method derived from critical theory's encounters with Hegel and Marx. This form of argument is useful for detecting the contradictions within

societies that may offer possibilities for emancipatory change (ibid.). It is immanent because it is located within current historical realities. This form of analysis examines contemporary political, cultural and economic institutions and structures with an eye toward their potential to create progressive transformation (Nickel 2012, 203). The goal is to undertake an "interior dialogue" with the premises, assumptions, professed norms/values and truth claims of orthodoxies. In the present analysis, those included cosmopolitan norms prohibiting aggressive war and social belonging and democratic membership, investigating each set of premises in order to test the "postulates of orthodoxy by the latter's own standards of proof and adequacy" (Harvey 1990, 5).

Benhabib's work on democratic iteration constituted an immanent critique of the tradition of moral and legal universalism (2006, 162). As far as migrants are concerned, her work has explored the tensions between claims that democratic membership should allow full members to have the right to articulate and author the laws that govern them (Benhabib 2006, 35) and their individual and collective possibilities to realize that right. As I conducted and analyzed interviews with resettled Iraqis in the U.S., I remained attuned to this central tension and to whether and in what ways exercises of voice, authorship and democratic iterations—and/or other actions, approaches or frameworks as described by interviewees—might imply a potential for emancipatory change.

In this way, I used semi-structured interviews to consider and ground empirically the theoretical insights that emerged from my project. Agger (1998, 177) has argued critical approaches have influenced research methodologies in important ways by valorizing and legitimizing narrative as a research tool. The critique of positivism in the broad critical tradition questions the hierarchy of knowledge between researchers and the topics and/or individuals they seek to study. This potentially creates spaces, including interviews, for formerly silenced

speakers to join in discussions concerning social issues that affect their lives (Agger 1991, 121). This view is predicated on understanding all knowledge as partial, fragmentary and perspectival (Agger 1998, 177). Interviews can help to build in-depth understandings of the everyday lives and experiences of resettled Iraqis.

The empirically-grounded critical approach I have adopted here is consistent with what Agger has claimed is a distinctively American requirement that these analyses matter to the lives of people (ibid., 166). According to Agger, American social scientists have an underlying orientation toward grounded and politicized intellectual work. As a result, calls for concreteness and specificity need not be concessions to positivism, but instead constitute a way to facilitate relevance and engagement with current urgent concerns. Antonio (1981, 341), for example, has argued that critical theory should focus on the practical problems of creating and sustaining democratic practices and institutions. This is precisely what my study aimed to do by analyzing interviews with Iraqis in the U.S. through the lens of Benhabib's conceptions of democratic membership.

Finally, the critical approach was a strong fit for the study of refuge. Forced displacement is a pressing contemporary issue and some scholars working in refugee and forced migration studies have called for analysts in these fields to adopt and maintain a critical stance (Cameron 2014; Espiritu 2014; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2014). Elaborating on what such an orientation entails, Espiritu (2014, 14, 80) has argued that critical refugee scholarship should move discussions away from refugees as objects of governance and toward viewing such individuals as agentic beings who both possess and enact their own politics. Similarly, Horst (2006, 216) has suggested that research on displacement and refuge should emphasize the importance of recognizing, (re)valuing and including the knowledge of refugees in developing strategies and

solutions to the challenges created by forced migration. As I have discussed above, I approached interviews with Iraqis in this way and I have sought in this project to highlight and emphasize the voices of those with whom I spoke. As I described in the introduction, and as I will discuss in more detail in following chapters, in the United States, increasingly hostile government rhetoric, policies and actions toward refugees, and migrants more broadly, has made politically engaged and potent approaches to such research more relevant than ever.

Research Questions

As elaborated in Chapter 1, Benhabib's democratic theory work generally and concerning the concept of democratic iteration, more particularly, shaped my research design and questions and protocol for the 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews that comprised the primary data for this study. The research questions that guided this project included:

> Q1: Do Iraqis who arrived in the U.S. as refugees see themselves as current or future members of a democratic people in the United States?
>
> Q2: Do legal residence and/or a path to citizenship translate to substantive opportunities to engage with and influence governing norms and laws?
>
> Q3: Do Iraqis see themselves as able to articulate voice and authorship as members of U.S. society?
>
> a. Given the connection between the Iraq War and the need for refuge, does the U.S. grant of refuge constrain those opportunities?
>
> Q4: Are Iraqis engaged in democratic iterations that seek to (re)negotiate or (re)interpret norms and laws?
>
> a. If so, in what ways are Iraqis engaging in public argumentation, deliberation and learning?
> b. Are specific or particular norms mobilized and (re)interpreted in such processes?

Interviewee Recruitment Strategies

I recruited interviewees based on the broad definition of refugee I described in Chapter 1. Initially, I targeted those who arrived in the U.S. through the USRAP or via asylum after March 20, 2003. Ultimately, I interviewed nine individuals who arrived in the U.S. and received legal

status through one of these programs. One individuals' asylum case was pending at the time of our interview. Because I opened the definition to individuals' self-identification as refugees or former refugees, six individuals who possessed different immigration or visa statuses volunteered to participate in this study. Five individuals who saw themselves as refugees or former refugees agreed to be interviewed, who had arrived in the United States via the Special Immigrant Visa Program (SIV). In the final case, one interviewee had refugee status in Syria but journeyed to the U.S. on a student visa.[20] Given the stress in the democratic iteration framework on voice, I limited recruitment to those who felt comfortable conversing in English. Although the experiences of Iraqis in the U.S. who do not (yet) speak English or who experience persistent difficulty in gaining full fluency in it are important, Benhabib's framework is predicated on a shared language of communication between migrants and host society citizens and institutions.

I identified potential interviewees using the following strategies. Initially, I selected locations for interviewee recruitment based on the existence of resettled Iraqi communities, organizations serving that population and the feasibility of travel. Before commencing my Ph.D. work, I worked in the nonprofit sector for seven years. For five of those years, I was employed by organizations that served immigrants, refugees and/or asylum-seekers in the U.S. From January 2011 to July 2013, I worked in Brooklyn, New York, at the Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC). In July 2013, I left New York to work for Upwardly Global in Chicago, Illinois.[21] I began participant recruitment by contacting former colleagues at Upwardly

[20] Abdullah left Iraq and received refugee status in Syria. When an opportunity arose to continue his education in the U.S. in 2010, he took it. As a result, although his experiences have significant overlap with others, he arrived in the U.S. on a student visa rather than through the USRAP, SIV or asylum programs.

[21] AAFSC is a settlement house that provides a wide array of services to communities in Brooklyn and Queens, New York, including afterschool youth programming, adult ESL and U.S. citizenship classes, legal services and family case services. The organization focuses on the Arab-American, South Asian and Muslim communities in the area, but all of its services are open to every member of the community. Upwardly Global is a nonprofit headquartered in San Francisco with offices in multiple cities, including Chicago. Its mission is to provide job readiness training and

Global to see whether they would be willing and able to connect me with clients, volunteers or coworkers who fit my recruitment criteria. I also reached out to a friend and former colleague in Buffalo, New York, who serves on the organizing committee for an annual festival celebrating immigration. Several months into the process, I contacted a former co-worker at AAFSC as well. I used those connections as a foundation on which to pursue a snowball method to locate additional interviewees. This strategy helped me find four individuals, who in turn connected me with six more interviewees.

Simultaneously, I compiled a list of community and nonprofit organizations in Chicago, Western New York and New York City that serve immigrant, refugee and Arab-American communities. I then emailed a number of those entities to recruit participants. In some cases, I sent a general inquiry; in others, I contacted the Executive Director, organizational leader or a specific staff member. As interviews proceeded, I widened my geographical search for participants, connecting with individuals in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area as well. Contacting potential interviewees through my existing personal and professional contacts proved significantly more successful than cold-calling immigrant or refugee service organizations. As one interviewee told me, it is unlikely that he would have agreed to an interview if his friend, with whom I had already spoken, had not connected us. I identified only two interviewee possibilities through cold contacts, each of whom connected me with an additional individual. Table 1 below summarizes the results of my organizational outreach. Where naming the organization might make interviewee identification more likely, I

employment search support to immigrants to the U.S. who have at least a bachelor's degree from their home countries, legal permanent residence or citizenship in the U.S. and a working knowledge of English. A significant percentage of the organization's clients are refugees or asylum-seekers.

have changed the name in this chart and in the following chapters. Finally, I secured one interview through a serendipitous personal connection.

Table 1: Results of Efforts to Identify Interviewees

Contact Organization	**Location**	**Contact Type**	**Initial Outreach Date**	**Outcome**
Upwardly Global	Chicago, IL	Former Colleague	9/15/2017	Agreed to connect me with staff/clients. Three interviews secured.
Annual Immigration Festival	Buffalo, NY	Friend and Former Colleague	9/15/2017	Agreed to connect me with colleagues. Three interviews secured.
WNYMuslims	Buffalo, NY	General Inquiry Email Address	9/19/2017	Spoke with Executive Director. Agreed to send recruitment materials to participants. No interviews secured.
Journey's End Refugee Services, Inc.	Buffalo, NY	Executive Director Email	9/20/2017	Responded to say they do not have contact with clients after 90 days and would not be able to help.
Catholic Family Center	Rochester, NY	General Inquiry Email Address	9/21/2017	No response despite multiple attempts.
Iraqi Mutual Aid Society (IMAS)	Chicago, IL	Executive Director Email	9/25/2017	Executive Director agreed to send recruitment materials to staff. After multiple follow-up attempts, no further response from ED. No interviews secured.
ACCESS of WNY	Buffalo, NY	Executive Director Email	9/25/2017	Executive Director was enthusiastic to help. She spoke with clients and staff who were nonetheless nervous about participating in the study. No interviews secured.
No One Left Behind	Rochester, NY	General Inquiry Email Address	9/25/2017	No response despite multiple attempts.
Heartland Alliance (Refugee and Immigrant Community Services)	Chicago, IL	General Inquiry Email Address	10/10/2017	No response despite multiple attempts.

Jewish Family Service of Buffalo & Erie County	Buffalo, NY	General Inquiry Email Address	10/16/2017	Executive Assistant responded saying they would pass my request to staff and they would reach out to me as appropriate. No interviews secured.
International Institute of Buffalo	Buffalo, NY	Executive Director Email	10/16/2017	Executive Director responded they are too busy to help, but forwarded my email to several people for individual follow-up. No interviews secured.
Arab American Association of New York (AAA)	Brooklyn, NY	Friend/Former Colleague/Executive Director	10/22/2017	Agreed to connect me with staff/clients. Two interviews secured.
Arab-American Family Support Center (AAFSC)	Brooklyn, NY	Former Colleague	12/6/2017	Agreed to interview and to connect me with members of personal and professional networks. Two interviews secured.
College Arabic Department	Harrisonburg, VA	Faculty Email	12/6/2017	Agreed to interview. Two interviews secured.
Congregation Bene Naharayim	Queens, NY	General Inquiry Email Address	2/21/2018	Responded saying the synagogue has no contact with the recent population of Iraqis in the U.S. Their congregants arrived long before 2003. No interviews secured.
Education for Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC)	Washington, D.C.	Staff Email	2/21/2018	Agreed to interview. Two interviews secured.
Voices for Iraq	Washington, D.C.	Executive Director Email	2/21/2018	No response despite multiple attempts.

Interview Process and Demographics

I approached the interview process drawing on insights derived from what Rubin and Rubin (2004) have called responsive interviewing.[22] Consistent with the critical stance on

[22] Rubin and Rubin (2004, 30) have described their strategy as relying on an interpretive constructionist lens "mixed with a bit of critical theory." As Agger (1998, 30) has noted, interpretive approaches are compatible with a critical orientation, and can have significant overlap with that stance. A primary difference between interpretive approaches and critical theory is the explicitly political stance of the latter (ibid.).

reflexivity I articulated above, responsive interviewing positions research as predicated on a relationship between an interviewer and interviewee and not as a process between an investigator and an object of study. This strategy assumes that because inquiry is undertaken with people, interacting in sometimes intimate ways, the interviewer must remain reflexive and reflective about the process he or she is facilitating. Described in more detail below, I endeavored to avoid triggering or harmful questions and I attempted to remain aware of the effects our discussions had on my study's participants.[23]

I undertook the first interview for this study on September 27, 2017, and the final one on February 27, 2018. I conducted, audio-recorded and later transcribed each interview myself. Immediately following each exchange, I wrote notes on my impressions, connections among interviewees' comments and themes that I perceived emerging across the conversations. I interviewed four women and 11 men ranging in age from 27 to 57 at the time of their interview. Study participants came from multiple cities in Iraq and all identified themselves as either Muslim or non-religious, but Muslim by background. I conducted interviews in English with individuals who felt comfortable expressing themselves in that language. The conversations varied in length; the shortest lasted 43 minutes and the longest one hour and 46 minutes. The average length was one hour and 12 minutes.

I undertook interviews in multiple locations including Chicago, Illinois; Harrisonburg, Virginia; and Brooklyn, New York. I left the choice of interview venue to interviewees and all of this study's participants initially chose public spaces. I conducted 11 of the 15 interviews at cafés. I conducted two interviews at an Islamic center connected to a Mosque in Brooklyn, New

[23] For example, during one interview, the individual with whom I was conversing was overcome by emotion describing their experiences and asked that we pause while they composed themselves. We took a break and continued only when that interviewee was ready to do so.

York, and one in a public park adjacent to a Buffalo, New York, branch library. The library was the originally planned location, but it was closed when we arrived. I undertook one interview in a private home, a second-choice location. The individual and I had initially planned to meet at a suburban coffee house near Rochester, New York. However, when we arrived the establishment was full, and we could not find a seat. In response, he invited me to conduct the interview at his nearby home.

I have assigned each interviewee a pseudonym. I gave those with whom I spoke the opportunity to choose their own alias. However, most opted to have me assign them an alias. Whenever interviewees referenced names of family, friends or acquaintances, I changed those names as well. When identifying specific organizations or initiatives with which study participants were affiliated that might make it possible to identify them, I either assigned those entities different names or referred to general organization categories or types. For example, rather than specify an institution by name, I have referred instead to a resettlement agency in the location. Finally, whenever I refer to quotations and material from interviews in the following chapters, I cite this information with a parenthetical reference that includes interviewee pseudonym and date of interview—for example: (Sarah November 30, 2017). The relevant information for each interlocutor that I cite hereafter appears in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Interviewee Demographics

Pseudonym	**Sex**	**Age**	**Program**	**Arrival**	**Status**	**City**	**State**	**Interview Date**
Walid	M	39	USRAP	2008	Citizen	Buffalo	NY	9/27/2017
Hashim	M	34	SIV	2014	Resident	Chicago	IL	10/1/2017
Ahmed	M	34	SIV	2016	Resident	Chicago	IL	10/2/2017
Wissam	M	35	Asylum	2009	Resident	Chicago	IL	10/22/2017
Nada	F	57	SIV	2013	Resident	NYC	NY	11/1/2017
Tariq	M	33	SIV	2012	Resident	Rochester	NY	11/2/2017
Mohammed	M	38	USRAP	2011	Citizen	Buffalo	NY	11/2/2017
Marwa	F	48	USRAP	2009	Citizen	Buffalo	NY	11/25/2017

Sarah	F	39	USRAP	2013	Resident	NYC	NY	11/30/2017
Omar	M	42	USRAP	2008	Citizen	Harrisonburg	VA	12/14/2017
Ali	M	37	SIV	2012	Resident	NYC	NY	1/14/2018
Abdullah	M	28	Student Visa	2010	Resident	NYC	NY	1/14/2018
Nora	F	27	Asylum (Pending)	2014	Resident	Harrisonburg	VA	2/6/2018
Kasim	M	45	USRAP	2007	Citizen	Washington	DC	2/27/2018
Zaid	M	35	USRAP	2010	Citizen	North Bethesda	MD	2/27/2018

Thematic Analysis of Interview Transcripts

The potential for silencing to cause voicelessness in refuge identified in the refugee and forced migration studies literature and Benhabib's work on democratic theory as elaborated in Chapter 1 served as guides for my initial analysis of interviewees' experiences and perceptions of their opportunities for exercising agency. In the project planning phase, I identified possible themes based upon these analytic frames. With this guide as I analyzed and interpreted interview transcripts, I looked for recurring concepts, patterns, events and viewpoints expressed by interviewees (Bailey 2007, 153). I approached the effort with Bailey's counsel in mind that thematic analysis is most effective when seeking to identify concepts linked to research questions and when exploring ties between and among them (ibid., 155).

I also accepted and sought to realize Saldaña's argument that themes are most appropriately an outcome of analysis, rather than vice versa (2013, 13). As I conducted interviews, I began to identify a number of additional recurring experiences and subjects as well. I made notes during interviews of connections and topics as successive interviewees described similar experiences and interpretations. My analysis of interviews began with note taking and memoing following each conversation. I transcribed interviews as I conducted them. As I transcribed the dialogue of each encounter, I annotated the transcripts with shared experiences,

themes and conceptual points related to Benhabib's framework and the refugee and forced migration studies literature and noted connections with earlier interviews.

After conducting and transcribing all 15 of the interviews, I entered the completed transcripts and field notes into Nvivo qualitative analysis software. I used Nvivo's coding tool to mark passages for themes. Beginning by using initial themes from the literature and those identified as I transcribed, I analyzed and organized the material around the major and minor topics that recurred within them concerning my research questions. This process was iterative. Some themes I initially identified I later combined with others, renamed/redefined or eliminated. As I coded the transcripts, I also identified new subjects.

I then organized the relevant chapters to analyze and explore those themes that emerged from this process. Table 3 below summarizes the final topics, which I employed to organize Chapters 3 through 7. Chapter 3 addresses the issue of destruction and loss as a result of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and interviewees' subsequent decisions to leave their native country. Chapter 4 explores the question of belonging in U.S. society amidst popular perceptions of Arabs, Muslims and refugees as problematic, dangerous and "alien." It also examines the themes of diversity and cultural exchange in the resettlement process. Chapter 5 explores interviewees' views and definitions of democratic membership and barriers to citizenship. Chapter 6 investigates the themes of voice, participation and experiences of discussion and debate, volunteering and activism. The conclusion (Chapter 7) briefly interrogates the theme of local community as a salient scale and site of civic and political engagement as well as the identification of refugee-led resettlement initiatives as necessary to address the needs of relevant localities. Chapters 3 through 7 draw extensively on the interviews I conducted for this study. As noted above, I approached the analysis of those conversations broadly as a practice of immanent critique. That

is, I searched for ways in which idealized notions against aggressive war and democratic citizenship contradicted the lived realities of resettled Iraqis to point toward future possibilities and alternatives.

Table 3: Themes

Chapter	**Theme**	**Definition**
Chapters 3 - 7	Agency	An individual's ability to formulate aspirations and goals they wish to pursue and to act to reach those.
	Voice	Capacity for those resettled to engage in dialogue, discussion and debate concerning their experiences, needs and goals as well as the norms and laws in a given society.
Chapter 3	Effects of War	Interviewees' experiences of conflict(s) in Iraq and ways in which the 2003 invasion led to a break down in that society.
Chapter 4	Belonging	Reciprocal feelings of acceptance and processes and possibilities for interviewees to identify and build relationships with members and institutions of American society at multiple levels.
	"Strange Experience" of Being a Problem	Interviewees' experiences of members of American society perceiving them as "alien," dangerous and problematic.
	Precarity	Interviewees' feelings of unease and uncertainty concerning their position within American society.
	Diversity	Interviewees' observations of the ways in which members of different communities live together in the United States and Iraq.
	Exchange	Processes through which individuals share aspects of their cultural backgrounds and heritage with members of different groups.
Chapter 5	Democratic Membership	Belonging as part of a democratic people with the right and opportunity to author norms and laws.
	Authorship	The right and opportunity to influence and set the norms underpinning laws governing a democratic community.
	Character of Democracy in the United States	Interviewees' observations that one should question the relative substantively democratic character of American political institutions.
	Voice Requires Time	The busy pace of life and necessity to work long hours in the United States prevented some interviewees from engaging in civic, political and social activities to the extent they wished.
	Authorship Requires Knowledge	Productive democratic engagement requires knowledge of issues, processes and institutions.
	Engagement Requires undoing Authoritarian Acculturation	Experiences living in Iraq under the Saddam Hussein government left some interviewees with a lingering fear

		of political activity, distrust of government agents and a preference to remain civically uninvolved.
Chapter 6	Participation	Interviewees' experiences engaging with fellow members of American society in multiple ways, including argumentation/discussion, civil society/community organizations and activism.
	Argumentation/Discussion	Use of communicative freedom to engage with reasons and justifications for mobilizing and interpreting norms in particular ways.
	Civil Society/Community Organizations	Interviewees' experiences joining, volunteering with and in some cases founding organizations carrying out various projects in their communities.
	Activism/Resistance to Anti-refugee Policies	Interviewees' experiences with the 2017 Trump Administration's Travel Ban and protests, rallies and legal actions organized in response.
Chapter 7	Local Scale of Engagement	Salience of engagement in the communities in which participants live.
	Refugee-led Organizations	Argument by several interviewees that existing organizations and institutions cannot fully address the needs of refugees. Therefore, organizations run by resettled refugees themselves should help to address this concern.

Accuracy and Representation

The information in this dissertation is accurate in the sense that I often directly quote what interviewees said. I also used interview transcripts to describe the intent and context of the ideas expressed by those with whom I spoke. In order clearly to represent interviewee views and experiences, I made the following editorial decisions. When I employ direct quotations, I have deleted instances of repeated words. I have also removed filler words such as "um" and "like" and sentence fragments/unfinished thoughts from both interviewer questions and interviewee responses to enhance readability. Finally, I have indicated in brackets, when for the sake of clarity, I have edited verb tenses or added explanatory information. I sought to retain interviewees' tone throughout and have noted laughter, for example, when I judged it was important to do so to convey the meaning or context of a remark.

I have sought to represent the range of views and experiences shared by interviewees. I did not, and do not, agree with all of the perspectives expressed and not all of them point in

progressive or emancipatory directions. In fact, some of the thoughts that my interlocutors shared challenged the political aims of this project. However, it was important to the analysis that I represent the full range and nuance of interviewees' views. Moreover, in a few limited instances, participants referred indirectly or vaguely to individuals or events during discussions. In such cases, I have noted where I am extrapolating or inferring based upon my understanding of the contexts of each full conversation and/or current events that occurred near the time of each interview.

Study Limitations

I derived the bulk of the data for this dissertation from the interviews I conducted. As a result, I analyzed those dialogues for conceptual insights and drew inferences from them based on their thematic similarity and theoretic substance, rather than attempt to draw statistically significant extrapolations to the experiences of Iraqis resettled in the U.S. In some cases, I have supplemented interviewees' individually reported experiences with information from publicly available government or human rights organization reports, media accounts and previously published material. I have done so to clarify and contextualize their personal views and experiences.

Moreover, and consistent with my epistemological stance, I understand that it is not possible to make claims to trans-historical/ahistorical and universal truths about experiences of seeking and attaining refuge. Rather, I accept as true in a situated experiential way the views, opinions and events shared with me by interviewees. These together provide insights into the way conflict, belonging, membership and democratic participation can be understood in the United States in the years 2017-2018 and point toward opportunities for positive change.

Lessons Learned in the Field: Secondary Traumatic Stress

I began the interview process aware that those I would be interviewing would likely have experienced traumatic events (Willard, Rabin, and Lawless 2014a; Wright, Dhalimi, et al. 2016). As I explore in the next chapter, the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq was extremely violent and touched off an anti-foreign occupation insurgency, opened space for groups such as al-Qa'ida and the Islamic State (ISIS) to grow and carry out attacks and sparked a fierce and ongoing contest over the form and composition of Iraqi government and society. The experience of this conflict and of displacement and seeking refuge in neighboring countries, such as Syria or Jordan and later, the United States, entailed significant trauma for those I interviewed. Moreover, many Iraqis, including some of those with whom I spoke, have experienced a series of conflicts stretching back to the 1980s.

However, the interview protocol I developed avoided asking questions directly about trauma and experiences before interviewees arrived in the United States. I made this decision for two reasons: First, I began the interview process cognizant that asking those who have experienced trauma to narrate or recall painful events can trigger post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and perhaps cause a painful reliving of past ordeals. Second, I envisioned this project as primarily addressing the ways in which a sample of those who had resettled engaged with the societies in which they now resided, rather than to undertake research on war or conflict *per se*. Therefore, my primary research questions addressed interviewees' lives post-resettlement and I did not aim to collect information directly about their experiences of the war. While I intended to analyze the importance of connecting conflict to displacement, I anticipated addressing this context with previously published work, government documents, human rights organization reports, news stories and other data.

Nevertheless, as my interviews progressed, it became clear that such experiences were salient for interviewees to discuss with me. In some cases, those with whom I spoke spent significant time sharing stories and feelings about the conflict(s) they had lived through and about the very difficult events and conditions they had witnessed or themselves undergone. Several individuals alluded to torture and kidnapping of family members without describing those incidents in detail, for example. Others discussed in-depth the death threats they had received, near-death experiences, witnessing bombings and the loss of friends and family.[24] Initially, I was not conscious of the frequency with which these experiences were recurring in interviews.

While I was in the midst of conducting interviews, I met with a committee member for coffee. In the course of our conversation, that individual asked me how I was handling vicarious or secondary trauma from interacting in close ways with individuals who had experienced traumatic events. At the time, I replied that actually, the interviews had not been particularly intense since they focused on issues after the conflict in individuals' lives and events since they had been in the U.S. In fact, I was slow to realize that interviewee firsthand accounts of violence and loss were having an effect on me. It was not immediately apparent to me how difficult the interviews were proving to be for me to process intellectually and emotionally. Soon after this

[24] Moreover, in the American context, "mass shootings"—attacks in which a gunman shoots, injures and kills multiple people, sometimes with a political motivation, sometimes not—have become a nearly daily occurrence (Morris 2018). Many of these attacks garner significant media attention. Interviewees were acutely aware of these incidents. Several high-profile shootings occurred close to the time of my interviews and a number of my interlocutors discussed those events in detail. Additionally, in a strange personal coincidence, I was driving to Brooklyn, New York, to conduct an interview at the time that Sayfullo Saipov is alleged to have rented a truck and driven it intentionally into a crowd of pedestrians on Manhattan's Hudson River Greenway, killing 8 (Mueller, Rashbaum, and Baker 2017). Saipov claimed he was inspired by ISIS to carry out the attack (Weiser 2018). I spent several hours listening to live updates as I drove. Not only did this attack take place a few miles from my planned interview, but when I lived in Manhattan I frequented and commuted by bike on the Greenway, passing the exact section of path on which the attack took place on a daily basis. So, this attack affected me in a more personal way than others had. In our interview that took place several days later in Western New York, Tariq and I discussed this event.

conversation with my committee member, however, I began to experience symptoms consistent with what studies of care workers have called *secondary traumatic stress* (Akinsulure-Smith et al. 2018; Newell and MacNeil 2010). Nevertheless, it was not until I had nearly completed conducting interviews that I recalled that conversation, connected the dots and realized what I was undergoing.

As interviews proceeded, I began to feel not only exhausted when I returned from trips, but also very irritable and restless. I completed nine separate journeys of varied duration and distance to conduct interviews. By the fifth or sixth such trip, I began to believe I could not compel myself to undertake another. Initially, I attributed this feeling to normal fatigue from traveling and/or to the separation these journeys entailed from my then-pregnant wife. But I also began to sense that it was very important that I respectfully portray the stories I was hearing and that it was an ethical and moral burden to be responsible for those narratives. I felt simultaneously that it was too much to bear, to carry all of these stories and that I must make others understand what interviewees had experienced. I felt, and to some extent still feel, compelled to engage with the difficult realities caused by the American invasion for the Iraqi people and to report on those. I have felt persistently uncertain about what level of detail concerning these events I should share with others, worrying whether those with whom I might speak would be interested, whether it would be difficult for them to hear those narratives, but also believing that I could not keep the information to myself. Indeed, I began to sense that if I did not share what I had been told with others, I would "go crazy."

I was also frankly often overcome with a feeling of the deep unfairness that I, as an American, could pursue a life uninterrupted by war and violence while so many in Iraq and many other places have, as interviewees described to me, had their entire lives delayed, uprooted and

destroyed by those forces. This sense of injustice was intertwined with a pervasive sadness and intense anger at the pain caused by my government, the apathy or indifference of Americans to the ongoing harm their government and military had caused and at the seemingly inexhaustible appetite of the U.S. to engage in war. These feelings were persistent as well as spontaneous. As I went about my daily life, while doing the dishes or taking a walk, for example, I would suddenly be overwhelmed.

The research I conducted into the war only compounded these feelings. The process of understanding the realities of the invasion and the tactics the U.S. military has employed since has been one of discovering snowballing atrocities. Each time I read documents or news reports addressing a specific incident or battle, I would see references to American soldiers killing Iraqi civilians, sometimes by accident and other times intentionally. Often in these accounts, I would then find passing references to other contemporaneous events of equal violence. These stories also conveyed the callousness with which American soldiers and commanders often described killing Iraqi soldiers and civilians.[25]

After discussing these feelings with my wife and explaining my situation to a friend who works as a social worker, I decided to schedule an appointment at the Virginia Tech Cook Counseling Center. At the initial appointment, I discussed the interview process, the travel, the

[25] As I read news reports describing attempts to capture Diyala Bridge on the road to Baghdad in the early days of the invasion, for example, I encountered a *New York Times* piece quoting Lt. Col. Bryan McCoy as saying: "We're killing them like it's going out of style. They keep reinforcing these Republican Guards, and we're killing them as they show up. We're running out of ammo." McCoy characterized this battle as a "Heck of a day. … Good kills" (Maass 2003) The same account described how these forces fired upon vehicles full of civilians attempting to cross the bridge to seek refuge from the battle, killing 15 people (Sanders 2013). Or consider how Staff Sgt. Frank Wuterich testified at trial that he had ordered the soldiers under his command, who killed 24 civilians in the "Haditha Massacre," to "shoot first, ask questions later" (Schmidt 2012). Finally, contemplate as well the widely circulated 2007 video footage released by whistleblower Chelsea Manning showing a helicopter gunship crew laughing as they shot dead 12 people, at least two of whom were unarmed civilians employed by *Reuters.* One of the crew members is heard saying: "Oh yeah, look at those dead bastards" (McGreal 2010). When a van arrived on the scene to assist those wounded by the attack, the helicopter fired on it, injuring two children sitting in the front seat. When the Americans realize they had shot children, a member of the helicopter crew could be heard saying: "It's their fault for bringing kids in to a battle" (ibid.).

project I was undertaking and the feelings I had experienced. I told the counselor I had recently encountered the concept of secondary or vicarious trauma. After describing how I felt and the symptoms I was experiencing, she agreed that they seemed broadly consistent with secondary traumatic stress. Throughout spring 2018, I met regularly with the counselor to process my feelings related to this research. The mental health professional also recommended several strategies for overall stress management and self-care. In one session, I proposed writing as an outlet for processing these feelings. The counselor suggested this could be done in the form of a personal journal for my own viewing or for a public audience. It seemed important to me to share my experiences as part of the research process as well as for the benefit of other scholars who might face similar challenges in the future. The notes from this exercise comprised the basis for this section.

Although I completed the final interview on February 27, 2018, deep engagement with the audio recordings, transcripts and supplemental research continued for the duration of the dissertation writing process. I was occasionally overcome with a sense of sadness and helplessness throughout the analytic process of preparing and coding the interviews. Such feelings arose when I was transcribing, as I was writing and occasionally without apparent prompting or explanation. These feelings arose in waves. At one point in spring 2018, I told the counselor that I had not had any sudden overwhelming feelings in several weeks and that perhaps our work together was coming to a close. However, by our next session two weeks later the emotions had returned in full force. Indeed, as I worked to complete this section a year after I finished interviews for this project, the same feelings returned.

Having already identified in the literature concerning Iraqi refugees a reluctance to name directly the American invasion as the cause of trauma, violence and instability, it was a mistake

on my part to attempt to decouple participants' lives before coming to the U.S. and post-resettlement, as I planned my interviews. In light of the fact that interviewees discussed their experiences before arriving in the United States more than I initially predicted, I have incorporated significantly more information than I originally anticipated I would include about the Iraq War, its effects on that country's society and the breach of the norms of war it entailed. In fact, what I initially envisioned as important background context material for the introduction became a full chapter, Chapter 3.

My hope in exploring the difficulties that arose for me in the interview process in the above section was to highlight for other scholars, activists and care workers the potentially charged emotional and mental health effects of working with those who have experienced the trauma of war and displacement. This is true in a general sense and in my own case particularly as I have sought to understand the effects of policies carried out by a government, which has claimed to act in my name. I found that discussing these issues with a mental health professional was helpful, if not to resolve them fully, then to explore and process them as fully and self-reflexively as I could manage.

Chapter 3 – "The Country is Completely Destroyed. The Iraqi People Didn't Deserve That:" Conduct and Consequences of Invasion and Occupation

> Everyone know[s] … there [were] no good reasons to destroy the country and to make the people immigrants and … [kill] so many … people in Iraq just because of Saddam Hussein and his administration at that time. The country is completely destroyed. … I mean, the Iraqi people [didn't] deserve that (Hashim October 1, 2017).

Introduction

Addressing the questions of how those who resettle as refugees view belonging and democratic membership, requires first considering the prior question of what compelled them to leave their homes in the first place. For this reason, it is crucially important to examine explicitly the connections between the American war in Iraq and the effects the invasion and occupation have had on millions of people in that country, in the region and around the world. The ongoing American war fought against their country created the context in which those individuals who participated in this study decided to leave their homes and resettle in the United States. As Omar, 42 originally from Basra, told me, for example, "I came here because of the war … that I didn't create" (December 14, 2017).

Scholars, politicians, journalists and activists must grapple with the immense, ongoing harm the invasion caused to the Iraqi people, the breakdown of Iraqi society that followed it and the mass displacement that was among its predictable consequences. This chapter sketches the violent realities of the U.S.-led invasion and military occupation, without which millions of individuals would still be living in their homes in Baghdad or Fallujah, rather than residing and seeking refuge in Amman, Berlin or New York. In order to understand the latter phenomenon, it is vital to engage with the former.

This chapter offers two arguments. First, the invasion was an aggressive war as defined in the Nuremberg Principles and United Nations Charter; it was not launched in self-defense nor did it receive United Nations approval. Rather, it was one of many bloody conflicts fought by the

United States to maintain and expand its position as, to use Abdullah, 27, from Baghdad's term elaborated in Chapter 5, a "superpower" (January 14, 2018).[26] Therefore, all actions taken by the American military in Iraq are illegitimate and the United States is responsible for all of the harms that have flowed from the invasion and occupation, including the violence of resistance to its presence and the rise of militia and anti-state groups, such as ISIS. Second, and equally importantly, the United States directly caused harm on a large scale. This argument is critical to challenge the claims of American leaders that it is possible to fight wars in such a way as to spare civilians from violence[27] and to highlight for the U.S. public the brutality of the wars its government wages.

These arguments are motivated by an overriding concern to demonstrate the scale and character of the harm done to the people of Iraq and to make very clear that American and allied forces committed this harm. My intention in presenting unvarnished examples of these realities is to activate readers' empathy for those injured, killed and displaced and spur a desire in them to work with Iraqis to seek justice for the devastation inflicted upon their society and to ameliorate the harms done by the American government.[28]

This chapter begins by establishing the ways the American-led invasion breached the normative prohibition against aggressive war well-established in international law and as

[26] I discuss Abdullah and several participants' important insights into the domestic and global effects of American imperialism in more depth in Chapter 5.

[27] As President George W. Bush (2003) declared: high-tech "precision" weaponry and tactics had allowed the American military to "achieve military objectives without directing violence against civilians." Bush's Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made a similar point by asserting that the U.S. goal was "to deliver devastating damage to enemy positions, while sparing civilian lives and the civilian infrastructure" (Rayburn, Sobchak, and Rayburn 2019). Then president George H.W. Bush made comparable claims about the 1991 Gulf War saying: "[W]e are going to extraordinary, and I would venture to say unprecedented, length to avoid damage to civilians and holy places. We do not seek Iraq's destruction… we are doing everything possible and with great success to minimize collateral damage" (Sherry 1991). The devastating effects of American bombing in 1991 and 2003 and thereafter described in this chapter directly contradict such contentions.

[28] Crucially, as Sontag (2003) has argued, "Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers."

articulated in the U.N. Charter. I then sketch the scale of harm this conflict inflicted upon Iraqis. Thereafter, I outline the historical context of the 2003 invasion, focusing closely on the ties between Iraq and the United States in the 20 years before the conflict. I then describe the 2003 war. That discussion is followed by interviewees' narratives of the corrosive effects the invasion inflicted on the individual lives of Iraqis. I conclude this chapter by arguing that interviewees' decisions to leave their homes and seek safety in the United States because of the American war against their country represented an important exercise of agency amidst difficult circumstances.

Mobilizing and Iterating Norms against Aggressive War

Waging war causes physical, emotional and moral injury that perhaps no form of contrition or reparation can fully heal in individuals' lives or in the public and material life of societies. War is, as the judges at the Nuremberg Military Tribunals held after World War II declared, "essentially an evil thing" (Trial of the Major War Criminals 1947, 186). Yet, multiple deep historical traditions and bodies of thought, law and practice have long sought to render the violence of war more just by inculcating norms of permissible and impermissible types and uses of violence, forbidding particular tactics and weapons and governing behaviors during conflicts.

As explained in more detail in Chapter 1, Benhabib situated her work concerning democratic membership and participation in the post-World War II context that saw an expansion of such norms of war and human rights and what she viewed as a shift from international to cosmopolitan norms of justice (2006, 15). Benhabib has contended that the codification and ratification of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Nuremberg Principles stemming from the post-conflict war crimes trials represented important steps in the development and spread of such norms (ibid.). This expansion presented and presents the possibility that generalizable principles and the treaties and law that

they inform, can be mobilized by actors in global civil society to support and expand human rights claims (Benhabib 2011, 126).

I deploy these principles in this chapter to demonstrate that the 2003 U.S.-led invasion violated the spirit and normative basis of the Nuremberg Principles and the U.N. Charter. It was therefore illegal as well. However, I am primarily concerned with reiterating and reinforcing the principles themselves rather than rely on illegality as a measure of illegitimacy. I do not want to reinforce the presumed legitimacy of other conflicts deemed legal, particularly the 1991 Gulf War also described in this chapter. The devastating violence committed against the people of Iraq in that conflict demonstrates the absolute insufficiency of (il)legality as a metric of justification for state violence.

Notably, the United States is a party to, claims to support and has had a significant role in developing, instituting and pressing for the strictures and norms I mobilize here. I do not take on, discuss or consider these principles uncritically. Instead, I point to them in part to demonstrate their fundamental insufficiency in preventing the American and other governments from launching wars or, in the present case, holding them accountable for the consequences of their actions against the people of Iraq. I seek to invoke those norms to push further than sanctioning/proscribing particular forms of violence and toward the ultimate goal, as embraced in the U.N. Charter, of saving "succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (UN Charter 1945). Perhaps, as the drafters of this document hoped, these norms can point beyond rendering war more just and toward the need to marshal intellectual, moral and material resources and political will to end war altogether.

American Aggression against Iraq

The United States does not have a right unilaterally to attack, invade or destroy other societies. The American-led planning and execution of the Iraq war in 2003 violated the well-established norm against aggressive war, defined under the Nuremberg Principles as conflict launched in violation of international law, treaties and agreements (Trial of the Major War Criminals 1947, 11).[29] Those Principles inform the U.N. Charter, which obliges signatory states, including the United States, to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" (UN Charter 1945). Military force is only legitimate very narrowly under these principles in self-defense and as a last resort and must be authorized by the United Nations Security Council.

As explained below, there was no conclusive evidence to support—and significant evidence to contradict—U.S. President George W. Bush's claims that Saddam Hussein was "seeking weapons of mass destruction" nor "arming to threaten peace" in the months or years before the invasion (Text of President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address 2002).[30] Iraq had not attacked the United States, nor was it preparing to do so. Under the self-defense principle, *preemptive* attacks can only be justified if launched to counter *imminent* military threat. No such Iraqi threat against the United States existed. Because the Bush Administration had no grounds

[29] Benhabib (2011, 14) has pointed to the illegal war against Iraq and American torture of Iraqis at the Abu Ghraib prison as examples of violations of those norms and a fundamental challenge to the cosmopolitan project she supports.

[30] It is also important to acknowledge that the United States has maintained stockpiles of "weapons of mass destruction,"—nuclear, biological and chemical—for decades. The U.S. is also the only country ever to have used nuclear weapons. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to which the United States belongs, obliges all signatories to eliminate their nuclear weapons. Nearly five decades after the NPT entered into force in 1970, the U.S. still maintains an arsenal of 6,550 nuclear warheads (Kristensen and Norris 2018). The U.S. also signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1997, pledging along with 193 other signatory states to eliminate its chemical weapons stockpiles. It has repeatedly missed treaty deadlines to do so (Kelle 2012). If development and retention of these prohibited weapons and failure to fulfil treaty obligations were sufficient grounds upon which one country has a right to invade another, many governments around the world would be justified in invading the United States.

upon which to claim the invasion was *preemptive*, they were forced to advance a *preventative* war justification predicated on the hypothetical notion that Iraq *might* attack the United States sometime in the future (Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe 2005, 58). This argument does not meet the self-defense standard.

A primary mechanism to ensure that states comply with what might be dubbed the "last resort" norm is the delegation of authority to the United Nations Security Council to determine what scenarios constitute threats to peace and to authorize the use of military force to address them. Any use of such force without the approval of the Security Council by member states is a breach of the U.N. Charter and by extension, a violation of the norms underpinning it. The advocates of the Iraq war took these norms seriously at some level, as evidenced by the U.S. government's attempts to gain U.N. approval for its proposed conflict, before ultimately acting unilaterally. Despite repeated United States entreaties, the Security Council did not authorize the American invasion before it began. In pursuing its preferred course in any case, the United States abrogated its commitment to work within the U.N. framework to resolve international conflicts.

In recent decades, scholars, practitioners and politicians have developed and mobilized a "humanitarian intervention" justification and exception to the self-defense requirement for using force enshrined in the U.N. Charter (Benhabib 2006, 29). This exception sets out the notion that states are justified, and perhaps obligated, to intervene in other countries in situations of mass killing, genocide and other crimes against humanity. The Bush administration belatedly sought to legitimize its invasion of Iraq on the basis of this doctrine (Kramer, Michalowski, and Rothe 2005, 63). Although the Saddam regime was brutal and had targeted groups with violence that approached genocide in the past, at the time of the coalition invasion, it was not carrying out mass killings (Roth 2004). Moreover, as explored below, given the U.S. Government's material

support for Saddam before, during and after he used internationally banned chemical weapons against Iranians during the Iran-Iraq War[31] and committed what Human Rights Watch (HRW) has called genocide against Iraqi Kurds in 1988 (ibid.),[32] the intentional widespread destruction of vital civilian infrastructure in 1990-91 by American warplanes, and the catastrophic effects of sanctions that multiple U.S. administrations supported from 1990 to 2003, it is dubious that the wellbeing of Iraqis was a primary motivator of the U.S. invasion.[33]

Furthermore, even if one accepts such claims, war planners *specifically predicted* that an invasion would *increase* humanitarian needs in Iraq because it would destabilize the country, increase terrorism and displace tens of thousands of people.[34] The United States could have

[31] The "Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare," colloquially known as the "1925 Geneva Protocol," predates the 1997 Convention referenced in the previous note by nearly 70 years and prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons. Both Iraq and the United States are parties to this treaty (Protocol for the Prohibition n.d.).

[32] In January 2004, Human Rights Watch, took the unusual step of issuing a statement directly challenging the notion that the United States and its allies had invaded Iraq for humanitarian reasons. Based upon extensive work closely monitoring the violence committed by the Saddam regime, HRW's executive director Kenneth Roth (2004) argued: "We estimate that in the last twenty-five years of Ba'th [*sic*] Party rule the Iraqi government murdered or "disappeared" some quarter of a million Iraqis, if not more. In addition, one must consider such abuses as Iraq's use of chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers. However, by the time of the March 2003 invasion, Saddam Hussein's killing had ebbed. … On the eve of the latest Iraq war [2003], no one contends that the Iraqi government was engaged in killing of anywhere near this magnitude, or had been for some time." To reiterate, the United States government, under President Ronald Reagan, supported Saddam while his government carried out many of its worst crimes and in the case of using chemical weapons against Iranians, provided crucial intelligence to facilitate that crime (Harris and Aid 2013).

[33] Consider how, for example, in 1996 Madeleine Albright, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and later Secretary of State under President Bill Clinton, justified the sanctions. Albright appeared on the television news magazine program *60 Minutes* where host Lesley Stahl questioned her about the human toll of the sanctions. Stahl said: "We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima … is the price worth it?" Albright replied: "I think this is a very hard choice, but … we think the price is worth it" (Mahajan 2001).

[34] American and British intelligence agencies anticipated the consequences of the conflict before the invasion. In 2011, several pre-war assessments from the U.S. National Intelligence Committee were declassified (NIC). The NIC "manages the Intelligence Community's estimative process" and seeks to incorporate the best expertise from inside and outside of government (Pillar 2003a, 40). At the time these reports were written, the NIC reported directly to the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and was authorized to "speak authoritatively on substantive issues" for the U.S. Intelligence Community (ibid.). These documents outlined the anticipated consequences of a U.S. military attack on Saddam Hussein's government. Among other "Key Judgments" on the regional effects of invading Iraq for the purpose of "regime change," the NIC estimated that a U.S.-led war and occupation of Iraq would increase "popular sympathy" for terrorist objectives in the short term; groups like al-Qa'ida would attempt to exploit the war by ramping up their "anti-US operations" [*sic*]; and neighboring states would "jockey for influence" by fomenting strife among Iraq's multiple ethnic and religious communities (Pillar 2003b, 5–6). One million Iraqis had been

pursued multiple avenues, including strenuous bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, increased funding and support for refugee resettlement, economic aid and the lifting of sanctions in lieu of the war it launched. All of these options may have alleviated the suffering of Iraqis more than the invasion did. Moreover, even if humanitarian concerns had been foremost in its calculus, the U.S. was still bound to seek U.N. approval and to use force only as a last resort.

Therefore, with no Iraqi attack on the U.S. launched or imminent, lacking U.N. approval and without a humanitarian justification, the United States invasion *prima facie* constituted an act of aggression under international law and its supporting norms.[35] As Nora, 27, now living in Harrisonburg, Virginia, observed, the "U.S. said that they're liberating [Iraq], but they're invading actually" (February 2, 2018).[36] The international judges presiding over the Nuremberg Military Tribunals called initiating aggressive war the "supreme international crime, differing only from other crimes in that it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole" (Trial

internally displaced in the conflicts prior to 2003 and these intelligence reports included estimates by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that a military operation centered on Baghdad would displace 900,000 persons internally and create 1.45 million more refugees (Pillar 2003a, 25). The British Joint Intelligence Committee also predicted that launching a conflict against Iraq would increase the threat of terrorism and communicated this assessment directly to Prime Minister Tony Blair (Chilcott 2016, 48). All of these predicted consequences, ignored by the Bush White House and Blair, unfolded as forecast.

[35] At least one individual directly involved in creating those norms after World War II made public statements on the invasion. Ben Ferencz, who served as Chief Prosecutor for the United States Army at the Einsatzgruppen Trial in Nuremberg, told an interviewer in December 2003 that going to war without Security Council approval as in the case of Iraq "is a crime. It's a crime of aggression, a crime against peace" (Ferencz and Mecklosky 2003). In 2004, then U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan told reporters that the U.S. invasion breached the U.N. charter. Unambiguously he said "From our point of view and from the charter point of view it was illegal" (MacAskill and Borger 2004).

[36] The Bush Administration's claims to liberating Iraq, installing a new democratic system of government by force and thereby setting "a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region" (Pan 2005) are so far outside of the narrow limits placed on the use of force in the U.N. Charter elaborated in this section as to be irrelevant to considering the invasion's legitimacy. Justifying remaking other societies through catastrophic violence is exactly the sort of imperial hubris Edward Said described when he wrote: "Every single empire in its official discourse has said that it is not like all the others … that it has a mission to enlighten, civilize, bring order and democracy, and that it uses force only as a last resort. And, sadder still, there always is a chorus of willing intellectuals to say calming words about benign or altruistic empires, as if one shouldn't trust the evidence of one's eyes watching the destruction and the misery and death brought by the latest *mission civilizatrice*" (Said 1995, xxi). Indeed, this chapter, and this work more broadly, are an attempt to bring this evidence to bear and to raise my own dissenting voice against that too willing intellectual chorus.

of the Major War Criminals 1947, 186). As the aggressor states, the United States and its allies are responsible for the immense human suffering caused by the war in Iraq, including the death and destruction directly committed by their militaries, the violent resistance to occupation and the resultant rise of groups such as the Islamic State.

Scale of Harm done to the People of Iraq

It will never be possible to know exactly how many individuals were injured, killed or displaced as a result of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. The United States government does not comprehensively track the civilian casualties of the wars it fights and ongoing wartime instability makes record keeping difficult for Iraqi authorities, scholars, journalists and human rights organizations.[37] Iraq Body Count (IBC), an initiative that continues to track and cross-reference media reports of casualties with morgue and other records, has conservatively estimated that between 183,249 and 205,785 Iraqi civilians were killed directly by violence committed by the American coalition, anti-coalition forces and groups such as al-Qa'ida and later ISIS between March 2003 and March 2019.[38] That number climbs to 288,000 when combatants are added, including 4,400 American military deaths. Hundreds of thousands more individuals in both groups have been injured.

Accepting only the more conservative IBC figures, American and allied forces have killed as many as 25,000 Iraqi civilians and 40,000 combatants and injured thousands more. All of these figures are almost certainly an undercount ("Body Count" 2015, 36–43) and as many or more individuals have died as a result of destroyed infrastructure, lack of healthcare and inadequate food access stemming from the invasion. Indeed, several studies conducted in the

[37] As the commander of the invasions of both Afghanistan and Iraq, U.S. Army General Tommy Franks declared about the then young U.S. war in Afghanistan: "We don't do body counts" (Antelava 2009).
[38] Figures updated daily can be found at: https://www.iraqbodycount.org/

years since 2003 have estimated the death toll to be significantly higher (Burnham et al. 2006; Hagopian et al. 2013).

With the understanding that the 2003 American-led invasion was an aggressive war and the broad picture of the scale of the damage it inflicted on the people of Iraq established, the remainder of this chapter explores the historical context leading to the invasion, the effects of the conflict on Iraqis and how those factors shaped the decisions of this project's participants to leave their homes and seek refuge abroad.

Contextualizing the 2003 American-led Invasion

As Sarah, 39, now living in Brooklyn, New York, explained, Iraqis like herself experienced the effects of multiple, consecutive conflicts. There was a:

> Very bad situation there because Iraq, before 2003, before the American war, it [had] another war with Kuwait, with Iran, and all the wars [affected] the people. So, this suffer[ing] [is] not from just … 2003. … Before it's very hard [for] these people to live this destroy[ed] life (Sarah November 30, 2017).

This section sketches the geopolitical events that led to United States involvement in Iraq from the 1980s to the present. I first trace the rise of the Ba'ath Party and Saddam Hussein's presidency because of their roles in the 1991 and 2003 conflicts with the United States. The period discussed includes U.S. support for the Saddam government during an eight-year war against Iran, a conflict that partly created the conditions leading to the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. A low-level U.S. war against Iraq followed until the 2003 invasion and overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Ba'athist Consolidation of Power and the Iran-Iraq War

A 1968 coup brought the secular, nationalist Ba'ath Party to power in Iraq, which thereafter set about consolidating a "totalitarian state" through purges and repression (Marr 2004, 139). In 1979, influential party member Saddam Hussein became president of the Republic of

Iraq. The Saddam government, drawing support from the minority Sunni Muslim population, encouraged division between the majority Shia population and Sunnis. He also violently repressed minority groups, such as Kurds. As Saddam rose to power in Iraq, a coalition of revolutionary forces overthrew the U.S. installed and supported dictatorship in neighboring Iran and ushered in the creation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Cleveland and Bunton 2009, 424–35).

Soon after ascending to the presidency, Saddam launched a war against Iran to help to solidify his rule and to prevent that country's upheaval from spreading to Iraq (Cleveland and Bunton 2009, 415–16). During the conflict, the United States supported Saddam with economic aid and battlefield intelligence. In addition, several American companies illegally sold Iraq precursor components for chemical weapons, including mustard gas (Tucker 2014). Saddam (in)famously used these internationally banned weapons against Iranian targets during the war and inside Iraq against the Kurdish population in 1988. Despite government denials for years, a cache of CIA documents declassified in 2013 demonstrated that the U.S. had provided intelligence and targeting support to Saddam's forces as they employed sarin and mustard gas against Iranian targets (Harris and Aid 2013). Saddam's chemical weapon stockpiles became an important factor in the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. Simultaneously, during the conflict between Iraq and Iran, Washington clandestinely supplied the Iranian government with weapons and military hardware in violation of an international arms embargo and U.S. law.[39]

The Iran-Iraq War continued until 1988, ending in a stalemate. Casualties were very high on both sides, resulting in the death or injury of hundreds of thousands of Iranians and Iraqis

[39] In 1985-86, the Ronald Reagan administration secretly arranged to sell the Islamic Republic of Iran thousands of antitank missiles and military spare parts through Israeli intermediaries. Reagan funneled the proceeds of the sales to the right-wing Contra counterrevolutionary forces engaged in a guerilla war against the Sandinista government of Nicaragua (Cleveland and Bunton 2009, 438; Glabe 2010).

(Cleveland and Bunton 2009, 419). The war also severely damaged the Iraqi economy, leaving Saddam deeply indebted to the neighboring Gulf States. These conditions set the stage for the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and subsequent U.S.-led Gulf War.

Gulf War and the Prelude to 2003 Invasion

A confluence of factors led to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, including a shifting geopolitical context as the Soviet Union, Iraq's primary arms supplier, dissolved and the U.S. Government's relationship with the Saddam government deteriorated (Marr 2004, 218-224). The Iraqi economy struggled following the war with Iran, due to falling oil prices and continued payments to its neighbors, including Kuwait, for debts incurred to conduct that conflict. Iraq also had ongoing border disputes with Kuwait and Saddam accused that state's government of slant drilling under Iraqi territory, thereby siphoning off much-needed oil revenues. Iraqi and Kuwaiti representatives met in late July 1990 to discuss these issues, but on August 2, Iraqi forces crossed the border into Kuwait and quickly captured and occupied its territory. On August 7, Iraq declared it had annexed Kuwait. Saddam worked to tighten his control over the country by arresting and executing 1,000 opponents within the first few days of the occupation (Marr 2004, 31, 34).

The international response was rapid and overwhelmingly negative (ibid., 229). U.S. President George H.W. Bush quickly organized a military force authorized by the United Nations to fight the Iraqi military in Kuwait. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops massed in Saudi Arabia and in January 1991 a U.S.-led coalition comprised of military units from 39 countries attacked Iraqi forces in Kuwait and heavily bombed Iraq. The coalition offensive lasted six weeks and entailed an extensive aerial campaign and limited ground assault. The overwhelming force directed against the Iraqi military in Kuwait and against targets inside Iraq

led to one-sided deaths and casualties. Coalition forces killed as many as 82,000 Iraqi soldiers and 7,000 civilians (Cleveland and Bunton 2009, 488). Meanwhile, approximately 200 coalition soldiers died in combat (Cooper 2003).[40] In addition to inflicting significant civilian and combatant casualties, coalition forces extensively bombed civilian infrastructure in Iraq, including roads, power plants, food warehouses and water purification facilities (Sherry 1991). A United Nations humanitarian mission report filed after the conflict characterized the devastation caused by allied bombing in the following way:

> The recent conflict has wrought *near-apocalyptic* [emphasis added] results upon the economic infrastructure of what had been, until January 1991, a rather highly urbanized and mechanized society. Now, most means of modern life support have been destroyed or rendered tenuous. Iraq has, for some time to come, been relegated to a pre-industrial age (Ahtisaari 1991).

As Wissam, 35 originally from Sulaymaniyah, explained, Saddam Hussein made a mistake when he invaded Kuwait in 1990: "If he didn't do that, maybe Iraq will be even better than Qatar or Kuwait or Saudi Arabia. Because he has power" (Wissam October 22, 2017). Saddam had ruled a strong centralized state; Iraq had a large, highly educated population, a powerful military and a high healthcare standard (Sanford 2003). Wissam argued that "It was the peak [state] in the area … but now, it has the opposite" of those strong social and economic structures (ibid.). During the conflict, more than one million Iraqis sought refuge in neighboring countries, including Jordan and Iran (Public Information Section 2003). The majority eventually returned to their homes. However, in the decade after the conflict, around 49,000 Iraqis resettled in the United States (Grieco 2003).

[40] Consider, for example, the case of the "Highway of Death." As Iraqi soldiers retreated from Kuwait, U.S. warplanes destroyed vehicles at the front and rear of the column of forces before strafing and heavily bombing along the highway. Blocked in by ruined vehicles, soldiers were trapped under the assault. American pilots who participated in the attacks described them as "shooting ducks in a pond" and "shooting fish in a barrel" (Coll and Branigin 1991).

Iraqi soldiers returned from Kuwait following the war and Saddam Hussein remained the President of Iraq until the 2003 invasion. The United States also remained militarily engaged in Iraq throughout the 1990s, implementing "no-fly zones" in the north and south of the country enforced by American and British fighter jets (Marr 2004, 254). During the conflict, the U.N. also adopted and implemented unprecedented comprehensive and crippling economic sanctions aimed at Saddam's government (von Sponeck 2006, 7). The measures restricted importation of numerous ostensibly "dual-use" items, including pencil lead, chlorine and vaccines. They also initially prevented Iraq from selling its oil on international markets (Embargo against Iraq 2000). The sanctions regime, compounded by the destruction of essential services during the Gulf War, including a significant share of the electric grid and water treatment facilities, devastated the Iraqi economy and, particularly, its health and education infrastructures (Gordon 2010, 87–88; Marr 2004, 239–40). The destroyed public health system and lack of adequate food and clean water led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of children under age 5 between 1990 and 2003 (Dyson 2006, 4495). Multiple high-level United Nations administrators charged with the sanctions program resigned in protest of the humanitarian crisis it created and sustained (MacAskill 2000). One of those individuals, former U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator in Iraq Denis Halliday, characterized the effects of the sanctions as genocidal.[41]

As a condition of ending hostilities, the United Nations mandated that the Iraqi government permit weapons inspectors to monitor sites within the country to ensure the elimination of chemical and biological weapons stockpiles and to prevent the development of

[41] In his 1998 resignation letter Halliday wrote: "Four thousand to five thousand children are dying unnecessarily every month due to the impact of sanctions because of the breakdown of water and sanitation, inadequate diet and the bad internal health situation" (Cockburn 1998). At a talk he delivered at Cornell University in 1999, Halliday argued that the sanctions were "deliberately, knowingly killing thousands of Iraqis each month. And that definition fits genocide" (Siegal 1999).

new programs. Although evidence suggests that Saddam largely destroyed his prohibited weapons after 1991 in compliance with U.N. requirements (Duelfer 2004), by 1998, the Iraqi government had stopped cooperating with inspectors.[42] Days after inspectors departed Iraq in late 1998, the U.S. and Britain launched Operation Desert Fox, a four-day aerial bombing campaign that targeted government facilities throughout the country (Rayburn, Sobchak, and Rayburn 2019). Bombing continued throughout 1999, with U.S. and British jets flying 27,000 sorties and dropping 1,650 bombs during the first 9 months of that year. At the time, the *New York Times* characterized this period as a "low-level war" and the "longest sustained military operation since Vietnam" (Myers 1999).

Shortly after George W. Bush's election to the presidency in 2000, preparations began in the U.S. for another large-scale conflict against Iraq. Indeed, as one of his first acts as president, Bush authorized joint U.S./U.K. bombing raids in February 2001 to disable Iraq's air defense network (US and British aircraft attack Iraq 2001). The administration spent the next two years publicly campaigning to convince domestic U.S. and international audiences that Saddam presented a global threat (Garamone 2012; Text of President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address 2002). In November 2002, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1441, which restarted weapons inspections throughout Iraq. Three months later, in February 2003, then U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell testified before the Security Council that Saddam was attempting to build "weapons of mass destruction" (WMDs) (Schwarz 2018). However, the inspections teams on the ground had found no conclusive evidence that Saddam had renewed his

[42] In the course of occupation after 2003, American soldiers encountered derelict, pre-1991 chemical weapons caches, many of which had been designed by American firms (Chivers 2014). A number of American soldiers and Iraqi police have been injured in the years since after stumbling upon such unsecured and abandoned caches.

prohibited weapons programs (Cleveland and Bunton 2009, 564). Despite multiple appeals, the Security Council refused to authorize U.S. military action against Iraq.

In fact, many governments throughout the world opposed the American plans for war. Intergovernmental organizations representing large groups of states, such as the Arab League and the European Union, issued statements reaffirming their commitment to resolving the issue of Iraqi disarmament through the United Nations and by peaceful means (Arab leaders declare opposition to war in Iraq 2003; Text of EU statement on Iraq 2003). There were also large-scale protests before the invasion in many cities around the world (Cities jammed in worldwide protest of war in Iraq 2003). For example, *CNN* reported on February 16, 2003, that between 750,000 and 2 million anti-war demonstrators joined the largest recorded protest in London's history. As many as 30 million people participated worldwide in protests against the American call for war (Chrisafis et al. 2006).

As I explain in more detail below, several interviewees, including Abdullah; Tariq, 33, now living in Rochester, New York; and Wissam noted that they had initially supported the idea of removing Saddam from power, only to become disillusioned with the seeming lack of a U.S. post-invasion strategy and in light of the violence it unleashed. Hashim, 34 and residing in Chicago, Illinois, alluded to opposition to the invasion saying, "wars never solve anything. Actually, [they] make things worse. You saw after the Iraq war [in] 2003 until today … it's completely destroyed" (Hashim October 1, 2017). One individual, Walid, 39 living in Buffalo, New York, directly stated that he was against the war before it began. He said:

> We like solving things without violence, without war. In a diplomatic way. We [were] tortured by Saddam Hussein, but I disagree about the war in Iraq. There's too many [other ways]. … There is no mercy in the war, unfortunately. There are going to be too many mistake[s] (September 27, 2017).

2003 Invasion, Occupation and Ongoing War

Amidst worldwide opposition and without U.N. authorization, after months of preparation and public campaigning, the United States, supported primarily by the United Kingdom and much smaller military contingents from Australia and Poland, launched air attacks on Iraqi positions and moved their soldiers across the border into Iraq late on March 19 and into the morning of March 20, 2003. The opening air and ground assault on Iraq killed more than 7,000 civilians ("Iraqi Deaths" 2012). At the end of that phase of the war, on May 1, 2003, the U.S. was alone responsible for more than 96% of civilian conflict deaths. Although on a smaller scale than previously, American warplanes targeted and disabled or destroyed infrastructure such as media outlets, telecommunications and the electrical grid, as they had done during the 1991 Gulf War (Docherty and Garlasco 2003, 42-49).

The invading forces quickly defeated Iraqi resistance and made their way to Baghdad. By May 1, Bush declared "mission accomplished" and dissolved the Iraqi government, army and other institutions. On May 22, the Security Council passed Resolution 1483 lending *post hoc* legal legitimacy to the occupation (Otterman 2005). A U.S. occupation regime directly ruled the country until June 2004, after which a provisional Iraqi government formed the basis for a newly established parliamentary system. Although he escaped the initial invasion, American forces captured Saddam in December 2003.[43] He was tried and convicted of crimes against humanity in an Iraqi court and executed in 2006. Four individuals with whom I spoke—Ahmed, 34, an SIV recipient now living in Chicago; Ali, 37 now residing in Brooklyn, New York; Hashim and Tariq—worked with the U.S. government and military in different capacities, such as translators

[43] As a part of the strategy of the initial invasion, military planners identified 50 Ba'ath Party leaders to target in "decapitation" airstrikes, including Saddam. The bombings killed none of the 50 intended targets, but did result in the deaths of dozens of civilians (U.S.: Hundreds of Civilian Deaths in Iraq Were Preventable 2003).

and interpreters, during the conflict. Nada's, 57, an SIV recipient now living in Brooklyn, New York, husband did as well.

The American occupation and war against individuals and groups resisting it presented an ongoing danger to Iraqi civilians from the moment it began.[44] As Abdullah argued, based on his interactions during the war, "[If the] military, they go to a civilian place, any military, they wouldn't act nice. They would [be] rude, they would attack people. They would be aggressive" (January 14, 2018).[45] Supporting his assessment, a Human Rights Watch (HRW) investigation determined that the circumstances of 94 civilians killed by American soldiers between March 20, 2003 and October 20, 2003, "reveal[ed] a pattern by U.S. forces of over-aggressive tactics, indiscriminate shooting in residential areas and a quick reliance on lethal force" (Abrahams 2003). Speaking to the frequency with which American forces used violence against civilians,

[44] For example, the United States extensively used cluster munitions during the war. Such weapons have been widely condemned, and in 2008 outlawed by 102 countries under international treaty (US Embraces Cluster Munitions 2017), because of their inability to distinguish between combatant and civilian targets. When fired, cluster bombs release thousands of smaller munitions that litter the area of attack. A percentage of each payload fails to explode on contact and essentially leaves behind a minefield, which can injure and kill for years after. As Human Rights Watch reported in December 2003, cluster munitions killed and injured hundreds of civilians in the first months of the conflict (ibid.). For example, Dr. Sa'ad al-Falluji, director and chief surgeon at al-Hilla General Teaching Hospital, told HRW that 90 percent of war-related injuries treated at the hospital had been from cluster munitions (ibid.). That experience was indicative of the form of injuries that occurred all over the country (ibid., 88). According to HRW, the heavy use of cluster munitions in populated, residential areas by the U.S. and its allies "represented one of the leading causes of civilian casualties in the war" (ibid., 85).

[45] Consider on April 28, 2003, for example, U.S. soldiers opened fire on a crowd of 200 protestors in Fallujah, killing 17 and wounding 75 others. The soldiers claimed they fired with "precision" in response to shots from the crowd; participants disputed that claim. According to a Human Rights Watch investigation conducted after the killings, the soldiers' assertion was in "serious question." Based upon witness testimony and ballistic evidence, HRW concluded: "U.S. troops responded with excessive force to a perceived threat" (Bouckaert and Abrahams 2003, 1). Two days after that event, U.S. soldiers again fired on a crowd of protestors, killing three and wounding 16. The following year, in May 2004, a U.S. helicopter gunship fired on a wedding in Mukaradeeb, close to the Iraqi border with Syria. The helicopter bombed the village, destroying homes and killing more than 40 people, including at least 12 children (R. McCarthy 2004b, 2004a). As one witness and victim of the attack told *The Guardian*, at 3a.m., helicopters began bombing the village and as she and her children sought shelter, "the American soldiers started to shoot us. They were shooting low on the ground and targeting us one by one" (R. McCarthy 2004a). Asked by a reporter about the attack, Major General James Mattis, then commander of the 1st Marine Division and later Secretary of Defense under Donald Trump, responded "[B]ad things happen in wars. I don't have to apologise for the conduct of my men" (ibid.). Mattis had personally authorized the attack claimed to have targeted anti-occupation fighters.

Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli commissioned a study that found of the 4,492 "escalation of force" incidents reported between January 2005 and January 2006, only 67 involved anti-occupation "insurgents" (Rayburn, Sobchak, and Rayburn 2019), suggesting American soldiers fired upon civilian non-combatants in 98.5% of those encounters.[46] By 2007, survivors and family members had reported thousands of shootings of civilians by coalition forces (Zielbauer 2007b).

Moreover, details have also emerged during the past 15 years of multiple murders and massacres committed by American soldiers and mercenary forces.[47] Some of these events received significant media attention when they occurred or soon after, while others did not. Most recently, for example, in May 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump pardoned Michael Behenna, who had been convicted in 2009 of shooting a naked, unarmed Iraqi prisoner (Rempfer 2019). Media outlets compared one event, the so-called Haditha Massacre in 2005, in which U.S. Marines killed 24 unarmed Iraqi civilians in retaliation for the death of a fellow soldier in a roadside bombing (Haditha Killings Fast Facts 2018; Schmidt 2012; Shanker et al. 2006), to the

[46] In addition to at peak a force of more than 170,000 American soldiers in Iraq, the United States made extensive use of private military contractors to carry out its occupation. These mercenary forces also engaged in aggressive and violent actions. In 2007, the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform released a memorandum detailing the most well-known contractor, Blackwater's, conduct during the war. According to that document, Blackwater's use of force in Iraq was "frequent and extensive, resulting in significant casualties and property damage" ("Memorandum" 2007, 6). Contrary to its legal and contractual obligation only to use force defensively and in situations of "imminent and grave danger," Blackwater's forces overwhelmingly fired preemptively. The committee based its findings on incident reports filed by Blackwater employees, finding 195 "firearms discharges" between January 2005 and September 2007. Blackwater soldiers fired first in 84 percent of those incidents (ibid.).

[47] In the most well-known episode committed by private contractor soldiers, Blackwater operatives carried out the Nisour Square Massacre. On September 16, 2007, Blackwater guards opened fire on civilians in a crowded public square with machine guns and grenade launchers, killing 14 and injuring 17 others (Neuman 2017). Four Blackwater soldiers were sentenced to prison in 2015 for their roles in the massacre (Hsu and Martin 2015). However, a federal appeals court overturned one of the convictions in August 2017. The judges ruled that the defendant, who was charged with murder, should have been tried separately from his co-defendants charged with manslaughter; he was therefore entitled to a new trial. The judges also ruled that the 30-year sentences given to the other three defendants for manslaughter and weapons charges constituted "cruel and unusual punishment" and ordered the three individuals resentenced (Neuman 2017).

1968 massacre committed by American soldiers in My Lai, Vietnam (Pyle 2006). This comparison is strongest when viewing Haditha, like My Lai, not as a singular atrocity, but as emblematic of one among other such atrocities committed throughout the war.[48]

For example, in a particularly disturbing incident perhaps less well known than the Haditha killings, five American soldiers plotted to rape and kill 14-year-old Abeer Qassim Hamza al-Janabi. On March 12, 2006, the soldiers left their posts at a checkpoint. Four soldiers broke into the al-Janabi home while the fifth acted as a lookout. The soldiers killed Abeer's mother, father and younger sister before gang-raping, killing Abeer and setting her body on fire (MacAskill and Howard 2007). Four of the five soldiers who committed these atrocities were tried and convicted in military courts. The fifth, Steven Dale Green, was tried and convicted in civilian criminal court (Barrouquere 2010). Green told an *NBC News* reporter in 2010 "There's not a word that would describe how much I hated these people. … I wasn't thinking these people were humans" (Barrouquere 2010).[49]

During the conflict, occupation forces arrested and detained thousands of individuals (Iraq: One Year on the Human Rights Situation Remains Dire 2004). American coalition intelligence officers told the International Committee of the Red Cross in 2004 that between 70%

[48] For example, in January 2004, Army Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Perkins ordered soldiers under his command to throw two Iraqi men into the Tigris River as a deterrent against looting. One of the men drowned while the second was able to swim ashore and escape. Perkins was tried and sentenced to six months in military prison for this crime (Roberts 2005). Or consider the "Iron Triangle Murders," one of several strikingly similar incidents involving the murder and attempted cover-up of unarmed civilians. On March 30, 2009, the last of four soldiers pleaded guilty for his role in those killings. An Article 32 U.S. military hearing and subsequent criminal trials revealed that four American soldiers killed four unarmed Iraqi men on May 9, 2006, during a raid on Thar Thar Island. After landing on the island, the soldiers first shot and killed an Iraqi man and detained three others, all unarmed. The soldiers bound the men's hands and blindfolded them. They then cut the ties binding the men and told them to run before shooting them, in an attempt to make it look like the men had tried to escape. Four soldiers were tried and convicted for their roles in this crime and cover-up (Zielbauer 2007a). Similar incidents of murder and cover-up occurred in the town of Ishaqi on March 15, 2006 (Schofield 2011; White 2006), in Hamdaniya on April 26, 2006 (Glantz 2017; Marine to serve 8 years 2007) and in Baghdad in spring 2007 (Whitlock 2009).

[49] In 2014, Green was found dead in his prison cell in an "apparent suicide" ("Convicted US War Criminal" 2014).

and 90% of all individuals imprisoned had been "arrested by mistake" (ICRC 2004). However, U.S. forces engaged in widespread abuse and torture of such Iraqi prisoners (Brody 2004, 2, 25). The most well-known cases of torture took place at the U.S. run Abu Ghraib prison.[50] Crucially though, the actions of guards at Abu Ghraib were not isolated. American soldiers and CIA officers tortured Iraqis—sometimes to death—in numerous locations throughout the country as well as transferred prisoners to Iraqi forces for abuse (ibid.).[51] For example, HRW interviewed three American soldiers in 2005 who described torture at Forward Operating Base Mercury in Fallujah as so common that soldiers beat prisoners, forced them into "stress positions" until they passed out, and denied them food and water for their own amusement and to relieve stress ("Leadership Failure" 2005).

As I describe through the lenses of the personal experiences of interviewees in more detail below, the invasion destabilized Iraqi society. It sparked not only intense anti-occupation resistance but also intercommunal violence. Militias formed and recruited Iraqis and foreign fighters to resist the American, British and other occupation forces (Cockburn 2016, 117). Other groups formed to pursue their own goals or to seek revenge against members of Iraqi society. It is important to note that organizations such as al-Qa'ida in Iraq, a nominally Sunni group, developed in response to the invasion and carried out a campaign of suicide bombings against American and occupation forces, the new Iraqi government and the Shia majority population

[50] A 2004 investigation of Abu Ghraib, and the less infamous Camp Bucca, prisons by Major General Antonio Taguba found evidence of "intentional abuse" of prisoners including punching, slapping, kicking and various forms of sexual assault and rape ("Article 15-6 Investigation" n.d.). U.S. military prison guards videotaped and photographed many instances of abuse. Major news outlets released a small number of these photos. However, several thousand more have been blocked from public release by the Bush and later Obama Administrations. Taguba told *The Daily Telegraph* in 2009: "These pictures show torture, abuse, rape and every indecency" (Gardham and Cruickshank 2009).

[51] For example, while held at the U.S. run "Blacksmith Hotel" prison, Iraqi Major General Abed Hamed Mowhoush was beaten over a series of days with fists, a club and a rubber hose before being forced into a sleeping bag and suffocated by a U.S. soldier sitting on his chest (White 2005).

(ibid., 117-119). More recently, ISIS began as an al-Qa'ida splinter group in 2010 that captured large swathes of territory in Iraq and neighboring Syria in 2014 (Cockburn 2015, 43–46).

The U.S. occupation of Iraq continued until 2011 when Bush's successor, Barack Obama, declared a formal end to the war and withdrew the majority of American soldiers by December 18, 2011. However, in mid-2014, the Obama Administration renewed U.S. military engagement in Iraq to combat ISIS' expansion. Between 2014 and July 2017, the U.S. launched 8,746 airstrikes in Iraq, nearly five times as many as it undertook from 2006-2011 during the height of the war ("Number of Strikes per Month" 2017). The extensive U.S. and allied bombing and ground battles over the course of more than 15 years have destroyed tens of thousands of homes, mosques and other buildings in cities including Fallujah, Mosul and Ramadi (S. George 2016; Sim 2017).[52] The massive debris created by heavy bombardment throughout Iraq and use of weapons such as depleted uranium have left many areas contaminated and polluted with toxic and radioactive materials that Iraqi government and public health studies argue have led to significant increases in birth defects and cancer rates (Busby, Hamdan, and Ariabi 2010; Chulov 2009, 2010; Zwijnenburg and Postma 2017, 15; Zwijnenburg and Weir 2016).

[52] In 2004, for example, in what has been characterized as the most intense fighting of the American war against anti-occupation fighters ("Iraq's Hardest Fight" 2014), U.S. forces twice laid siege to the city of Fallujah. On April 1, U.S. Marines surrounded the city, blocking egress for anti-occupation fighters and launched an assault that killed hundreds of civilians, destroyed thousands of homes and forced as many as 200,000 individuals, the majority of the city's population, to flee (R. McCarthy and Beaumont 2004; Rayburn, Sobchak, and Rayburn 2019; Sassoon 2009). Then U.N. envoy Lakhdar Brahimi threated to resign in response to this attack on Fallujah, stating in an April 14, 2004 press conference "Collective punishment is certainly unacceptable and the siege of the city is absolutely unacceptable" (Glantz 2017; "Joint Press Conference" 2004).[52] The American forces, supported by smaller British and Iraqi contingents again attacked the city from November 8 to December 23, 2004. Captain Paul Fowler, who led a 13-day tank assault on the city, told an embedded *Boston Globe* reporter "I really hate that [the city] had to be destroyed. But that was the only way to root these guys out. … The only way to root them out is to destroy everything in your path" (Barnard 2004). The second assault killed more than 1,000 civilians and left the city in ruins. American bombing and ground assault damaged or destroyed 70% of the homes in Fallujah, thousands of businesses, 100 mosques and multiple government buildings (Jamail 2012). American journalist Aaron Glantz (2017), who reported from Iraq for three years and covered the April siege firsthand, writes that U.S. Marines killed so many civilians in Fallujah that the city's soccer stadium had to be converted into a graveyard.

The Obama Administration began to send American military forces back to Iraq in summer 2014, deploying approximately 5,000 individuals by the end of 2016 to support the Iraqi Army with intelligence, artillery and air support (Gibbons-Neff 2016; Starr 2016). The Trump Administration initially intensified U.S. involvement in Iraq. As of April 2017, for example, American Marines were still deployed in Iraq firing artillery every day in support of Iraqi army operations (Tilghman 2017). During our interview, Kasim, 45 from Baghdad now living in Maryland, discussed his view that the Bush Administration's prosecution of the war was a "total failure." Bush "just went there and he couldn't do anything," Kasim said, "So, Obama pulled back, pulled out his troops. It made things worse" (February 27, 2018). When we spoke in February 2018, he interpreted the Trump Administration's renewed engagement as promising to "go back to Iraq, we'll solve the problems, and that's what he did" (ibid.). At the time of this writing, airstrikes continue although at a reduced rate, shifting to an intensified bombardment of neighboring Syria to combat the cross-border threat from ISIS and other groups.

Three individuals with whom I spoke, Hashim, Marwa and Ali, said that Americans occasionally apologize to them for the harm caused by the war. When this happens, Hashim responds "it's not your fault, don't apologize … it's just politics. It's not the people" (October 1, 2017). Marwa, 48, and now living in Buffalo, NY, explained:

> Some people, they say sorry. They know what it's like there when they attack[ed], when the American army attack[ed] Iraq and that's why we are here. Some people, and they are veterans, they say sorry. … I say no, don't say sorry. Saddam Hussein, he was very bad. I'm not [a person who] like[d] him. I'm happy when they took Saddam Hussein out. I was so happy. Maybe that's why I'm different (November 25, 2017).

Ali said that when Americans find out he is from Iraq, "not all of them but most of them," tell him they are sorry, "we ruined your country because of a false war" (January 14, 2018). "I feel happy when I hear that," he said, "because if my country [didn't] have war … I [wouldn't] be here, you know?" (ibid.).

In view of the context, from the U.S. support for Saddam Hussein to the Gulf War, intentional destruction of essential infrastructure, sanctions and low-level conflict in the 1990s to the 2003 invasion, it is clear that the United States government and military have been intimately connected to Iraq and have been responsible for significant harm to that country during the course of several decades. In the following section, I explore the ways in which, according to some interviewees, the 2003 invasion "destroyed" Iraqi society.

The American War's Corrosive Effects on Iraqi Society

In view of the preceding discussion of American conduct during the war, I next examine what interviewees described as the social and political breakdown of Iraqi society that the American war precipitated. In the wake of the invasion and overthrow of the Iraqi central government, chaos ensued. While life was difficult before, the elimination of the ruling regime created a complete collapse of law and order. Trust between individuals and communities began to fracture, militia and para-military groups flourished, and foreign fighters entered the country. Militias fought against both the occupation of the country by foreign armies as well as other members of Iraqi society as intercommunal violence spread. These groups, most of which were unknown in Iraq before the invasion according to interviewees, terrorized the population.

The violence and instability unleashed during the war and its aftermath also eroded education and employment opportunities and persistently threatened the personal safety of many citizens. Nearly all interviewees spoke at least briefly about their experiences during the conflict. Some expressed their views concerning the U.S. invasion and ensuing occupation, offering a range of perspectives. Their narratives are elaborated in this section, throughout this chapter and as they relate to broader interview themes, in the following chapters as well. One thread that

appeared in many interviewee comments was the argument that the U.S. invasion had "destroyed" and "ruined" Iraqi society.

Sarah, for example, said that after the invasion there was "No education. No electricity. No stable life. No job[s]. [The war] destroy[ed] [the] country" (November 30, 2017). Sarah spoke, too, about the post-invasion intercommunal violence committed by Sunni against Shia and vice-versa, based upon group identity. As she explained, this ongoing violence had caused "Too many people from Iraq [to] escape to go to another state, because some people don't like this situation. … Many people, not just me" (ibid.). She noted that common countries of resettlement included Australia, Sweden and the U.S.[53] Her brother went to Germany, while other relatives resettled in Sweden and Turkey. Sarah and her sister left Iraq to find a safer situation in Syria, remaining there for eight years before relocating to Brooklyn, New York. I asked her whether she had a choice of resettlement country when she applied with the United Nations in Syria and she said, "Actually, no. I told them we wanted to go to London because my uncle live[s] there. Maybe [he could] help me and my sister. But the U.N. told me [it] doesn't work. It's very hard. [The U.N. sent] me and my sister here, [to] America" (ibid.).

The ongoing war in Syria began while she was there, and she witnessed conflict in her home country and society of refuge. In Iraq, "Sometimes we see this situation in front [of] my eyes," she said, "Some people died and me and my sister, when you see this, we'll be crying and I can't sleep (ibid.). "We escape[d] from Iraq, we [went] to Syria," she continued:

> I [saw] the bad situation [there] also when the war [started]. … I heard the [warplanes], up in the air. We [saw] the school, high school near [to] my apartment, it explode[d]. … Many people [were] afraid and scared. We see the same situation, from Iraq to Syria. It's very hard. … It's still hard. We remember that and still [I am] too afraid from the

[53] Sweden, in particular, accepted significant numbers of Iraqis for resettlement in the first five years after the 2003 invasion. By 2009, as many as 40,000 Iraqis had joined already established Iraqi communities throughout Sweden (Sassoon 2009, 100). Sweden, a country of 10 million people, has proportionally resettled 10 times as many Iraqis as the United States.

plane, the warplane. The sound, I can't sleep (ibid.).

Sarah also explained that she believes both Iraqis and Americans have suffered as a result of the war:

> The American people, some families, [lost] maybe the husband, the father, the brother or the son because of the war. I see on TV, too many American people that suffer[ed] from this. It's not good. The war, it's not good for any country (ibid.).

Similarly, Nada explained how stressful the conditions in Iraq were before she and her family decided to leave:

> The situation in Iraq is so, so difficult. And I told you why we are coming here: for my husband and for my kids. I want to [have] more safety. And I want to sleep. Really. During one year in my country, I can't sleep. I couldn't sleep. I feel always I'm very scared [of] everything. Who's knock[ing] [on] the door? Many, many things. When my kids or my son or my husband went to the college or to schools or to his work, really, sometimes when they went, I heard some bomb[s]. I [didn't] know what I will do at that time. Or sometimes late in his work or in his school … maybe someone [kidnapped him]" (Nada November 1, 2017).

Nada's husband worked for an American company after the invasion and at one point, she found a note in her garden at home that read: "You should go now. You should leave now" (ibid.). Those threatening her life because of her husband's work left a bullet with the letter. "What can we do?" she said, "Of course, my kids and my husband [are] very important for me, this is my family. So, we decided to come here [to Brooklyn, NY]" (ibid.).

Nora explained that she has a mixed background. "I'm coming from … Kurdish and Arabic," she said, "And then, part of my family is Sunni and part of my family is Shiite. That make[s] it [harder] for me to adjust [to] the whole conflict back home. That was one of the thing[s] that I got threatened because [of]. It's like, you cannot hate your own family" (Nora February 2, 2018). She continued to elaborate on the threat she and her family faced:

> My whole family was threatened by the two parties, the Sunni and the Shiite. We got kidnapped, my brother got kidnapped twice. My dad got kidnapped. And I was threatened to [be] kidnapped, get killed actually, to be honest with you. [I'm] quite sure. Because I was in two different families, Sunni and Shiite and I cannot support one of them against

> the other because they both are my family. Like my sisters, my aunts, and my brothers-in-law, so, I got rejected (ibid.).

As Hashim argued in his succinct summary of the invasion that serves as the title and epigraph to this chapter:

> Everyone know[s] … there [were] no good reasons to destroy the country and to make the people immigrants and … [kill] so many … people in Iraq just because of Saddam Hussein and his administration at that time. The country is completely destroyed. … I mean, the Iraqi people [don't] deserve that. This is something [that is] just not fair (October 1, 2017).

For Hashim, the consequences of the invasion began in 2003 and continued up to late 2017 when we spoke. In his words:

> You saw after the Iraq war [in] 2003 until today … it's completely destroyed. Everybody now, they want their parts. The country is becoming divided … we have ISIS in Iraq. We never heard about this kind of terroristic [groups]. We never had them in Iraq before. We used to live in Baghdad, we were really [a] very successful community. We have schools, we have universities. We studied, we had very good education, and we had very good entertainment places, everything we had. Now everything is destroyed. We have the worst education. We have the worst healthcare. … It's just not fair (Hashim October 1, 2017).

Because of the invasion, Hashim said, "We [were] never able to plan for anything in Iraq. Even if I planned for two years or three years and then something happened in that city, either war or conflict or anything [it] will completely destroy all our plans" (ibid.). Hashim's parents still live in Baghdad and he said: "I would really, really love to go back to them, to live with them." However, "at the same time … we cannot do anything there. It's just very hard to plan, to set a future for your kids" (ibid.).

Tariq asserted that "In 2003 if you [were] there, and you [saw] how the U.S., the Marines and Army came, everybody welcome[d] them. You will say: 'We didn't know that [Iraqis], they love [the] U.S. They have no problem with us'" (November 2, 2017). In the course of the war, he joined the American Marines as a translator because, as he argued, "we want to, people like me, they think that if [the] U.S. they came to help us, we should help ourselves" (ibid.). However, his

attitude changed. “The turning point,” he said, came when “you [the American government and military] left everything open to … al-Qa’ida. They moved [into Iraq]. This is the point that I started [to believe the] U.S., they did [a] really bad job with us and they killed us” (ibid.).

Abdullah called it “tricky” to determine whether Iraq would have been better off without the 2003 war. “Because,” he said:

> We had a problem with the regime. … He [Saddam] was a dictator. There is no question about that. … You had no freedom in Iraq. Ok, you were safe. You had basically, barely you had food. But you had no freedom of speech. You could not say anything about politics. So, I believe that the regime should have changed (Abdullah January 14, 2018).

However, despite those conditions, Iraq was stronger in some ways before the invasion, in his view. For example, he said, “Iraq was much stronger, our education was good. … We had [a] good reputation in the countries, we had our place within the countries [of the world]. … People respected us” (ibid.). Nevertheless, the negatives far outweighed these perceived positives for Abdullah, and he was convinced that the regime needed to change, although not in the way the U.S. accomplished it. As he observed:

> I would say that if there was something else other than the war … if you could have changed the regime without having all [the] circumstances that happened after, consequences, I think that would be a perfect solution. But the way [the] USA did it, I think it was a disaster. Because I believe that the people who were in charge at that time, the American administration, they had very poor knowledge about Iraq and the Iraqi people (ibid.).

The American war “made Iraq a total mess,” Abdullah said:

> And it made Iraqis pay for that until this day. Like, it has been what? 14 years? And we still have violence, we still have a lot of corruption, a lot of killing in Iraq. If the people in charge [had been] aware of what’s going on in Iraq, we could have avoided all of that (ibid.).

In light of his analysis of the repercussions of the war, he said:

> If you were [to ask me whether I was] with or against [the war] in Iraq based on the results that we are having right now, I would say 100% I’m against it. But maybe if you asked me … in 2003 if I was with or against the war in Iraq, I would say if you would bring knowledgeable people who were actually trying to help Iraq and who are trying to implement a system and they have a plan after the regime falls … I would say, yeah. I

> wouldn't say a war, because at the end of the day I don't like the fact[s] of the war. But maybe there's another solution. So, unfortunately, that thing happened and it was a huge mess and I'm shocked, really to know that people who were in power at that time had this poor knowledge about Iraq. It was a complete mess (ibid.).

As we continued our conversation on the American invasion, Abdullah added that there were a few positives after the war, although he did not name any specifically. He began to say freedom of speech before stopping himself and noting, "you can't say really freedom of speech because yeah, on paper, you have freedom of speech. But, there [are] a lot of militias and if you say something, you know [you are at risk]" (ibid.). Therefore, Abdullah concluded "some people they [got] advantage[s] [from] the war. And others, which is the majority of the people, their [lives] completely got destroyed" (ibid.).

"I was one of the lucky ones," he said, "I think I got lucky to get [a] scholarship" (ibid.) to travel to the United States for college. (I describe this in more detail in the following section). He went on:

> If [it] was during [the] Saddam regime, I wouldn't have got it. So, in terms of career-wise and education-wise, I got lucky to get it. And I feel, actually, guilty to get that thing, because there are millions of other people who cannot go to school. So, I got that good thing … from the war. But at the same time, I cannot see my family. So, it's half, half. But in general, it was bad. The war was bad for a lot of Iraqis. And there are thousands of people who got killed, completely innocent people. And I don't think people should [support] the decision that will lead to kill[ing] a lot of innocent people" (ibid.).

Wissam expressed similar views on the conflict. In the period leading up to the invasion, "we were really pro it," he said:

> Because … I was born under the Saddam regime and I was thinking of leaving [even] before he was thrown out. So, it wasn't that pleasant. But the problem was, we trusted the U.S. government, they know what they're going to do after that. [But] after that now everybody says: 'Oh we wish we [could] go back to Saddam's days' (Wissam October 22, 2017).

Although there were no political freedoms under Saddam's rule, "to some extent it was peaceful," he said, "There was no ISIS, there was [not] that ethnic fighting. There was [not] this

corruption. [The] infrastructure was really good. … It was very secure because nobody can even steal a car or [the government] will kill him" (ibid.). "We were safe at our houses," Wissam reiterated (ibid.). However, he said,

> There was no money. That was the hard part. Because there [were] economic sanctions in Iraq. … Now, we got the money, you can't do anything with it. You don't feel safe at your house. You don't feel safe. There is corruption from the smallest employee in the government to, maybe, the Prime Minister.

He compared this to life under Saddam, where, in Wissam's view, there were:

> Certain people or certain red lines you didn't cross and you stay safe. Now, you don't know. You don't know who's your enemy. Your enemy [is] unseen. [You don't know] who [is] going to take your house, take your rights. So, it's very hard. … I left [in] 2005. I think it [would be] very hard for me to go back and adapt to that situation. … Every party has its own militia and they fight all the civilians [who are] the victims. … And they keep fighting with each other. You know what I mean. You see what's going on now (ibid.).

Finally, Ali related several stories about himself and his family to illustrate how dangerous it was after the 2003 invasion. He worked as a translator with the U.S. military during the occupation, which made his life in Iraq increasingly difficult. "We started to get threats at home," he said:

> 'You are helping the invaders. … Your brother is working with them.' Whatever. So, our life became difficult over there. Even our travel, our commute. Because … [there were] a lot of militia group[s] at that time on the ground. From different sides … from Sunni and from Shiite. I don't want to say only Shia or only Sunni. For me, I'm a Sunni person. But it happened a lot. And they started to kill interpreters and put a note on their chest. So, we decided to flee (Ali January 14, 2018).

The incident that precipitated his decision to leave Iraq involved his brother's narrow escape from death. At the time of the incident, Ali's brother Abu Bakr was a college student studying to be a veterinarian. As Ali shared:

> So, he's going to his college and [encountered] a checkpoint. They are stopping cars and asking for IDs. The checkpoint was [run by] a Shia militia. So, they asked about his ID and he gave his ID. They said: 'Abu Bakr? Okay Abu Bakr, step out of the car please.' At that time, I have also newspaper [reports], these militias used to kill according to names. Omar, Abu Othman, Abu Bakr. Those three names are top for them. They start to kill

> them and cut their head [off] and put their ID on their chest[s]. …[54] So, my brother was smart. On the other side [of the road] … there was an [American] convoy coming, my brother speak[s] English. So, he stopped them. 'Stop them! They [are] going to kill us according to our names. I'm seeking your help!' [he shouted] (ibid.).

Because Ali and Abu Bakr's father held a position with the Iraqi Foreign Ministry under Saddam, Abu Bakr had spent time in the United States as a teenager. As Ali continued:

> My brother … was here [in New York City] in 2001 and 2002. He had his ID from high school, from New York … so he showed the American soldier. He [the soldier] saw Manhattan … my brother explain[ed] to me, he said he felt like I am one of them; 'They cannot abandon me.' So, they went to the checkpoint, they stopped the line, they stopped the car, they stopped the traffic. [The checkpoint] appeared that it wasn't authorized by the Ministry of Interior because they made calls. And then they put them down on the ground and they cuffed them and they took them. And they stopped the car and they said to my brother and his two friends, 'Go back, take them to the nearest point, to their home.' After that, we said then that's enough. I fled my country in 2006 (ibid.).

Ali left Iraq shortly after this incident, but his brother stayed. However, their family home was occupied by looters in the course of the war and Abu Bakr was forced to move. Ali's father had collected antiques from around the world during his travels for work and had amassed a library of books. "This is his life," Ali said, "30 years of working and traveling" (ibid.). But, as Ali demonstrated with his fingers, all of this was gone in a snap.

Ali punctuated his description of the breakdown of Iraqi society after the invasion with a final example:

> A criminal used to go and steal cars, steal [from] homes and he was in prison for 3 years. That was before the war. … He got caught [in] one of my friend's house[s]. … After he went to prison. Then … during the war all of the prison[s] [had prison breaks]. … This guy started to [take] revenge [on] the people who made reports to the police. My friend was one of them. And [he] went to their house seeking money or their life. They have to choose. So, they gave the money. After two months, my friend got killed [by] the same person (ibid.).

These incidents were illustrative for Ali. Reflecting on the war, he said:

[54] In 2006 *The Guardian* reported a rise among Sunni Iraqis in Baghdad changing their names to be less identifiable and forging identification indicating they were Shiite. In one incident, Baghdad police uncovered the bodies of 14 young men all named Omar who had been shot in the head and left in a garbage heap by a militia (Beaumont 2006).

> When you remember what happened to you, to your sister, to your brother, to yourself. And then how people changed all of a sudden after that war. … There was one person [Saddam Hussein] … holding the law and holding everything [together] … in one hand. When he[‘s] gone, everything went upside [down]. … When you think about it, it’s ruined. The country is gone. It’s torn … apart. There is no law to protect you. And you go to the police station [the officer would say]: ‘What can we do? We can’t do … anything’ (ibid.).

Ali left Iraq and first went to Jordan. “Jordan was too difficult,” he said, and:

> Then I went to Syria. [In] Syria I opened a small translation office to help immigrant[s] and refugee[s] during the Iraqi crisis. … It went [approximately] two years and 7 months. After that, I went to Egypt and I stayed in Egypt five years till I came here [to Brooklyn, NY] (ibid.).

Ali’s comments provide a segue to the next section that outlines why interviewees chose to leave their homes and seek refuge in the United States.

Agency amidst Instability: Deciding to Leave, Seeking Refuge Abroad

Millions of Iraqis were displaced from their homes during and after the conflict as a result of U.S. military action, fear of militia groups and deteriorating conditions. Sassoon (2009, 110) has argued that the initial response by the United States government to growing violence in Iraq and concurrent displacement was to pretend the problem did not exist and hope it would go away. Fewer than 1,000 Iraqis arrived in the U.S. as refugees between 2003 and 2006. The figures fluctuate widely by year thereafter, but between 2007 and September 2017 an average of 14,500 Iraqi immigrated to the United States each year (Admissions & Arrivals 2019). Refugee resettlement overall has been significantly curtailed under the Trump Administration, which assumed office in January 2017.

The decision to seek refuge is an agentic process. Individuals and their families are not passively “pushed” into assuming a refugee role. While there are myriad factors that contribute to leaving one’s home, as interviewees explained, becoming a refugee entails a decision, or better perhaps, series of decisions, that together prompt a person to seek safer or more stable

conditions elsewhere within their country or beyond. Many of those with whom I spoke indicated that they left Iraq in response to the deteriorating living conditions there. As described above, Nada, for example, explained that she and her family faced threats because of her husband's work with an American company in Baghdad. Life in Iraq after the invasion was "very, very difficult for us, for my family" (Nada November 1, 2017). She was afraid for her safety and the safety of her husband and children and ultimately, that concern resulted in her choice to leave Iraq.

Many interviewees confronting similar conditions first fled to neighboring countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt before emigrating to the United States. Some had applied for resettlement in multiple countries, including Australia, Canada and Sweden, before deciding to go to the United States. For this reason, these decisions, which unfolded for individuals during the course of months or years, are best conceived as processes rather than discrete single-time events.

For example, Hashim's relocation choices entailed multiple stages. He lived originally in Baghdad and worked for both the United Nations and later the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In 2006, he decided to move from Baghdad to Irbil, a city in the north of the country in Iraqi Kurdistan. There, the physical danger was lower, and he found meaningful and well-compensated employment. Nonetheless, he decided to apply for the Special Immigrant Visa Program in 2014:

> The decision was very difficult to take. I applied for the SIV program. I travel[ed] in less than a year, in 10 months. And then it went very quick. I wasn't expecting that … because it takes years for many people. With me, it took only 10 months until I received my visa … and it [was set to] expire within 3 months so I [had] to travel within 3 months [of] … when I received it. So, it was [a] really difficult decision to take. I had so many friends living in [the] United States and everyone was telling me different experience[s] depending on their experience[s] and their background[s] and everything. So, I didn't [have] a very clear understanding about life in the United States until I arrived and then

> we made the decision and we decided to travel. But now I would say it's one of the best decisions I've made in my life (Hashim October 1, 2017).

Walid, who came to the United States through the United States Refugee Admissions Program, narrated his experiences leaving Iraq in the following way:

> I came [to the U.S.] in 2008 as a refugee. I'm [a] U.S. citizen [now]. … I was [a] middle school teacher in Iraq, a business owner in Iraq when [the] war started. I worked sometimes to interpret with coalition forces, [the] American Army there. … Also, we establish[ed] [a] nonprofit organization for human rights. We [weren't] successful at that because we [did] not have protection from [the] government. We lost family and friends because of that reason, which [made] me feel unsafe so I moved to Syria before the war in Syria in 2006. We lived [a] very good life there. [A] Syrian family helped us and support[ed] us (ibid.).

Walid and his family were among the more than 1 million Iraqis to seek refuge in Syria before and after the U.S. invasion (Harper 2008, 170). Like his friend Walid, Mohammed, 38 now living in Buffalo, went to Syria and was displaced twice over. As he put it:

> Before I came here, in Iraq, we [had a] civil war and it [was] terrible. I [lost] my two brothers, my father and a lot of friends because [of the conflict]. I decided to move to Syria and Syria started [a] civil war in 2011, so we [came] here. … When I have the interview with the U.N., they [asked] me if you have friend[s] in America. I [gave] Walid's name so they [brought] me here too … so Walid can help me (Mohammed November 2, 2017).

An element of becoming a refugee entails identifying and seeking out opportunities to change one's circumstances. Wissam left Iraq in 2005 to study in Jordan. When Barack Obama was elected president in 2008 to replace George W. Bush, Wissam heard from acquaintances in the U.S. Army that the new government planned to withdraw its soldiers from Iraq to focus on the concurrent war in Afghanistan: "At first," he said, "we didn't believe that because they spent billions and billions of dollars there. But after that turn[ed] out [to be] true, [things] started to collapse there, so it was not safe for us to stay" (Wissam October 22, 2017). So, he and his family decided to emigrate. The university in Jordan where Wissam studied had an American campus and he received a visa to go to the United States for his graduation ceremony. Originally,

he intended to come for the commencement events and then return home. However, while in the U.S., he decided to seek asylum.

Wissam's experiences also speak to the complexity of "refugeeness" and the overlapping legal regimes one might pursue in order to find a safer place to live. He and his parents received asylum, first coming to the United States and then making their request. His wife applied for and received a visa through the Special Immigrant Visa Program. Several members of Wissam's family also resettled in different parts of the United States by first leaving Iraq for a second country before applying for refugee status through the United Nations and the USRAP. This too speaks to agency, as individuals apply for the programs for which they may qualify, and pursue whatever opportunities they can identify, to ensure their safety.

Like Wissam, Nora applied for asylum after arriving in the U.S. In Baghdad, she had worked as a lawyer at a women's organization providing *pro bono* legal services. In what ended up as her final case, she represented the wife of a powerful militia leader as that woman sought a divorce and legal protection for herself and her son. As the case proceeded, the husband threatened Nora and her coworkers. Indeed, at one point, he came to Nora's home and handed her a bullet telling her he would kill her if she returned to court. Later, militia members came to her house looking for documents related to the case. As Nora explained:

> He put papers on my door. They put a sign on my house like [a] red cross on my door. … They [militia] were everywhere, you know? And I had [an] incident before that. My dad got kidnapped and it's like they know us, somehow. I don't know. So, I said: 'There's no way to go back' (ibid.).

So, she "left everything, I left my office, I left this organization" (ibid.), and her home and moved in with a friend before applying for a visa to the United States to visit her brother in Ohio. After she arrived, she petitioned for asylum. Looking back at these events, she said "I got past this whole thing, it was very horrible. … It was so hard to lose everything. To lose my

house, everything in my life [was] there. I am starting all over here from zero and it is so hard" (ibid.).

In a final example, Abdullah first left Iraq for Syria and applied for and received refugee status there. While living in Syria, he heard about a nonprofit organization that facilitated a program that offered refugees the opportunity to come to the United States to pursue higher education. Around 2008 or 2009, Abdullah applied to that program, even though he did not read, write or speak English. He asked a friend to assist him with the application. He received a call from the program organizers, who told him, by way of his brother who could converse in English, that language proficiency was required. They asked Abdullah to sit for an English proficiency exam, on which he scored a "0." Thereafter, he decided to dedicate himself to learning English so that he could apply again: "I kept studying for three months straight from my room," he said (Abdullah January 14, 2018). His efforts led to scoring two levels higher than necessary for the program when he took the exam a second time. He applied to the scholarship program again and was successful, receiving a visa to go to New York City to attend New York University in 2010.

The examples explored in this section demonstrate the multiple paths individuals have taken to resettle in the United States as well as the exercise of agency that their resettlement entailed. These experiences counter the long-standing metaphors, such as "waves" and "swarms" employed by many in media, government rhetoric and migration scholarship (Misra 2018), that implicitly and explicitly frame those displaced as undifferentiated masses of humanity. Displacement is complex and individuals experience it in different ways. These examples also reveal the analytical hollowness of the tendency to view refugees as passive victims of

circumstances (Malkki 1996, 388). Rather, those who are displaced remain agentic individuals who pursue their own goals.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the essential connections between the events leading to the 2003 war in Iraq and the resettlement of approximately 172,000 Iraqis in the United States that followed in its wake. It has demonstrated the importance of understanding the ramifications American actions have had for millions of people in Iraq and questioned the contention that the 1991 and 2003 wars were fought so as to spare civilians not involved in the conflict from their effects. As the description of the 1991 war demonstrated, conflicts widely deemed legal and legitimate are just as likely to cause massive harm to civilians as illegitimate and aggressive wars. Furthermore, even ostensibly non-violent measures such as sanctions meant to punish governments can have catastrophic consequences on the health and safety of those they target. These facts point toward the imperative not only to resolve issues through diplomacy but also to seriously (re)consider what qualifies as violence and to continue to imagine new possibilities for peaceful international relations.

Moreover, I have argued that the 2003 invasion was an aggressive war, and as such the United States is morally and legally responsible for the ongoing destruction of Iraqi society. Irrespective of how many Iraqis died or were injured in the U.S. invasion, as discussed above, the norms of war hold the United States accountable for all of the harm done to the Iraqi people, directly and indirectly stemming from its decisions to initiate the conflict. It is critical that Americans understand and assume responsibility for this reality. Consider an interaction Nora described with an American in Harrisonburg, Virginia, who could not clearly recall the 2003 invasion:

> I [have] met people [who] don't know where Iraq [is]. Literally, a lady … asked me about my accent … and she's like: 'Where is that [Iraq]?' And I was very, very, very depressed and I was like: 'Where is *that*?' [I] told her: 'Do you know [the] Middle East?' She said: 'No.' 'Do you remember 2003? George W. Bush had a war on a very, very small, dumb country [claiming] that they had a nuclear weapon?' She said: 'Oh, I don't know why, [but] I remember there was a war, the United States was part of it.' I was like: 'I am that small dumb country. … So, do you know where that [is]?' And from there, that was the last time. I was like: I need to calm myself down and not be nervous about people asking me where I am from. Because I got very nervous, especially when I see the ignorance.[55] I was like: 'Your country [has] been in two war[s] and you don't know why these people [are] coming in?' We are coming in because we're fleeing the war (February 6, 2018).

This interaction is illustrative of a broader lack of sufficient engagement among Americans about the devastation their military has caused in Iraq over the course of several decades. A 2018 poll conducted by *HuffPost* and YouGov found, for example, that only 34% of respondents remembered "very well" the justifications for the invasion of Iraq (HuffPost: Iraq war 2018). 28% of those surveyed reported that they "don't remember" whether they supported the war in 2003. Only 33% reported supporting the war in 2003, despite contemporaneous polls suggesting that more than 60% of Americans supported invading Iraq.[56]

There is a significant need to develop what Sontag (2003) has called a "national project" that fosters a deep understanding and acknowledgment of the vast devastation created by the United States in Iraq. Sontag has argued that only belatedly have Americans felt compelled to recognize and commemorate the "monstrous" character of earlier crimes committed by their society and government, such as American slavery, and that no such recognition has emerged around the horrors of the United States war against Iraq described in this chapter.[57] I seek here to

[55] Reinforcing Nora's interpretation, in 2015, Public Policy Polling asked "532 usual Republican primary voters and 525 usual Democratic primary voters" whether they would support or oppose bombing Agrabah, the fictional Middle Eastern city from the Disney film Aladdin. 30% of Republican and 19% of Democratic voters said they supported bombing this fictional city. Trump supporters were the most likely to support at 41% (Jensen 2015).
[56] Similarly, a 2015 YouGov poll found 38% of respondents reporting they supported the war in 2003 (Frankovic 2015).
[57] Nor for that matter, as Sontag rightly points out, has such a project emerged around the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or the decades-long American wars in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

contribute to building such a project, to make American aggression as morally repugnant as slavery and to press Americans to know, to remember, and to act.

Finally, participants' experiences leaving Iraq and seeking resettlement in the United States problematize the notion that refugees are, or should be, primarily acted upon by NGOs, state agencies and international organizations rather than viewed as individuals who possess agency. The following chapters will deepen this critique. After detailing the context that led to widespread displacement among Iraqis in this chapter, the next examines the interactions interviewees have had with members of U.S. society after resettling. It explores their interpretations of widely circulating discourses portraying Arabs and Muslims as irreconcilably different and dangerous and the opportunities many have found to interact and exchange with native-born American and fellow newcomer friends, neighbors and co-workers.

Chapter 4 – How Does it Feel to Be Arab, Muslim and a Refugee? Belonging, Precarity and Cultural Exchange

> As a refugee, I'm doing … a lot of good things. And I'm doing a great job … for the community or for my work, you know? But, sometimes if you [make] one single mistake … they will forget about all of the good things you have done the past five years (Ali January 14, 2018).

Introduction

The preceding chapter explored the deep connections among the American war in Iraq, its effects on that country's society and the decisions this study's interviewees made to leave their homes and resettle in the United States. Following chronologically, this chapter delves into the post-resettlement understanding and experience of belonging in American society of those with whom I spoke for this inquiry. To reiterate from Chapters 1 and 2, I use the term belonging throughout to denote reciprocal feelings of acceptance and processes and possibilities for interviewees to identify and build relationships with members and institutions of American society at multiple levels. I frame such feelings and experiences not as antecedent or as a predicate to the discussion of democratic membership and participation in Chapters 5 and 6, but rather as intertwined and co-constitutive. In other words, as each factor influences the others, there was necessarily overlap among the feelings of belonging, understandings of democratic membership and opportunities for participation among interviewees for this study.

Importantly, throughout this chapter and those that follow, interviewees often discussed their perceptions of American attitudes toward themselves and other Iraqis, Arabs, Muslims or those from "the Middle East." In a number of instances, individuals articulated perceptions that large numbers of Americans hold negative views of those like themselves. As I pointed out in the Introduction, this perception is well-founded. Polling data suggests that pluralities of Americans do hold negative views of Arabs and Muslims (Zogby Analytics 2017; Zogby International 2010). A majority believe that Iraq is "unfriendly" to the United States or its enemy (In Depth:

Topics A to Z, Iraq 2019). As this chapter explores as well, many Americans also believe that Islam is inherently more violent than other religions (U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society 2017a). And, as noted in the Introduction as well, various levels and agencies of American government have targeted Arabs, Muslims and Iraqis for discriminatory and violent policies in recent decades.

Therefore, even if a majority of native-born Americans do not hold such views or support such policies, I interpret the experiences shared by individuals as reactions to widespread beliefs and government actions. Of primary importance is participants' *perceptions*, rather than demonstrable "fact," that many or most Americans view resettled Iraqis as dangerous outsiders. One takeaway from this situation is that those Americans who seek a more just society need to work harder to publicly demonstrate and voice support for vulnerable individuals and groups and pressure governments to protect their rights and safety. The discussion in Chapter 6 of the protests against the Travel Ban points to a situation in which participants understood such demonstrations to have occurred. Importantly as well, as explored below, perceptions of widespread resistance to newcomers existed for some with whom I spoke at the same time they were able to create positive relationships with their neighbors and colleagues and develop spaces for mutual exchange.

This chapter first explores interviewees' shared sense of belonging in their local communities and in the United States more broadly. Those with whom I spoke suggested that such perceptions can be partial or unresolved in various ways. The chapter then focuses on the recurring theme of, as Du Bois (1903) framed it, the "strange experience" of being seen as a problem by many in society. For some interviewees, this strangeness was informed in no small part by widely circulating anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and anti-refugee discourses and policies in the

United States. Thereafter, the chapter considers the precarity expressed by interviewees, both long-standing and increased in the wake of the election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency, who ran an overtly racist and xenophobic campaign and has pursued and enacted policies aimed at making resettlement more difficult (Johnson 2015; Newkirk II 2018).

The chapter concludes by exploring the role of diversity in communities and cultural exchange between resettled Iraqis and their neighbors and friends in building and solidifying a sense of belonging for interviewees. Importantly, many of this study's interviewees suggested that they simultaneously experienced constraints and/or silencing along with opportunities for voice and agency in their daily lives. I argue in this and the following chapters that positive welcoming by American citizens in general and in response to negative rhetoric and governmental policies facilitates not only the resettlement process but also can widen spaces for belonging, voice, authorship and participation at all levels of society.

Between Here and There: Complexities of Belonging in American Society

Individuals' experiences of belonging in their local resettlement contexts—Buffalo, Rochester and Brooklyn, New York; Chicago, Illinois; Harrisonburg, Virginia; and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area in this study—as well as in the broader American society—emerged as a central theme of my interviews. I generated discussion addressing this topic with the question of whether interviewees anticipated staying in the United States permanently or whether they intended to return to Iraq.

Overwhelmingly, individuals with whom I spoke envisioned remaining in the United States to live, work and raise their families. Some were certain, while others expressed a lack of control concerning whether they would or could stay. "I hope so," both Ahmed (October 2, 2017) and Tariq (November 2, 2017) said about the possibility they would remain permanently

in the U.S. Some, including Omar and Ali, attributed their intention to stay to the roots they had put down and the opportunities available for themselves, their children and their families in the United States.[58] Others, such as Nora and Zaid, 35, now living in North Bethesda, Maryland, indicated they would likely remain. However, if they could not, they would not return to Iraq because of the ongoing danger and instability in their home country.

With this background established, interviewees often described their feelings of belonging in the society in which they were rebuilding their lives. For some, including Ahmed, a sense of attachment began to develop immediately upon arrival, while for others, including Nora and Marwa, becoming comfortable in their new home was unfolding as a process. For still others, such as Tariq, that evolution remained unfinished or constrained. As multiple interviewees explained, Americans' reactions to them, positive and negative, played a substantial role in this evolution of attachment and belonging.

Ahmed explained that he immediately had a sense of connection to the United States. As he described:

> I always say, if [asked by] any of my American friends, actually it started from the moment I arrived. The first word[s] I heard here in the U.S. [were]: 'Welcome Home' from the immigration officer, right before any other word she said. She just said, 'welcome home,' and at that moment I really felt connected (Ahmed September 2, 2017).

Despite what he called Chicago's "bad reputation," he had been comfortable upon his arrival. In his experience, "People here are really friendly, supportive. They care for the community. Everyone was supportive around me. So yeah, I feel connected and I think there was not really a process" (ibid.). He gave the example of an interaction he had on the first day his

[58] Omar explained this process in the following way: "This question [do you plan on staying in the US permanently?], if you asked me when I came here, I would say no. But now, every year, my roots in this country become stronger and stronger. So, imagine, 9 years. The roots are now bigger. Because we went back [to Iraq] this year in August. … I missed all the places, I missed everything. But still the country was not ready to welcome us. Still it's in chaos" (December 14, 2017).

daughter started at her new school. According to Ahmed, staff members "immediately came and asked me if there is any religion or anything related to your tradition, we want to include that in her teaching. I said no, let her be like other kids. … So, from that moment on, I think we were really connected" (ibid.).

For his part, Hashim explained that in Chicago, he was able to live together with diverse members of the community:

> [I am] not feeling in any way that I am different here. And this is what I like about Chicago, especially. So many communities, everybody's living together peacefully without any problems or conflicts … like what we had in [the] Middle East. So, that's why I really love this place and this city (October 1, 2017).

The role and importance of diversity for Hashim and others are explored in more detail below. Hashim's in-laws had also moved to Chicago and two of his brothers now live in Texas. As a result, he said, "I feel like we have [been] building community, building connections, building everything. At the same time, we are receiving the same rights, we are following the same policies and rules, as U.S. citizen[s] so I feel … 100 percent comfortable with being a U.S. resident" (ibid.).

Nada said, "*in sha' Allah*, why not?" (November 1, 2017) about the possibilities of belonging in American society.[59] She continued, "Because, after one year, we should, we will be citizen[s] … when we came here, after five years, we can [become] a citizen" (ibid.). Nada and her family's arrival in the U.S. via the Special Immigrant Visa Program provided them with a path from legal residence to citizenship. She said about her feelings when she first arrived in New York:

> Really, I [was] afraid. Because, the first thing, we are old, me and my husband. We built everything in our country. We studied there. We worked there. … So, when we decided to come here, I [felt] at that time—of course [now], I'm comfortable—but, that means I will face many challenges. I will face a new life. I don't know [about] the people there.

[59] A common Arabic phrase meaning "God willing," expressing uncertainty and/or hopefulness for the future.

> But, *khalas* [enough, done, that's it], this is our decision. … And when we came here, really, all the people [were] very, very nice. All the people" (ibid.).

Nora expressed a strong sense of belonging to Harrisonburg, Virginia, saying, "I do feel very, very [strong] belonging to this community, this society. … It's very local" (February 2, 2018). She explained that meeting others and volunteering with local organizations had been integral to her development of belonging:

> It was a process. The first year I was like: 'No, I don't belong here. I don't have friends, I don't know how they make friends, everyone is living by himself. There [are] no family bond[s].' And I was like: 'No, this is not what I [am] used to, so I cannot do it.' But then, I tried volunteering. … When we came [to Harrisonburg], [the man] who rent[ed] us the house become very close to us. So, he brought his wife, we asked them to come for dinner. And his wife met me and [said]: 'I know [a] lady in the community, she is very nice and she always [tries] to meet new people.' So, I met [her] (ibid.).

The woman served as the chair of a Charlottesville-based activist coalition with branches throughout Virginia. Nora began volunteering with the organization's Harrisonburg group and met many other community members through that work. She also learned about and became active with, refugee-serving organizations in Harrisonburg. She described this experience and the individuals she met and with whom she became friends: "[I] met two women that have changed my [out]look [about] the United States. … It's like, they were the turning point in my life and I'm not alone in this" (ibid.).

She illustrated the process of perceiving herself as more and more a member of the community with an example. Harrisonburg holds an international festival that Nora has attended every year since she arrived. As she explained:

> The first year we came to Harrisonburg and I came to this festival, I felt so, so down that I [didn't] know anybody. I'm just walking and seeing booth[s] and stuff. The second year, when I walk [through the festival] I was like: 'Hi! Hi!' People start[ed] to know me. The third year … people [knew] me all the way down. This year, I was standing in the refugee office booth and then I went to [another] booth and I was like, people know me, and I've been talking and talking and this [made] me feel very, very connected to this place. Like, I know everyone here. Like I am from here. I feel that. Like I belong (ibid.).

Walid observed, “I feel that this is my country now, because [it is] the place that give[s] you respect, love and probably support. I consider this my country now” (September 17, 2017). Importantly, for Walid, this meant learning about and incorporating aspects of American culture into his life while retaining his Iraqi heritage, a dynamic I explore in more detail below. Abdullah similarly indicated he had a sense of belonging in U.S. society, yet was still Iraqi: “I feel that I’m both in between, you know? I still am proud of my Iraqi heritage, my Iraqi culture and that [is] part of [me] that never changed. Since I was born, I am always proud of that” (January 14, 2018). Later in our conversation, he said:

> I think [the] USA is a great country. I really believe that. I just don’t like some of the regimes that come here and they affect other people[‘s] lives. You know? But as a country, as an idea, [the] USA is a very interesting and unique country. … I don’t feel it’s just a country. It’s basically, I don’t know what to call it. … I feel it’s like [an] organization or a club. Really, it could feel that [way], people from everywhere in the world they come here and try to contribute to make it more successful. So, I really don’t think these people who are coming here are causing problems. If you look at it most of these people are actually helping the country (ibid.).

Also, speaking to the complexity of belonging, Zaid said: “I came from a Sunni/Shiite family. So, I’m neither Sunni [nor] Shiite. I’m just a typical Iraqi citizen. I used to [be]. Now I’m American. … I’m still both” (February 27, 2018). But he said in response to the question whether he planned to remain permanently in the United States: “I’m not sure. If you’re asking about going back to Iraq, no. There is no way. There is no way” (ibid.). He left in 2007 and spent three years in Jordan before coming to the United States. He returned to Iraq in the summer of 2017 to visit his family still living in Baghdad. He said “it was really hard for me. I couldn’t even recognize anything when I [went] back. … I mean, it was really bad when I left the country. … When I came back last summer, it was even worse. … It was really bad. But, for some reason, people are just adapting to the, to that way of life (ibid.).

Sharing a similar experience as Ahmed about the point at which he viewed himself as an American, Zaid said:

> The day that I really felt that I [was] an American citizen is the day when I came back from Iraq [after his most recent trip] and [the] border agent officer told me: 'Welcome home.' I really felt that, yes, this is my home now and I really felt that I just wanted to come back, even though I only spent about a week outside this country (ibid.).

However, he continued, "to be completely honest with you, I still feel that I am Iraqi [because] I cannot deny that even talking to you now, I know that you're looking at me [thinking]: 'You have citizenship, you … speak good English … [but] he is not from here" (ibid.). He apologized to me for saying this and added: "I see this like in every, in most, of the people that I interact with. Although no one has, almost no one, has ever shown me this kind of feeling. But, maybe it's just the way I feel" (ibid.). Despite this perception that many of the native-born Americans he interacts with view him as an outsider even though he is a citizen, Zaid explained:

> But, still, it's much better than the way that I felt in my home country, Iraq. At least, I'm dealing with people who respect me, just because of me … not because of my background. … Maybe I'm … [giving] you mixed information, but it's … the way I feel. It's complicated. It's really complicated (ibid.).

Mohammed offered that the question of belonging for him was unresolved, as well. He remarked, "I have good communication with the American people. … The people in Buffalo [are] really friendly" (Mohammed November 2, 2017). However, when I asked him "do you feel like the U.S. is your country, in a sense?" he said:

> Right now, yeah. Like 75%, yes. But you know, if you go to Iraq right now, you will miss your country. It's difficult, do you know what I mean? I [was] born there. All my life [was] there. Yeah. So, yeah. But it's not 100% (ibid.).

For Marwa, belonging was a process. The "first time is hard," she said, "I came here [and] already I [knew] English. But, the accent, the dialect, it's different. But let me tell you: it depends [on] your personality; if you accept it or if you adapt. I feel I am flexible, I adapted"

(Marwa November 25, 2017). She attributed this successful outcome to her outgoing personality. In her words: "I like to talk with the people. I like to ask a lot [of questions]. I didn't feel shy" (ibid.). Now a U.S. citizen, Marwa considered herself both American and Iraqi, "I love my country [Iraq] because my family [is] there," she said (ibid.). The week after our interview, Marwa traveled to visit her family in Baghdad for the first time since 2011.

Unlike Marwa, "I'm a citizen, but I don't feel I'm a citizen," Tariq said:

> It's hard because … some group[s], you will see yourself [as] a member, based on them and how they treat you. When you go [to] other groups, you can tell, you're not part of it. You can't be part of it. So, it's difficult. Maybe in [the] future, this is what we hope. … So, unfortunately, I don't want to lie, [I am] not a member [of American society]. But we hope in the future, maybe (November 2, 2017).

Finally, Kasim was the only individual with whom I spoke pointedly to say no, belonging in American society was not fully open to him. "There will be barriers," he said:

> I tried, but I felt some kind of prejudice especially when I apply to job[s]. When I go to places where the employers mostly are white, they think I'm different. When I go place[s] where [employers] mostly are black Americans, they think I'm different. So, it's always this problem, that's what I felt. I don't know to what degree it's correct, but that's what I felt (Kasim February 27, 2018).

However, despite this feeling, Kasim then said it was not difficult to "assimilate" into American culture. He continued: "I know what the Americans want. And, probably that's part of me, I cannot give it" (ibid.). By way of example he said:

> I mean, I'm not [an] American football fan. If I was, it would be different. Yeah. Like, my brother, he's a fan, so he was able to communicate more. My other brother, he drinks alcohol. … Also, his wife is American, so he doesn't have a problem. He's very much into the culture. Whereas I'm different, I stopped drinking two years [ago]. … So, I feel like I'm more distant, like there's some kind of barrier (ibid.).

Moreover, Kasim argued that the United States is a:

> Very much divided society. … Each community [has] their own, basically their own micro-culture. … Here, everybody has their own ways [of] adjusting to society. So, they create their own communities … as they obey the law and go by the rules. … There are shared aspects, but generally, it all depends. … But, American culture, it's a big word. It can accommodate or incorporate any culture, that's the beauty of it. As long as you just go by the rules … you can make it (ibid.).

Within this context as Kasim explained it, he described how he viewed the levels of what he called "assimilation" for himself and other Iraqis he knew. In his words:

> From my interaction[s] with Iraqis … they range differently in terms of assimilating to the culture, the American culture. Some of them are very well attached or connected to the American culture. And some of them are more distant. I would put myself [at] out of 10, I would put myself [at] 6 in terms of assimilation to the culture. I [know] people [who] are way [further] into that process. Like my brother, he got married to an American girl and he's, he cannot be 10 out of 10, he's like 9 or 8 out of 10. My other brother is probably 7. So, I would consider myself 5 or 6 (ibid.).

Beyond himself and his family members, Kasim said, "I've seen some [people], some of them … cannot integrate with the culture. They still have this barrier. Some of them, they went back home. … They couldn't take it" (ibid.). Kasim's explanation of the challenges he encountered to "assimilation," was emblematic of several interviewees nuanced feelings of belonging. The following section elaborates on the sense for individuals like Ali, Hashim, Omar, Tariq, and Zaid of otherness that can exist simultaneously with a sense of belonging.

The "Strange Experience" of Being a Problem

This chapter's title paraphrases W. E. B. Du Bois' famous formulation of the implicit, hesitant, and unasked question on the lips of many white Americans toward African-Americans: "How does it feel to be a problem?" Describing the experience of being a "Negro" at the turn of the 20th century, Du Bois (1903) offered the trenchant observation that it entails a "double consciousness" of always comprehending one's self through the eyes of another who looks at you with pity and contempt. For some African-Americans, addressing this tension meant accommodating the society that scorned them, while for others it entailed rejecting that society. Du Bois argued that African-Americans wanted simply to "make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face" (1903, 2). As I describe below, Tariq explicitly

compared the experiences of many Iraqis in 2017 to the historical experience of African-Americans and described his own desire to belong to the society in starkly similar terms to those articulated by Du Bois.

I use this frame to explore the ways in which individuals, such as Hashim, Ali and Tariq, experienced perceptions by some members of American society that they are intrinsically undeserving, "alien," dangerous and problematic. The construction of the "Oriental" other as inherently different from "the Westerner" is deeply rooted (Said 1995), as is the reductive and ahistorical notion of an unbroken and ongoing "clash of civilizations" between monolithic formations of Islam and Christianity (Kumar 2012).[60] Moreover, negative portrayals of Arabs, Muslims and refugees as incompatible with American society have long been staples in U.S. media, popular culture[61] and political discourses. The particular stereotyped image of "the Middle East" has evolved with time and changing historical and economic contexts.

U.S. President Donald Trump and other Republican Party (especially) elected leaders have promoted discourses of danger and otherness regarding individuals from many other parts of the world in recent years (Johnson 2015).[62] Interviewees discussed these tropes as well as the

[60] In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks, for example, then president George W. Bush declared that a "war on terrorism" was a "crusade" against "evil-doers" (Bush 2001). This construction implicitly draws parallels to the historical conflicts begun in 1095 after emperor Pope Urban II of the Byzantine Empire called upon Christians to fight against "enemies of God" and retake control of Jerusalem from the Muslim Seljuk Turks (Kumar 2012, 14).

[61] Consider Shaheen's (2003) seminal work on the topic, in which he explored more than 900 Hollywood films depicting Arab characters produced between 1896 and 2003. Shaheen found first that films often conflate Arabs—a linguistic cultural and ethnic designation—with the Islamic religious tradition. The majority of Arabs are indeed Muslim; however, the overwhelming majority of Muslims belong to other cultural and ethnic groups. Second, he found that the "vast majority" of films have portrayed Arabs negatively as villains and terrorists. He writes: "From 1896 until today, filmmakers have collectively indicted all Arabs as Public Enemy #1—brutal, heartless, uncivilized [Muslim] religious fanatics and money-mad cultural 'others' bent on terrorizing civilized Westerners, especially Christians and Jews" (Shaheen 2003, 172).

[62] One can find subtly discriminatory and bellicose rhetoric against Arabs and Muslims over time among American politicians and government representatives. Such rhetoric primarily comes from Republicans, although not exclusively (Running on Hate: 2018 Pre-Election Report 2018). During the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election campaign, for example, the Republican candidate John McCain held a townhall event in which an audience member

suggestion by public figures and sometimes those whom they have encountered in their daily lives that many refugees come to the U.S. to receive public benefits. As Tariq put it "people think that we come for fun to [the] United States [and to] live for free" (November 2, 2017). In the course of interviews, both Tariq and Hashim commented that services such as healthcare and education were free at the point of service in Iraq and as Mohammed pointedly noted in comparison to universal free at the point of service healthcare in Canada, "The [U.S.] government, they didn't give the American people anything [for] free. Nothing is free for you" (November 2, 2017).

Othering, xenophobic discourses circulate in the United States alongside a narrative within the American popular imagination that views theirs as an "immigrant country" and as a particular and perhaps unique refuge for the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free."[63] In

said of his Democratic opponent "I can't trust Obama. I have read about him, and … he's an Arab." McCain responded "No ma'am. He's a decent family man, a citizen" (Segarra 2017). Interestingly, *Time* magazine characterized McCain as "strongly" defending Obama. However, whether intentionally or not, his response set a dichotomy that one can be either Arab or a "decent family man" and citizen, but not both. At another campaign event, an audience member asked him when the U.S. would launch an attack on Iran. McCain responded by singing "bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb" Iran to the tune of the Beach Boys' "Barbara Ann." The audience responded with laughter (Gonyea 2007). McCain, who died in 2018, was a strong supporter of the invasion of Iraq, publicly calling for "regime change" in 2002 and voting to authorize the attack in 2003 (Lane 2008). In the same election cycle, Democrat Hillary Clinton, also a supporter of the Iraq War, threatened Iran in her primary campaign against Barack Obama saying in the event of a *hypothetical* Iranian attack on Israel, that as president "we will attack Iran" and "we would be able to totally obliterate them" (Morgan 2008) Such public threats are themselves *prima facie* violations of the normative spirit of the U.N. Charter, which as noted in Chapter 3 binds states to refrain not only from the use of force but from the *threat* of force against other states (UN Charter 1945).

[63] Alba and Foner (2015) call this the "grand narrative" of the U.S. as exceptional in its incorporation of immigrants throughout its history. They have argued that "One common popular claim is that the United States has been an exceptionally—some would say, uniquely—open society, welcoming immigrants and quickly investing them with membership rights, including access to America's historically broad escalator of mobility into the middle class" (ibid., 12). These sentiments are reflected in, for example, comments made by former U.S. President Barack Obama. Mr. Obama told an audience in 2010 that "we've always defined ourselves as a nation of immigrants—a nation that welcomes those willing to embrace America's precepts" (Remarks by the President on Comprehensive Immigration Reform 2010). He went on to say that a "steady stream of hardworking and talented people has made America the engine of the global economy and a beacon of hope around the world" (ibid.). The late U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy expressed similar sentiments when commenting on the Diversity Lottery immigration program in 2006. Kennedy stated that the U.S. is "great because with a little luck and hard work anyone can succeed here" (Kennedy 2006). Furthermore, according to Kennedy, the U.S. is the "only country that can say that" (ibid.). Tom Gjelten's *A Nation of Nations: A Great American Immigration Story* (2015) is a popular press example of such framings. Gjelten, a long-time National Public Radio (NPR) host, argued that the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 had

keeping with this view, Abdullah commented, "a lot of people, including myself, we came here to follow our dreams and to contribute to [the United States]" (January 14, 2018). Mohammed, too, said, "when I came to the United States, I thought that it's a big dream, really. Because I see the United States [on] the TV so, [I'm always] hearing United States, United States" (November 2, 2017). However, he soon discovered many challenges related to life in America:

> When I came here [to Buffalo, NY], I came in February so [there was] a lot of snow. … The weather [was very] bad. … [The] apartment I lived there in Riverside, it's a very bad area. So, I just sit in [my] apartment, I don't know where I'm going [for] 3 months. I said: 'What is going on here?' I can't go outside, I don't know how can I use the bus, everything is difficult. Everything is difficult. So, I decided to come back to Iraq (ibid.).

Mohammed did not go back to Iraq and eventually built a social network and found fulfilling employment. However, his experience speaks to the reality that neither a completely negative nor positive "grand narrative" fully describes or accounts for the experiences interviewees shared. This section continues to illustrate both the vagaries and subtleties of participants' experiences as refugees and former refugees.

Some interlocutors, including Ali and Tariq, expressed a sense of irreconcilability with American society and a conviction that no matter how hard they tried, they would remain as Tariq phrased it "second class" residents or citizens, or in a precarious position. This sense of uncertainty led Nada and Zaid to suggest that even with legal rights as residents or citizens, they might still face potential penalties for exercising them. Hashim and Tariq expressed a desire to live and be treated like everyone else, something that they did not perceive they were fully

a "dramatic impact" on not just the demographics of the United States, but also allowed the U.S. to "demonstrate the exceptionalism it has long claimed for itself" (2015, 344). Gjelten described the lawmakers who passed the 1965 legislation as "liberal" and "enlightened," and sought to demonstrate on the legislation's 50th anniversary that the United States is in fact a "nation of nations" and that "diversity" was its "destiny" (ibid., 10, 200). Like Obama and Kennedy, Gjelten framed "ingenuity and enterprise" as essential for immigrants in the United States, asserting that their ambitions are "limited only by their own talents" (ibid., 6). Whatever its other relative merits, this argument conceals and erases those forcibly acculturated, indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans who were not so "willing" to embrace the U.S. state-building project (Brown 1970).

experiencing at the time of their interviews. Finally, in this portion of their interviews, Tariq and Kasim pushed back against the notion that Islamic religious commitments or a culturally transferred Muslim background were inherently dangerous and violent, and Omar and Nora discussed their fear that speaking their first language or a language other than English publicly would put them at risk of opprobrium or worse.

As Ali explained in his observation cited for the epigraph to this chapter, he perceived there to be a very high standard to which he and other resettled refugees were held. And as he argued, if someone like himself makes one mistake, or if others perceive his actions as wrong, the work he had done to live up to this standard would be erased:

> As a refugee, I'm doing … a lot of good things. And I'm doing a great job … for the community or for my work, you know? But, sometimes if you [make] one single mistake—if it was a mistake. Sometimes it was interpreted like a mistake—they will forget about all of the good things you have done the past five years. And they will catch only these single things. Yeah, these things are here in the community (Ali January 14, 2018).

Tariq contextualized his comments about his life in Rochester, New York, by describing his expectations of the United States before he left Iraq. Because of the new and often expensive equipment that the American occupation forces brought to Iraq during the war, Tariq assumed that life in America would be materially comfortable and that everyone would "live in peace," which he desired for himself and his family. As he put it:

> So, I was thinking when I moved to the U.S., it's the homeland for them. If … people overseas [have] the offices, the lifestyle everything, that mean[s] the U.S. will be better. Right? This is what you think. If you see me overseas with all the fancy stuff and all the degrees that I have, the lifestyle that I have. You think: 'Oh, what about his home country? Probably [it] will be better then.' … And when you go to the U.S. embassy in Iraq, it's heaven. You walk the gardens, it's landscaping [is] beautiful. … If you go there, you don't want to come back. It's beautiful. So, we think, people like me: 'Oh my god, if it's overseas and they have all that beautiful stuff, so definitely in the U.S. it will be better.' So, I was thinking we will be better. And we will live in peace. This is what I want. So, we moved (November 2, 2017).

However, when he arrived in the U.S., the reality did not meet his expectations:

> I [was] surprised by all the nonsense. Like, [there is] still [racism between] white and black. And [it is assumed] immigrants and refugees, they don't work or whatever. They all moved here for benefits. All nonsense. And I said: 'Oh my god, really?' And then drugs, a lot of issues. A lot of poverty. A lot of poverty. So, this [is] what surprised us. … We're [not] going to someplace I was [expecting], you know, you're going to find a job, nobody [is] picking on you, [you can] live in peace. Work, school, done (ibid.).

In consequence, Tariq suggested that he must put forth twice the effort that Americans do in his work to prove that he has the right to be in the United States: "We work double. So, we want to work and show them that we are just normal people and … you made the right decision by [letting] us in" (ibid.). As noted above, he compared his experience as an Iraqi, a refugee and a Muslim to the historical experience of African-Americans. It is "our era, unfortunately" (ibid.) to be treated in this way, he said. Moreover, he pointed out that despite centuries of struggle, there are still significant unresolved issues between black and white Americans: "For us, it will be tough too" (ibid.). Tariq perceived his social position as one of living with a feeling of persistent suspicion, a sense that he was viewed by many as untrustworthy and somehow guilty of an unstated transgression. Tariq attributed this perception to his background as a refugee from the Middle East. As he put it:

> Because if you are [a] refugee from Europe, who cares? Probably they … [are] white, who cares? They don't know you. Even if you have an accent, if you say I'm [Italian], you're good. If you say I'm from England, you're fine. You're white, you're fine. But, when they know [you are] from [the] Middle East, [they are] a little bit concerned. … It's profiling (ibid.).

"You're not trusted," he said and "If some Muslim did something, [it's] all over the news for the next month" (ibid.).[64] Tariq argued as well that reports will emphasize the perpetrator's

[64] A recent paper by Kearns, Betus, and Lemieux (2018, 22) found that terrorist attacks committed by individuals identified as Muslims receive significantly more media coverage than those perpetrated by those of other backgrounds. Their statistical analysis found that such events received between 1.81 and 4.93 times more coverage (ibid., 21).

Muslim background, even if tenuous,[65] and that the complexity of identities is flattened as well with anyone from the Middle East or with an Arab background assumed to be Muslim, an identification presumed to be dangerous and violent. In light of this, when he learns of a mass shooting or bombing, Tariq's first reaction is to hope the perpetrator is not a Muslim:[66]

> Every time when I hear somebody [committed a shooting], really, I say: 'Oh my god, I don't want to know if it's [a] Muslim.' This is reality for a lot of us. When I hear [about a] shooting, mass shooting and bombing. … Don't say … Muslims [did it] because this is what [is] killing us. Like, oh my god, then [it will] be on the news and you go to the store. Boom! And his face [is] looking at my face. … People see us as a terrorist. They don't see us as people (ibid.).

[65] Tariq pointed to the inconsistency or double standard in the way media often have portrayed crimes committed by white Americans and Muslims. When a "white guy" commits murder, he is portrayed as mentally ill. "When we do it, [we're terrorists]" (Tariq (November 2, 2017). He mentioned several examples—including the 2015 murder of three Muslim students in Chapel Hill, North Carolina by their white neighbor (Blanford 2017)—in which white Americans shot and killed multiple people and media attributed the shooter's motive to mental health issues with no mention of terrorism. A 2019 YouGov poll found a similar double standard among respondents' interpretations of such events. American respondents were significantly more likely to label violent attacks committed by Muslims as terrorism and similar violent acts committed by white Americans as hate crimes (Frankovic 2019).

[66] Terror attacks committed in the United States are exceedingly rare compared to other violent crimes and Muslim perpetrators are in the minority of this already small number of incidents. The Investigative Fund at The Nation Institute tracked 201 incidents between 2008 and 2016, for example. Of those incidents, they attributed "Islamist" motives to 63, or around 31 percent. Nearly twice as many incidents, 115, were motivated by rightwing ideologies or zealotry, such as white supremacy or anti-abortion beliefs (Neiwert et al. 2017). However, despite this reality, the fear that Muslims will face backlash if an attacker is identified as Muslim is both well-founded and persistent. After the 2013 bombings at the Boston Marathon, for example, ABC News quoted Ibrahim Rahim, the Imam at a mosque in Boston, as saying: "Dear Lord, God, please whatever this yields, let it not be something that can in anyway be associated with Islam" (R. Goldman 2013). The reporter also interviewed Daisy Khan, then director of the American Society of Muslim Advancement. She described her feelings of the event in nearly identical terms as Tariq did about attacks more broadly: "My first reaction was I hope it's not a Muslim. … If a Muslim did this, it will set the Muslim community back a decade. … It will feed into the perception that Muslims are terrorists. Children are more likely to be bullied at school, individuals at work will be treated with suspicion by their coworkers" (ibid.). Khan even started a Twitter campaign with the hashtag: "ihopeitsnotamuslim." Expressing the same feeling as Tariq and those quoted here, in an interview on NPR's program *All Things Considered* after the 2013 bombings, Omid Safi, a professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, told host Jacki Lyden: "My first thoughts were actually to pause and to sit in grief. As it became clear … that the two suspects are Muslims of Chechen background living in America. … I think there were a lot of people in the Muslim community who were afraid and fearful that this would trigger somehow another wave of backlash against American Muslims. … And, in fact … we did see that those fears were not unfounded. There was a Bangladeshi man in Bronx who was beaten up by people who called him an effing Arab, apparently confusing Arabs and Bangladeshis and Chechens. There was a … Syrian-American doctor in Massachusetts, who was walking her daughter in a stroller to a play date, and someone came up and punched her in the shoulder and said: Eff you. Eff you, Muslims. You're terrorists. You're the ones who made the Boston explosion" (Danger In Conflation: Separating Islam From Acts Of Terror 2013). At the time of the Boston bombings, I was working for AAFSC and we had a field trip scheduled the day after the attack to take a group of mostly Yemeni and Yemeni-American students to visit a local Museum. The staff at AAFSC were acutely aware of the two incidents Safi described above and we decided to cancel the trip for fear that a large group of young Arab-Americans would be a visible target for such hate crimes.

In less stark terms, Zaid experienced a sense of difference "because I am a foreigner" (February 27, 2018). As he put it, "I am not an American citizen, I am a *naturalized* citizen. … Not an American born citizen" (ibid.). Elaborating, he especially had this sense when he visited the state of Kentucky with a friend: "It was like everyone was just staring at you" (ibid.). As Zaid related it, his friend, who is white but originally from Russia, shared this perception: "She's Russian. I mean, she's white. But you can tell that she's not from here. And she got the same feeling. You know?" (ibid.). I asked Zaid whether he believed that this feeling would change in the future and he said: "I think not. No, I think not. With everything going [on] now, with unfortunately having a racist president [Trump]. This is my feeling. This is the way I feel now" (ibid.).

Nora, too, speculated that perhaps she had had interpersonal issues in Harrisonburg, Virginia because she was "different." I asked her whether her background as an Iraqi had created any challenges for her in the United States and she said:

> No. I think people have challenges, no matter where they are from. It depends on the person that you're dealing with, right? I don't [think it is] because I am from Iraq. I don't look at it this way. But I think because, I don't know, maybe because I'm different than [other Harrisonburg residents]. Like, I don't have the southern accent, with the blonde hair (Nora February 6, 2018)

She asserted that some Americans would always treat her differently based on her country of origin: "No matter what's your language, even if you don't have an accent but, people always treat you as where you're from, even if you get citizenship" (ibid.). However, she continued with a laugh, only a minority might treat her that way: "Not all of them, but one [in] twenty will. So, it's ok, it's only one. You have 19 [more] that welcome you [and] that's ok" (ibid.).

I asked Omar the same question concerning whether his background as an Iraqi had created any challenges for him and he argued that rather than proving a hindrance, his Iraqi

origin provided a justification for his presence in the U.S.: "If you are being asked why are you here, for example, I would definitely say: 'I came here because of the war that I didn't create.' So, it's kind of [a] justification [to] help me justify my presence here" (December 14, 2017). He continued to explain how this aspect of his background could be used as a way to exercise voice in asserting his right to live in the United States:

> As an aid, I would use it definitely. … Because I worked as [an] interpreter for the U.S. troops. And [for] that reason my father [was] killed. And, I have sacrificed a lot to [the] U.S., more than anyone who's asking this question or [other] citizens. Easily I can ask him: 'What did you give to your country? Other than the taxes that you are giving. Did you give your son? Your father?' So, the war actually it's not challenging here for me. But, I mean, challenging back home (ibid.).

As a follow-up, I asked Omar whether he felt the need to justify himself to Americans or whether anyone had asked him to do so:

> The problem [is] because they think that they have the right. And to be honest with you: They don't because they are immigrant[s] like us. And, we all should justify our presence here to the Native Americans (ibid.).

In his view, those Americans who would ask him to justify his presence would do so because they had been affected by propaganda: "To justify, I mean, it's something that [has] propaganda for it, everywhere. So, people believe it" (ibid.).

More explicitly than asking why he was in the U.S., Mohammed indicated that he had experienced individuals telling him to leave the country. At one point, he held a job at the Buffalo Niagara International Airport that involved enforcing traffic and parking rules and preventing cars from approaching the security entrance. Occasionally while enforcing the rules, individuals had yelled at him, "Go back to your country!" He noted that he laughs this sort of remark off and observed that, "I don't care about it. I just told them: 'I respect that, just move your car'" (Mohammed November 2, 2017). He interpreted this as a type of interaction that could occur in any society. As he explained:

> I think this is normal and happen[s] [in] each country… they have bad and good people. But 75% of the people [are] good. So, this [does not] mean … this country is not good … Anywhere you can find good people and bad people, but I think the people here [are] really good people, really friendly. Yeah. No issues from racists. No, I didn't see anything [like that] (ibid.).

Mohammed, had, however, encountered the attitude that he should accept without question his circumstances and remain silent. He chose to exercise agency and voice in this situation. Soon after resettling, his resettlement organization caseworker told him the only available employment entailed cleaning cages at the Buffalo Zoo. As Mohammed narrated:

> I told them: 'I don't have any issue with this job. But I can't do that. I work[ed] with the government in Iraq. So how can I go to [the Zoo]? I'm sorry, I graduate[ed] with a [technical degree] in Iraq.' So, he told me: 'Okay [go] back [to] your country if you want to.' This [made] me very, very, very upset. … I told him: 'Okay, you can fix up my country and I will [go] back tomorrow morning. You [brought] me here. I [had a] civil war.'… So, I told him I don't need cash, I don't need food stamps. I decided to work (ibid.).

Thereafter, Mohammed declined any further services from the resettlement agency and set out to find employment on his own. He first found employment delivering pizza and then at a Walmart before securing the job described above in airport security. At the time of our interview, he was working as a caseworker at a social services organization.

In addition to markers of difference like those noted by Nora above, such as speaking English with an accent, physical features or hair color, a particularly visible sign of Islamic faith are the various types of head coverings some Muslim women wear. Only one of the women I interviewed, Marwa, wore a *ḥijab*. The other women with whom I spoke did not. Marwa did not express any concern about covering her hair in Buffalo. Rather, she said:

> Sometime[s] when I'm [at an] event with my community, like for [a] wedding party or funeral, [friends may ask]: '[You] wear a scarf, you are *muḥajiba* [a woman who wears *ḥijab*]. [Do] you find [a] hard time?' I say: 'No, absolute[ly] no.' … They respect that. I didn't find any disrespect. From my experience, no (Marwa November 25, 2017).

However, several of the men with whom I spoke discussed women they know who, they believed, were facing prejudice or harassment or may in the future. Tariq, for example, expressed fear of walking in public and a particular concern for his wife because she covers her hair and therefore is visibly Muslim. He said: "My wife wear[s] a headscarf and [I am] afraid somebody will kill her or hit her. This is a big mess. You know, this is what we think all the time about. … You can identify [Muslim women] easily" (ibid.).

Ali worried as well about incidents targeting women who cover their hair, including his mother. "What I am hearing from friends," he said:

> If they wear *ḥijab*, they pull the *ḥijab* from them, they spit on them. They curse them. … I have my mother, she wears a *ḥijab* and I'm afraid [for] her when she goes out. She [doesn't] speak the language. So, maybe she doesn't understand when someone curse[s] [at] her … or someone spit[s] on her (Ali January 14, 2018).

According to a 2018 New York City Commission on Human Rights report, such incidents are common in New York City, where Ali lives.[67] He continued, arguing that members of the government had failed to speak against such actions:

> In the past, you used to hear [of] one, two [such incidents] in different states. Some happened here. … Now, it's increasing a lot … and increasing in a dangerous path.[68] No one is doing [anything]. No one [such as the president] is going out and speaking saying: 'This is not acceptable. This is not what we do. This is not what the Constitution says.' These are my fears, you know? These are what I'm thinking of (ibid.).

Walid, who has founded and leads several organizations serving refugees, used a part of his interview to share his experience working with the Iraqi and Muslim communities in Buffalo.

[67] At the time of interview, such an incident had not occurred to Ali's mother. However, a 2018 New York City Commission on Human Rights survey of more than 3,000 Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish and Sikh New Yorkers found that 38.7% of respondents had experienced "verbal harassment, threats or taunting referring to race, ethnicity or religion" (The New York City Commission on Human Rights, Frazer, and Howe 2018, 9) and 27.4% of Muslim Arab women wearing a *ḥijab* reporting being pushed or shoved intentionally on a subway platform.
[68] FBI hate crime data, likely an undercount of such incidents, shows an uptick in reported incidents in 2015, the year the 2016 presidential election campaign began, from 154 in 2014 to 257. Reported hate crimes increased again in 2016 to 307 before falling to 273 in 2017. Despite the drop in such incidents in the most recent available data, the 2017 number remains significantly higher than that for 2014 ("Incidents 2014" 2015; "Incidents 2015" 2016; "Incidents 2016" 2017; "Incidents 2017" 2018).

Drawing from these interactions he said about women encountering issues because they cover their hair:

> [Others] don't know I'm a Muslim from my face, probably. But they know the woman with her scarf. These women [pointing to two women wearing brightly colored headscarves sitting on a nearby park bench], I know [are] probably from Somalia or Sudan. Having this scarf, my perception, they are Muslim. … I have [had] some famil[ies] mention they use [the] metro and somebody tried to say bad words about that and make these women feel unsafe and uncomfortable (Walid September 27, 2017).

Walid and fellow organization members encouraged women to voice safety concerns to the police:

> We told them if something like this happen[s] call 911 and tell them I'm not feeling safe somebody is saying something. Also, we try to educate and tell them what they [are] supposed to do if something like this happen[s]. Some women start to think about taking off the *ḥijab* because they are not feeling safe. I found this [concerning]. It's kind of [a] shame the society [is not educated about practices such as wearing a head covering] (ibid).

We Want to Be Like Everyone Else

Hashim and Tariq stressed that they had resettled in the United States to pursue building lives exactly as native-born Americans do. They desired safety from conflict for themselves and their families, economic opportunities and engagement in their communities. In this way, they desire to live like "everyone else." Both Hashim and Tariq put it in the same language saying resettled Iraqis are not "aliens." At the end of our interview, Hashim emphasized his shared humanity with Americans laughingly saying: "We are not coming from a different world. … We are not aliens" (October 1, 2017). In remarkably similar language Tariq said: "We're not aliens… from [a] different universe. We're just people" (November 2, 2017).

Hashim argued "We are here because [we] escaped from there. We escaped from [everything] happening there. … We are not going to do anything bad in this country" (October 1, 2017). Reacting to the rhetoric and policies originating in the Trump White House, he observed "Maybe I agree … with [setting] strict[er] rules on people that did bad things, … let's

say the bad people. I really agree on that, to go after them. To try to set strict[er] rules on them. But, not on everyone. This is very [un]acceptable" (ibid.). He continued, rejecting the idea of banning Muslims or other groups from entering the United States:

> You cannot just say that we ban Muslims from entering the country. [This is] completely not fair, you know? The Muslim community or the Iraqi community or any other community, they have been here for many years and they did something. They participated in the community. … Many of them, I am not saying that everyone is bad, or everyone is good, but many they have been here for many years and all [of] them they have their goals in life. They want to just be safe, to just get a good education, to just get good healthcare for their families. We are just try[ing] to be safe here and plan for our future. … The majority of immigrants, 90 percent of them, are here for [a] better life (ibid.).

Later in our conversation, Hashim reiterated this point saying:

> I'm not asking for us to be treated differently, I'm just asking for us to be treated just like everyone else. … Everything now is against Muslims, Arabs and Iraqis, all the media and all [of] the official[s], I think this is very wrong. … We're just like Europeans here. Just like Chinese here. Just like everyone else in this world. So … it's just difficult for us to be treated this way. We're not asking to be treated in a different way (ibid.).

Tariq too indicated that he wants to "live like anybody else" (November 2, 2017) as a member of the community:

> Me and my family, and I have a lot of friends [who] all come with degrees. And we want to … live in the U.S., be part of the U.S. community and live like anybody else. You know, live next to everybody and you wake up in the morning, say hi to everybody, live in peace (ibid.).

He reiterated this point later in our conversation saying "we came here to be like anybody else. We work and we want to be like anybody … and we live our lives. We love [the] U.S., that's why we moved here" (ibid.). Moreover, like Omar, Ali and others, Tariq worked with the U.S. military after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. In similar terms as Omar detailed above, he noted his service to the American Marines as a justification for having the opportunity to live like others in the U.S. He asserted his own agency by explaining:

> I put my life in danger, probably a lot of people they didn't do anything, even here. I served with the Marines. Probably, there's a lot [of] men or people, they served. But there

> is still a huge [number], they didn't even serve. And then they want to know about it. So, this should really [demonstrate to] people that: Come on, people they put their life [at] risk, they help[ed] you see your father back home safe, see your son, see your wife, see your daughter back safe and he's [never been to the] U.S. before. So why did [they do that]? For fun? Nobody join[s] the Marines or army in general for fun. There's no fun there. And then, so they just want [Americans to] give us an opportunity (ibid.).

Islam and Muslims: Uniquely Violent?

It was important to Nada to preface our conversation by stating:

> Of course, my religion is Muslim and really, I am proud of this. I want to [show] everyone here what [it means to be] Muslim. I know they have the wrong idea about Muslim[s]. But I'm a Muslim and I love all the religion[s] here, … everyone here, really because they respect me, so I respect them. And when I came here, they helped me so much and helped my family. So, I love [all the] people here. Everyone here. … Just, I want to say that (November 1, 2017).

I understood her insistence as pushing back against the widespread trope in this country that Islam is inherently and uniquely violent among religions and cultures of the world and that she was taking the opportunity of our interview to voice an alternative, more accurate, understanding.

This notion is long-standing and is repeated by American commentators and politicians, both self-described conservatives and liberals, with agendas in support of wars such as those in Iraq and American foreign policy goals throughout the Middle East.[69] Ahmed, for example, said,

[69] The portrayal of Islam as essentially irrational, violent and dangerous is pervasive in American cultural and political discourses. Conservative religious figures, for example, such as televangelist Pat Robertson, have declared "we have to recognize that Islam is not a religion. It is a worldwide political movement meant [*sic*] on domination of the world. And it is meant to subjugate all people under Islamic law" (Waldman 2016). This language undermining Islam as a religious tradition emanates from government as well. For example, Michael Flynn, retired U.S. Army Lt. General, former Defense Intelligence Agency director under President Barack Obama, and former National Security Advisor to Donald Trump, has a long history of inflammatory rhetoric about Islam. He, too, has claimed that Islam is an ideology, not a religion. Flynn is an advisor to the board of directors for ACT for America, a hate group that the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has characterized as the "largest anti-Muslim group in America" (ACT for America n.d.). In 2016, he tweeted "Fear of Islam is RATIONAL" [emphasis in original] and in a speech that year declared "We are facing another 'ism,' just like we faced Nazism, and fascism. … This is Islamism, it is a vicious cancer inside the body of 1.7 billion people on this planet and it has to be excised" (Kaczynski 2016). Flynn has also called Islam as a whole a "cancer" in the past (ibid.). Therefore, despite the apparent distinction drawn between "Islamism," and the religion itself and its practitioners, Flynn's invocation of a "cancer" inside 1.7 billion people indicates a belief that any and all Muslims are "infected" with the "disease" of an ideology he compared to fascism.

"you get accustomed, especially after all the events in the last 20 years that [have] happened, you get a certain stereotyp[ed] image about the Middle East" (October 2, 2017). Abdullah similarly argued that it is important to be willing to recognize and encourage nuance "because there are a lot of people from the West who [assert that] all Arabs and Muslims [are] attacking everybody (January 14, 2018).

Other interviewees also pushed back, arguing that groups such as ISIS claiming to act in the name of Islam were violating, rather than upholding Islamic principles. Unlike some American commentators or politicians who assert the uniquely violent character of Islam, but who have little knowledge of its traditions, these interviewees rejected that claim from within that faith. In this way, they set and (re)interpreted boundaries around what qualifies as authentic and inauthentic Islam. In characterizing the intercommunal violence in Iraq after 2003, for example, Sarah said that Sunni would kill Shia and Shia would kill Sunni. However, those who killed based upon this division within Islam were not genuine Muslims, in her view: "These people, we think, [they're] not Muslims. [They're] not Muslims, maybe. Bad people, yes, that's why [so] many people from Iraq escape[d] (Sarah November 30, 2017). Like Nada, Sarah emphasized that she respected everyone, regardless of their religion or race. She too stressed that:

> Muslim people, in general, the basic Muslim people [are] peace[ful] people. … In general, the Muslim people don't … hurt [others]. I think that and I see all the Muslim people like that. And, I respect my religion and I don't have any problem with any [other] religion (ibid.).

As Walid put it in similar terms:

> There [are] in every religion, in every society, there [are] good people and bad people and some of these bad people they use religion as a tool to justify their criminal [acts]. And they are not Muslim. … [I] consider them criminal people because Islam teach[es] me

In the mid-2000s, the term "Islamofascism" came into vogue among some cultural commentators, liberal and conservative, to describe America's supposed enemies in "The War on Terror" (Hitchens 2007; Judt 2006).

> how to love people, how to help. … We give to charity, the same as Christianity. There is no difference. We never heard about these bad people who attack[ed] [the] United States on 9/11 and it's all related to politics. They use religion to justify their political opinion[s] (Walid September 27, 2017).

He framed the motivations for such acts as reacting to U.S. violence in the Middle East. In his estimation, the perpetrators followed the logic, "Why [did] you attack [the] Middle East? We want to attack you" (ibid.).[70] He continued: "And this is not [about] religion. This is a war between countr[ies], not religion" (ibid.). In Walid's view, and as polling data suggests (Poushter 2015), "many people disagree about this kind of criminal behavior of some people who consider [themselves] … Muslim" (Walid September 27, 2017).[71]

Finally, as explained in more detail in the following chapter, Wissam noted the Islamic injunction to protect Christian and Jewish houses of worship. Therefore, he argued, "What they're doing is all false," (October 22, 2017) when ISIS and similar groups that claim to act in the name of religion attack such sites in Iraq.

Two individuals, Kasim and Tariq, pushed back against the notion of Islam as inherently violent in strikingly similar language. Tariq strongly refuted the notion that Islam is "bad," and that Muslims are raised to hate and kill.[72] As he explained:

> You [have] to understand [that] when somebody shoot[s], [it] doesn't mean all of us want to shoot. I keep telling them, if it's our religion that's bad, we are a billion and a half. So, if we are raised to kill people, [a] billion and a half, … we will fight everybody. Probably

[70] Indeed, Osama bin Laden, who claimed responsibility for the attack, justified it on these exact grounds. In his "Letter to America" he answered the question "why are we fighting and opposing you" directly: "Because you attacked us and continue to attack us" in Palestine, Somalia and Kashmir and elsewhere. In his letter, he specifically mentioned the starving of 1.5 million Muslim children in Iraq under sanctions to justify the attack (bin Laden 2002).
[71] Furthermore, a 2011 Gallup poll of 131 countries found that survey respondents living in Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states were less likely to justify military attacks on civilians (18%) than non-OIC member state respondents (24%). Americans were the most likely population to justify violence against civilians (49%) of any country surveyed. Only 8% of Iraqis said targeting and killing civilians is sometimes justified (Views of Violence 2011). The survey also found no correlation between religiosity and support for attacking civilians.
[72] This stereotype about Islam is longstanding as well. In 1990, for example, the Orientalist scholar Bernard Lewis wrote an article for *The Atlantic* on "The Roots of Muslim Rage." Lewis portrayed Muslim responses as emotional and out of proportion to interests or policies that may affect them. He asserted that many Muslims hate "the West," pathologizing responses to colonization and U.S. support for authoritarian regimes as a facet of "humiliation" in the face of ascendant Eurocentric culture and values (Lewis 1990).

> [there will] be war, from [a] long time ago, because, we're raised to kill people, right? So, why if I [was] raised to kill people, I'm here and we should fight [all the] time. … Fighting everybody because we hate everybody. This is what you guys think. No! If we [were] raised to kill [everyone], I told you, we are a billion and a half! We are going to [have a] Third [World] War … or … you know, the First World War [would have been] us against everybody" (Tariq November 2, 2017).

Tariq continued by saying that if all of these assumptions were true, he and I would not have been sitting in his living room and talking. In very similar terms, Kasim articulated the view that many Americans already know this, and that they understand that the problem is not Islam, *per se*. As he argued:

> [I] remember when 9/11 happened, there [were] a lot of incidents against Muslims. … When we came here, we didn't find that. That sentiment was gone already. And, people [have] come to realize after all these years that the problem is not Muslim[s]. The problem is … terrorists.[73] If you think it's the Muslims, there [are] over a billion Muslims in this world. If they do the same thing [commit acts of terrorism], the world [would] be like hell [for] everybody. So that's not the case (Kasim February 27, 2018).

He went on to attribute the notion that all Muslims are violent to "propaganda." He said:

> This is propaganda some people use against Muslims and we know who they are. But the general public [has] now [come] to [its] senses: 'These people [are] just like us.' You know? And we find terrorists everywhere, in every culture, in every time. You find sick people anywhere, everywhere in any community. So, … it's a good thing, I think society probably realized that to a big extent.

Kasim did not clarify whom he meant when he said that "some people" use propaganda against Muslims. However, even though he is a Donald Trump supporter, later in our discussion, he called Trump's rhetoric racist and propaganda.[74]

[73] Interestingly, Pew polls indicated that in March 2002, six months after the September 11, 2001 attacks, only 25% of respondents reported they believed that Islam encouraged violence among its adherents (U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream 2017a). That figure peaked at 50% in 2014 and fell to 41% in 2017, still significantly higher than in the aftermath of 9/11.

[74] Kasim went on to explain that perhaps terrorism of the sort carried out by ISIS was, in a way, good for both Muslims and non-Muslims. He said: "Probably what happened with the terrorism, it's probably good for both: for the Muslims and non-Muslims. In Iraq, they say it was the thing that happened with ISIS and all that, it was a terrible thing. But it was that [which made] the country come together (Kasim February 27, 2018).

Arabic as Dangerous Speech

Tariq, Omar and Nora described a particular silencing around expressing themselves in languages other than English. Not only did some of those with whom I spoke perceive their religious background, or that attributed to them, as problematic in terms of how they were viewed by other Americans, but several interviewees also shared that they were often uncomfortable speaking their native language, Arabic, in public spaces. Tariq said, for example, "At the airport, if I speak my language, they could kick me out easily" (November 2, 2017).[75] Although he did not reference any specific incidents of this happening to himself or others, there have been multiple cases in recent years of individuals interrogated by airport security for carrying Arabic flashcards (N. George 2015), detained before boarding a flight after passengers complained about overhearing Arabic (Arabic speaker detained from flight after nervous passenger complains 2015) and removed from flights simply for speaking Arabic on the plane (Hassan and Shoichet 2016).[76] Moreover, various agencies such as the NYPD and FBI have targeted and profiled those of Arab descent or Muslim religious background for increased surveillance and scrutiny in airports, Mosques and community organizations for many years (Kumar 2012, 144).

[75] The experience of airports as a site of discrimination against Arabs, Muslims, and those assumed to fall into such categories is widespread. For example, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) released a report in 2017 discussing the phenomenon of "Flying while Muslim" (The Empowerment of Hate 2017). A play on the term "Driving while Black," the American vernacular name given to the increased police suspicion and racial profiling of African-American motorists, Flying while Muslim describes the similar situation in which those outwardly appearing Muslim and/or of Middle Eastern origin are targeted and assumed to be dangerous. As CAIR define the term: "Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, commercial airlines have increasingly subjected passengers who are, or are perceived to be, Muslim and/or Middle Eastern to profiling and discrimination by either refusing to allow them to board planes or by removing them from flights" (ibid.). Speaking Arabic is one marker that is used by fearful travelers and airport security to profile an individual into such groups.

[76] Similarly, in January 2019, two women, both American citizens, were detained for 40 minutes by a U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent simply for speaking Spanish. The women recorded the agent saying "the reason I asked you for your ID is because I came in here and I saw that you guys are speaking Spanish, which is very unheard of up here" (Chappell 2019).

Omar suggested that those overhearing Arabic spoken in public spaces might deem it inappropriate and that he might be disliked simply for speaking it. As he explained:

> In a public café, we do not try to speak Arabic [loudly]. … You know, it's also not appropriate in terms of being liked by others. [They may think]: 'Oh hey, these people are speak[ing] Arabic? Oh man, we'd rather not have this.' Usually, if you are going for enjoyment or entertainment … we'd rather not. Sometimes, we socialize in [an] Arabic café, for example, here. But other places, no. Yeah, we'd rather not [speak Arabic] (Omar December 14, 2017).

Nora too perceived spaces in which speaking her native Arabic had proven problematic: "Sometimes just people look at you [for speaking Arabic], but I don't care. If this is the way my mom [who does not speak English] will understand me, no, my mom is way [more] important than the public" (Nora February 6, 2018). She also gave an example of her work, wherein speaking in Arabic was essential and was interpreted as a problem. Nora works as a caseworker assisting Arabic-speaking clients. She related a story in which she and a client met with a representative from a government agency that she preferred not to name. In this case, an individual with whom Nora had to interact in her work had perhaps viewed speaking a foreign language more broadly, rather than Arabic specifically, as a problem. As Nora recalled:

> I've been kicked out [of] one of the government agenc[ies] here. And I felt it was obvious she just dealt with me based on where I am coming from. And I went to the refugee office [where Nora works] and I told them this happened and they [said]: 'Well this is not the first time. She did that with the caseworker before you, the same person. So, we know that.' … I met her the second day; I went and I talked and I just completely ignored her (ibid.).

I asked Nora to elaborate on the specific incident and she continued:

> I was with my client … but because we spoke our language in front of her, she was like: 'Oh, I don't trust you, you might do this, and this is his case.' I was like, 'I am his social worker, I am authorized to speak about his situation. And, if he doesn't have the language and you did not bring [an] interpreter, how will [he] be able to understand you? He just came and he need[s] his [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) card]. You know, I cannot just use his welcome money to bring him food.' … She's like, 'You get out of the building!' And that day I swear my blood pressure went up high because I did not answer her. I just [stood up like] this: 'Can I have the card now?' And she gave it [to] me, I was like: 'Thank you.' And left (ibid.).

Unease and Uncertainty: Longstanding and Newly Piqued

In addition to the tensions between belonging and "strangeness" and othering by some members of American society, some interviewees indicated they or others they knew experienced a sense of precarity and constrained agency living in the United States. For Nada, this was a long-standing sense, while for others like Abdullah, Omar and Nora, it first arose within the context of the 2016 election and Donald Trump's xenophobic and anti-refugee election campaign. Multiple interviewees identified a sense of growing unease since the 2016 presidential election and executive actions such as the 2017 Travel Ban that attempted to bar refugees from seven countries, including Iraq initially, from entering the U.S.: "I don't know what he's going to do or what his next step will be," Ali said, for example (January 14, 2018). Although not everyone indicated that they opposed the Trump Administration's policies, individuals like Nada, Abdullah and Omar discussed how executive actions and immigration policies had contributed to a sense of foreboding for themselves or for others they knew.

Nada, for example, discussed how as a Green Card holder, she knew she had a legal right to travel within the United States as well as outside of the country. Nevertheless, she was afraid to exercise that right. She said:

> I want to visit some [other countries]. Really, but I [am] afraid. I want, for example, to visit Canada. I want to see it. … But, I [am] afraid because I have a Green Card, just a Green Card. I know I can do it. The rules [allow me] to do that. But, I [am] scared because sometimes, for example, Trump … decided the rules, I can't come back again. Because I have just the Green Card. This is my [fear] (Nada November 1, 2017).[77]

Although Nada did not directly connect this fear to the Travel Ban, when it initially went into effect, thousands of individuals were detained at airports, some for multiple days (Cheng 2017). Media reports indicate that in some cases legal permanent residents were among those

[77] Only Congress can pass laws. However, Presidential Executive Orders like the Travel Ban do not require Congressional approval and have the force of law (Executive Power n.d.).

detained, including Iraqi SIV recipients (Darweesh 2017; Macguire, Gostanian, and Ortiz 2017). Hundreds of others with "legal visas or refugee status" were prevented from boarding flights bound for the U.S. at foreign points of origin (Gomez 2017). Nada's fear increased under Trump, but she was also nervous to travel under his predecessor, Barack Obama. As an SIV recipient, she said "I know that Iraq [compared] with another country, they give us more chances to come [to the United States]. But, I [am] afraid. I want to protect myself and my family" (ibid.). Fortunately, at the time of our interview, Nada had only one more year until she could apply for citizenship after which time, she believed this concern would dissipate.

Abdullah also expressed an increased feeling of uncertainty: "I feel less protected. Any decision that president [Trump] might make could directly affect me. And, I'm living on the edge right now" (January 14, 2018). As he continued to explain: "Honestly, since he got elected until now, every day he comes [up] with some order and I'm basically freaking out. [Am] I staying here or not?" (ibid.). At the time of our interview, Abdullah had been granted Optional Practical Training (OPT) status, which allowed him to remain in the United States for up to three years to work after he had concluded his studies in engineering. This program is among the immigration policies that Trump has said he would seek to reduce or eliminate (F-1 Student Visa, Optional Practical Training Risks Continue 2018). As he put it, "I'm on OPT status and he is pushing to change that. So … basically, I have a right [to live in the U.S.], he might basically be able to take it, to take my right" (ibid.).

Abdullah suggested that this insecurity was the primary challenge he faced in his daily life:

> So that part is the main thing that is annoying me right now. If you asked me, what is the biggest struggle right now, it would be that because I'm going to work and doing everything fine. I'm moving up in the company and all of that could change in one day (ibid.).

As he continued to explain:

> So, right now, I don't feel as protected as before. For sure. It is very stressful … because in that case, you feel like you have no rights. Because even if your paper[s] are fine and if you have the right to stay here, you feel, not safe (ibid.).

During our conversation, Omar returned to one of the first questions I asked him; whether he planned to remain in the U.S. permanently, saying:

> Back to your question about if I'm [going] home or staying, that also has something to do [with whether] the community will keep accepting me or not. Recently there are some signals that: 'Oh, you guys, you are bad.' Even though we were productive. We were clean. We were educated. We were paying taxes. But still, if someone did something, that will be counted for all people from that country or ethnicity or religion (December 14, 2017).

Omar saw a change in the way he and others like him were being treated in his community since the election of Donald Trump. That shift emanating from Washington would "impact the whole nation, whether it is negative or positive," he said (ibid.). Omar noted as well the effects the President's rhetoric and actions were having on children, including his own, in his community. He related a story about a recent incident in which classmates bullied his fourth-grade son, calling him names such as "terrorist." Despite this episode, and his overall sense that there was less support coming from the national government, he perceived his local context, the city of Harrisonburg, Virginia, as overall supportive of immigrants and refugees: "[In] Harrisonburg people are, I would say 90 percent of them, very good. Yeah. That [is] what made me [live here] 9 years. It's a unique city" (ibid.).

Nora described the day after Trump's election in 2016 and the way in which one of her American friends reacted:

> When he [Trump] [got] elected, I remember the second day, I couldn't sleep, so I [woke] up [at] 7 o'clock. I was going to my job and then my friend, she's American, called me and her son was crying and was like: 'Are you going to leave the United States because Trump is going to make you leave?' And I was like: 'No, I'm not going to leave. I need you to be there for me. Okay?' And, my friend's like: 'I'm sorry, I want [to] apologize to

> [your] mom. I know she's waiting [for] your brother to come … but, we're here for you' (February 6, 2018).

Mohammed spoke of others' fear saying "Some people [are] scared [of] the president right now. I [will be] clear with you. … We don't know what the government will be deciding in the future (November 2, 2017). "But," he continued:

> I'm sure the American Congress and American people, in my small experience, they didn't accept anything racist or anything like this. They will support us, and I think that because I read about the American people in history and … the American people don't accept racism (ibid.).

Although Trump appears on TV and threatens refugees with harmful policies that would "push the people outside America," (ibid.), Mohammed was confident he would be prevented from enacting them: "[It will] never happen because the Constitution, I think, the Constitution protect[s] the people. Not just the refugee[s], all the people in America" (ibid.). Mohammed was especially convinced that community members and the local government in Buffalo would protect the rights of people like himself.

Speaking to the environment in Buffalo as well, Walid said that Trump's election in 2016 created difficulties for his work with refugee communities in the area. This was particularly true because many of those with whom he interacts have family members abroad awaiting resettlement: "It does create challeng[es]. We still have many famil[ies] overseas. They are waiting [to] join their family member[s] here. And all the process is now a mess. They don't [know] what's going to happen" (Walid September 27, 2017). At the time Walid and I spoke, significant uncertainty remained as to the legality of the Travel Ban. He received a phone call during our conversation from a Green Card holder living in Buffalo whose wife was in Lebanon. Her visa application had been pending for three years before the Trump Administration began and that process was suspended after Trump's election. According to Walid, the pair were considering divorce because the husband wished to remain in the U.S., but after waiting three

years without resolution, the wife wanted him to return to Lebanon. Walid said similar uncertainty had created difficulties for other families with which he works: “We see some people waiting [for] their mom, some people [for] their daughter and it’s [causing] emotional difficulties for many family members with [the] new polic[ies] of the Administration” (ibid.).

Because of a profound sense of insecurity, constrained agency and voicelessness, Tariq said many individuals from the Middle East would avoid confrontation, even if they believe they are in the right because they are afraid that American society and government are predisposed against them. He said “This is the toughest part. And this [is] what the people [are] living now with Trump’s era. … He [Trump] said it: ‘If you do anything, you’re out!’ (Tariq November 2, 2017). With such constraints, he questioned what he should or could do. As a hypothetical example, he expressed voicelessness, saying that even if he were physically assaulted, he felt he could not assert his right to safety: “If I walk in the alley and somebody hit[s] me, I can’t say [anything], you know?” (ibid.).

He went on to say that as someone in a precarious position, he empathized with those individuals affected by Hurricane Harvey, a severe storm that struck Texas in the months before our interview: “I was really touched,” he said, “if you are in my position, probably you feel [this situation] a little bit” (ibid.). As he explained, and media reported at the time, many of the people displaced by the storm were undocumented migrants who were afraid of calling the police or emergency services for help or seeking recovery assistance after the storm because they could be arrested and/or deported (Capps and Soto 2018, 3). As a result, they faced danger and even risked death. Police representatives and officials in some areas made public calls that those affected could seek help without fear of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), but many of those affected remained fearful (Owen 2018).

Tariq said that this situation was the same for him:

> I am legally here, but I'm scared to do it because no matter what … I'm not from here. I don't speak the language [fluently] that they speak. Maybe they [police or judges] [would] use [a] term I don't understand … against me. And he [Trump] make[s] this one [police and judges] very strong now. If you hit somebody, immigrants, they just walk away. So, he is going to create a massive … disaster. It's a dictatorship. This is how they buil[t] a dictatorship in Iraq. This is how we [had] Saddam Hussein. If you say something: Boom! Done, you're gone. And your family (Tariq November 2, 2017).

He then described what he viewed as the process by which government can move toward authoritarianism and highlighted signs in American society that such a shift was occurring. As he argued:

> This is how it starts. You say something, you get kicked. Or you, they put [a negative mark] on you when you apply for a job. They know you are bad; you are from this family, you are done. And then day after day, he has more power because people gave him power. Nobody say[s] no to him. So, he gain[s] more power, start[ing] now. Not kick you from the house or [deny you] a job; now he can kill you. He killed one, two, and everybody. Oh, it's fine. Nobody say[s] [anything], okay let me take his family. Then you say something, and [they] take your family. This is how the life in Iraq was (ibid.).

Consequences of Demonization

Tariq, Nora, Ali and Zaid all discussed the potential ramifications for individuals when the President and other elected and appointed officials rhetorically attack Muslims, refugees and other immigrants, and enact restrictive policies. Such actions by government officials intersect with disproportionate media coverage of acts of terrorism committed by Muslims compared with others and narratives in popular culture that portray Islam as dangerous and violent as described above. Tariq and Nora spoke of the radicalizing effects this scenario can have on those so targeted. Ali and Zaid suggested that perceived government support for demonization gives license to racists to act in aggressive and violent ways toward refugees.

In Tariq's experience, many immigrants believed they did not need to worry about policies that would make it more difficult for others to enter the U.S. because they had already successfully immigrated: "a lot of people think: 'Oh yeah, because I'm here, I'm good'"

(November 2, 2017). In fact, Kasim, expressed this exact view, as I describe in more detail in the discussion of the Travel Ban in Chapter 6. This was a mistaken understanding according to Tariq because such policies can radicalize those targeted:

> Because there [are] a lot of people [who] want to be here. What about if I'm there, and I'm waiting desperately to move. And I have a death threat. And now, for example, I believe a lot of people have the same thing. Like I have a death threat and now Trump ban[ned] me from going. What should [I] do? Get killed? And that's it? What are you going to do when you have this situation? Probably, you will join ISIS and fight [the] U.S. Why [did] they do that? I help[ed] you and now you kick me out? You don't want to have my family and [me]. So, we shouldn't underestimate these things (ibid).

Tariq argued that Trump does not care about the long-term consequences of his actions. "How long you going to be president?" he asked, "Four more years? And then what? You're gone. You are going to create something, a massive problem elsewhere, they are going to fight" (ibid.). Conversely, he said this situation could change "if we [had] support from people, from the White House, from Washington and the news stop[ped] [perpetuating anti-Muslim discourses]" (ibid.). He hoped to see less division in the future in the United States.

The assumption of danger targeted against those already in the U.S. has far-reaching ramifications, Tariq argued. "It's not going to affect me," he said, "because [of how] I [was] born and raised, I'm strong. I know that's not us" (ibid.). However, the danger, according to Tariq, is that children of Muslim backgrounds born in the U.S. will:

> Grow [up] on hate. Watch the news: 'Muslim, Muslim, Muslim.' And he's Muslim and he's a kid. And he's not going to understand. So, you create[d] that beast and then he grow[s] up a little bit, he now wanted to be a Muslim. But he went to the wrong side. People like ISIS, they say: 'We are Muslims' (ibid.).

As Tariq pointed out, reviewing the small number of terrorist plots or attacks involving Muslims, the overwhelming majority involved American-born, rather than foreign-born, individuals (Neiwert 2017). Despite this reality, as noted above, in the United States, news media disproportionately cover terrorism committed by Muslims compared with attacks committed by

those of other backgrounds. Moreover, Islam, particularly as represented by predominately Arab societies in the Middle East, has long been regularly conflated with terrorism in popular culture (Shaheen 1984, 2003). Tariq observed that this conflation is incorrect:

> This is the mistake that people [make to] consider Muslims terrorists. We're not. … One [crazy] guy get[s] mad, not because he's a Muslim. He get[s] mad probably because the behavior that you guys show him. And that's why I keep telling friends, teachers: 'Don't blame me in the future when one of my kids, because of you, you feed him hate and you tell him you're different.' Because [when] the kids [are] born, they don't know black and white. We teach them black and white (ibid.).

Forcefully continuing to frame this problem in personal terms, he said: "In our homes, we feed them that stuff. So, don't blame me when he do[es] something stupid in the future. He [was] born and raised here" (ibid.). Therefore, Tariq argued:

> If he did something stupid, don't say he's a Muslim, because [of] his religion. No! Because you made him do that. This is how you do it: 'You're green, your black, you have [an] accent. You are from there.' This is what make[s] him angry. This is [why he wants] his revenge (ibid.).

Nora, too, highlighted the effects of demonization and targeting by the government. For example, policies such as the separation of child migrants from their parents and imprisonment by immigration authorities create anger she argued.[78] "Why [are] you making people angry because when you take somebody's father, how is his son going to feel? This anger inside of him, how [will] you deal with that?" she asked rhetorically directed at those who implement such policies, "Because you created that in the first place" (Nora February 6, 2018).

[78] In 2017, the Trump administration implemented a policy of separating families who crossed the southern U.S. border without a visa, including those seeking asylum, detaining parents and children in different locations (Seville and Rappleye 2018). The policy was designed to "deter" mothers from migrating with their children (Ainsley 2017). Reports indicated that at least 2,737 children were separated from their parents in 2017 and 2018, but the actual number is likely significantly higher (Long and Alonso-Zaldivar 2019). Children who were separated from their parents and children who arrived alone, so-called unaccompanied minors, are typically placed in foster-homes or shelters. Reports emerged throughout 2018 that the Trump Administration was detaining separated children in cages in makeshift facilities ("Trump Migrant Separation Policy" 2018). In late 2018, the Trump administration began removing children from shelters around the country and concentrating them in tent camps in Texas near the Mexico/U.S. border (Dickerson 2018). Importantly, the policy of child separation was met with significant public outrage as photographs of children in cages appeared in news reports. The administration announced the policy would change, but as of this writing in early 2019, it has not (Jordan and Dickerson 2019).

With such a context, the question for Nora was to ensure the individual such as the angry son does not go in a "bad" or "wrong" direction. As she put it, "I lived [in a] situation like that. Sometimes people do the wrong stuff by choice. They just [think]: 'Okay, I have to do it because I feel I'm not treated fairly.' … And they develop a way of thinking and living that's some kind of a way that it might end up [badly]" (ibid.). Nora argued that one way to ameliorate such a situation is to reach out to those who exclude or perpetuate alienation and explain that there are long lasting-effects of exclusionary rhetoric and policies.

Ali and Zaid pointed out that when it is not only members of society who demonize the other, but also the most visible leader of the country who voices prejudice, in this case Donald Trump, it gives license to those who would harm targeted groups to carry out discrimination and violence. As Ali explained:

> If I am a racist and if I see a lot of people going and … protecting other religion[s], protecting other communit[ies], and I am a racist? Probably I will change my mind a little bit. [The racist individual will think]: 'Hey listen, this is just only me and look how a lot of people, and some of them, this is my cousin and this is my neighbor,' they will change. But, if you see, like a [person in a position of authority] … if I'm a racist I'll do whatever I want to do. I don't care. I believe you understand my point (January 14, 2018).[79]

Zaid pointed out that Trump, whom he called racist as noted above, received a significant share of votes in 2016. As he argued:

[79] Supporting this argument, Trump's words have been cited in multiple incidents of violence since 2015. In August 2015, for example, two men were arrested in Boston for allegedly attacking a man with a pipe and urinating on him. At the time of arrest, they told police: "Donald Trump was right. All these illegals need to be deported" (Ferrigno 2015). One of the men later told police he had attacked the man because he appeared to be "Hispanic" and an "illegal immigrant." Trump's rhetoric has reached far beyond the United States as well. In November 2018, the Nigerian Army justified the killing of 40 protestors, some of whom threw stones at soldiers, specifically citing Donald Trump's assertion that U.S. soldiers would shoot migrants who attempted to throw rocks at American military members patrolling the southern U.S. border (Searcey and Akinwotu 2018). Most recently, the alleged perpetrator of the March 14, 2019 terror attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in which more than 50 people were killed, wrote in a "manifesto" that Donald Trump was a "symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose" (Smith et al. 2019).

> Almost half of the people voted for him and I think they voted for him for that reason.[80] I wouldn't blame … people [for] being afraid of change and [adapting to] new things. Maybe that's why people here are more open-minded because they have seen with their eyes, they have interacted with people from different backgrounds.[81] But to have the head of the country kind of adopting or encouraging this kind of [racist] behavior, I don't think that these things will fade away [any] time soon, unfortunately (Zaid February 27, 2018).

Still, Zaid was hopeful that the situation would improve in the future. This was in part because, as he maintained, even though many Americans seemed to support racist views, "there [are] even more people who are against these ideas and they are fighting on our behalf" (ibid.).

Diversity and Cultural Exchange

Strangeness, unease, uncertainty and constrained voice exist together with many interviewees' experiences of engaging with American friends, neighbors and coworkers on a daily basis. Multiple interviewees described their interactions with acquaintances and colleagues as a positive aspect of life in the United States, particularly when they involved those of diverse backgrounds coming together to learn and exchange. Some linked the type of multicultural society they experienced in the U.S. to their experiences in Iraq before 2003.[82] Many interviewees expressed a desire to have agentic opportunities to voice opinions about practices in

[80] What Zaid likely meant is that nearly half of those who voted, rather than half of all Americans, voted for Trump. Only around 58 percent of eligible voters cast a ballot in 2016 (Regan 2016). Of that number, Trump won 62,984,825 votes, 46.4 percent of the total. Due to the peculiarity of the American Electoral College system, his opponent Hillary Clinton who won the majority of the votes 65,853,516 or 48.5 percent, nonetheless lost the election (2016 election results 2016).

[81] It was not clear from our full conversation where "here" in this sentence referred. He may have meant the United States or North Bethesda, Maryland, where he resides.

[82] In Marwa's experience, for example, Iraq has many different religious groups, such as Christians, Muslims and Yazidi. These communities interacted with each other as they do in Buffalo, NY where she now lives. "My neighbor, she [was] a Christian. … I celebrate[d] with her, she celebrate[d] with me" (Marwa November 25, 2017). Sarah too noted in Iraq the groups were different, but there were multiple communities living together, such as Muslims and Christians: "[If] you are Christian, I respect you … because when I was in high school … all [of] my friends [were] Christian" (November 30, 2017). There is no difference between Christians or Muslims Sarah said. "For me, I respect the person." Tariq said that Americans are surprised when he tells them "we have Christians in Iraq" along with many other religious groups, some that do not exist in significant numbers in the United States (November 2, 2017). Tariq has friends from multiple religious backgrounds and those differences were not a source of tension. For example, if he, a Muslim, invited his Christian friend to a religious celebration, his friend would "never tell me: 'no Tariq, I can't. I'm Christian.' Rather, he would respond "I'm coming!" (ibid.). Unfortunately, after the 2003 invasion, militia groups targeted minority populations, causing significant numbers of Iraqi Christians of various denominations to leave the country for refuge abroad (Sassoon 2009, 25).

the U.S. as well as to share their culture with friends, neighbors and co-workers and to enjoy similar occasions to learn from native-born Americans as well.

Importantly, as Benhabib has argued, routine and mundane contact between members of "different human groups" does not guarantee that they will develop what she has characterized as the cosmopolitan viewpoint, that all human beings are "equally entitled to certain rights" (2006, 153). Those with whom I spoke described both routine interactions with diverse others as well as many experiences of intentionally seeking to build such a cosmopolitan point of view. Fostering such contact requires, as explained by interviewees, purposeful interactions and a willingness on the part of both native-born Americans and newcomers to change, learn and grow.

Diversity in Daily Life

Multiple interviewees pointed out that individuals of religious or cultural backgrounds different from their own had assisted them with their resettlement. For example, Nada explained that when she first arrived in New York City, members of the Jewish community helped her and her family to settle into their new surroundings. As she elaborated on the diversity she experienced she said:

> New York City has different cultures. So, of course, each culture has many things. Maybe, for me, I don't like it. And maybe for another, [they] like it. So, because we have law here, they protect me, and the law protect[s] them. So, for this reason, all the people can live here and feel very comfortable. And, I say it again: I respect them, and they respect me. This is normal. So, we can live here (Nada November 1, 2017).

Nada continued, "America has a lot of cultures because we have law. Of course, any law has many mistakes, but we can change that" (ibid.). She indicated she believed this situation was better than in Iraq where "we don't have good government, we don't have law, we don't … respect [each other]. This is our problem" (ibid.).

Ali, too, described the everyday diversity he experienced in New York. When he first arrived, a Christian woman living in Manhattan hosted him for several weeks:

> She kept me with her for 15 days with no charge, with nothing. This is huge. … And I don't know her personally. I know her through Facebook, through a person. The first time we saw her, [was] when we came from the airport to her place. … It's a big thing, you know? (Ali January 14, 2018).

His host also invited him to parties to meet people. Additionally, a volunteer, who Ali noted was Jewish, took his daughter to a children's activity club that had a swimming pool and playground. He said: "She's Jewish. Okay. And my host is Christian. And I am Muslim. … So, I like that. I like the diversity of people, living together in peace. I love that here. I cannot explain how much I like that" (ibid.). Later in our conversation, Ali said again about New York:

> You can practice whatever religion you want. No one will [ask] you what you're doing. When the mosque here on the corner [has] an event [for] Ramadan or in Eid, three police [cars] protect them. The same thing when Hindus have [an] event, three cars [to] protect [them]. When a temple, a Jewish temple, [does so], they have [protection too] (ibid.).

We met in a café and Ali pointed to the other customers, saying he could see Muslims, non-Muslim Americans and people of different backgrounds living together and shopping at each other's businesses.[83] Ali compared this experience to Baghdad's atmosphere before the 2003 war.[84] Similar to what he had experienced in Baghdad before the war, Ali said in New York: "I feel safe and I feel [in] the United States, people from different background[s] and religion[s] [are] living together" (ibid.). In his view, protection by the law facilitated this situation:

> Why there, [do] they fight? Outside the United States. This is the question. Because of the law! If the law is gone from any country, it will be chaos. I'm not talking about my country. I'm talking in general (ibid.).

[83] Nearby to the location of our interview, for example, was a restaurant that advertised *ḥalal* Chinese food with signage in English, Arabic and Chinese. During our interview, I noticed several other patrons speaking Arabic in the café as well.

[84] Ali explained that before 2003, Baghdad had been lively, with shops open and residents on the streets until 2a.m. or 3a.m. in the morning. However, after the invasion, shops closed early in the evening and the city became "dead." The interaction of Iraqis of diverse backgrounds ended as well. After 2003, Shia did not enter Sunni districts and vice versa for fear of violence. Individuals would be asked to produce identification to prove their group belonging and trust between individuals broke down. "This [was] all because of the war. It wasn't like that before. [It was] just like here [Brooklyn]" in Ali's words (January 14, 2018).

For example, in Brooklyn Ali has two friends, one Jewish and the other Muslim, both from Palestine, he said.[85] In New York, they are friends and co-run a business. He asked rhetorically, "Why [can't] they … be friends and work with each other in Palestine? … Why [can] they live here in peace and why over there in *Orshulim* [Jerusalem] they are fighting?" (ibid.). "It's all about the law," he answered, "And my feeling is, if you separate the religion from the politics, I believe every country would be fine" (ibid.).

For Sarah, too, an aspect of life in New York that she liked was the fact that so many people from many different backgrounds lived there together:

> Many people here live together. Different kind[s] [of] people, from the world … with different religion[s], with different citizenship[s], with different color. It's good. This part for me, I like that. It's good for America, it's good to live together. … And also, [they] have to respect each other (Sarah November 30, 2017).

Earlier in our conversation, Sarah said it can be challenging for newcomers like herself to interact with others from so many different backgrounds: "It's really difficult for new people, … Iraqis, when you come here to see these people, different culture[s], different religion[s], different traditions or different language[s]" (ibid.). However, in her experience overall this diversity has been very positive.

Walid chose to resettle in the United States specifically because of its diversity. He had the choice to emigrate to Canada or Germany, too, where some of his family members had already settled. Nevertheless, he chose to raise his family in the U.S. because in his view it is a "country of diversity." I can raise my family," he said, "In term[s] of discrimination, I know that country [the United States] [has] an experience work[ing] well with different race[s] (Walid September 27, 2017). He compared the United States to Germany saying, "when I speak with my

[85] The full quotation is: "I know a friend of mine, he's Palestinian Muslim. And, he's making business with a Jewish Palestinian" (Ali January 14, 2018). I assumed Ali meant the latter individual's nationality is Israeli based upon his later reference to Jerusalem.

sister in law, she [say]s there's always only German[s]. They don't have this kind of diversity" (ibid.). Moreover, he said the U.S. is an "immigrant country, so that's why I felt more comfortable" (ibid.). Walid also noted that Buffalo, New York, in particular, has a significant resettled refugee population, which creates a diverse community. He said, "We have migration from Europe, from Africa, Asia, so we [are a] diverse community here in Buffalo" (ibid.).

Similarly to Walid, Wissam said, "The good thing about [the] U.S. is the different backgrounds and cultures you have here" (October 22, 2017). As he observed, "even if you have an accent, even if you want to learn, you see lots of people are going through the same thing and you don't feel different from anybody else, … especially in Chicago" (ibid.). He suggested Chicago does not have a dominant group. Rather, "it's very mixed, very culturally welcoming, people are very nice here and I don't feel singled out," he said, and "I fit in right away" (ibid.).

In his view, the experience of "people here [the United States] living [in] harmony, from all different backgrounds, all different cultures [is] very big" (ibid.) and should be emphasized more. He noted that his own mixed background had created challenges in Iraq.[86] He had concluded that Americans "tend to take it for granted" (ibid.) how relatively well members of different groups are able to live together. For Wissam, focusing on these positive experiences makes people more willing to learn about other cultures and accept other points of view: "After all, we all have the same goal: It's to improve this country to make it the best country that we can live in. And, [in] the end, all our lives will be better together" (ibid.).

[86] "I'm from Iraq … I lived in Baghdad, but originally [I'm] from Sulaymaniyah [a city in Iraqi Kurdistan]. So, I [have a] mixed background … Kurdish … my grandmother [is] Turkman and my mom is Arabic," Wissam said (October 22, 2017). As a result, "maybe you'll find [I am] the most neutral person because I have all these different backgrounds and so I have cousins from all ethnicities. … I [have] to listen to everybody" (ibid.). He concluded that this complexity leaves one both accepted by all and rejected by all.

Building Community through Exchange

Related to the substantial discussions of the positive role of diversity and difference I had with many interviewees, was the notion that individuals from disparate backgrounds could not only live in proximity with different cultures or practices but also could and should interact, form relationships and learn from one another. As several interviewees explained, such processes often entailed finding and creating spaces to voice their views concerning social and cultural norms and practices. The experiences and activities described in this section involved the iteration of such norms among newcomers and native-born citizens to ponder, alter and expand their understandings of belonging.

Importantly, and in view of the preceding sections describing frequently voiced assumptions of the fundamental "otherness" of Islam by a significant share of American society, I preface this discussion by noting that the distance between cultures is often less wide and the differences less stark than asserted by those opposed to immigration. Monolithic ideological constructs such as "the West" and "the East,"—and a supposed intractable conflict between them—present a world of discrete, homogeneous cultures that do not conform to social reality or history. For example, there are and have been cooperative and conflictual contacts, exchanges and syncretism among the heterogeneous practices of what we now think of as Judaism, Christianity and Islam for centuries all over the world (Asad 2011, 157; Kumar 2012, 13, 24, 50). Therefore, contra assertions by those who view Islam and Muslim newcomers as irreconcilably "outside of" American society, it is important to problematize assertations of uncrossed and uncrossable social, cultural and/or political boundaries between human communities.

As multiple interviewees explained, Iraq, like the United States, is a diverse society with

many ethnic and religious communities including Muslims, Christians, Jews, Yazidi, Kurds, Arabs and others. As Nora, for example, observed, "I've been invited to go to churches. I've been going to lots of Sundays. I've been going to [services] on the Christmas night" (February 6, 2018). Whenever she is asked questions about her religion, she explains that "I believe in Jesus, I believe in Mary and I believe in all this stuff. Even though I'm a Muslim, that doesn't mean I don't believe in that" (ibid.). With this in mind, I turn to the issue of exchange among interviewees and their friends, neighbors and coworkers.

"When I was in Iraq," Abdullah explained, "we were under sanction[s] basically all my childhood. And we were not in touch with people from different countries. We were [a] very closed country. So, my mentality was constrained … in that way" (January 14, 2018). He continued: "I didn't have a good image about [the] USA when I was in Iraq. Because I told you, we had [almost] zero interaction with people. And, the only interaction we had [with] foreign people were the American [soldiers]" (ibid.). As he noted, and as Chapter 3 explored in greater detail, when a soldier interacts with civilians, "they [are unlikely] to act nice" (ibid.). However, when Abdullah left Iraq to seek safer conditions abroad, he began to think differently about those of non-Iraqi backgrounds, "Once I went to Syria, I met people from [America], from other countries. It changed my view," he said (ibid.). As he detailed:

> As soon as I traveled, I came here [to] one of the most diverse places in the world. My mentality completely change[d] and even my way of thinking [became] a combination of American mentality and also my school, engineering. They usually make you think in a logic[al] way, you know? Use more of a problem solving, critical thinking. So, I think a combination of all that affected my mentality (ibid.).

Later in the conversation, he elaborated:

> When I came here [to the U.S.], it completely changed my views. And I was able to distinguish between good people, bad people, government actions, people['s] actions. So, right now, if I see someone [saying] something [negative] about the West, I will try to defend [it]. Because this is not right, you cannot generalize. Because there are a lot of people from the West who are talking just like [that] about all Arabs and Muslim[s], that

> [those groups] attack everybody. So, it really goes both ways. … I believe if you generalize, religion, countries, race, whatever, I believe this is wrong. Period (ibid.).

Abdullah suggested that he understood learning about difference to be a two-way process. He argued that Iraqis have responsibilities to educate themselves about the United States and Americans have a responsibility to meet and learn about Iraqis and challenge negative stereotypes concerning them:

> When we were back home, [we] always had [a] bad image about the West because our media was controlled by the regime and it always [portrayed Americans as] bad. And then when I met other people, that changed my views. So, I think the same thing should happen for Americans. They should go meet other people, they cannot just trust the media because most of the media are controlled by bigger [people] than us and they have agendas. … I think it's 50/50. … I think the best way to learn is you actually go there and learn … [and] build human connection[s]. If you are staying far away from a person, you cannot really have that connection with [them], even if you hear stories. The extremists [are] not really helping people from the Middle East, our reputation, but if you actually go there or read more or just interact with people here in the country, I think it would be [a] surprise how people are different from whatever the media is showing (ibid.).

Hashim, too, viewed deep interaction as essential to changing the views of others: "If some[one] decided not to think about something, it's very hard to change opinions by going through discussions with them. I don't think that will change that much. Because with all the media, with all the things happening now in Iraq they just think that we are enemies, anyway" (October 1, 2017).[87] However, he argued that protracted interaction and relationship building between himself and native-born citizens could potentially change such views:

> For people that I know, when they know me better, when they see, when I get them to my house and then they see my family, when they see how we are living and how we are hard workers and how we are studying and how we are raising our kids. I think they will change their opinions. So, I will be, just an example of an Iraqi person living and working in the United States to set a good example. That's the only way to maybe participate in changing their opinions (ibid.).

[87] As noted in the Introduction, significant percentages of Americans believe that Iraq is an enemy of the United States.

To illustrate this point and process, Hashim discussed several individuals who began as coworkers and whom he now considered friends:

> [In] my work, I have many friends now. [But] let's say, last year when [we] first met them, they had different opinions. So, I think [I] just set a good example of the Iraqis, that's the only way, you know? Just to show them that: Hey, we are just like you. We are just doing exactly what you are doing, we don't hate, we don't hate you. I don't know you to hate you. So, it's just: Try to set a good example I think (ibid.).

Through these efforts, he has constructed friendships, changing his friends' initially wary perceptions of Iraqis in the process. Describing the challenges and need for such processes as well, Walid related his experience raising children in Buffalo:

> In Iraq, the way of raising [children] is totally different than here. So, sometimes I'm thinking about how my kids grow up here and my 15-year-old daughter she [has] start[ed] to tell me: 'Daddy you are not understanding me.' Even I'm a social worker, I'm a counselor … but, she [thinks] I'm only from Iraq. So, I told her: 'Please teach me how this happened?' (September 27, 2017).

Walid remarked that teenagers, both newcomers and Americans, face difficulties. Nonetheless, "it's kind of [a] challenge raising kids here in both culture[s]. It's very difficult. Sometimes people feel that they are losing their culture. … They're [becoming] more American" (ibid.). He described as well how a friend's son told his mother he did not want her to go to his school because she wears a *ḥijab*, an outward sign of her, and by extension the son's, "different culture" (ibid.). Walid said about this situation:

> We found [it] very important to address this issue with the school: 'Why [don't] you have [an] international day? Or have different flag[s] in the school? Or have presentation[s]? Or the student[s] from different countr[ies] teach the kids where you come from and show [the students] about Iraq?' [We] have 5,000 [years of] history and we want to learn about your history. To make these kids feel proud [of] where they come from, [rather than] shame or guilt because of [their] different culture (ibid.).

In his view, the negative feelings he noted in the above quotation had led immigrant children to "want to be just American. They want to lose their identity and culture because they want to belong [to] the community. … Many famil[ies] have a lot of pressure [because of this]"

(ibid.). Walid also described his own personal experience of belonging to multiple communities, observing "I can't say I'm only Iraqi. I can't say I'm only American. I'm Iraqi-American" (ibid.). He continued:

> So, half of me [is] Iraqi, half of me [is] American. Part of why I see this [is] because I feel this society change[d] a lot of my view[s] for [the] future. [For example], if I'm in Iraq, maybe my wife will stay home and take care of [the] kids. Now, my wife she's working in [a] chemical dependency program, she's helping me with the kids. It's totally different.[88] … So, we see many famil[ies] now they are learning. It depend[s] on if there's enough exposure to U.S. famil[ies] (ibid.).

Immediately following these comments, Walid said that local religious organizations had facilitated such processes:

> What helped me a lot [is] when I met with the church, and [the] church helped me to adjust [to] the life and also integrate [into] the society very quickly. I'm [a] very curious person [and] to learn I went [to a] temple, I went to [a] church, I went to [a] Hindu temple, to [a] Jewish [temple], I want to learn, understand this society. [It] is part of my curiosity. Maybe, the other people just want to stay home. … I want to make sure I'm raising my family in a healthy way, keep both culture[s] and try to support them. There's also bad parts of the American culture in term of drug[s], alcohol. … [But], many famil[ies] learn from this culture, the good part of this culture (ibid.).

Finally, Walid described how he has also attended inter-faith meetings that engage Jews, Christians and Muslims in the area in dialogue about their particular experiences:

> They come together; they meet monthly. And they have like a conference, invite the community. And they discuss different topics. For example, one of the people said: 'I [grew] up in Lackawanna,' which is 45 minutes [from] here. He said 'all my friends [are] Yemenis, they are Muslims.' … The other person, he's Jewish, they start[ed] to share their experience[s]. He said 'I [grew] up in Amherst, I never have [met] a Muslim, but please go and try and do something to teach us. We don't know how to find you.' So, you need to raise awareness (ibid.).

Walid said of such programs: "So try these kind[s] of [activities]. There's a lot of

[88] Walid also said: "My wife was in medical school back in Iraq. She finish[ed] her nursing degree and now she's back [in school] for nurse practitioner, so she already [had] some education background. But, women or wives [or] mothers [have] never been in school so they [are] staying home" (ibid.). It is not clear from the transcript of our conversation or the larger context whether Walid meant that his wife, even with her advanced education, would likely have stayed home to raise their children if they were still in Iraq or whether he meant that other women, without such a background, often did so in Iraq.

education, interfaith organization[s] try [to] invite people to discuss different topic[s]. What [are] their concern[s], what [are] the most important things?" (ibid.).

Mohammed, too, occasionally attends church services in Buffalo, even though he is Muslim. A good friend attends this church and he enjoys the company of the other parishioners. As he put it, "I like the people there. I have [a] friend in the church and so, I like to mix with another religion to [have a] good experience, to see what's going on (Mohammed November 2, 2017). "But," he said, "I never go to the Mosque [in Buffalo]. Maybe one time" (ibid.). Mohammed went on to describe the process of cultural exchange, comparing life in Buffalo to his life in Iraq:

> I feel the people [are] not [very] social. It's difficult to know your neighbor. … But in our country, we have good social [ties] with the community. All your neighbor[s], when they cook, they bring the food for your house. When you cook, you send the food [to] your neighbor. But here, no. You don't know the name [of] your neighbors, so … it's difficult a little bit (ibid.).

Mohammed had worked against this insularity attempting to build community with friends. He spoke about an American family, friends of his family with whom he "mixed" cultures:

> We have two famil[ies], [mine and an] American family. We mix the culture[s] between us. My friend … and his family [come to] our house. We stay together, eat together and we go to his house … he [has been] my friend [for] three [or] four years. And I [asked] him: 'Why [do] you like our culture?' He said: 'Mohammed, actually, in America, we [are losing] the culture.' … So, he [said]: 'I need to mix with your family.' And I told him, 'I need to mix [with] your family to understand the American culture.' So, we work together and sometimes we discuss together how [we] can, like, help my daughter and his daughter because they are teenagers (ibid.).

In general, however, Mohammed indicated that he perceived cross-cultural communication as difficult. In his view, connecting on a personal level can be challenging:

> If you ask him about his job, it's difficult. If you ask him about his family, it's difficult. If you ask him, everything is difficult here. It's difficult to make communication with the people a little bit. He's your friend, it's difficult to enter his life, or to discuss with him about anything personal with him. It's very difficult (ibid.).

In an early attempt to break through what he felt was a barrier, and move beyond pleasantries, Mohammed began bringing coffee and Iraqi food to his coworkers at the airport. He told his colleagues that in Iraq it was a normal part of social interaction and that he enjoyed doing so. After he began this practice, his relations with his fellow employees started to change. His coworkers, who became friends, also began to bring food to share:

> So, I change[d] it a little bit. My friends, they do the same thing. They go to Tim Hortons, they bring you food, share with us. … They change it a little bit. It's not a hundred percent, but they change it (ibid.).[89]

Mohammed also explained that he had incorporated aspects of American culture into his daily life. "The [American] culture changed something good for [me]," he said (ibid.). As he explained "In our culture, when I go [to] your house, I didn't call you [first]. … I just knock [on] your door" (ibid.). However, Americans, in his experience, approach such a visit differently and are more likely to ask before arriving. "Because maybe you're busy," (ibid.) Mohammed said, and he appreciated this norm. Americans have "borders" in their social interactions, he said, which Mohammed also liked: "So, I learned some culture and … I give the people some [of] our culture. … A little bit" (ibid.).

Marwa explained that in Buffalo she now has a diverse social network: "I have a lot of friends [who are] Nepali, Burmese [and] Somali. … It's nice in the United States … it's mixed. I like it. … I have a lot of friends from different countries. Yes. That's so great" (November 25, 2017). Marwa said that when she first arrived in the U.S., she and her husband often discussed issues she felt should change in American society: "They should change that, no I don't like that. … But now … I accept it more when I [became] involved with the people … [and] after learning [more]" (ibid.). She went on to say:

[89] Tim Hortons is a Canadian coffee and donut chain restaurant that is ubiquitous in Western New York. Mohammed and I conducted our interview at one of their locations. Marwa and I did as well.

> Some families, they didn't adapt [to] the culture here. They still want their kids to keep, like it's okay, it's nice to keep your culture. … It's okay, I have now, I keep some. But I want my kids to [be] involve[d]. Some families, they didn't [become] involve[d] with the community here and they want their kids the same. … They didn't know how to mix (ibid.).

Moreover, Marwa explained how drawing on her own background and parenting accordingly, she could lead by example and have an effect on American culture and the actions of those around her indirectly. She said:

> They are going to see [a] successful family, what they do with their kids. They are going to see. First, they are going [to] say: 'No, no, no.' But after when they [are] in trouble [or have] problem[s] with their kids, they are going to say: 'Oh, you are right' (ibid.).

I asked the clarifying question: "So you're setting an example?" to which Marwa replied: "Living an example" (ibid.).

Exchange and cooperation are not only a function of newcomers and Americans interacting as individuals, but also occur among members of various communities and representatives of institutions within American society. For example, as Sarah told me, it was the responsibility of both the American people and government to create welcoming feelings and environments for newcomers. Hashim too argued that the government had a responsibility to unite and not divide different communities. This role was important for Hashim, because, he said,

> The job of the government is to keep the communities united, to keep them more united, not to divide people because once you have this [division] … you might start seeing some communities hate other communities and problems will happen. They will always happen. So, the government['s] job is … to help or to set rules: 'Hey these people are just like you or just like other people' (October 1, 2017).

On this topic, Omar said, "in our city [Harrisonburg], everything looks good" (December 14, 2017). The local Islamic center has close cooperation with area churches and works to demonstrate its willingness to assist the entire community. For example, the Islamic center opens space to shelter members of the city's homeless population during Christmas because the

churches that typically do so are unable to do so on that day.

Omar is personally involved with a number of projects aimed at creating a welcoming and multicultural atmosphere in Harrisonburg and, those, he observed, "[Are] a lot of work. But, for the long run. I think we will see something different. Different than other places" (ibid.). Indeed, "We can feel that," he said:

> We see new people [all the time], [and] especially the business[es], they were very grateful that we are here. Very grateful. And they [are] enjoying the food, they [are] enjoying the culture. So, it's different. The city is different also. … [It is] developing faster and faster in just five years (ibid.).

Omar continued elaborating that the effects of immigration on the city were not only economic but also attitudinal:

> The impact was not only on us but on the city itself in economic terms and in terms [of the] attitude[s] [of] people towards others. When they [are] introduced to the families, the refugees, they [hear] more stories, and everyone was impact[ed] (ibid.).

He saw the recent approval by the city council of Harrisonburg as a "Welcoming City" as a sign of that fact (Stouffer 2016).[90] This result was a "product of working many years," (ibid.) together with others in the community. I examine the role of activist, nonprofit and community organizations in fostering exchange among individuals of different backgrounds and advocating for the rights of refugees for which Omar and others have volunteered and worked, in more detail in Chapter 6.

Finally, the processes of interpersonal exchange and communication move in many directions. As Kasim explained in detail, he believed that the Iraqis who learned how to interact with diverse others in the U.S. could bring what he saw as newly developed openness and

[90] A designation as a "Welcoming City" is a project of the national nonprofit organization Welcoming America. Receiving such a designation indicates a commitment to working, "across multiple sectors, such as government, business, and nonprofit, to create inclusive policies and practices. … Welcoming Cities are guided by the principles of inclusion and creating communities that prosper because everyone feels welcome, including immigrants and refugees" (Welcoming America 2019). Omar worked with a community group to garner support and convince the city council to seek this designation.

tolerance back to Iraq if they decide to return. Kasim first described his experiences living in Iraq:

> It was hard for me back home. … I [didn't] feel the freedom to say whatever I want[ed]. Not politically, even culturally. … When I was there, there was no cultural openness. If you believe[d] in something, you will find somebody who really aggressively wants to deny your beliefs. In that way, there's no freedom. It's not because of government, it's because of the culture. There's no tolerance. … And it [has] nothing to do with the religion, it's just to do with the culture. [It] became so backward that they don't tolerate anything (Kasim February 27, 2018)

With this background established, Kasim went on to say about the experience of Iraqis interacting with different cultures after resettling in the United States:

> So, now the Iraqis here [in the U.S.] know how societies work. How culture works. They have a bigger picture now. They're more tolerant, they're more open-minded. I wouldn't say they're Americanized, but they know how the world works now. … And, everybody here … they're an asset if they go back home or try to teach people. This is how societies work. If you want to move to the next step, you have to be tolerant to everybody (ibid.).[91]

Conclusion

The experiences shared by interviewees in this chapter counter unfounded assertions that refugee resettlement poses a threat to the United States and that Muslim refugees, in particular,

[91] Kasim also described at length what he understood as the persecution of various groups within Iraqi society over time. He compared the current situation to that of Iraqi Jews in the 1940s and 1950s: "Our parents or grandparents didn't talk about it, now … we are suffering exactly what they suffered" (Kasim February 27, 2018). Jews were "part of society and they [had] all the rights, just like ours. And it's their country, they've been there for thousands of years. We should give them the opportunity to come back. We should prepare the society to accept them again" (ibid.). In the early 1950s, the majority of Iraqi Jews, one of the world's oldest Jewish communities, emigrated under increasing threat by the Iraqi government in the wake of the creation of the State of Israel (Shiblak 2005). Kasim went on to say, that Iraq "has to be a tolerant society to everybody. … It's different than like Saudi Arabia. It's a mosaic of different cultures" (February 27, 2018). However, as he explained, successive minority groups have been "oppressed or pushed out" throughout Iraqi history (ibid.). Jews in the 1940s and 1950s, followed by communists, Iranians, Shiites and in the 2000s, Ba'athists, he said: "Even the ones who didn't have any criminal record, they were pushed out. Some of them were killed, tortured. And then the Christians now, the Yazidis. [In] every time [period] there've been one of the minorities being subject to some kind of discrimination" (ibid.). In light of this history, Kasim said: "Everybody feels so bad, I mean, this is ridiculous. We want to be seen just like how the U.S. is. You know, everybody lives happily, doing their own thing. Nobody's restricting them … as long as they don't affect anybody adversely. … This nation it wasn't a nation. It just came from different people [who] came from different places in the world and they created a big society, a very you know tolerant society" (ibid.). He reiterated his argument that "each community operate[s] separately but at the same time they follow the rules … and that's fine. It's a nice thing to see how people [Iraqis] have changed, but hopefully they will be able to go back, and in a way that they can educate [others]" (ibid.).

are a dangerous population. Interviewee experiences point to three primary insights about resettlement processes.

First, belonging is not necessarily a binary state that one either experiences or does not. For some interviewees, it was a strong feeling, while, for others, it was partial or constrained, at least at the time of their interview. For others, there was a sense that they could never fully belong to American society. Importantly, it is possible to develop an attachment to a community at the same time as challenges and barriers complicate that sense. These processes require an attitude of openness and welcoming of both native-born Americans and immigrants.

Second, it is important to highlight the anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and anti-refugee discourses that circulate in American society, which function to silence members of such groups and can create constrain agency and voice. All of these are founded on prejudice born of othering and fear and they created feelings of precarity, unease and/or voicelessness among some of the individuals I interviewed. Moreover, it is essential to question the exceptionalism myths that posit "hard work" alone is sufficient to open a path for immigrants to share in the "American dream."

Third, contact, exchange and finding opportunities to voice opinions on norms and practices among those of different backgrounds can be a fruitful process of building bonds and community among newcomers and the native members of their host society. This requires intentional exchange and is not a certain result. As interviewees described them, these processes are multidirectional and their character is the shared responsibility of immigrants, host society members, community initiatives and governments at all scales. Individuals, religious groups, nonprofit organizations and government institutions and programs all have roles to play in these processes. As I elaborate more in the concluding chapter, such iterative processes are related to

but not exactly analogous to Benhabib's democratic iteration framework.

In sharp contrast to policies that target refugees for increased scrutiny and rhetoric that demonizes Muslims, the experiences profiled here suggest that governments at all levels in the U.S. ought to focus instead on developing and implementing programs that foster tolerant citizens who can live amicably in multicultural communities. Such initiatives require a basic understanding and commitment to equal protection under the law and personal capacity to accept and even to celebrate heterogeneity, rather than to fear it. This work should be carried out not only by government but also in and through civil society and social movements. Chapter 6 below argues that creating and supporting robust community-building initiatives and organizations can be important sites in which to carry out such activities.

Finally, resettlement processes can be difficult, but the fact that they are challenging is not a reason not to attempt them. The alternative, as interviewees suggested has been true in their native Iraq after 2003, is social mistrust, fragmentation and violence. The discussion in this chapter concerning perceptions of belonging flows into the following two chapters, which continue to explore agency, voice and authorship as they delve into democratic membership in the United States and the practices and engagement interviewees witnessed, participated in and in some cases led, even as they encountered barriers to doing so.

Chapter 5 – Democratic Membership: Voice, Authorship and an Equal Right to Participate?

> We came here for safety, of course. And also, to practice democracy. … It was amazing to participate. To feel that you have a voice. … I was happy every time I did it (Omar December 14, 2018).

Introduction

This chapter examines the ways in which this study's interviewees understood democratic membership in the United States as resettled refugees, residents and, in some cases, citizens. As elaborated in Chapter 1, Benhabib's work on voice, authorship and democratic iteration provided the definitions and conceptual understanding for how I use the term democracy, and how democratic membership in the United States is constituted. Democracy, as I use it here, requires that those subjected to particular governance structures have a right and substantive opportunities to participate in forming, consent to and dissent from the rules and laws that govern them. Political authorship, the essence of democracy, describes the possibility that individuals in such regimes are not only objects governed by law, but also able to affect and influence the content of those statutes (Benhabib 2006, 168). Voice is a precondition of authorship and denotes the capacity to engage in dialogue, discussion and debate concerning norms and laws in a given society (ibid., 35, 56). Democracy, then, means as Hashim described about his life in the U.S., "I can set up rules that work for me in the things that I experience" (October 1, 2017).

With these standards in mind, both citizens and residents of the United States are bound by the rules and laws to which they are subject. Therefore, they have an equal right to participate actively in determining the form of the processes by which laws are created and implemented and the content of those statutes. I assume that every such individual has a right to exercise voice and claim authorship. To reiterate a point from Chapter 1, democracies require porous borders—

literal, physical and territorial as well as social, and cultural and political—that grant newcomers entry and allow those formerly excluded to gain membership and engage in decision-making processes. Moreover, I assume that contestations concerning the character and content of democratic arrangements that include those who do not necessarily "share the dominant culture's memories and morals" are the mark of a strong "culture of democracy" rather than a threat to its existence (Benhabib 2006, 2006). It is important to note that there is no *a priori* reason to believe that newcomers are any more likely to present a challenge to a culture of democracy than those born into a social or political community. The central analytical questions at issue are how a democratic ethos and habits can be strengthened, how the boundaries of those beliefs and mores can be enlarged, discerning where substantive opportunities exist for newcomers to do so, and identifying what factors constrain such processes.

This chapter explores individuals' understandings of democratic membership in the United States. I begin with Wissam's argument that there is no contradiction between the liberal principles enshrined in the U.S. Bill of Rights and the Islamic tradition. I then address the important observation offered by several other interviewees that there are reasons to be circumspect about the degree to which American institutions can be expected to provide the mechanisms to form and carry out their goals. As some interviewees explained, participation mechanisms cannot always create change in government policy or action. Several individuals also pointed to the particular situation of the United States as a "superpower" whose actions affect individuals around the world, who otherwise have no right or ability to veto those actions. Moreover, several interviewees pointed out that the enormous expenditures required to maintain U.S. military hegemony around the globe siphon off resources that could be used to build and enhance social democratic programs.

After sketching these important caveats, I explore interviewees' perceptions of a right to engage as a member of a democratic people. I examine whether and in what ways they understood themselves to have the same or equal rights as native-born Americans to participate in democratic decision-making processes. I then elaborate on three of the barriers and requirements interviewees identified to their participation in such processes. The first is the fact that exercising voice in the decisions that affect one's life requires time, which is not always available amidst the need to work long hours to support one's self and/or family. Second, authorship of the laws, policies and rules that govern one's life requires adequate information and knowledge of the processes, institutions and choices shaping one's environment; building such understanding also requires time. Third, a recurring theme in the interviews I undertook was the fact that my interlocutors had lived much or most of their lives in a country governed by an authoritarian regime. For such individuals, it is necessary to address and reduce lingering suspicions of agents of the state and government officials more broadly in order to trust that political engagement is safe; some may choose to abstain from democratic engagement and/or interaction with state representatives as a result.

The Character of Democracy in the United States

I begin this discussion of democratic membership first by highlighting the contention of the previous chapter that the boundaries between cultures, traditions and practices are often more porous and share more characteristics than commonly assumed. Democratic norms in the United States are the result of iterative processes that have unfolded over time, as well as being the product of contact and exchange with multiple political traditions. As discussed in Chapter 4, several interviewees, including Sarah and Walid, claimed the Islamic tradition and were working in our discussion to (re)iterate its boundaries in reaction to the conflation of their religious and

cultural tradition with terrorism and violence among some in the U.S. On the topic of democracy, Wissam engaged in a similar line of argument during our interview. As he put it:

> We see the laws in [the] U.S., it's more Islamic than Iraq because they have the checks and balances, they really protected the freedom of speech, the freedom of religion. All these kind[s] of things that are [embedded in Islam] but, because you live in a dictatorship [in Iraq], they don't care. They [are] just like mottos there. … So, there is no contradiction at all between what's in the constitution and what's in Islamic values (Wissam October 22, 2017).

Conversely to Iraq, in Wissam's view, the United States has actively sought to realize such principles. Although not a regular mosque-goer, Wissam is familiar with the Islamic tradition. Comparing the American Constitution, for example, with Islamic principles he observed:

> We have that, we have that. … So, it's all the same. … Even the freedom of worship, [for example]. That one we have, so there [are] a lot of stories about how Mohammad at that time said: 'All the Jews can stay, all the temple[s] are going to stay [in the Islamic sphere of influence],' … and that's why you see it till now. … [For example] … you saw a certain church that's been there for thousands of years or hundreds of years and they [were] under that Islamic rule for all these [years], nobody did any harm to them, they all protected it. Because you have to protect others where they worship. And now they [ISIS] came and blew it [up]. That's not right. What they're doing is all false (ibid.).

Wissam went on to say that secular law was more salient for organizing life and policy. However, he said, "There is no contradiction at all between … what's in the [U.S.] Constitution and what's in Islamic values" (ibid.). In addition to significant overlap in substantive values between the two traditions, Wissam pointed to another foundational principle in Islam that binds Muslims to obey the laws of the country in which they live, "Where ever you live, you have to comply [with] the laws and the rules of that country. … So, there is no contradiction" (ibid.). As he understood it, some local mosques in Chicago discussed ideas such as freedom of speech, parishioners' rights, and so forth. He noted that this was in stark contrast to how media often portray mosques and Islam (as discussed in Chapter 4); such representations are "absolutely the opposite" of Islamic teachings (ibid.).

The central point in Wissam's example is not that American democratic institutions, rooted in, among other strands of thought, European liberalism, are identical with Islamic thinking. Nor is it to suggest that one tradition should subsume the other. Rather, the important point is the recognition that foundational democratic values, principles and norms have been developed in multiple intellectual contexts and have resulted from contact among several philosophic and theological traditions, and ongoing processes of reiteration. This shared intellectual and conceptual space provides grounds upon which to build exchange not only as explored in the social realm in the last chapter, but also in terms of democratic practices as well. This is particularly important for resisting the common belief held by a plurality of Americans, that Islam is incompatible with democracy and so-called "Western" values and institutions.[92]

Whither Democracy?

It is also important to problematize and historicize the democratic character of American society and institutions. One must interrogate the degree to which interrelated spaces such as American electoral political institutions, civil society and workplaces are democratic in substantive ways, for newcomers and native-born citizens alike. Historically, the individuals who designed formal institutions of American representative democracy did so to exclude the majority of the country's population.[93] As a result, there has been and remains a fundamental

[92] A 2017 Pew poll found, for example, that while 65 percent of American Muslims surveyed believed there was no conflict between Islam and democracy, only 46 percent of Americans overall believed such to be true. In that survey, 44 percent of respondents answered, yes, there is a "natural conflict" between Islam and democracy (U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society 2017).

[93] The social, cultural and political kernel of what became the United States of America was built on the exclusion, expulsion and eradication of the indigenous populations and forced labor of enslaved Africans. Upon the U.S.'s founding as an independent republic, those who designed its formal institutions of parliamentary democracy excluded women, enslaved Africans, members of indigenous groups and men of European descent without property. It was only after the 1919 passage and 1920 ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that women, the majority of the population, won enfranchisement after significant activist struggle. Despite a short period of expanding civil and political rights after emancipation and Northern victory in the American Civil War, African-Americans were excluded by law and custom from these institutions in large parts of the country until the passage of

contradiction and persistent tension between the universalist ideals articulated in the country's founding documents and their realization for many Americans. Put differently, there long have been and remain fundamental structural and attitudinal barriers that have prevented active political participation in formal and informal processes for large swathes of the U.S. population. For example, in the 21st century, significant structural issues remain that prevent millions of Americans from voting and that limit the decision-making power of voters.[94]

Interviewees expressed varying levels of confidence that actions they could take would allow them to attain meaningful voice and authorship over the decisions that govern their lives. Sarah, for example, questioned the efficacy of discussion with government representatives. She queried: "When we [are] talking with this person from the government about [a] problem, [can] he do something good? Solve this problem? Or just talk and that's it?" (Sarah November 30, 2017). Sarah went on to express that if the government had been unable to solve issues such as affordable housing for Americans, it would be even less able to do so for newcomers like herself: "So, [the] American people, [it is] hard for them to get [affordable housing] and what about me and the Arab people? It's hard, doubly hard" (ibid.). Hashim and Mohammed each expressed

the Voting Rights Act of 1965; this act has since been partially rolled back. While indigenous peoples were granted citizenship in 1924, and therefore the right to vote under federal law, state laws continued to bar them from participation, with the final state to guarantee Native American voting rights, New Mexico, doing so only in 1962 (Little 2019). Structures that exclude a majority of the population from decision-making are not democratic in any meaningful sense. In light of this, formal American institutions have only been even minimally democratic for slightly more than 50 years. Importantly, as Honig notes responding to Benhabib, even with the iterative expansion of rights for formerly excluded groups such as women and African-Americans, these individuals "have still never come to bear those rights in the same way as their original bearers" (in Benhabib 2006, 112). Efforts continue, particularly although not exclusively by the modern Republican Party, to prevent members of ethnic and racial minority groups from voting (Vandewalker and Bentele 2015) and various forms of social, economic and political exclusions continue despite ongoing activism by and on behalf of women, African-Americans, indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups.

[94] For example, millions of American citizens are barred from voting as the result of criminal convictions (Uggen, Larson, and Shannon 2016). Or consider the Electoral College, a Constitutional mechanism rooted in U.S. history as a slave society that ensures indirect election of U.S. presidents. This mechanism has resulted in victory for the candidate garnering a minority of the popular vote in two of five—40 percent—of the presidential elections held in the 21st century (Kelkar 2018). Since the ratification of the Constitution, five presidents have won election having received a minority of the popular vote, as a result of the Electoral College, including the current incumbent of that office, Donald Trump.

doubt about the potential that protests have to shape or reshape policies. As Mohammed put it, even "if a million people go to the street, nobody [in government] will change [policies or laws]" (November 2, 2017).

In prefacing his critique of American electoral democracy, Kasim said "voting is important. You have to use your rights to make change. … I went there, I voted" (February 27, 2018). Nevertheless, he went on to say, "I [knew] my [vote] wouldn't count, but if everybody doesn't vote … how can you participate? How can you make a difference?" (ibid.). Kasim voted for Donald Trump in 2016 and continued to support him at the time of our interview. "Many people disagree with me," he said, "but from day one I was like, I knew this guy. The minute I listen[ed] to his speeches, he just was in the same line of my understanding of how things work" (ibid.). He continued to explain:

> I lived [here in] Obama's time. Obama is a very great guy. He's very intellectual and he's probably one of the best presidents. But, when it comes to implementing things, he had [a] hard time because that's not how the US [government functions]. … For Democrats, it's always hard to pass legislation because the power is with people who have money and they are Republicans mostly. The power's always on the Republican side. Even if they are not in power, still. So, it's hard to pass legislation [for Democrats]. Whereas this guy [Trump], is a Republican. And whenever he says something, he can do it. Because they have the power (ibid.).

Wissam, too, pointed to this sort of corruption in our conversation. As he put it, "you have, maybe, not as much corruption as other countries. But you do have it. You have billionaires who want to use power" (October 22, 2017).[95] However, he understood the structure of American government to mediate this situation. He was more confident than Kasim that American institutions could effectively address the issue of wealth translating into political

[95] A series of Supreme Court of the United States decisions beginning with the 1976 *Buckley v. Valeo* case and culminating in *Citizens United v. FEC* in 2010, have equated "political spending with political speech," (Levinson 2013, 885) upholding limits on direct contributions to politicians while allowing unlimited total expenditures in support of particular candidates or parties. This has created a system in which "people have as much speech … as they can buy" (ibid., 901).

influence. As he put it, "You have, maybe, the most billionaires in the world who want to use power. … Still, [the] Constitution is protecting this country from it. … We are currently seeing a lot of people abuse power. But at least there [are] checks and balances" (ibid.). Wissam went on to say he had been reading about the American system of government. "I think it's very, very creative," he said, "They really predicted the right formula on how to create a democracy. But, it's very hard to stay consistent with it and that's what we are seeing here" (ibid.).

Wissam works in the dining and restaurant business and discussed food safety laws in the United States as an example of the negative role of money in political processes. He said: "I want to really affect the laws about the standards of food here. It is all controlled [by] big corporations, it's very hard to fight them. … Not all the laws are for the best interests of the consumer and that's what I'd like to see changed" (ibid.). In order to change such laws, he argued that lobbying was essential. "Mostly it's about lobbying," he said:

> I don't know if there's any other way. Maybe you have a chance to speak with a reasonable government official and show them benefits [of a particular policy]. But if not, you have to go through lobbying. There [in Iraq], it's kind of illegal. But here, it's all legal.[96] So, it is easier, of course, if you have the money. But in a way, those officials need to weigh the benefits versus what the lobbyists want. There has to be a balance so, I don't know (ibid.).

Ahmed, too, pointed to corruption as a concern, and like Wissam, he stated that it was perhaps not an insurmountable problem. In the course of our conversation on taxes in Chicago, for example, Ahmed remarked:

> I know there is … corruption, that's everywhere. But, I would [rather] have corruption and services provided to me than no taxes with 100 percent corruption and no accountability [as was the situation in Iraq]. Here, even with the corruption [politicians] still need to be accountable [to] the people who voted (October 2, 2017).

[96] As explained in the previous footnote, legalized unlimited political spending has allowed those with money to "buy special access to politicians and [given them] an outsized voice in the political debate" (Levinson 2013, 901–2).

In the above quotation, Ahmed, like Wissam, argued that despite the corruption he perceived, U.S. officials were accountable to citizens in a way they were not in Iraq.

War Abroad and Democracy at Home?

In addition to the skepticism that their participation could affect political change and the problems of corruption within American democratic institutions individuals identified above, it is important as well to make explicit that any sort of democratic processes or institutions cannot be separated from the reality that, as Abdullah put it, the United States is "not a normal country" (January 14, 2018). It is, in his words and as commonly accepted by those supportive and critical of its role in the world, a "superpower" (Ó Tuathail 2003, 868; Ullman and Wade 1996, 63). The United States as a political and social formation is a historically and contemporary expansionist and imperialist project, striving for military dominance and economic and cultural hegemony, first in what is now called North America and thereafter around the globe.[97] According to the U.S. Department of Defense, for example, it now operates 4,800 "Defense Sites" in 160 countries located in countries on all seven continents (Our Story n.d.). This includes maintaining 800 military bases in dozens of countries (Vine 2015, 4).[98]

[97] The European settlers and their descendants who conquered the territories now comprising the United States did so through the sustained expulsion and extermination of the indigenous peoples who lived on the continent before Europeans arrived. This project of displacing, concentrating and killing the indigenous population to clear land for European settlement continued until the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre, in which the United States Army killed between 150 and 300 members of the Lakota tribe (Brown 1970, 443). This event is commonly referred to as the end of armed indigenous resistance. Near the end of the 19th century, the U.S. government began invading and annexing overseas territories including Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and Samoa. It also invaded and conducted long-term military occupations of Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the Philippines (Kinzer 2007). Throughout the second half of the 20th century, the United States fought a series of wars, some brief, and others protracted, in several countries including, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Grenada in order to secure its economic and military hegemony against its principal rival superpower the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). As the USSR dissolved in the late 1980s, the U.S. nonetheless continued to intervene militarily around the world including in Panama, Iraq as explored in detail in Chapter 3, Somalia, Sudan and the former Yugoslavia. U.S. military conflicts around the world continue in the 21st century as described below.

[98] In comparison, all other countries in the world maintain a combined total of 70 military bases beyond their own borders (Slater 2018).

Several interviewees had this context in mind when offering two additional caveats to understanding American democratic processes and institutions. First, as Abdullah and Walid pointed out, decisions made in the United States affect not only those within its borders but also have impacts that reverberate around the world. Second, as Wissam and Mohammed argued, such decisions, particularly warfare and the maintenance of the world's largest military, entail a significant expenditure of resources, which limits the government's ability to enact social policies to benefit those who live there.

Unlike other interviewees, Abdullah's entry to the U.S. on a student visa does not provide him a direct path to Legal Permanent Residence (LPR) or citizenship. As a result, "it's tricky," he said, to answer the question whether he had a right to participate in decision making about laws and policies in the United States. As he explained: "Because at the end of the day, it's not my country and if it is not my country, I don't think I have the right to do that" (Abdullah January 14, 2018). However, he added:

> But, [the] U.S., specifically because they are taking a lead, to lead the world. So, it's not a normal country, it's a superpower country. So, I believe people from outside [the] USA, they should get involved in [U.S.] politics. Because really, who you choose to be in power could affect other countries, other people. It's not like a country [which is] just, interfering … inside [its own borders]. It's a major power (ibid.).

Abdullah suggested that on certain issues, such as immigration policy, perhaps he did not have a right to have a voice on decisions even though he had opinions on this subject because it was a domestic issue in his understanding. "But," he said:

> In terms of voting for a president, I think it's very important and I think because I could tell other people: 'Please don't vote for that president. [Vote]for the other president because that president might cause wars and it would affect people from outside [the] USA.' … I don't know how I would affect, how would I change that. But I think the main thing that I can do is just to try to convince people not to vote for that person, [and] for the other person. And I think that is legit (ibid.).

He emphasized this point by speaking directly to a hypothetical American audience saying:

> You might not feel it, but whatever decision politically you take, it could affect [the] lives of millions of other people. … It did affect my country [as described in Chapter 3] and it's affecting other countries. I know it's hard to tell from living here and the media you have. … But that decision you make to elect someone, it has a direct influence on other people's lives (ibid.).

Similarly, describing his views on the 2016 presidential election, Walid said he disagreed with Trump and that he was a Bernie Sanders supporter in the Democratic Party primary. As he observed:

> I'm a Democratic [Party supporter] and I was thinking about Hillary Clinton, but [she] decided to [support the invasion of] Iraq. She has [a bad] reputation. I was encouraging people about [Sanders] because he didn't vote for Iraq, he didn't vote for the war. … Yes, there [are] a lot of good candidate[s] in this country, they can do something good overseas. I mean, when you think about participat[ing] in democracy, you have to think about how much they do good here and also good outside of the United States. So, I didn't have any choice at that time [in 2016]. We disagree about President Trump … [and] we [were] thinking about the person who's caring about us and also caring about the people overseas because we know the United States plays a big role in many countr[ies] (Walid September 27, 2017).

The point made by Abdullah and Walid is important, as not only do United States' policies affect people around the world, but the country has a long and ongoing history of military invasions, covert and overt assassinations, training and funding of paramilitary forces and coups against other governments. In recent decades those countries have included, among others, Iran, Iraq, Guatemala and Chile (Kinzer 2007). To enumerate only a partial list of the conflicts it has waged in the 21st century, in addition to the wars in Iraq described in Chapter 3, the United States has been at war in Afghanistan since 2001, participated in the 2011 NATO naval blockade and air campaign in Libya and has carried out aerial bombardment in Syria since 2014. Its military and CIA have also carried out large-scale drone assassination programs, begun in 2004 under George W. Bush and intensified under Barack Obama, in Pakistan, Somalia and

Yemen (Body Count 2015; Scahill 2015). The U.S. has launched 6,786 drone strikes during the last 15 years, killing between 8,459 and 12,105 people.[99] In 2017, the United States deployed special forces to 149 countries, up from 138 in 2016 (Turse 2017).

Abdullah and Walid's comments point to the recurring central questions for democratic decision-making of who has standing to participate and, as Benhabib has framed it, how conversations about enlarging the conversation incorporate those affected by particular decisions (2011, 146–47). These concerns highlight the important reality that decisions such as starting wars not only affect those beyond the borders of the belligerent state(s), but also in many ways subject those individuals to the governing structures of the warring states.[100] This important empirical reality strengthens the argument that as agentic individuals, those former "outsiders" subjected to American military attack, including not only Iraqis but Afghans, Syrians, Yemenis and others, have *moral* standing to participate in, consent to and voice dissent about the decisions that affect their lives, including American decisions to invade, bomb and sanction their countries.

This insight, and the global scale and harm caused by conflicts waged by the United States described above and in Chapter 3, further reinforces the argument that those who resettled in the United States ought to have full standing to participate in decision-making processes and points toward the need to reconceptualize democratic decision-making beyond the bounded state.

[99] *The Bureau of Investigative Journalism* extensively tracks and keeps an up-to-date running count of American drone strikes and covert actions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. It can be found at https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/projects/drone-war.

[100] Fraser (2008, 411) has suggested the "all-subjected principle" in order to determine "who" is allowed to participate. She has described it this way: "all those who are subject to a given governance structure have moral standing as subjects of justice in relation to it" (ibid., 411). In distinction to appeals to "abstract humanism" or the broader all-affected principle, the all-subjected principle considers groups of people "fellow subjects of justice" not necessarily through state-centered citizenship, but through "subjection to a structure of governance, which sets the ground rules that govern their interaction" (ibid.). The all-subjected principle moves beyond membership strictly defined as citizenship to a nation-state and begins to recognize that decisions have consequences that cannot be contained within national borders. As Fraser notes, this principle can be applied to those who are not already officially accredited members of a structure of governance (ibid., 412). Therefore, those living in Iraq and facing an impending United States invasion *become* subjected to the American structures of governance, for example.

I agree with Benhabib's contention that "the nation-state is not the sole site of our democratic attachments" (2006, 172), nor should or must it be. Rather it is important to continue to imagine and elaborate other modes and mechanisms of decision-making rights that can be exercised at all levels from the local to the inter-or-transnational.

With this in mind, I next connect the negative effects of American global military dominance on the lives of those around the world to the vast resources required to maintain this project. As Wissam noted about the decision to spend vast sums on the American military, "you spend trillions on [the] defense budget," (October 22, 2017),[101] to the detriment of civilian infrastructure. He pointed to the poor quality of American airports, for example, and indeed, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has rated the United States a "D+"—meaning "poor, at risk" and only one step above "failing"—in its annual report card comprehensively evaluating the state of American infrastructure such as airports, water quality, and transit (2017 Infrastructure Report Card 2019). As a remedy, he suggested:

> If you spend maybe 10 percent of that for the infrastructure of [the] U.S., bullet trains … or better airports, better roads or maybe to have [a cleaner] environment like electric cars, things like that and focusing [on] these kind[s] of things. It's better than spending all this money [on the military]. Especially … the problem is, we are, the United States, spending trillions of dollars on our bases outside the country. So, money [is] coming out from, let's say, our pockets, to those countries (ibid.).

Similarly, Mohammed said "the government [has] to think about the American community. … Really, this is always my opinion: Why [didn't] they support the American community? Why?" (November 2, 2017). As evidence of this, Mohammed pointed to the vast

[101] According to the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (SIPRI), the United States allocates more to its military in absolute terms than any other government in the world, spending approximately $605 billion in 2017. This figure is greater than the amount spent by the next seven countries combined including China, Saudi Arabia, the Russian Federation, India, France, the United Kingdom and Japan. The country with the second highest military budget, China, spent approximately $228 billion that year, roughly 38 percent of U.S. expenditures. The U.S. spends the third most per capita for defense, behind only Saudi Arabia and Israel (SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2019).

sums of public resources spent on the military.[102] He pointed to the then-recent Congressional vote to increase the already enormous U.S. military budget by tens of billions of dollars for fiscal year 2018 (Stolberg 2017), asking, "Why? Nobody can tell me" (ibid.). He continued:

> I promise you … not after 1,000 years, America is America. It has such [a] strong military, nobody can [seriously threaten it]. Be comfortable. So, if you want to spend like $55bn [roughly the proposed budget increase], you can spend it for American people. Why [are] you spending [it on] the military? Why? (ibid.).

Emphasizing the point, he questioned why the United States had spent billions or trillions of dollars fighting conflicts against Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.[103] "Why [did] you spend all this money?" he asked, "This is from [the] American people. These people work, [pay taxes], and make the government strong. … But, the government, they didn't help the American people" (ibid.). He pointed to the economic hardships many Americans face, such as the high cost of healthcare, which only a few miles across the Canadian border from Buffalo where he lives, that country's government provides to all of its citizens. As he remarked:

> [It] can't be like this way always. You spend money, spend money [on war], the money will [run out] in the future. So, the people will be angry, and [there] will be trouble. So, the government should change [its] mind to help the people, enough war, enough weapons. If you spend these billion, billion, billion dollars for [the] American people, everybody will be happy and [their lives] will be changed. Right? (ibid.).

Mohammed's interpretation of a fundamental tension between the U.S. government maintaining a vastly more expensive and powerful military than any other country in the world and its ability to provide basic services to its population echoes former U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's famous 1953 speech, "The Chance for Peace." In it, Eisenhower argued that a

[102] In view of year over year military budget increases, a Gallup poll conducted in early 2018 supported Mohammed's interpretation, finding that 34% of respondents believed the federal government spent too much on the military, 31% believed spending was "about right" and 33% responding the government should increase its military budget (Newport 2018).

[103] A 2018 report by the Costs of War project at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs estimated that the so called War on Terror cost $5.9 trillion between fiscal year 2001 and fiscal year 2019 (Crawford 2018b).

superpower arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States would most likely end in nuclear war or, failing that tragic outcome, would nonetheless result in perpetual fear, tension and a wasting of strength and wealth in both societies. As Eisenhower (2019) famously remarked: "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed." Eisenhower called for "solemn agreements" between nations to limit the size of militaries around the world and the resources devoted to such purposes. As the only remaining world superpower, and given the United States' ongoing pursuit of global conflicts, pushing the American government to adhere to such commitments and limits, as Mohammed has suggested, is as relevant today as in 1953.

Democratic Membership

With the forgoing critiques in mind, I move next to consider interviewees' understandings of their membership in democratic institutions and processes in the United States. As I illustrate below, their individual conceptions of substantive membership varied. Some, including Walid and Omar, were very positive about their opportunities for voice and authorship while others, including Zaid and Tariq, were significantly less enthusiastic.

Nora, whose asylum application was pending at the time of our interview, said that in the future, she could be a member of formal democratic processes in the U.S., but not currently. "I don't have citizenship to vote," she said:

> I cannot express my opinion [about] more political stuff, but I do … feel the democracy and I belong here because I talk [about] whatever I want to talk [about]. And I say that this is right and this is wrong. I should not be treated like this because I am different. So, I do practice … democracy here. … Like, I just used my right[s] and was like, even though I'm not American I do have the right to say or I do have the right to be treated different[ly]. But … I cannot do any elections when it comes to this [city] council. … I cannot do anything. But I can express my opinion (Nora February 6, 2018).

Nora's comments speak to the tensions between formal citizenship which confers the

right to vote that is not available to permanent residents or those with other immigration statuses and the opportunities to use those rights such as the freedom of speech that are guaranteed to all U.S. residents, including non-citizens, to advocate for control of the conditions of her life.

Walid observed, "I am very attached" to American democracy (September 27, 2017). He said of his volunteer work with immigrants in his community:

> We try to encourage people to get U.S. citizen[ship]. And we do have a lot of people, they reach five years [of residency] so we encourage them to get naturalized and try to practice their rights because we came from [the] Middle East and maybe people they don't learn how to practice their rights and here we tell them it's really important. We have a congressman, a congress. We can go and talk [to them] (ibid.).

As an example of the types of activities he encourages community members to undertake, he described how an attack in northern Iraq had upset many families living in Buffalo about the safety of their family members living in that region:

> They said 'Walid, tell us what we do? We want to do something.' So, to raise awareness [about Yazidi women kidnapped by ISIS], we decided to use our [democratic rights] to contact the [city] council member, to invite some faith-based organization[s] to light candle[s] … [to] express our feeling[s]. We wanted them to not keep this anger and sit home because you are going to be very depressed and very tired [if you do]. We want to bring the community and teach them how to practice their rights (ibid.).

Ahmed indicated that he had democratic membership "to a certain extent" (October 2, 2017). As a resident, he could not vote in 2016. However, he remarked:

> I watched the election. I did not participate in the election. Actually, I watch[ed] the election with popcorn. It was super exciting. I know for other people, they don't feel this way. … I met with a few friends after the election and obviously, we have like 50 percent of the population [who] feel downbeat about it. That's in any normal election or democra[tic] process (ibid.).

He counseled his friends to be optimistic, telling them "no, you don't need to [be hopeless]. In four years' time or in two years' time, you still have the power to change it" (ibid.). "For me personally," he said, "I waited almost more than 20 years of my life to see another

country forcing democracy [in Iraq]. I think it will be [a] super exciting moment for me just to participate" (ibid.).

I asked Ahmed whether he viewed it as his right to help decide what the laws are in the United States, to which he replied:

> I think so. Not helping with the laws like going and writing them, but having an opinion about something, yes. Because in the end it will affect me and affect my family, it will affect my friends, it will affect the community I live in. I think so, yeah (ibid.).

He continued:

> I look forward to being part of making a decision in the community, within the small group that I'm interacting with, maybe, if I can give an added value to their discussion. In terms of government? I think that would not be my role. I don't have, never had any sort of [desire to go] into that direction I would say. … I don't have political aspiration[s] (ibid.).

Elaborating on how he understood decision making in the realm of government, he said about the possibilities of changing a law or policy with which he disagreed:

> I can voice my opinion, but I will not be in a position to … [make] a different decision. Because again, I don't think the government here works [in that way]. There will be other people factoring in their voices and their concerns. So me being the decision maker? I don't think so (ibid.).

For his part, Omar noted, "We came here for safety … and also to practice democracy. Democracy is very important" (December 14, 2017). Describing his experience engaging in democratic processes such as voting he said, "It was amazing to participate. To feel that you have a voice. And I was happy every time I did it" (ibid.). As described in more detail in the following chapter, Omar has been involved in establishing and working with several organizations engaged in a range of activities including education, civic engagement, and community organizing and coalition building since arriving in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

On a personal level, separate from the community work he does, Omar noted that private gun ownership laws were a potential issue on which he desired to have input. He said,

> If there is something to change, really, I [would] change the gun policy. That's very problematic, let me say. I am surprised that we see [such policies] here. Like in our community, the gun should only [be] restricted to the government. In our country [Iraq], even [though] it is not sophisticated like here … but we never have someone handling the gun[s]. … So, it should be restricted. You see from time to time, crazy people. … So, why [do] you give them the opportunity to take these weapons and kill us? So, it is something that hopefully will be gone, so all will live in peace (ibid.).

Omar went on to call gun ownership by private individuals a larger issue than many others, but one he wished could be changed because in his words:

> I love this nation. So, I want it to live in peace. That's the reason why I'm interested. Yeah, others they have the same [opinion] but again they don't have the power, or they don't have the means. … It's bigger than us. It's business, it's everything" (ibid.).

In order to make the change he wished to see, he argued that it had to emanate:

> From people. No one can do it by power. When everyone, you and me, and everyone [is] convinced that my neighbor, why should I be scared [of] my neighbor? I'm living with my neighbor long, long years. That gun will not protect me from my neighbor. And then that's it. It starts from a member and then the community. And then city, state, that's it. … We need peace. Yeah. And the government is very strong, so it can protect anyone (ibid.).

Kasim also explained that an issue on which he wanted to have a say in deciding laws in the U.S. revolved around private ownership of firearms. He took a very different position on this subject. He cited the rise in school shootings in the United States saying:

> Nowadays, this problem with the shootings in school[s]. Definitely, I would love to try to push some kind of legislation that protects schools because it's really alarming what's happening. I mean I see my kids' school, they lock the schools, I cannot get in. How come people can get in and kill the kids? Something is wrong. I listened to a speech [by] someone who had his kid killed. And then he was saying that you cannot get a bottle of water inside a plane, and you can get a rifle inside a school (ibid.).

Coming to the opposite conclusion as Omar, Kasim said:

> We have to do something about that. It's not about controlling guns. … They can come in with knives and kill kids. It's not about gun[s]. Not about gun control. It's definitely not the case. It's about securing the schools from those maniacs. Crazy people. Terrorists, whoever. So yeah. That's really alarming (ibid.).

Hashim, too, desired to be involved in decisions that affect him and his family. As noted at the opening of this chapter he said, "I can give my opinion and I can set up rules that work for

me in the things that I experience" (October 1, 2017). However, he said:

> Of course, I cannot give [an] opinion … [on subjects] I don't know about. But I can give [an] opinion on, for example, education for my kids in the community schools, if they have suggestions, if they decided to make some changes [to] the schedule or on the education guidelines and all of that. So, I really want to be involved in my community, involved in things affecting my family. So, I would really be happy to make, not make decisions because I'm not the decision maker, but at least to participate in the community and participate in decision making (ibid.).

Wissam expressed optimism that he was in a position to participate in decisions that affect his life:

> I really hope it is my right to change the U.S. in positive ways. … What's good about [the] U.S. is you have all these … people from all different backgrounds and it's the most successful model because people [are] living here peacefully, they are working together peacefully, everything is working (October 22, 2017).

He went on to describe democratic membership as providing him "peace of mind." As he elaborated:

> There are certain things you don't do, that will keep you safe. [If] you know what's right, what's wrong, then you are on the safe side to some extent. And being able to petition the government or talk with the politicians, I [have] never experienced that. But these things are very hard in Iraq and other countries because it's very hard to see someone who is in power, even [if] he works in the city or [is] just a manager, something like that. It's very hard but now [in the U.S.], it's different. The whole system is different (ibid.).

Moreover, Wissam argued that he had an equal ability to give his opinion as Americans "to some extent, in certain areas" (ibid.). However, he said about private gun ownership, for example:

> I can't speak for everybody [who] … was born with different values, different experiences. … Some things I'll feel strongly about [but] … don't control. I can't [control such issues] because people here have it since day one. We didn't back there, so we are [not] used to [having] guns at home or us[ing] [them] unless you are in the army [for example] So [it] depends on the topics (ibid.).

On issues such as gun control, even though he argued he was not necessarily in a position to control decisions made because he had not lived his entire life in the United States, Wissam said he could affect decisions by:

> Let[ting] them hear my side of [the] story. Because, again, they didn't live or go through what I went through. So, they need to listen to my story, what I went through. … And the good thing [is that] people here are open-minded, they understand. They understand we are equal. They understand: 'Okay, let me listen [to] what he says,' before they just shut you out. … But, again, am I the best person to explain it to them? Or convince them? Maybe not. So, [it] depends [on] who can speak [about such issues] well, you know? It's tricky (ibid.).

Interpreting his ability to participate in discussions with others as less equal than Wissam, Ali also suggested that his capacity to participate, and to participate equally with Americans, would be stronger if he had been born in the United States:

> If I was born here, and an American, [the capacity to participate would be] stronger. But, my situation, I [was] not born here … and I will remain as a refugee, you know? It's not forever, but this feeling inside you [remains], even if you want to be an American (Ali January 14, 2018).

In addition to the internal perception Ali described, he pointed out the distinctions government officials may draw between native-born and naturalized citizens. As an example, he pointed to the potential for scrutiny when interacting with airport security:

> Whenever you want to go, especially during this time, if you want to travel, you are going to get questions, even if you have a U.S. passport. You are going to get questions. Especially when [it indicates] country of birth: Iraq. [If it reads] country of birth: Brooklyn, New York, it [would be] different. This is something that [has happened in] the past year, 2016. They are taking their phones, they are [asking] questions, which is not good (ibid.).

However, Ali also argued that the law in the United States provided protection to everyone living there. Therefore, for example, one could practice their religion freely. Ali stressed that if this legal protection were to change:

> I will give my voice. I'll give my opinion. I believe this [equal legal protection] is better because from my experience, what I had back years ago in my country [the breakdown of law and institutions after 2003], this is what happened. So, I don't want this country to go [through] the same thing [that] my country went [through]. I'm talking about civil war, something like that. I don't want that to happen here in the United States (ibid.).

Zaid stated that although he was an American citizen and had a legal right to engage in democratic processes, he did not in practice have the right to exercise voice and authorship over

decisions about the laws in the United States. As he described:

> I think it's not my right. No, … I don't want to be a hypocrite. [I've] just been living here for seven years. I don't think I gained that right. Yes, I mean, I have the citizenship, but I can't decide [for] people who were born [here], this is just my opinion. I know it's my right … but I believe that it's not really my right (Zaid February 27, 2018).

When I asked Tariq "do you feel like you're a part of the democracy in the United States?" he said:

> This is a good question. Part of it, probably yes. … But we are a second level. You know China? China [has] levels, class[es]. Class one, class two, class three.[104] Now, it's our era, unfortunately. It used to be black [Americans] before and now it's Muslims. … This is what I think. It's my opinion. … So, when you are guilty and you have a bad record and you go to the judge and you say: 'No, I didn't do it!' They're not going to trust you. This is what I feel here. We have a democracy, yes. But we can't say anything. We can't use it. What are you going to do? Everybody [is] against you, the news, the government. … So, you're weak … because you're not trusted. … So, it's not democracy (Tariq November 2, 2017).

He went on to argue that Trump had effectively authorized Americans to treat refugees badly:

> We cannot practice our democracy, it's difficult when the government [is led by someone] like Trump, he's against us already, we're done. Now he [has] legalized people [to] do whatever they want with us. Right? Because he said: 'If you do anything, you're out!' (ibid.)

Tariq allowed that Trump ostensibly took this approach to keep people safe. However, he explained: "He was thinking it's going to be good to keep people away from problems, but you say that for people [who] make a problem, which is very few of us. Not [every] immigrant" (ibid.). This targeting of all immigrants led Tariq to ask rhetorically: "Is that freedom? Is that a democracy? It's not. It give[s] you a right to do it again and again and again, because it worked" (ibid.).

[104] Although he did not explicitly name it, he was likely referring to the system of household and internal migration registration called *hukou.* This system provides disparate public benefits to Chinese citizens depending upon registration type and location and, as some have argued, has created a type of second-class citizenship within China (Tyner and Ren 2016).

More broadly than the president's actions, for Tariq, life in the U.S. is difficult because a segment of the society does not support refugees. He is a U.S. citizen now but still thinks of himself as a refugee. He said: "Why [do] I still think I'm a refugee or I'm an immigrant? Because no matter what, this [is] our taxes. This is how the first generation [who] move[s] to the U.S., this is, I feel, this is our taxes" (ibid.). He continued:

> My kids probably will be better because they have the American accent, so it's hard for you to recognize them in the future. But for us, this is how we pay taxes. We still feel, [from] the community, from the news, from the politics, or from politicians when they do something against us, you feel like: 'Oh, why [did] they do that against me?' So, you are not [a] full citizen. U.S. citizen. … Why? Because we just moved, no matter what I'm still [a] foreigner because [of] my accent, my color, maybe. My whatever. So, still, you will struggle (ibid.).

Tariq went on to say that even if he were able to build a sense of belonging and democratic membership, one event could set all of that backward:

> It's not going to be easy. … When you say something or you live your democracy very well because no matter what, on the news … one day if it's [a] whole year with no problem, people start to [do] better and you know, forget. And then boom! [A] shooting [happens] and they [say]: 'Muslim, Muslim, Muslim!' (ibid.). [105]

He was certain it would be "impossible" to have an equal right to participate as Americans. "That will take time," he said, "it will probably [be] after I die. My kids at least [may have it]. Maybe, yes. But, no, no we're far behind" (ibid.). Moreover, he argued that the exercise of his democratic rights may place him in jeopardy:

> For me, definitely you think you can say it, but I keep remind[ing] you that for us to practice those things, it's a little for me at least, it's difficult. I don't want to put myself in a spot and then you will get hurt by [the] government. I know, probably, freedom of speech nobody [is] going to hurt me but, who knows? Probably they will consider [it] against me down the road. 'Oh yeah, you [have] been doing this and now you are a terrorist.' They can do that, easily (ibid.).[106]

[105] I discuss more of Tariq's experiences with media portrayals of mass shootings in the previous chapter.

[106] Tariq prefaced this comment by saying "Each person [is] probably different. Probably the people that [you] interview have different point[s] of view. … Because if you go to Michigan [for example], probably [it is] different. They practice their religion very easily there. They can. They have a big mosque over there. They can go. They say:

This was especially true under Trump in his view. As he argued, Trump had, for example, directed ICE to take, "people from their homes and moms from their kids, without mercy" (ibid.). He compared these actions to the situation under Saddam saying:

> It's like Saddam Hussein. This is what he did after 1991, after the Gulf War. He sent his army [to] every house and he took people from their house[s]. I almost [lost] my dad because of that. It's the same thing. ICE, same thing. They have the right, they [have] the power to take anybody.[107] So, it's easy for them to consider me, I'm the bad guy, easily (ibid.).

He argued that if he were to exercise his freedom of speech by posting something critical about the government on social media, he could be arrested. He stated that immigrants who participated in protests against Trump took the same risk. As he explained, the reason he believed that the government could arbitrarily exercise its authority over those engaged in legal activities is that he had personally experienced this reality: "I [was] born and raised in this same situation," he said, and the government "can [turn] easily against you. So, for me, we [have] to always think ahead" (ibid.).

Religious practice too is constrained, in Tariq's view:

> We practice in a small place and we don't go every time because I was scared to. Who knows? They come and they [will ask], 'What are you guys doing here?' Or they [are]

'no we're fine,' probably they are going to tell you everything is different. This is the thing: Each case is different" (ibid.). Tariq's reference to Michigan is likely rooted in its contemporary position as a hub for Arab-American life and culture. The state of Michigan has the nation's second largest Arab-American population after California (Demographics 2018). Cities such as the Detroit suburb of Dearborn have long-established Arab immigrant communities. Dearborn serves as a cultural hub, housing the Arab American National Museum, for example. Its population is 42 percent Arab in origin, a number of whom are Muslim, and has been characterized as the "capital of Arab America" (Crowder 2015; Whiteside, Naik, and Valdes-Dapena 2017).

[107] In addition to the Travel Ban, which initially included Iraq, I conducted these interviews as the Trump Administration was directing agencies such as ICE and the United States Border Patrol to increase actions to arrest, imprison and deport immigrants in the United States. In June 2017, several months before interviews began, ICE ramped up efforts specifically to target Iraqis. The majority of such individuals were Chaldean Christians who left Iraq before and after 2003 to seek refuge from violence directed at their community. A legal petition brought by the American Civil Liberties Union in July successfully halted the immediate deportation of 1,400 Iraqis who had been detained, allowing time for individuals to reopen their immigration cases (Bonsitu A and Andrade 2017). The judge who issued the injunction halting deportations argued in his ruling "Each Petitioner faces the risk of torture or death on the basis of residence in America and publicized criminal records; many will also face persecution as a result of a particular religious affiliation" (Goldsmith 2017). As such, the judge contended, deportation of such individuals to a country where they are likely to face persecution would constitute a violation of both U.S. and international law.

> watching us already. Maybe they're watching us already and they think that we're doing something [they] don't like (ibid.).

"Maybe I'm wrong," he said. However, he continued: "it was true before … in the country that I come from. … You get killed for that. You get arrested for that" (ibid.). Moreover, Tariq pointed out that the U.S. government maintains watchlists of those targeted for suspicion. As noted in the Introduction and Chapter 4, state authorities already disproportionately cast suspicion upon and surveil Muslims, mosques and Islamic community organizations in the United States. "Even if it's not true, this is what I feel," Tariq observed (ibid.). He went on to say:

> I wish I'm wrong. … But, based on the data and [what I] see [in] the news, I [have] to be aware of that. Keep away from all the problem[s]. Even if I'm [a] U.S. citizen now, always keep away from anything because I just want to live my life. I don't want to do anything. I don't want anybody [to do] bad things to me and I'm never going to do anything to anybody (ibid.).

In view of all of these experiences and assessments of his position in American society, Tariq said:

> So, [it is] just the democracy that we [are] looking for. We hope we'll be more like anybody else and [that] our voice can be heard, and they believe us when we say [something] because … they don't believe us (ibid.).

Barriers to, and Requirements for, Democratic Participation

With these experiences of membership in mind, those I interviewed also highlighted specific barriers as well as requirements to engagement with political processes and to exercise voice and authorship in the United States. Multiple interviewees identified three such fundamental themes. The first was the insight that locating opportunities to exercise voice requires time. Second, authorship requires knowledge of processes and preferences. Third, interviewees' experiences living under an authoritarian regime left some suspicious of political engagement.

Additionally, a number of individuals identified language as an important factor, and in some cases precondition, to engagement. Many interviewees described how their knowledge of English facilitated both resettlement processes broadly and also opportunities for involvement. In addition to facilitating everyday interactions and the ability to pursue daily activities those with whom I spoke described how their knowledge of English allowed them to advocate for themselves, interact with state authorities, neighbors and others in their communities. Confidence with the common language of interaction facilitates voice. With this in mind, I turn to a discussion of the three barriers/requirements to civic engagement that interviewees identified.[108]

Exercising Voice Requires Time

The majority of interviewees argued that they were lacked sufficient time to engage in activities that would allow them to exercise their voice. Many individuals, including Ahmed, Mohammed, Ali and Sarah, discussed how the need to work long hours left little time to see family and friends, let alone become involved in broader scale discussion, debate or activism. Marwa, for example, told me voting was the extent to which she wished to engage in democratic activities. I asked her whether she had done so already and she said: "I didn't [have] time. I already register[ed] … but I didn't get [to do so]. I was busy working" (Marwa November 25, 2017).

Ali elaborated that he worked long hours during the week, occasionally not seeing his children or wife because he returns home late, "So, yeah, the weekend is fully booked for my family. Because the whole week, sometimes … I don't see them because I come late. Sometimes

[108] The insights shared by participants in this section accord strongly with Bloemraad and Ramakrishnan's argument that: "Beyond language, immigrants may also face cultural gaps in understanding their new country's political institutions, its taken-for-granted norms about politics and civic activity, and the very ways that politics and civic engagement are understood and discussed. Immigrants must learn the ropes, so to speak, of their host country, and research indicates that those from authoritarian regimes are less prepared to participate in politics. … The immigrant experience can thus create obstacles to political and civic incorporation, but it can also rejuvenate or transform norms and practices in host societies" (2008, 5).

I see them like for half an hour and they have to go to sleep" (January 14, 2018).

As Hashim explained, comparing his experience in Chicago to that in Iraq:

> We had so many Iraqi friends at the beginning and then, you know, everyone is busy here in [their] live[s]. Back in Iraq, we had a lot of time to spend time with family and friends but right here we are so busy so we're just seeing the closer families and from time to time we can maybe meet with friends (Hashim October 1, 2017).

Between work and family, Ahmed, too, had little time to engage in additional activities: "Because I used to live in Rogers Park [a neighborhood on Chicago's Northside] and it's basically between work and going back and family duties I was not really able to go [into] the community and talk" (October 2, 2017). He said that he discusses important concerns with co-workers and friends, but not in other fora. Ahmed was interested in becoming more civically involved: "if the opportunity comes my way" and he reiterated "with the time constraints I need to think about" (ibid.).

Similarly, Mohammed argued:

> [There's] no time for American people to go [out] to talk with the government. Everybody go[es] to the job and come[s] back [from] the job. With this circle, who [is] thinking about the government? [What] they [are] doing? Nobody. Fifty percent [of the] American people, if you ask [them] about the name [of] the [Secretary of Defense] … [they] don't know (November 2, 2017).[109]

He went on to argue that "the government put[s] the people [in] this situation. Just work, work, work and don't think about [politics]. Don't think. Don't talk about [politics]. Just go to the job and come back [home]" (ibid.). In this way, he concluded, even if someone were

[109] Polls of Americans' knowledge of their government support this assertion. For example, a 2014 Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania poll found that fewer than half of respondents could correctly identify which party, Democrats or Republicans, controlled the House of Representatives or Senate at the time of the survey ("Americans Know Surprisingly Little" 2014). A 2018 Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation poll of 1,000 U.S. Citizens found that 57% of respondents could not identify how many Justices sit on the Supreme Court of the United States (National Survey 2018).

interested in engaging politically, “There’s no time. Who’s going outside to lose his check [for] a week?” he asked (ibid.).[110]

Although Mohammed argued that he was too busy to engage, such involvement was something he was interested in undertaking, nevertheless. He said that he often speaks with his 23-year-old cousin who graduated with a political science degree and moved to Washington D.C. to work for the Democratic Party, imploring her to work for positive change. Mohammed has also prioritized supporting his high school-aged daughter’s civic engagement. He sent her on a two-week leadership program offered in Washington, D.C., where she had the opportunity to meet with members of government. He said of his hope for his daughter’s future: “My plan in the future, I [will] send my daughter to [study] political science to do something for the people, not just for refugees, no, swear to God. For the American people, too, to change something in the future” (ibid.).

Wissam, too, said, “the problem here is people don’t have time, they live in a bubble and life here is very fast. … People don’t have time here to research” (October 22, 2017). As a result of these constraints Wissam argued:

> So, they just trust the government. Whatever those decisions [made] for them, they don’t have the time. I mean, even the elections … most people when they [vote] for senators or representatives, they are going to decide in a few seconds, depends on the picture, which picture is better. … They’re not going to spend the time to research what this guy’s plan is, which is unfortunate. So, people [are] relying heavily on government to [make] decisions for them (ibid.).

[110] Ali expressed a similar view that government, in this case the Iraqi rather than American, keeps individuals focused on daily concerns and he proffered that this was a tactic to prevent organizing against government policy and power. Describing the destruction of essential infrastructure and services after the 2003 invasion, he said that availability of electricity was limited and the cost prohibitive. “These are simple things for human being[s],” he said, “[The government] have to consider that. But they are not doing that. They are making people run and care about electricity, care about their life, care about how they are going to feed their children [because] they don’t want them to get involved with politics. They don’t want [them to] get involved to do some kind of revolution against the government right now. So [they] make people deal with those simple things, which the government can fix” (Ali January 14, 2018).

Moreover, he explained, the U.S. "is not a small country, it's a continent. So, even the government has limited resources to fight back [against] all [the] bad guys or all [the] lobbyists, everything" (ibid.). This situation "makes you lose hope and [believe] there is no way you can change that" he said with a laugh (ibid.). For himself, "[I] just stay busy with … my business and I don't care about anything else" (ibid.). Later in our conversation, he said:

> Not many Americans [are] engaged in political life. … Maybe now there are more. But I didn't see that [many] people care about what['s] going on, even outside the war. So, they don't [care], we don't care what's going on outside. And I'm busy with my life and my kids, things like that (ibid.).

Kasim, too, contended that Americans he encountered were generally preoccupied with daily concerns: "When you are talk[ing] to [an] ordinary American person, he lives his daily life routine. He doesn't look outside the box" (February 27, 2018). In more personal terms, Sarah said that she would participate in democratic activities in the future, but her work kept her too busy. For example, the resettlement agency that assisted Sarah and her sister when they first arrived in Arizona held workshops on various topics and as she explained:

> Some people [went] to the resettlement agency, but me and my sister we go just two weeks and then we start[ed] to work. And all my time [is] busy, we can't go there. Some people [went] to the organization to [get] more information about America. But, me and my sister we are busy [all the time] [working] 10 hours [per day]. [Activities were held at] the same times we wanted to go to complete my education [as well], but I can't. No time. No time (Sarah November 30, 2017).

Nora, who has been involved in a number of different nonprofit and activist organizations said that she had to step away from some of this work because she was caring for her mother, commuting between Harrisonburg, Virginia and Washington, D.C., to complete a master's degree and working 10-hour shifts at her job four days a week. At one point, Tariq, too, was involved as a volunteer with an organization that assists Special Immigrant Visa recipients in the Rochester area. But, because he, too, was too busy with work, he was only volunteering "a little bit" at the time of our interview (Tariq November 2, 2017).

Walid, who is very active in multiple activities, said he knew 5-10 people who were "donating their time to the community" in Buffalo, New York (September 27, 2017). However, by and large, most members of the community, he opined, are "focusing on their own needs [at] this time" (ibid). As he explained:

> For individual[s], I know many famil[ies] in the community [who] help each other. Reading their mail, calling the doctor to schedule an appointment, we have this kind of help, supporting [the] community, in some way. But, in term[s] [of] taking issues [to] governmental or local agencies they don't have time or ability probably to do that because they are very busy in this life (ibid.).

Nada expressed a strong desire to be active in her community. However, she said she too was not involved in any activities at the time of our interview because:

> All [of] my time [is spent] in my job or studying. Yeah. I don't have time. Especially my daughter, this year has [the] SAT. So, this is very important for me. I prepare everything for her to feel very comfortable, to [be able to] study … and really [on the] weekend I have one day [to] spent with her. … Now, all my time [is spent] for my job and … studying and with my family (Nada November 1, 2017).

When I asked Nada whether she thought this busy schedule would change in the future or whether she would like it to, she said, "Yeah. Really, now I stopped everything to [engage] with any community because that means I need time. And, I explained [to] you, I don't have time now" (ibid.).

Zaid said his daily life entailed "working and working." He followed up by laughing and reiterating: "and working" (Zaid February 27, 2018). "Seriously," he continued, "this is what I'm doing. Since the day I arrived till now … you are struggling against all the needs [and] demands. I didn't even get the time to have a life" (ibid.). As he reminded me with a laugh, Zaid had come directly from work to conduct our interview. He was also caring for his parents who live with him in Bethesda, Maryland. So, he said, "unfortunately I didn't have the free time. I mean, since the day I came here until now" (ibid.).

As several individuals such as Tariq and Mohammed pointed out, part of the reason one must work long hours, for example, is that there are limited social democratic programs such as universal tax-funded healthcare or post-secondary education provided to residents or citizens in the United States. In Iraq, essential services such as healthcare and education had been provided at no cost. In the U.S., however, the cost of living is high, and one cannot depend upon social supports to fulfill needs.

Authorship Requires Knowledge

In addition to sufficient time, information is required to engage in democratic processes. Many interviewees pointed to the need to make informed decisions as well as noted that they may not have enough information or knowledge of U.S. structures, institutions or processes to participate productively in authoring laws, policies or rules affecting their lives. When I asked Nora whether she understood herself to have the ability to voice her views on laws in the United States, she said, "I cannot do that. Not yet. I'm not [knowledgeable] about everything [such as] what the law[s] have missed … [and] I [have] never been in a situation to say that, honestly" (Nora February 6, 2018). However, in the future, she was confident she could. "Why not?" she said, "If I cannot change it, at least I will highlight the issues to people who [can] change it, the policy maker[s]. It's like, why not?" (ibid.).

Nora also went on to say that it depended on the type of law or policy: "It depends also on what type of law you are talking about. Like, I cannot change, as [an] example, immigration law. No, I'm not going to change that mostly because they have the right to protect the country" (February 6, 2018). But she continued: "if there is some stuff like why [are] you making people['s] [lives] more complicated and miserable, why not just try to talk about [it], try to say something" (ibid.).

Ahmed expressed hope that he would be taken as seriously as native-born Americans when articulating his views: "I still hope so, but honestly speaking, I don't think so" (October 2, 2017). The reason for this, he elaborated is that, "they [Americans] might think of me, not less, but maybe they think I'm not yet fully integrated and fully involved" (ibid.) Therefore, he said:

> Maybe they will think my idea is good, from the outside, but if they want to look at it from the community long-term, because I [have] still yet to get my full grasp of the laws, of the system, so I might say something not relevant. It's relevant to me, but not relevant to the subject (ibid.).

Moreover, he argued that this disparity was not because he was a resident and not a citizen at the time of interview. Rather it was the short period of time he had lived in the United States:

> It's not because I'm not American yet or they are, but it's only how long you have been here, you know the community better, you know the country better, you know your city better. So, you know the laws better. So, for an example, if I now go and protest against the [recently imposed] soda tax [in Chicago], okay I want to do that, but did I research the health implications on the Americans society and the obesity? No, I did not. So, someone else might sit next to me: 'How long you have been here?' And I would say: '12-13 months.' They would say: 'Okay, thank you for your opinion, but I might want to consider someone who [has] been here for the last 30 years of their life or born and raised and suffered health issues that affect all their [lives] and their families as well' (ibid.).

Sarah expressed uncertainty about her right to participate as a Green Card holder:

> I don't know, which law[s] … allow [me] to [participate] … I want to learn about this subject more from people, from organization[s] here… I think some organization[s] here, talk about this subject. We are actually looking for it here (November 30, 2017).[111]

She elaborated this point, noting that as a resident she cannot vote. However, in the future, she said she would speak out if a candidate can "help the people, for example, to develop

[111] Later in our conversation, Sarah and I discussed the high barriers to home ownership in New York City. I asked her whether this topic, which she cared a great deal about, is something she would consider discussing with a local government representative. She said: "Actually, it's no problem for me. It's no problem because everyone can talk about this subject" (Sarah November 30, 2017). She then asked me: "For the new people here, it's no problem if we wanted to talk with them about that? Or?" I said yes, it is legal, and she has the right to do so, to which she said: "Because we don't [want] to [have] a problem, especially me and my sister. We don't to make a problem to talk with some[one], [about] subject[s] [that are] no good" (ibid.).

education, … health, many things. … We need the time to [make] this decision about which one we have to choose. … I want to learn. I want to learn first and then to, maybe, make a decision about that one (ibid.).

Mohammed flatly answered "no," to the question of whether it was his right to help decide what the laws are in the United States. He then elaborated:

> Do you know why? Because … any point in the Constitution, [these are] the American issues. It's difficult for me to understand the American life, and decide [on] any point, which is right for the American people. … This is the American right because you [were] born [in] America. You know what [is needed in] the American life. It's difficult, I don't have [a lot of] experience. If you asked me about Iraq, I [will tell] you: 'Yes, 100%.' Here, it's difficult. Just if you're reading about the tax [system] in America, you have to read like 100 books to understand [it] (Mohammed November 2, 2017).[112]

Omar spoke about knowledge of the "tools" of democratic processes as necessary for democratic engagement, not as a barrier, but as a facet of such processes: "We are new and also beginner[s] to these things. … I'm trying to educate myself in these democratic things, the tools. And so, we have a lot to learn" (December 14, 2017). In his volunteer work, Omar educates community members about these processes as well: "We are also teaching our communities about these tools to use them. Right now, we have [had a] hard time to pull out our community to vote" (ibid.). For himself, Omar said: "Being able to also change the rules, I wish to. And I don't

[112] By way of example, Mohammed asked me to imagine I had moved to Iraq and become involved in a car accident. There is no insurance there, he said. To resolve the situation, one must discuss with the other motorist, who if at fault, will go with you to the mechanic and pay for the repairs to your car. Sometimes in this process, the person at fault will argue over payment and families will become involved, he said. "You don't know about this process, right?" I said no. So, he said, this is difficult for a newcomer to understand. He asked me to imagine I moved to Iraq, received three months of support services and thereafter, was expected to find employment and make a new life. "It's really difficult" (ibid.). Yet, this is the expectation for resettled refugees. Mohammed volunteers supporting newly resettled refugees in Buffalo and he often encounters clients who receive letters informing them of decisions made by various agencies that they do not understand. For example, they receive notice that their public assistance has been terminated because they missed an application deadline, or their credit has been negatively impacted because of a missed gas bill payment. These routine matters are unfamiliar to newcomers and are a challenge to understand about American life.

think there is an obstacle for that as far as I work for it and find [the] opportunit[ies], I think, [I] will be able to [do so]" (ibid.).

Wissam offered that there ought to be more programs, available sooner, to educate refugees about the structures in American society such as the purpose and uses of tax revenues:

> For refugees, I think there should be more programs to teach them about these kind[s] of things that you guys know about renting vs. buying, how to apply for taxes, what do taxes mean, why do you pay them. Because most of these countries they come from they don't have any taxes. So, they don't know why. I mean, we do have some programs here, brief one[s], about bank account[s], taxes, basically knowing your rights, what you can do, what you can say … when you have [the] right to stay silent, things like that (October 22, 2017).

The wide array of programming Wissam described above may or may not be available through nonprofit or resettlement agencies to those who resettled, depending on a number of factors including the local resettlement context, funding availability and language learning and education support. Wissam argued:

> It shouldn't be after getting citizenship [that one can] learn about all these things. It should be when you first come here. You learn about like: This is the Bill of Rights, these are 27 amendments that we have, this is what people [are] discussing, these kind[s] of things. It should [be] available before they come, even before they come, yeah. Just to let them have an idea. And explain to them these kind[s] of things (ibid.).

At the time of our interview, Wissam was studying for his citizenship exam and I asked him whether he was learning about these issues now as he prepared. He said: "A lot of it, yeah. A lot of things I didn't know" (ibid.).

For Hashim, specific subject area knowledge facilitated participation. At the time of our interview, he was completing a master's degree at the University of Chicago focused on healthcare management: "I'm studying policies and regulations, managing health institutions. This is something I'm going to be specialized in. It is something I can give [an] opinion [about],

you know?" (October 1, 2017). In his graduate work, he and his classmates spent significant time in seminars discussing the ethics and policy questions related to healthcare.[113] As he put it:

> This is something I can maybe give my opinion [about]. I can go into debates [on this topic] but not something related to different fields. So, yeah. I think I can participate in debates related to what I know about. What I'm doing (ibid.).

Marwa did not see an equal right to participate because "maybe [Americans] know more than me. I am still every day [learning] something" (November 25, 2017). As she continued:

> My kids now they [are] different. They know more than me. … I came already here, I'm [an] adult. I [grew up] there. I [grew up] in [a] different culture. I try my best to know. I try now. I try my best to know more. More, more, more. But I miss a lot (ibid.).

We returned to this subject later in our interview and Marwa sketched her understanding of what it requires to make change in society. "It takes time," she said, "if I want to change [something], I'm not going to give my opinion. … No, it need[s] research, it need[s] people [who] understand maybe … more than me" (ibid.). Marwa's insights point toward the connection between time and knowledge. Sufficient time is required to learn about processes and issues.

Finally, it is important to note there was a tension in the perception that many individuals lack time and/or knowledge for engagement in their communities and their activities. Individuals, including Mohammed, Marwa and Ali, explained that they were very busy and this limited their time to engage. However, at the same time, they were undertaking in various forms of volunteering in addition to their paid jobs, as explored in the following chapter.

[113] Hashim gave an example of a debate he and his classmates had in a course on healthcare ethics and policy. He said: "We are all students in the in the master's program from different backgrounds. We have physicians. We have biologists. We have IT people. We always get into discussions of what are the best policies in healthcare. Unfortunately, here it's a business. Healthcare is a business right now here … in the U.S. For example, one of the discussions we had before, we were talking about immigrants, … if I had illegal immigrants [come] to my hospital and she's a 5-year-old [kid] and she needs [a] kidney transplant, for example, and she doesn't have legal papers. But, she really need[s] the healthcare service. What [am] I supposed to do as an institution? So, I [was] thinking for me, actually everyone in the class decided, I mean, agreed on putting her on the list to be transplanted. But, the truth is as [an] institution they cannot accept her because she doesn't have health insurance, she doesn't have legal paperwork" (Hashim October 1, 2017).

Engagement Requires undoing Authoritarian Acculturation

Finally, Marwa, Walid, Zaid, Omar and Tariq suggested that their experiences living much of their lives under an authoritarian government had left them without experience engaging in democratic processes or left them uninterested in or afraid to do so. Marwa, for example, discussed how there was no freedom of speech in Iraq. She was highly critical of Saddam Hussein she said, but:

> Even inside my home, I can't [criticize him]. Because my [daughter] … when she go[es] to school maybe … she [will] say: 'My mom and my dad they [are] talking about Saddam Hussein!' Believe me, [the] second day, we are going to be [killed]. That's how bad Saddam Hussein was (Marwa November 25, 2017).

Conversely, she said "I like the freedom here. I like the free speech here" (ibid.). As a result, even though Marwa expressed several times in our interview that she did not want to participate in politics or political activities in the United States, she was clear she does not remain silent if she has an opinion to share.

Although very active in his community, Walid still feared the repressive government in Iraq, which allowed no freedom to criticize it. **"**There [is] still fear," he said:

> We came from [a] security government [in] Iraq if you say something about the government. … I lost my father, because my father, back in Iraq, he used to say things about [the] Ba'ath Party and they took him, they kill[ed] him, they took our home, confiscated [it] because of that (Walid September 27, 2017).

In his view, such experiences meant "many Iraqis, they have this kind of fear. Don't talk about [the] government. So, don't talk about these things" (ibid.). Despite this fear, Walid engaged in public expressions of voice such as protests against policies he did not support. He also invited many people he knows to attend marches organized against the 2017 Travel Ban, discussed in more detail in the following chapter. However, in his view, many were afraid to engage in such activities because:

> They have trauma from police. Police there … [are] not supporting citizens. It's criminal,

> like [they are] criminal[s]. They came to kill people … as part of the agenda of [the] government there. So, they have this kind of PTSD for now. I mean, many families [if] they see [a] police car, they freeze. So … they want to live peacefully without touching these things (ibid.).

Zaid expressed the fear Walid identified in very similar terms. He said in Maryland where he now lives:

> Whenever I see a police car, I get this feeling that … they are going to [arrest] me. They are going to stop me, and they are going to find something wrong with my ID, with my car, with anything … because I came from this background when we really get scared when we see police anywhere. [In Iraq] they just tend to, harass people and try to get them into trouble and get as much as they can, like money [or] whatever. … So, it's completely on the contrary. People here feel safe when they see a police car. I get this kind of feeling. … By the way, I've never been stopped by a police car before. You know? But still (Zaid February 27, 2018).

In light of this perception, Zaid described his views on participating in American democratic processes:

> I know it's not fair, it's actually selfish to say that [I am unable to participate in democratic processes] because I am gaining from this democracy … but on the other hand, I cannot participate in it. Maybe it's not just because I cannot, maybe I don't want to because … of my background, we came from this politically corrupt system. So, we have a very, very bad experience with being part of the system. I believe not just me, any people who came from that country, I believe that we [would] just rather stay away as much as possible from any kind of political system. We just want to live our life as far [away] as possible from any political thing[s] (ibid.).

I asked Zaid if this included opting out of voting as well and he said "No, voting, I'm 100 percent with voting. … Voting is kind of practicing your democracy but, I don't think I can do anything other than that" (ibid.).

Omar, too, explained that even though he and other members of the Iraqi community had a right to engage in politics, he might hesitate. "Not because I'm scared of something," he said, "not because we still have the fear of expressing political views. It's related to back home. Even the community I'd say. Even it's our right. But sometimes we hesitated to express our perspective towards any case" (Omar December 14, 2017). He continued, "but we can do that in

our community [of fellow Iraqis]. But with others, it is very hard because still, we have this influence from back home. … Because we don't know, what are the limit[s] of our freedom" (ibid.).

When I asked Tariq whether he believed he was able to express his views and opinions about actions taken by the U.S. Government, he responded: "This is the part that I love. Because over there, you can [express views on the government]. But easily you can disappear, too. Here, you can do that; you can express your views" (November 2, 2017). Tariq was clear throughout our conversation he opposed President Donald Trump's policies. However, he continued: "At least when I talk to people that support Trump, they're not going to kill me. At least they will listen and hear and then … it's up to you to decide if it's wrong or right" (ibid.).

He juxtaposed this possibility with his life in Iraq. "Let me tell you something," he said, "I [lived] in Iraq 27 years. I witnessed my whole life dictatorship. Saddam Hussein. And we weren't allowed to talk. You're not allowed to express your opinion about government. So, it's very difficult for me to express my opinion now" (ibid.). Echoing Marwa, he said:

> You can't even whisper because somebody will hear you, [and then] you're gone. Even with police. You can easily [be] take[n] by police over there. The police arrest you easily without any warrant, without anything. They just take you. Beat you up and leave you, that's easy (ibid.).

As a result of these experiences, Tariq was left with a lingering fear of government authorities and preferred not to interact with them or with the American legal system. As he explained:

> I know … you have freedom of speech [in the U.S.]. … You can express your feelings. But, it's still hard for me to say out loud because I still have [fear] that somebody will knock on the door, or probably [break] it and take me out. It's difficult. It's not easy. That's why you guys, you Americans [are] lucky you didn't live [through] this [situation] (ibid.).

Taking a different angle on this context, Wissam asserted that his experience under an

authoritarian government gave him authority to explain the currents and events happening in American society. When I asked him if he believed it was his right to help decide what the laws are in the U.S., he replied:

> I believe so, yes, because to some extent, people live here in a bubble. This is unfortunate. But, for me, I [got] to live in a different society, different regime. … I had to go through all the processes. So, I know … how it starts because maybe I have a background about that. I know how it's going to go down the road because I've lived that, I can tell people what they can expect (Wissam October 22, 2017).

Conclusion

This chapter has explored ways in which interviewees understood democratic membership in the United States as well as salient specific barriers many saw to substantively exercising that status. Individuals' experiences point toward several important insights about how to bring democratic practices and processes closer to the ideal articulated at the opening of this chapter. The need for time to put voice and democratic membership to use and the need for information to author rules and laws are essential points.

Residents and citizens need sufficient time to engage in activities such as researching issues, voting, joining activist or advocacy organizations or attending union meetings. A robust democratic society in the United States requires, as Mohammed suggested, an environment in which one need not have to choose between engaging in political activities and losing wages. Leaving aside whether it is an intentional government strategy, as Mohammed and Ali argued, citizens cannot engage in democratic practices if they have to spend all of their time working. This points to the realization that strong social support mechanisms and structures are crucial to ensure that members of American society, resettled Iraqis and others, possess sufficient material comfort necessary to engage.

Moreover, as Wissam suggested, civil society organizations and government agencies should prioritize and make as widely available as possible for residents and citizens educational

programming that makes clear how democratic processes and institutions that govern them function and that encourage widespread participation. Such processes and institutions are only democratic if individuals have authorship over them and wide and deep knowledge is necessary to effectively exert control. As Wissam and Mohammed suggested, a portion of the vast expenditures currently committed to military spending could be reallocated to such civic projects and social democratic programs such as healthcare and education if elected officials had the political will to do so. Beyond the institutional realm, for activists and those involved with social movements seeking to build a more democratic society, these insights speak to the importance of developing strategies and tactics that engage in the intertwined work of political education, fighting for social democratic supports and directly providing essential programs and services such as food and medical care when government does not.

Finally, the lingering fear and unease individuals described about their experiences in Iraq under Saddam point to the need, too, for government, media and civil society to ensure that residents and citizens not only feel safe and protected by the law but also are so in practice. This means ensuring that government agencies do not arbitrarily exercise their power against refugees, Muslims and other groups and ensuring that members of these groups are confident this will be the case. It is absolutely essential to end the profiling, surveillance and discriminatory policies targeting Arabs, Muslims and refugees. Democratic governance can only be approached in the United States if all residents have an equal right and substantive ability to participate and are guaranteed equitable treatment by governance institutions.

Critically as well, these experiences point toward the need to listen to warnings such as Tariq's that actions by U.S. government officials and agencies share similarities to the authoritarianism under which he lived in Iraq. As his interpretations shared in this and the

previous chapter have highlighted, it is always possible for governments, local, state and federal, to undermine the rights of particular groups. The Trump administration has undercut and/or eliminated legal protections for not only immigrants and refugees, but it has also sought to strip protections from others, such as transgender Americans (Alonso-Zaldivar 2019). And, crucially, threats to legal protections are neither unique nor confined to the current administration.

Consistent with Tariq's fears of expanding, arbitrary government power, while Trump's predecessor Barack Obama had a comparatively more progressive record on many issues, his administration nevertheless operated and vastly expanded a massive, clandestine domestic surveillance apparatus that aimed to collect all digital communications in the United States (Bamford 2016); killed American citizens abroad without trial or conviction (Scahill 2015); and Obama's Attorney General, Eric Holder, asserted in official communication with U.S. Senator Rand Paul that the United States military hypothetically had the right to kill American citizens within U.S. borders (Holder 2013). Even though the latter thankfully did not happen, Holder's assertion sets a precedent for future administrations.

Therefore, to reiterate the point made at the opening of this chapter, newcomers possess an equal capacity to enact democratic agency. This capacity may be mediated and/or constrained by specific barriers as this chapter has explored. However, threats to democratic culture do not come exclusively, or even primarily, from "outsiders"[114] nor from only one side of the mainstream American political spectrum. There is always potential for the degradation of a

[114] Consider, for example, a 2017 Pew Research Center poll that found that while larger majorities of Americans surveyed believed that representative (86%) or direct democracy (67%) was somewhat or very good, a significant number believed that rule by experts (40%), a "strong leader" (22%) or the military (17%) was a good way to govern the country (Gramlich 2017). Under the definition I have set out, the latter three governing structures would not qualify as democratic.

democratic ethos and practices among those who have been born and raised in a particular society.

The following chapter builds upon these findings, examining the activities individuals have engaged in such as discussion and debate with coworkers, friends and fellow community members, volunteering with civil society organizations and activism, both their own and the ways activism by native-born Americans affected them. As I explore, support, welcoming and commitment to publicly advocating for the rights of groups such as refugees by native-born Americans is important to pushing government and the society at large to uphold its commitments to creating and perpetuating an open, tolerant and multicultural society.

Chapter 6 - Locating Spaces for Democratic Participation and Agentic Engagement: Dialogue, Civil Society and Resistance

> People had come from all different nationalities just to [say] that we're welcome. Then, we start[ed] running around the court square and having all these signs with us. … There was another parade and there was a community session from the refugee office … so there was plenty of stuff [happening] just to make people feel welcome (Nora, February 6, 2018).

Introduction

The previous chapter explored ways in which interviewees viewed democratic membership in the United States and particular barriers and requirements to their exercise of voice and authorship in governance processes. With that discussion in mind, this chapter considers the experiences that those with whom I spoke shared regarding participating in various activities and the potential for resettled Iraqis to exercise democratic agency and voice at multiple scales and sites. Following Benhabib's work on critical democratic theory outlined in Chapter 1, I conceive of democratic spaces and processes in this chapter broadly, to include formal and informal sites and activities. I use the term participation throughout this chapter to frame all of the experiences interviewees shared concerning engaging with fellow members of American society in democratic spaces.

This chapter first sets out the breadth of participation interviewees described. I then narrow my focus to the three most salient modes and sites of participation that recurred in interviews. The first, drawn from the democratic iteration concept, is discussion and debate, broadly conceived, about the issues that affected interviewees' lives. Second, I explore the role of volunteering and nonprofit organizations in the locations where this study's interviewees live, including Buffalo, New York, and Harrisonburg, Virginia. Third, I reflect on the 2017 U.S. Travel Ban targeting individuals from select predominately Muslim countries and the ways interviewees interpreted and participated in activism organized against it. Throughout this

chapter, I draw on the argument offered in Chapter 4 that interchange and exchange among newcomers and native-born Americans are essential to widening participatory spaces and opportunities for all members of society.

Defining Participation and Locating Spaces for Engagement

I considered the interviews I undertook through the lens of Benhabib's democratic iteration framework, asking questions regarding public discussion and debate to (re)interpret norms of democratic membership. As interviews proceeded, interviewees reflected on their experiences on those topics and shared many additional examples and definitions of what it meant to them to participate and what constituted exercising agency. Those with whom I spoke referenced a wide range of activities in which they had already engaged and/or that they wished to pursue in the future. Those included completing surveys, protesting, voting, volunteering, attending Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and other school meetings, educating others, writing to and meeting with government representatives and serving on nonprofit boards.

Many interviewees said that voting was an important way to participate in their communities. Some, including Kasim and Walid, who were citizens, had voted and viewed it as important. Others, including Ahmed and Ali, could not yet vote but said that they looked forward to doing so in the future. As discussed in Chapter 5, for individuals such as Marwa and Zaid, voting was the only way in which they wished to participate. Zaid, for example, said voting is important because it is "practicing your democracy" (February 27, 2018). However, beyond that, he wanted to live his life "as far as possible from [anything] political" (ibid.).

In addition to voting and engaging in a formal, institutionalized democratic process, three primary modes and sites of participation recurred in interviews; those forms and sites necessarily overlapped. As Abdullah observed, for example, "I think the main thing that I can do is just to

try to convince people not to vote for that person [who would harm others and to vote] for the other person" (January 14, 2018). This observation touches on voting, but also on the first primary mode of participation I will explore: discussion, debate and dialogue. Thereafter, I examine individuals volunteering with nonprofit and community initiatives engaged in the pursuit of various goals. Finally, I consider the 2017 Travel Ban and interviewees' interpretations of, and in some cases participation in, protests organized against the Ban's enactment.

Exercising Voice through Discussion, Debate and Conversation

Interview questions directly examined whether and where interviewees engaged in discussion, dialogue or debate about issues that were affecting their lives. The majority of individuals interacted with friends, family or coworkers on such topics in various ways. In many cases, discussion was informal, while in others they participated in activities sponsored by organizations in their communities.

Sarah, for example, said "We talk about [government policies] a little. But not too much. [Primarily] at work, when [on] break" (November 30, 2017). Mohammed and I discussed several contested issues in American politics at length, including healthcare provision and policy and the large student loan debt many Americans face as a result of attending college. He said that he speaks with friends of all backgrounds, fellow refugees and native-born Americans, about such issues and said that he "100 percent" (Mohammed November 2, 2017) had an equal right and ability to give his views in such conversations.

In our exchange about sharing his views and experiences with others, Ahmed said that "sometimes I feel I have more than equal share" of space to do so "because sometimes people … want to listen to something different from … their perspective. Actually, I was given really more

than enough share" (October 2, 2017). For example, he explained that at a recent monthly office lunch, the subject of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks came up. When Ahmed began expressing his views, his coworkers focused all of their attention on him; "I was just telling them my experience," he said, "and instead of going around the table they just stopped and they kept listening to me for the rest of the lunch. So, I think that was very considerate of them" (ibid.).

Despite interpreting his experiences as valued by colleagues, Ahmed voiced doubt about whether he had the right to change others' opinions. Rather, he argued it was the right of others to be exposed to new and different experiences and stories. As he put it:

> If you never hear about things you would only assume one certain way. So, it's your right to know the other stories, other people. So yes, I would say it's their right to hear me out. … Maybe they don't like my story, maybe they don't want stories about newcomers or they don't want to hear certain stories. But it's their right to hear it out and take whatever perspective they want to take (Ahmed October 2, 2017).

Ahmed argued that this process requires listening as well as sharing your story and there is no guarantee it will be successful:

> First of all, you need to listen to them. … Even if it's the most silly [or] stupid idea they have about the subject you are talking about, just listen to them. Try to talk sense into them. … And then, even if in the end you cannot change their views, you made them listen because you listened first. So, after that, you cannot do anything. You cannot force anyone to think in the same way you are thinking because who said you are right? (ibid.).

As a newcomer, Ahmed suggested that it was important that he emphasize the positive aspects of life in the United States over its negative dimensions. Moreover, he argued it was important to help Americans, "understand that we don't all fit into one label. … [The] more they know about not only my story, my side of [the] story, but they know more about the partners in the community and how they are reacting to people. Maybe that would improve everything" (ibid.). "No society is perfect," he said, and learning from negative and positive experiences helps everyone in his view.

"We [are] part of this community" in Chicago, Hashim observed. Therefore, "for us, for everyone … we have to take care [of] others, to participate in setting up the rules and policies for that community" (October 1, 2017). He explained how he viewed this role and his right to exercise voice in doing so:

> I'm involved in everything. I'm involved with the daily challenges just like all the U.S. communities [face], so I think I can give my opinion exactly just like them. … Maybe three years is a short [time] for [a] new person to start giving their opinion and all of that but I would say I [have] spent a lot of time reading policies, reviewing what … are my rights. … I mean we [are] part of this community and we really want to keep this community growing and we really want this community to be better organized, safer for us (ibid.).

Returning to the example given by Wissam, Omar and Kasim in Chapter 5 of private gun ownership as an important issue over which they wished to exercise voice, Wissam said: "I'm a newcomer," and as a result, Americans might react negatively to him giving an opinion on such a matter. They may say, "He just came here and he's trying to change my way of life" (ibid.). Wissam continued:

> So, in a way I also feel I don't have that right [to engage in discussions on topics such as gun control] to some extent because their ancestors were here before me, they fought for this country, I just came here and [I am] trying to adapt (ibid.).

Omar described how he had been involved with various discussions as a member and leader of a community organization, and I analyze that work in more detail in the following section. He offered two examples of the types of dialogue the group had organized or planned for the future. In the first, the association members had held public discussions leading up to the 2016 election. Overall, Omar described those conversations as "very democratic" (December 14, 2017). However, one member, originally from the Congo, left the group, concerned about what he perceived to be the character of its conversation. As Omar explained, "He didn't like the way [we were] debating and he left the association. He thought that everyone in the association [would] definitely elect Clinton" (ibid.). Nonetheless, Omar refuted that perception, saying that

every member of the group had a right to hold and express their own views. Through later conversations, he and other participants learned of a specific policy that Clinton had supported in relation to Congo, prompting Congolese members to support Trump. "So, then I understood what happened," he noted, "and then the debate was very nice. … At the end, you get positive things" (ibid.).

In the second example, Omar described how one of his fellow organization coordinators, who is a white American, works part-time for the public transportation organization in Harrisonburg. Omar's colleague told him that his fellow bus drivers "were talking about the immigrants, [saying] bad things. And he suggested to me that [I should] come and talk to them. I said: 'Well that's fine. I can'" (ibid.). Omar intended to do so, but at the time of our interview, he had not found the time to schedule this activity. Such an event would be consistent with what he explained as the organization's ongoing project:

> To go and listen to [members of the communities served], what [are] their issues. Trying to just listen, listen, listen. And then if there is [an] opportunity to try to explain or reveal anything that is maybe incorrect, by the media or other things. The ultimate goal is to have the city be welcom[ing] for every immigrant (ibid.).

Zaid spoke to the positive potential effects of dialogue. Even though he did not support Trump's election to the presidency, he viewed that outcome as a potential opportunity for American society. As he explained:

> I'm okay with it. I think that having Trump as president is a very good thing to happen to [the] United States because there [are] issues. There [are] problems. People didn't really get the chance to talk about it, now they have the chance to talk about it. If you don't talk about it, it will never be on the table. It will never be discussed. It will never be solved (Zaid February 27, 2018).[115]

[115] Zaid did not elaborate further on what specific issues he believed could be publicly addressed under a Trump Presidency. From our full conversation, I interpreted that he was primarily referring to racism and other prejudice within American society.

Democracy, he went on to say, entails accepting other members of society and listening to a diversity of views, "I just want to show you my point of view. You want to show me your point of view. We [are] going to work on trying to meet in the middle, at least" (ibid.). As a result, "We don't have to agree on every single point, but at least we need to find a way to live and coexist with each other and live in harmony" (ibid.). As Zaid argued, such processes might have a "rough period in the middle" (ibid.), but the outcome is a better future.

Speaking to Trump's election and policies as well, Ali described how he had seen a local news interview with a young woman who came to New York as a refugee and lived near the location of our interview. Ali related how she told the reporter that she disagreed with the Travel Ban and invited President Trump to her home, to see what life is like for refugees: "It was a shock for me to hear from this … 19-year-old and she said that I'll invite President Trump to come and visit us to see [what] refugees look like … and how they live" (January 14, 2018). I asked Ali whether he would be willing to do the same and he laughed and said "Sure. I'd love to. I would love to … convince him [to change his policies that harm refugees]" (ibid.).

Tariq, too, brought up the idea of inviting Trump to discuss the harm his policies had done to refugee communities. He argued that the policies Trump had enacted were "Creating … a tremendous amount of hate and killing us. … It's become a bigger and bigger issue" (Tariq November 2, 2019). Illustrating by way of analogy how to engage with Trump, Tariq said if he had a friend who was harming others, he would sit down with him to discuss why this was wrong, "Like my friend. I have a crazy friend. Doesn't mean he's bad. It's a crazy friend, that's it. I accepted it. He's my friend. But, when his decisions affected me, okay, stop. Come on. We got to sit and talk" (ibid.) And, in the case of Trump, Tariq observed, "your decisions hurt me and my family and many families. And, not one family, thousands of us" (ibid.).

For his part, Abdullah argued, "I think the greatest thing about [the] USA is the freedom of speech" (January 14, 2018). He went on to say, "We don't actually have that in the Middle East. … People say we do. But, in reality, we don't actually" (ibid.).[116] As a U.S. resident, Abdullah asserted that he was able to exercise his right to free speech anywhere in his community (Brooklyn, NY.), "I could share my political views [with] anyone here … in conversation. … I don't feel threatened at all. Especially now, there is a lot of talk about the current president and I could really say whatever I want" (ibid.). He argued that this right extended to himself as a resident, just as it did for citizens, "The only difference is on paper and I cannot vote. But in terms of talking and sharing my ideas, no one has ever told me: 'You cannot say that because you are a citizen. You are not [a] citizen!' Never" (ibid.).

Importantly, however, even though Abdullah has felt confident to express his views on U.S. government policies, he said, "I feel that I don't have a say in [making those policies] because I don't have citizenship. So, I cannot vote. I cannot do anything" (ibid.). Moreover, despite being comfortable about speaking his mind, he explained:

> I'm also careful with people who I talk with. Because sometimes you would talk with, I would say, ignorant people and you don't get anywhere from this conversation. So, I usually try to avoid talking about that. I'm open to have a conversation with people who are willing to listen (ibid.).

A final caveat Abdullah brought up about his experience of exercising freedom of speech was the local context in which he lives: "Living here in New York is for sure, the place to do that [share his opinion]. I would imagine other places might be different" (ibid.).

[116] I understood Abdullah to mean that while the post-2003 Iraqi constitution guarantees freedom of expression, press and assembly (Full Text of Iraqi Constitution 2005), these rights are limited for many in practice.

Story sharing

Several individuals framed sharing their stories as a discursive strategy that could potentially be effective in changing other's views of refugees. Nora, for example, had participated in several public events to share her personal narrative in order to change negative perceptions. As she described:

> I mentioned my story in the [university] conferences. I went to Richmond to the mental [health] conference. … I start[ed] going and talking, [telling audiences] it's not what you see on the news. … I was persecuted [by] both ISIS and [the] government, so that doesn't mean I am [a] terrorist (February 6, 2018).

Describing how he might make a positive change in his community, Ahmed said: "for me, it's making people just look at the glass half full, positive vibes, giving them real-life examples" and "sharing stories" (October 2, 2017). This can influence those who hear these examples, he argued: "Because for me, I always think if you see a face and if you see a story that would stick with you more" (ibid.). In elaborating how story sharing can lead to change, he went on to say:

> Let's take the Travel Ban for example, and if you tell them I know this person with a name, he or she was affected by this Travel Ban and they were separated from the family, and for example, they both supported the U.S. army or the government, why are you doing that? If you keep telling that [story], you can utilize social media, you can reach out [to] groups that support your cause. You can go to local authorities like the alderman[117] or someone within your state or city and write to them. … Maybe they can reach out actually for a wider audience that would help you (ibid.).

For Ali, an aspect of his job is to speak with clients, largely immigrants and refugees from the Middle East and North Africa, gather their stories and help get those narratives into the media:

> We can put them on media. Getting them interviewed. So, people will know the reality of refugee[s] living in the United States. Their stories, they are normal people. They have families. They have a lot of responsibilities. The same, just like here. And it's doing a lot of good (ibid.).

[117] Alderman is the term used for Chicago City Council members.

The nonprofit organization also hosts a blog on which its staff post stories from clients about, among other things, their experiences as immigrants.

Tariq suggested that sharing his personal story with his customers and coworkers is his "second job" and that he engages in that role on a daily basis. He does so:

> Sometimes with nice people … they're nice, so I share it with them. … And then, the other group that, when I see them, you can tell from their reactions they know that you are a … foreigner. From your accent. And [I] tell them too. But when I tell them, I tell them the strong story: … This is [why] I'm here and why I came here and this is what my expectation was and then [it was not met]. And then they will get surprised: 'Oh yeah, we didn't know that' (ibid.).

He said that he considers it a success when his experiences provide new information for clients and prompt them to change their views of refugees and the difficulties of the resettlement process.

Sarah too spoke about sharing her experiences with others and the importance of doing so:

> It's important when I told some people [about my experiences] because some people don't care about this subject. I think it's good for me to tell these people about my experience[s] in my country and Syria and here in America. Maybe, some people [will] learn from me. Maybe, some people [will] discuss with me some [of the] question[s] you wanted from me. Maybe, when he ask[s] me some question[s], it's useful for him [my answers]. I think yes, I think also it's important to discuss [these issues] with [the] American people (November 30, 2017).

Limits of Discourse

A recurring theme in the interviews I undertook were the limits and challenges to exchange and discussion. If agency and democratic engagement are predicated on a discourse ethic, as in Benhabib's framework, it is important to examine what it might mean when dialogue is constrained or ineffective. Ahmed, for example, discussed the need to avoid "alienating" those with whom you are interacting by ensuring conversations remain focused on issues and do not "get personal" (October 2, 2017). As he put it: "If [you] alienate the person in front of you, that's

it. You lost the discussion. … Even if they are not hostile, they [will] never come back and listen to you" (ibid.). Ahmed contended,

> In the end, if they still cannot agree with me, that's fine. … The aim is not making them 100 percent agree with me, but the aim is to have a conversation, open their mind to my beliefs and my ideas and open my mind to their ideas and their beliefs. No one knows everything (ibid.).

Wissam highlighted the challenge of securing "fruitful conversation[s]" (October 22, 2017). In his view, there is always a risk that certain participants may dominate a discussion causing others to acquiesce to their position or perspective:

> There are certain things here people discuss, … maybe a point of view, but it's not really valid. And they keep spending hours and hours on it so they can distract you from the main goal of the discussion. And that will exhaust people and they just want to say: 'Okay let's just do that, this is never going to end' (ibid.).

Determining what are legitimate or important topics for discussion is difficult, he said:

> Because you don't want to shut everybody out and say: 'Shut up! I know what I'm doing, let's go with it.' But, it's between getting a fruitful conversation and wasteful conversation. It's very hard to balance between those. So, I don't know (ibid.).

Concluding this point, he laughingly said: "It's [the government's] job to figure out, not mine" (ibid.). Wissam continued on the topic of discourse and dialogue, identifying what Popper (1947) has called the "paradox of tolerance"[118] as a particular challenge to the exercise of speech. He explained by way of an extended example an area where it seemed to him that there are situations in which speech *should* be limited for the safety of others and in which expression violates the basic principles American democracy claims to uphold and defend. As he explained:

> There are things that I can't really understand. [For example], with the citizenship exam they [ask] you were you a member of the Nazi regime. …[119] At the same time, you see …

[118] In his well-known formulation, Popper argued "If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them" (1947, 226).

[119] Question 13 of the N-400 form asks: "Between March 23, 1933 and May 8, 1945, did you work for or associate in any way (either directly or indirectly) with: A. The Nazi government of Germany? B. Any government in any area occupied by, allied with, or established with the help of the Nazi government of Germany? C. Any German, Nazi, or S.S. military unit, paramilitary unit, self-defense unit, vigilante unit, citizen unit, police unit, government

> what happened in Charlottesville,[120] they're wearing all the [swastikas] and they [are] having conventions, things like that. … I know it's [their] right, but there must be a limit to that. … There shouldn't be a freedom to oppress people, to kill people, things like that. This is not freedom. This is like a lunatic (Wissam October 22, 2017).

Wissam gave another example of a public event scheduled several months before our interview in which a white supremacist planned to give a speech at a university in Florida. Students organized protests in response, with the goal of preventing this individual from offering his remarks.[121] "So," he noted:

> There is a lot of contradictions. So, why [do] you ask people not to belong to these part[ies] at the same time you allow the people to have conventions, seminars and talk about it? These kind[s] of things make you think: 'What's going on?' (ibid.).

Wissam opined that such a large university should not allow the individual to have a platform to speak about white supremacy. In his view: "These things should be a matter of the past. I mean America fought a lot for that, they lost lots, hundreds and hundreds of soldiers, for that and now these people just come and speak about it. That doesn't make sense" (ibid.).

Strategic Silence

Another avenue explored in-depth in this study's interviews was the existence of contexts in which sharing one's views or opinions were seen as difficult, unproductive or dangerous. In such cases, several individuals described how engaging in *strategic silence* can be prudent and is itself an agentic choice and act. For example, despite explaining how he regularly shares his personal story with his clients, Tariq observed that he also often withheld his opinions: "Oh

agency or office, extermination camp, concentration camp, prisoner of war camp, prison, labor camp, or transit camp?"

[120] Here Wissam was referencing the August 11-12, 2017, "Unite the Right" rallies held in Charlottesville, Virginia, organized by Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi, and other white supremacist groups. During the event, James Alex Fields, Jr. intentionally drove a car into anti-racist counter-protestors, killing Heather Heyer and injuring 19 others (Caron 2017; Stolberg and Rosenthal 2017).

[121] Based upon the indirect reference Wissam made to a speech by a neo-Nazi at a Florida university, he was likely referring to the event planned by Richard Spencer at the University of Florida. Spencer is a neo-Nazi and white supremacist figure who had garnered significant media attention during the time period of our interview for advocating for the creation of a "white ethno-state" (Levenson 2017).

yeah. A lot … of [the] time, I just avoid that" (November 2, 2017). But, he continued, that "doesn't mean that I'm going to say nothing whatsoever. No. I will say it later" (ibid.).

For this part, Abdullah noted, "If I am seeing someone who is saying extremely racist thing[s], I really don't see [the] point of talking to them" (January 14, 2019). In such a case, "I just try to ignore it and then I hope that person [will] wake up" (ibid.). For example, Abdullah related a situation in which a stranger shouted at his friend on the New York City subway. The man yelled disparaging remarks about Islam and about individuals from the Middle East. Abdullah noted that his friend is also Iraqi but is Christian, not Muslim. He attributed this incident more to the individual's mental state rather than prejudice. He did not take the encounter personally because the person began harassing other passengers when Abdullah and his friend ignored him (January 14, 2018).

Another area in which Abdullah said he avoids certain topics is discussing politics on social media. Although, as described above, he understood that he had the right to do so, he often has chosen not to do so. "Because," he shared:

> It really creates problems. … People back home, we have different sects and if you say something people will take the wrong way. … So, we end up losing friends if you share your political views about stuff back home, which is sad. … So, for me I try to avoid that so I don't, you know, lose people (Abdullah January 14, 2018).

Despite this, Abdullah said that if he sees a post on social media about "something that [is] wrong" he will engage with it. For example, Abdullah said if someone expresses a racist sentiment or if they are "attacking a certain sect or certain religion, I have to say something, and I usually do" (ibid.). As I explore in more detail below, Walid similarly explained that in his work with members of the refugee communities in Buffalo, it can be better to avoid discussing certain sensitive topics in order, first, to build sustainable relationships.

Since coming to the U.S., Ahmed declared that he had "not yet" encountered a situation

in which he kept his views to himself. However, in Iraq, he had routinely done so, "You used to be silent because that's a way you can express yourself about certain subjects.[122] … It is a tool you can use. Sometimes you better just say nothing" (Ahmed October 2, 2017). In his view, freedom of speech protections in the U.S. allowed him to "say whatever you want, as long as you are not offending people" (ibid.). However, silence may be a better "if you think maybe that someone will be impacted negatively," he said (ibid.). Another context in which keeping one's opinions to oneself, according to Ahmed, is when, "there is [a] safety issue, although I have never experienced this so far. … If you will be personally harmed, then it would be better to find a better occasion to speak about the issues you want to speak about" (ibid.).[123]

Zaid expressed unease about discussing political subjects with anyone other than friends or family, "It's not that I don't feel safe. This is a big word. But I don't feel really comfortable discussing these ideas with people I don't know. … I would rather keep these discussions with the people that I know" (Zaid February 27, 2018).[124] For example, as we sat down for our interview, he received a phone call from a friend who had voted for Trump. He said "I have no problem with that. I know this person. I know his background. I feel safe discussing these things with him" (ibid.). "For example," he observed with a laugh,

> When Trump suggested that he wants to give weapons to teachers to protect the kids, I just [asked] him: 'Okay, so are you happy with your president now?' But I don't really feel comfortable discussing these things with people I don't know or even remotely know (ibid.).[125]

[122] Ahmed's comment echoes Marwa's sentiment described in Chapter 5 about the dangers of expressing opinions about the Saddam government even in the privacy of one's own home.
[123] Similarly, Omar said that he had not experienced a situation in which he had chosen not to share his views in a discussion. However, if he found himself in such a scenario or one that would put the community more generally, at risk of violence, he would do so.
[124] Recalling the negative experience we discussed earlier in our interview, Zaid laughingly noted, "I will definitely not discuss [Trump's policies] with anyone from Kentucky" (February 27, 2018).
[125] On February 24, 2018 Trump tweeted in support of the idea of training and arming teachers in schools as a way to deter school shootings (Landers 2018). These comments came in response to the February 14, 2018 massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Florida. A gunman entered the school and shot and killed 17 people

When I asked whether he would consider attending a public event or discussion on such a topic he responded, "Never."

In the course of our interview, Nada chose to remain silent on the topic of U.S. government policies. She said that she was comfortable sharing her views and opinions about life in the United States with Americans, Iraqis and others in her life. However, when I asked her whether she would feel secure discussing her views concerning explicitly political issues, such as her perspective on President Trump, she laughed and responded that it was a "difficult question" (Nada November 1, 2017). Elaborating her answer, she suggested:

> Anyone when he hurt[s] another [person], he deserve[s] to be [punished]. And this, this is [what] our God said. Anyone. From any religion. From any country. This is the rule for our life. I [will] just say that. And you understand me, of course (ibid.).

I attempted to clarify if she meant that if a president were doing something wrong, they should be punished for hurting others. She laughed and said, "I don't know. I don't know. Pass" (ibid.). In light of our full conversation, I understood her to mean that she disagreed with some of Trump's policies and that he ultimately would face punishment for those actions. However, she chose not to make this point explicitly.

Finally, illustrating with an example, Mohammed related a story about a time when after remaining silent, he had decided to speak his mind. In order to improve his English language skills, Mohammed had enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at a community college in Buffalo. He described the course's instructor as having "some issues with the refugee[s]. … I was very careful to talk with him because I know he's a little bit racist," he said (Mohammed November 2, 2017). However, when his instructor spoke about the war in Iraq and

including 14 children and three staff members. Seventeen other individuals were injured (ibid.). Such massacres are regular occurrences in the United States and the Parkland shooting was the most recent before my interview with Zaid, occurring less than two weeks before.

its consequences without, in Mohammed's view, sufficient knowledge or understanding, he confronted the instructor. When his teacher said, "we helped the people in Iraq," Mohammed sought to contextualize what that meant in reality, saying:

> No. Listen to me, I don't want to talk about [politics] … but really, Saddam Hussein [was] a bad guy, I know that. And [he was a] dictator, 100 percent. But, when he [was deposed], we [now] have 100 dictator[s] in Iraq, the same thing. … I don't know which democracy you are talking about, which freedom. We don't have freedom. … We have a mafia right now in our government in Iraq (ibid.).

Mohammed interpreted that his instructor held this discussion against him saying, "And this [is] the point I fail[ed] in the class. He [didn't] like me and I change[d] my class finally and I pass[ed] it. … He didn't accept my opinion. But he start[ed] to ask me about my opinion and I told [him] my opinion" (ibid.).

Community Engagement: Volunteering and Nonprofit Organizations

Moving from discussion and dialogue, civil society organizations constituted the second primary site and mode of engagement for interviewees. Some individuals, such as Mohammad and Wissam, volunteered with nonprofit organizations. Others, including Ahmed and Ali, worked for such organizations, and others, such as Walid and Omar, had founded their own. Interviewees engaged in a range of activities with those entities, such as providing services to other refugees and immigrants, building knowledge and awareness of U.S. law and institutions, creating bonds between diverse members of their communities and participating in discussions and dialogue. As described by Nora, Ali, and Omar, such organizations and activities served in many cases as spaces to inculcate and expand robust norms of belonging, diversity and understanding among individuals of different backgrounds. As I argue in more detail in the concluding chapter, these activities, and the activism described in the following section, broadly

demonstrate the iteration of norms in line with the spirit of Benhabib's democratic iteration framework.

In Chicago, for example, Wissam has served as a board member for an organization working with immigrants from the Middle East and was at one time the chair of that group. Recalling the discussion in Chapter 5 about time constraints as a barrier to engagement, Wissam reported with a laugh, "I'm still on the Advisory Council, but I couldn't keep up because I have to do like 10 hours a week. It was very demanding. So, I couldn't" (Wissam October 22, 2017). The nonprofit provides services such as job placement, assistance applying for Green Cards, citizenship, parenting programs, women's programs and it offers Arabic classes as well.

Ahmed works full-time for another nonprofit that serves immigrant communities broadly in Chicago. When I asked him whether he would like to become involved outside of work with other activities, he said, "I think yes. If I care for the cause, if the cause is close to heart … especially if in the end this would help spread the cause in a different part of the society" (Ahmed October 2, 2017). Elaborating on what sorts of issues these might be, he said that a co-worker had asked him if he would be willing to speak at a high school located on Chicago's Southside to bring new and different perspectives to the school's students. Ahmed's colleague thought of him because of his views as an Iraqi.[126] Ahmed reported that he had talked with those students and described it as a positive experience and an example of an activity in which he would like to engage again.

Omar began our discussion on volunteering by explaining why he had become involved

[126] Ahmed referenced the term "Chiraq," a portmanteau of Chicago and Iraq, as a reason why his colleague thought Southside students might respond to his experiences. This contested neologism purports to describe a level of violence experienced by Chicago residents greater than that of Iraq after 2003. The *Chicago Tribune* has reported that the often attributed originator of the term, local rapper King Louie, was himself wounded in a 2015 shooting that killed 2 others and injured 6 in addition to the performer (Williams-Harris, Ford, and Crepeau 2015).

in many activities in Harrisonburg. He said there was a:

> Will inside … to show to this community … you have kind of [an] obligation … because every single person from the community represents me. And I also represent him. So, if you did bad, that will influence me. If I did good, that will influence him. So, yeah. That's the reason. Being [a] volunteer in different things, in different places. Volunteering everywhere (Omar December 14, 2017).

When he first settled in Harrisonburg, he and several other individuals created a volunteer group to welcome newly arrived refugees at the airport, organize transportation to their homes, prepare meals for them and provide translation. This work was carried out by creating a formal agreement with the local resettlement agency. The group engaged in this work for several years, leading to a project to create the first Arabic translation of the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) driving exam booklet. This group also provided Arabic classes for children in cooperation with a municipal community center.

Omar went on to describe the process of founding several other initiatives in Harrisonburg, "I started to form a group and [after] one or two years that group vanished or reformatted [into] another group. … The aim was to help the refugees and to make them productive members [of the community]" (ibid.). The organization undertook surveys of local residents to advocate for them more effectively. Among the activities held, are public events for immigrants in Harrisonburg to discuss elections, pros, and cons of particular candidates and government policies. Omar stressed that in such discussions:

> We had a lot of perspectives. … Some, they were [in favor of] electing Trump, for example. Some [were] against. And we took that in a freedom way [and] in a [democratic] way that each can express and [is] not prevent[ed] from [disagreeing] (ibid.).

As an organization comprised of members of various immigrant and refugee populations, they also meet with local government representatives to put forward plans and ideas for their communities.

Omar described a focus of his work as uniting communities, “That’s strength. If I’m [a member of the] Iraqi community, maybe working alone will not give me power or my voice will not be heard by others” (ibid.). However, he argued, “if I have other communities working together and supporting [each other]” (ibid.), they can create a base of support. For example, if the Iraqi community is targeted by another group or government authorities, “standing [as] one” (ibid.) with other immigrant or refugee communities will provide a basis from which to organize.

Nora has volunteered with Omar and been active in the projects described above, among many other activities, including working part-time for a resettlement agency in Harrisonburg. The organizations she is active with offer classes to prepare immigrants for the U.S. citizenship exam, advocacy concerning such issues as child migrants and family separation, classes designed specifically to support women, and driving lessons and assistance navigating public transportation in the area. As described in the previous section, part of her work includes public engagement and Nora has spoken about her life at conferences in several parts of Virginia.

Nora also described efforts that community groups in Harrisonburg had taken to create a welcoming, multicultural environment for the city’s residents. For example, the local school system has recognized Spanish, Arabic, Kurdish and Russian languages and certain schools in the district cater specifically to Russian and Arabic speakers. Omar had helped establish the Arabic school, an accomplishment Nora called a “big step forward.” Harrisonburg is “getting more open. People [are] start[ing] to realiz[e] that there [are] different communities in the [area],” she observed (Nora February 6, 2018). Aligning with the cooperation between local churches and community groups noted by Omar in Chapter 4, Nora suggested, “the churches [are] doing [an] amazing job here with the community with the growing difference and highlighting what those differences [are]” (ibid.).

Walid shared "I feel I have a responsibility … to do something for the community" (September 27, 2017). As a result, he is very active in Buffalo, founding and serving as chair of an Iraqi and Arab immigrant-serving nonprofit organization in Western New York. That organization provides services such as ESL and case management to teach parenting skills, for example. Walid described the organization's mission as building leadership skills for those with whom it worked. At the time of our interview, he was also serving as president of a local coalition with a goal of "empowering refugees, not only Iraqi[s] but all of the communities that came from different parts of the world" (ibid.). He described the group's work thusly:

> We work on different level[s]. On, education, public safety, immigration issues, … housing, employment, so we try to address … major issues for refugees in general [including] Iraqis. … Each community [has] unique problem[s]. [For example], when we come to people from [the] Middle East, … there's a lot of background check[s] and [suspicion] about where they come from, how long they've been in [the] Middle East, [who are] their friend[s]. So, it's not easy to get the Green Card or [become a] U.S. citizen. … So, each community they do have a problem. It just depend[s] on where they come from and the culture, on education, on where they live (ibid.).

Walid also contended that "the empowerment part is making a big difference for [participants] to understand" their rights (ibid.). In his view, the process of understanding and exercising rights is part of practicing democracy. For example, Walid described how members of his community group approached the Buffalo Mayor's Office to create a "language line" for non-English speakers to call in case of emergencies. They based their petition on federal law mandating interpreter access for non-English speaking residents. They enlisted the help of lawyers to demonstrate that lack of such a line violated the law. Group members met with the mayor and city council members to discuss this issue. They were successful and were able to push the municipal government to set up the line. In addition, the Buffalo Police Department hired a community liaison and began providing language services. Local media reported in March 2016 that the plan to create the line was spurred after "50 representatives of the local

immigrant and refugee communities came forward several months ago with a proposal" (Mroziak 2016).

Walid is also active in a yearly event celebrating Buffalo's immigrant communities.[127] He described several others similarly involved, some of whom are native-born Americans, as "very [passionate] about international [issues]. … They love people from different background[s] so they attend our meeting[s] because of their interest to support [the event]" (ibid.). For Walid, planning this occasion is "part of changing American culture." As he explained, to do so:

> We invite 12 teams from different ethnicit[ies], from different background, from [the] refugee community and immigrant[s]. We cook food. … It's open to the public in [a local park] which is close to here. … We invite elected officials, we invite the community, we announce through the media … to show them our culture, to show them folklore dancing, traditions and also try to break this kind of stereotyping about unknown people. I know you are scared [of] these people, but it's good to talk with them to know who they are, which reduce[s] their fear (ibid.).

Walid pointed out that Buffalo is a divided city, the sixth most segregated metropolitan area in the United States, according to 2010 U.S. Census data (Staff 2015). His goal when he moved there in 2008 was to "bring the entire community together" (Walid September 27, 2017) and to build friendships and relationships with Americans so that they might lose the fear of unknown others.

However, sustained activism is difficult in Walid's estimation, "There's a lot of activists in different communit[ies], [however], there is no support. … I found many leaders and activists [who] help one year, two years, and feel frustrated [because there is] not enough support" (ibid.). That discouragement leads them to say, "let's focus on our famil[ies]" (ibid.). Organizing community members is difficult as well, he explained. This task is particularly challenging in refugee communities in Walid's view because of pre-existing tensions among members. For

[127] At the time of our interview, he and others were planning for the 2018 event and he invited me to attend their organizing meeting.

example, Walid reported, those who came from countries experiencing civil wars may be uncomfortable working with individuals who were on the opposing side of those conflicts.

By way of example, he explained how he had met with a Kurdish Syrian family and had to steer the conversation away from religion, politics and Kurdish independence from Iraq. "Let's put politics or religion [aside]," he suggested, "I know you agree or disagree. Because if we talk about religion or politics, we won't be friends. We have different opinion[s] about that. … So, some people they [became] very isolated because of these things (ibid.). Therefore, he proposed instead "Let's focus on the family, kids, … school, education, how to be successful here, how to benefit from this opportunity, being in this country" (ibid.).

Marwa worked with Walid to help to establish the immigrant-serving nonprofit organization in Buffalo and Mohammed also volunteers his time with that entity. The organization had been operating for approximately four years at the time of our interview in November 2017. Marwa was particularly involved with the coalition's women's empowerment programming:

> We do many event[s] for the women. [For example], how to raise your kids here. How to get your [necessary] permits. How to be independent. How to [have] power in your family. How to support your family [and] how to be involved with the community (November 25, 2017).

Events, often facilitated in both English and Arabic, may draw between 100-150 participants. According to Marwa, "My community, they [are] growing now. They are [a] huge number. Also, not just Iraqi. Now we, make it for all Arabic speaker[s]. Like Syrian[s], anyone. Not just Iraqi[s] now" (ibid.). Marwa's nonprofit organization extends invitations to local government officials to give talks on various subjects as well. As a volunteer, she has shared her contact information with local police in case community members have issues or need an interpreter. Her organization also holds events to celebrate holidays such as Ramadan, inviting

residents to share communal meals, discuss issues they may be having and to offer assistance. They provide Arabic classes for children as well.

In our conversation, Ali stressed the importance of working together with diverse others in his community in Brooklyn, New York. To that end, he had participated at the time of our interview for four years in a row in the Brooklyn International Day of Friendship events, recruiting volunteers for that festival. The annual gathering is a major facet of Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams' "Embrace Your Hyphen" campaign, which seeks to encourage local residents to celebrate and learn more about the diversity of individuals living in Brooklyn (Leonhardt 2018). The 2018 International Day of Friendship, which Ali was helping to prepare at the time of our interview, included a "Unity Parade of Flags" on a main Brooklyn thoroughfare, cultural events featuring traditional dance and music from Panama and Tahiti, and a "Global Village" of "tents from countries around the world showcasing their cultures, cuisines and customs" (ibid.).

In his full-time job for an Arab-American serving nonprofit, Ali works closely with the Borough President's office as well as conducts outreach to Arab-American and refugee communities in the New York area, including New Jersey. He also works to educate donors who, in his view, are often misinformed about the level of support refugees receive to support their resettlement. "The problem is," he said:

> Most of them they think the refugees when they come here the government [pays] everything for them. But, in reality, they are already in debt. When they were in another country, not their mother country, seeking for refuge or asylum, they spent their last penny over there and then when they come to the United States, they face this challenge to pay their air fee. … So, it's a lot. They are already in debt (ibid.).[128]

[128] As a condition of resettlement through the USRAP, individuals who do not pay for their airfare to the U.S. upfront are required to pay back the cost of their flight to the United States government (Westcott 2015).

Nada works for a different Arab-American serving nonprofit in Brooklyn that provides training on various topics as well as undertakes advocacy trips to Washington, D.C., and other politically significant cities and towns. The organization has a particular focus on issues Muslim women face in the United States and women's rights more broadly. Women "want to know [their] rights. It's very important because they want to protect them[selves]. This is good for us," Nada said (November 1, 2017). She said that in Iraq, unlike other countries in the Middle East, she had rights as a woman and "My family [gave] me my rights and my husband is good. We don't have any problem[s] in our … family or my country" (ibid.). However, she went on, "always, I think [I] need to know the rights here. Of course, not just [as] a woman, everybody [should] know [their] rights here. How they can protect them. How they can protect their kids. This is the [most] important. And … I'm learning that from my association" (ibid.). Nada's experience demonstrates that she was engaged in teaching others about their rights, while simultaneously seeking to build such knowledge herself.

No Ban, No Wall: Pro-refugee Protests Invoke Norms of Welcoming and Support

After speaking of Muslims and refugees as dangerous and irrational during his campaign, newly elected President Trump moved almost immediately to enact policies to prevent refugees, particularly those from Muslim majority countries, from entering the United States. On January 27, 2017, seven days after his inauguration, Trump signed Executive Order 13769, which sought to lower overall refugee resettlement to the U.S. in the long-term, to suspend all such admissions for 120 days and block new entry into the United States by any individuals from seven countries: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen (Hersher 2017). All of these countries have Muslim majority populations. This fact, and Trump's pledge to ban Muslims from entering the country while campaigning (Johnson 2015), prompted many opposed to the policy to frame the

Executive Order as a Muslim Ban (US expands travel ban 2017). As noted in Chapter 4, several thousand individuals were detained at airports upon arriving in the U.S., some for multiple days immediately upon the Order's initial implementation (Cheng 2017). *Al Jazeera* reported in early 2019 that the U.S. State Department denied 37,000 visa applications in 2018 as a result of the Executive Order (State Department rejects 2019).

The Ban sparked immediate protests, with thousands occupying major airports such as John F. Kennedy (JFK) in New York City and gathering in large numbers in squares, parks and other public spaces.[129] As the section header alludes, a common slogan of protest was: "No Ban, No Wall," linking the opposition to the Travel Ban to another Trump anti-immigrant policy of expanding and further militarizing the existing border wall on the Mexico-U.S. border (Rodgers and Bailey 2019). The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) launched a legal challenge to the Ban and a federal judge temporarily ordered a stay against the action (Hersher 2017). On March 6, 2017, Trump issued a superseding Executive Order 13780, removing Iraq and Sudan from the list of targeted nations, after intense diplomatic pressure and negotiations with those governments (K. Liptak 2017). He added North Korea and Venezuela to replace those countries. At the time of interviews, the final status and legality of the Ban were uncertain. However, in June 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality (Totenberg and Montanaro 2018).

The Ban created an increased precarity and uncertainty for those refugees already in the U.S., as I turn now to explore. For some, including Abdullah, Ali, Nora and Ahmed, the pro-refugee responses to the Executive Orders, such as protests in airports and marches in city squares, were significant. They indicated a type of welcoming from native-born Americans toward refugees, particularly those from the Middle East that was new and meaningful. Those

[129] Such protests and marches took place in Blacksburg, VA as well on and near Virginia Tech's main campus. I attended several of these events.

actions entailed a significant invocation and mobilization of norms by many Americans, such as welcoming newcomers, diversity and openness to difference.

Only one individual with whom I spoke, Kasim, indicated that the Travel Ban was unimportant. He dismissed it with a shrug, saying it "doesn't affect Iraqis [and] I have all my family here" (Kasim February 27, 2018).[130] He went on to say "I mean, I understand his [Trump's] point of view. But he's doing this for show" (ibid.). Because he argued:

> Obama's administration did their best to vet everybody who comes in. [Trump] can't put any more [security] measures. But he's just saying that. I don't think it's applicable. The law is the law. You have to go by the book, and he cannot do anything to change the process. I mean, they [did] their best, Obama's administration, what can you add? It's just, he's trying to get more publicity and votes (ibid.).

Conversely, all other interviewees who spoke about the Ban viewed it as having consequences for themselves, their families and others in their communities. For example, Tariq responded to the Ban with incredulity. He called the initial decision to include Iraq on the banned country list "crazy" and observed: "We [are] the only country fight[ing] ISIS. And you banned us? That doesn't make sense" (Tariq November 2, 2017). He then put it in personal terms saying:

> I served with the U.S. Marines. He [Trump] didn't serve in his life. I served with your Marines and I [got] the death threat and I [was] forced to leave the country. And you ban me from coming? It doesn't make sense (ibid.).[131]

[130] Iraq had already been removed from the Ban by the time of my interview with Kasim.

[131] Tariq made a crucial point about the inextricable links between U.S. foreign and domestic policies and actions. As elaborated in Chapter 3, the American war in Iraq devastated that country, led to the creation of groups such as ISIS and caused mass displacement. Of the countries targeted by the Travel Ban, the United States fought a conflict within the past decade in Libya, is fighting a small-scale conflict in Somalia, has been at war in Syria since 2014 and is actively supporting the Saudi Arabian-led coalition war in Yemen that has created the world's worst current humanitarian crisis, according to the United Nations (Humanitarian crisis in Yemen UN 2019). The U.S. also maintains crippling sanctions on Iran, North Korea and Venezuela, exacerbating economic hardships for those living in those countries. A recent study published by the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Economic and Policy Research estimates that the sanctions imposed on Venezuela in April 2017 by the Trump Administration have led to the displacement of millions of individuals and 40,000 "excess deaths" due to their denial of residents' access to necessary medical care and adequate food imports (Weisbrot and Sachs 2019).

Tariq mobilized the U.S. military's "leave no one behind"[132] principle to support his argument against the Trump Travel Ban. As he put it:

> We don't leave anybody behind, and this is our rules in the military. … This is what I learned from U.S. Marines. We can't leave anybody behind. We got to get them, no matter what. And now you leave these people like me? Before, we put my life and my family's life in danger. I had death threats. They came to my house (ibid.).

To reiterate his point, Tariq asked rhetorically if Trump faced death threats because he had worked as an interpreter with U.S. Marines, would he support a ban that put him and his family at risk? The self-evident answer for Tariq was no.[133]

Whereas Tariq spoke about the danger the ban potentially created for those still living in Iraq others, including Abdullah, spoke about the precarity it created for their lives in the United States. Before the Executive Order was signed, Abdullah suggested:

> I felt I'm protected. … I have rights. This country believe[s] in human rights and I'm staying here. Finally, something good, you know? And then, he came up with that order and I felt that my rights got stripped away from me (January 14, 2018).

Trump banned "seven countries and I was [from] one of these countries," Abdullah said, "I really felt that I was going to [be] kicked out. When I heard of it, I did not even leave my place. I stayed in my room. I was so depressed, stressed, I was like: I don't know what to do and I felt unsafe" (ibid.).

However, the reaction in opposition to the Ban by many Americans began to ameliorate some of Abdullah's fears. Soon after its initial enactment, "American friends started texting me," he noted, "they are trying to come up with [a] solution. It's like: 'We are there for you if you

[132] This principle is deeply embedded in U.S. military culture and articulated in the "Soldier's Creed" as: "I will never leave a fallen comrade" (Rawlings 2012).

[133] Tariq questioned more broadly the disparity between Iraqis who worked for the U.S. and Americans who served in the occupation forces. Although some of his friends had been injured or died while working with the U.S. military, "We're locals so we don't have any [of the services] that help us" (Tariq November 2, 2017). Because Tariq and Iraqis like him are not technically or officially US military veterans, they are ineligible for any of the basic benefits veterans may receive, including "GI Bill" education benefits or Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare.

need anything'" (ibid.). After that, Abdullah began to see groups of people in New York City creating social media campaigns and organizing protests in Battery Park and JFK Airport.[134] "They started protest[s]," he said, "So, I felt these people, they made me like so much safer" (ibid.).

These protests, as Abdullah understood it, had "pushed people, certain judges … to make the right decisions for this country" (ibid.) and at least temporarily to block the ban from taking effect. He compared these rallies to earlier resistance movements, such as the large-scale marches organized against the 2003 Iraq War described in Chapter 3, "I don't know of any other protest that had this direct effect. I have heard there were some protests against the war in Iraq, but they didn't change anything. But that specific one [against the Travel Ban], it actually changed something" (ibid.). Before the protests in reaction to the Travel Ban, Abdullah was not involved in any political or activist activities. However, Trump's action pushed him to become involved in such efforts. As he put it:

> I contacted some people and they were [at] JFK [airport] because there were a lot of people who were held [at] JFK. And they were asking for translators. So, I contacted some of my friends [to tell them] people need translator[s]: 'Are you guys willing to go to JFK?' All of them they said: 'Yeah, of course.' And then we were going [to] go. But then, by the time I wanted to put my name, there were a lot of people who were already signed up for this (ibid.).

While he had been willing to provide translation, Abdullah said: "I didn't feel safe to go and protest, because anything could go wrong, I [could] get picked up. They [could] deport me" (ibid.). However, "there were a lot of Americans, really good Americans, who stood [up] for us and protected us. That was so beautiful to see" (ibid.).

[134] *CBS New York* reported that 10,000 protesters participated in a rally and march held at Battery Park in lower Manhattan. U.S. Senators for New York Chuck Schumer and Kirsten E. Gillibrand attended along with New Jersey Senator Corey Booker and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio (Falzon 2017).

Like Abdullah, Ali witnessed the protests against the Ban unfold in New York City. He viewed the Executive Order unambiguously as a "Muslim ban," saying "I cried when I saw the ban, [my] first response" (Ali January 14, 2018). He went on to say the:

> Trump administration, I don't know what he [is] going to do, the next step, to be honest with you. … It's hard when you think about that. Like, it's not only me. It's a lot of people in the community. And I'm listening and I'm hearing they [are] in fear (ibid.).

This fear for Ali was based on material impacts the Ban had already had on those he knew. For example, he reported, "when the ban happened, the first one. I have a friend he's a citizen. Country of birth: Iraq. They didn't allow him to enter [the] United States. And then there were lawyers and … the ban was [blocked]" (ibid.).

However, in response to the Ban, the first who went out to the airports and to squares to protest, Ali noted, "Were Americans and they were born here. And they work in, some of them, in government, they work … a lot of places. The first response, they went" (ibid.). The fact that so many native-born Americans went out to protest was significant for Ali: "I cried when I saw this scene in front of me" (ibid.). He described the effect of this response in the following way:

> The Arab people [now] have this courage, come, like we [Americans] are protecting you. Just come, go out, let's be hand [in] hand. And I went to the airport at that time to give translation service, whatever. And, it was a huge thing for me (ibid.).

The fact that government officials attended the protests was meaningful for Ali as well. "I love New York. I love the government of New York," Ali told me:

> I love what they are doing because they are working not for only a specific community. Not only for a specific religion. They are working for all as American[s]. … Let's have [the] federal government [do the same], just like [the] New York government (ibid.).

The government should "protect the American people," he argued, "not divide the American people" (ibid.).

Nora described how, after the Executive Order was signed, there was a protest in downtown Harrisonburg that drew a large crowd of residents.[135] Protestors gathered with signs, some expressing "welcome" in multiple languages. "I was there," Nora declared, "and was very emotional" (February 6, 2018). Several of her friends also attended and one, who is the leader of a local activist group, spoke to the crowd. As she explained, in addition to the initial protest, local organizations planned more events for immigrants in the area:

> People had come from all different nationalit[ies] just to [say] that we're welcome and then we start[ed] running around the court square and having all these sign[s] with us. Then, there was another parade and there was a community session from the refugee office. … So, there was plenty of stuff [happening] just to make people feel welcome (ibid.).

Nora also saw Harrisonburg residents come to the resettlement office where she works and inquire about volunteering as a result of the Ban. The new volunteers asked how they could "support families so they don't feel they are alone because of the Ban" (ibid.). These responses gave Nora a sense of belonging, she said, and she interpreted the protests and outreach as Americans saying "[Trump] doesn't represent me, I welcome you in here. … We're here for you. We support you, we're completely with you" (ibid.). She compared this to refugees/Iraqis/Muslims asserting that extremists or terrorists do not represent them. Nora repeated twice that strangers had no obligation to go out of their way to show their support for refugees, and yet they had done so after Trump issued his Executive Order. In addition to supportive reactions from other members of the community, after the Ban was signed, Nora and Omar organized and held a know your rights workshop for immigrants residing in Harrisonburg.

[135] Local media reported that "hundreds" rallied in downtown Harrisonburg on January 29th within 24 hours of the first EO (Silvers 2017). The Harrisonburg *ABC News* affiliate WHSV 3 interviewed an Iraqi man, Saber Khoshnaw, who attended that rally and whose experiences echoed those of this study's participants. Khoshnaw told reporters, "They [refugees] came here for a better life, to save their kids and their futures. … America is a country of freedom. It is not in our Constitution [to ban individuals based upon their country of origin], yesterday you are American, today you are not" (ibid.).

This event covered topics such as what to do if you are approached by the police or ICE agents, when to contact a lawyer, and what support services are available.

Walid reported that in Buffalo, "when the ban happened … we saw a lot of people in this park [where we held our interview]. They came marching and supporting refugee[s]" (September 27, 2017). A majority of the protesters were Americans, according to Walid and:

> It [was] a huge number of American[s] talking about [the] Ban, which [made] me feel really happy to see the democracy and the people [who] don't agree about the … injustice or [policies] that harm other people. … Really, I [felt] proud about this society [that] care[s] about unknown people or a refugee or an immigrant and they want to get justice. I mean, they have to distinguish between terrorist[s] and famil[ies] who came here who want to build their [lives] in this country (ibid.).

Ahmed opposed the ban, although he said there could be an alternative way to "implement and improve" vetting of potential refugees to prevent abuse of the system. When the President issued the Order, his colleague called to check on him. "How do you feel?" his coworker had asked, to which Ahmed had replied:

> I really feel wonderful. … And I said I feel wonderful for two reasons: One I [have] never seen support for the country I came from, or even the region, from American people like this. And second: I [have] never seen the power of the people like this in my life (October 2, 2017).

He went on to say that, "you get accustomed, especially after all the events in the last 20-years that happened, you get a certain stereotyp[ed] image about the Middle East" (ibid.). "So," he continued, "when you see someone go and block three major airports in the nation … protesting [in support of those who have been negatively stereotyped] against the ultimate power in the country, … I [have] never seen such support" (ibid.). The potential for such protests to exercise the "will of the people," in Ahmed's words, was "one of the reasons why this country is great" (ibid.). Without the freedom of speech protections enshrined in the Constitution and law,

Americans "would not be able to go to the airport to protest," he said (ibid.).[136]

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the various activities in which interviewees engaged to participate in their communities. Many of those with whom I spoke sought out opportunities to discuss issues they found important with their friends, families and colleagues. In some cases, this meant putting forward their own personal stories and narratives as a way to challenge negative perceptions held by a significant percentage of Americans about refugees, Iraqis, Muslims and Arabs.[137] As several interviewees pointed out, in order to have productive discussion and interactions that hold the potential to change views, reciprocal listening is important. As Ahmed and Omar similarly observed, in order to change beliefs and values, one must be willing to hear others views and attempt to understand their perspectives, with the expectation that they will do the same. This surely can entail, as Tariq and Ali described, engaging with individuals with whom one fundamentally disagrees and who may actively be doing harm.

Importantly as Wissam argued, there may be limits to the degree to which one can participate in dialogue with individuals who harbor views that are counter to fundamental democratic norms. One cannot necessarily engage in dialogue with individuals, such as white supremacists and neo-Nazis, who espouse hate and support violence against particular groups

[136] Zaid expressed an interpretation of Trump's election broadly in similar terms to Ahmed's view of the Travel Ban. During our conversation, Zaid characterized Trump's policies as "radical," "extreme" and "racist." Early in our conversation he said the U.S. had a "racist president," referring to Donald Trump. He later corrected himself, saying the ideas expressed by Trump were "old" and "old-fashioned," rather than racist. However, "To be honest," he said with a laugh, "it's not that I felt happy that he won. But I felt kind of relaxed. I felt kind of comfortable knowing that there [are] so many, the majority of people are against these ideas and they are fighting on our behalf" (Zaid February 27, 2018). This was important to Zaid because "just as I told you earlier," he said, "I can't really say what's [on] my mind any time or anywhere I want. So, I'm, I'm so happy that I have this privilege that there [are] so many people who are like fighting this fight, this war for me" (ibid.).

[137] See the discussion of American attitudes toward members of these groups in the Introduction above.

within society. A fundamental precondition to engaging in dialogue with others is the assumption, implicit or explicit, that, because human, all participants are morally equal agentic individuals. Groups like the neo-Nazis Wissam reference do not agree to the essential principle that all human beings are equal in this way, targeting in violent rhetoric and action various groups such as African-Americans, Jews and Muslims whom they deem inferior to themselves. Therefore, while interviewees indicated that discussion with individuals could be effective in changing views in some cases, in other instances, especially when confronting those who have a fundamental opposition to one's humanness, other strategies and tactics will be necessary to secure change.

This tension speaks to Honig's argument, elaborated in Chapter 2, for the need for other forms of agonistic politics with a stronger emphasis on collective action in addition to iteration of norms of belonging and membership in and through formal legal mechanisms. As I argued as well in Chapter 2, discussion and dialogue to reinterpret norms are necessary but are not sufficient to confront the extreme rejection of difference and diversity advocated by right-wing, reactionary members of American society. Unlike Ali and Tariq, I am not optimistic that those individuals—such as Trump; his immigration advisor and author of the Travel Ban; Stephen Miller (Darby 2019; Levitz 2019); or the right-wing militia members who illegally detained 5,600 migrants at gunpoint near the Mexico/U.S. border between February and March 2019 (Hay 2019)—who advocate and use violence to exclude and expel those different from themselves can be convinced to welcome newcomers by discussion, interpersonal interaction or increased understanding of the difficulties of displacement and resettlement.

Indeed, some of what may be required to push back against these reactionary forces is reflected in the civil society activities and activism described by interviewees. The volunteering

and nonprofit work individuals such as Walid, Omar and Nora described included providing essential services, supplementing the supports provided by government and resettlement agencies, facilitating discussions on important political issues and working directly with individuals from diverse backgrounds to build connections and relationships among members of different communities. One of the themes woven throughout individuals' experiences with volunteering for events such as the International Day of Friendship and the Buffalo immigrant festival was the desire on the part of both newcomers and native-born Americans to foster and reinforce the positive norms of diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism and to bring people together to have meaningful interactions and to learn about varied cultural expressions across various dividing lines. These activities are the public version of the experiences with interpersonal exchange among participants and their friends, neighbors and coworkers discussed in Chapter 4.

An even more direct strategy to confront a politics of exclusion, as Omar described, involves bringing individuals together to build power collectively. He made the crucial point that community organizing and social movements bringing together residents of all backgrounds are likely better able to confront government repression than isolated individuals. The resistance to the Travel Ban as described in this chapter suggests the aptness of this insight. The work of educating immigrants about their rights as Nada and Nora explained is an avenue through which to prepare those targeted to assert their position as equal members of a democratic community. The large-scale protests and airport occupations are examples of individuals acting together to pressure government officials to reverse exclusionary policies and targeting of vulnerable populations. These actions represented a moment in which it was possible, as Ahmed framed it, for the "power of the people" to resist the "ultimate power in the country" (October 2, 2017). As

Nora, Ali and Walid described, this involved significant numbers of native-born Americans joining with those directly targeted to voice their opposition.

Finally, as Abdullah and others pointed out, the right to freedom of expression in this way is written into the U.S. Constitution and it is an important point at which to leverage existing social and political structures to push for expansion of spaces for newcomers. As Benhabib has pointed out (2006, 59), this right is not static or ahistorical but has been expanded over the course of the last century through multiple contestations (ACLU 2019), in civil society and through the legal system, in the manner she describes as democratic iteration. It is incumbent upon those Americans who wish to see a democratic, diverse and multicultural society to use this right and to demonstrate publicly that this is a society that should be open and welcoming to newcomers and that ensures the equal right to belonging and democratic membership for those who seek them.

Chapter 7 – Conclusions: Silent Refuge? Quotidian Iterations, Local Engagement, Future Research and Implications for Policy and Activism

Not So Silent Refuge

This research began on the basis of my interest, piqued by the refugee and forced migration literature, that displacement, seeking and finding refuge are frequently spaces for individuals in which opportunities to exercise control over one's life and circumstances are limited and constrained. I sought to understand where there were incongruences and contradictions between legal statuses and lived experiences for resettled Iraqis in the United States. I have framed this problem in this research as silence and silencing, reflecting an inability to exercise voice in the decisions affecting one's life. The experiences of the 15 Iraqis with whom I spoke, living in various American cities, demonstrated not a binary silent or silenced situation or social position, but one that suggested that their capacity to exercise their innate agency was mediated by a range of specific identifiable factors.

As I began this project, I anticipated that perhaps the situation of Iraqis seeking refuge in the country that caused them to leave their homes may have presented particular challenges or created tension in their lives in the United States. For those with whom I spoke, their Iraqi backgrounds were less a source of friction than I anticipated. Instead, the broader resistance among segments of American society to refugees and immigrants, as well as longstanding cultural prejudices against, and stereotypes about, Arabs and Muslims in the U.S. presented a much more direct obstacle to the exercise of agency among interviewees and to opportunities for each to occupy equal social and political positions within American society.

Crucially, I also found that those and other constraints can exist simultaneously with opportunities for those displaced to exercise voice in various ways. For example, deteriorating safety and social bonds can prompt one to leave one's home to seek more stable conditions

elsewhere within one's home country or to migrate abroad. Persistent demands on one's time to work long hours in order to support a family can exist at the same time as desire and opportunities to participate in community-building work. Fear of government policies and agents and the material effects they can have on one's life can be and were partially mediated for a share of this study's interviewees by public demonstrations of support and resistance by others within society.

A key takeaway from this research is the necessity for those in stronger, more secure positions within American society to seek out opportunities to work with and support those who suffer discrimination, violence and who are otherwise often placed in marginalized social roles. This work is urgent and imperative. And, as I note below, privileged Americans must do so in ways deemed most helpful by those whom they would assist. This requires listening actively and empathetically to those targeted to understand what their goals and needs are.

For those engaged in such efforts, whether that takes the form of activism, research or care work, it is important also to remain reflexive about the emotional and psychological difficulties that may arise when encountering traumatic events and situations, even those experienced by others. As detailed in Chapter 2, I experienced secondary traumatic stress as a result of engaging with the experiences of conflict, loss and displacement interviewees shared. Therefore, not only is it vital first and foremost carefully and compassionately to offer support to those who have experienced trauma, but it is also important to care for oneself and seek help as necessary when working with or on behalf of vulnerable individuals, either as a researcher, social services professional, or advocate.

From Democratic to Quotidian Iterations

I undertook research with Benhabib's democratic iteration concept as my primary guide and conceptual framework. As I conducted interviews based upon her conceptualization, it became clear that those with whom I was speaking were not engaged directly with the institutions of American law in significant ways, a central element in the democratic iteration concept. Opportunities to bring issues contesting the limits to rights and freedoms directly into U.S. courts are relatively rare, particularly Benhabib's primary examples of bringing suits to federal courts, as in the headscarf affair. Such courts only hear a limited number of cases every year and there are long processes involved in bringing suits before them. However, what I did encounter was a number of nonprofit leaders and community organizers drawing on norms of welcoming, multiculturalism, exchange and dialogue to ground their advocacy and service work on behalf of refugee organizations, immigrant communities and the wider American society.

Many of the activities and experiences described by interviewees had at their core the goal of interacting and working with others to change the ways in which belonging and membership are constituted in U.S. society. Therefore, while such activities did not draw specifically on the sorts of post-World War II cosmopolitan norms grounded in texts such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that Benhabib has described, they drew in some cases on the liberal norms embedded in the U.S. Constitution and other founding and guiding documents of the U.S. regime and on broader norms of equality. This inquiry found many examples of individuals invoking and (re)iterating norms concerning the issue of who has a right to come and stay in the United States, and where and what the boundaries of belonging and democratic membership ought to be.

What I primarily found instead of what I initially expected were frequent quotidian opportunities for interviewees to engage with others, talk through various issues, interact with friends and share cultural practices and traditions, work with others to build "welcoming" spaces, organizations and communities, and occasionally, when acute moments of targeting against vulnerable groups appeared, to join with and draw support from other United States residents to press government officials to reverse unjust policies. For those interested in working to build a more open, tolerant and just society, such opportunities are one means by which to seek to do so. As elaborated throughout this research, building upon and reinforcing norms of welcoming, diversity and multiculturalism as values American society should strive to realize is vitally important during this historical moment in which anti-immigrant and anti-refugee ideologues control the executive and part of the congressional branch of the federal government and have enacted increasingly violent and exclusionary policies and in which significant pluralities of Americans espouse negative views of Arabs and Muslims.

Local Scale Engagement

The daily, interpersonal nature of iterations dovetails with another insight that arose from the interviews described here. Implicit in many of the activities in which interviewees engaged was a focus on the local scale. My respondents considered democratic citizenship more regularly in relation to their local communities, such as Brooklyn, New York or Harrisonburg, Virginia, rather than at the state, national or international levels. Indeed, when interviewees Omar and Nora sought to build "welcoming cities," for example, they did so by working with local nonprofit resettlement organizations and with churches and other religious entities, as well as municipal governments. Simultaneously, when the macropolitical situation affected or intersected with their lives, they undertook local initiatives to address those events.

This insight might be combined with theories and practices of domicile citizenship, granting full membership to all residents "independent of ancestry or location of birth" (Bauder 2014, 79), to envision new, and reimagine existing, practices of citizenship at the level of the city or locality. Benhabib has similarly argued that "modalities of non-national citizenship" such as what she calls denizenship[138] have developed alongside national citizenship, providing opportunities to exercise "proto-citizenship rights … at local and regional as well as supra- and transnational levels" (2006, 172). In many ways, the initiatives in which Omar, Nora and others reported participating are doing just that. They are enacting politics and democratic citizenship within and across organizations in their localities even as, in Nora's case, she had no permanent status in the U.S. at the time of our interview. Continuing to work to increase spaces and opportunities for newcomers to engage in democratic processes at the scale(s) that have direct impacts on their lives may be a fruitful avenue to pursue for those interested in assisting this population.

Moreover, even when acting at a local scale, as I have argued throughout this work, one must understand the global implications of decisions, particularly those taken by the American government. I hope that this dissertation has complicated and questioned the arbitrary distinction between American domestic and foreign policy (even as in some cases interviewees' perceptions of their right to participate reinforced this sharp demarcation). For example, one must understand the Iraq War in order to understand refugee resettlement from that country in the United States and vice versa. Perhaps building deeper understandings of the ways in which war-making,

[138] Benhabib does not define or develop the term denizen or denizenship beyond this allusion. However, Hammar (1990), has employed the concept to refer to immigrants granted legal, permanent residence, but not citizenship. This usage excludes those with temporary immigration statuses in a particular state. Benhabib's use appears broader and as I invoke the term, I too am interested in understanding the ways in which changes in citizenship rights and practices can occur at various scales; the city, the state, and inter-or-transnationally to provide opportunities for democratic decision making to everyone, including those with temporary or no legal immigration status, stateless persons and others excluded under existing legal regimes.

resettlement and democratic membership are intertwined can allow analysts, scholars and others to conceptualize more democratic and less violent approaches to American actions around the world, including within its current borders.

Refugee-led Organizations

A recurring theme in the experiences shared by some individuals about the work they were doing in their communities was criticism that the public refugee resettlement agencies and/or nonprofit contractors were not fully addressing their needs and concerns. Walid, Marwa and Mohammed's work in Buffalo, New York, for example, was undertaken to provide support to recently resettled refugees in parallel to, or to supplement, existing public services that they saw as insufficient and inadequate. In addition to perceived deficiencies in service provision by resettlement and community organizations, several interviewees contended that those entities did not take seriously their input or concerns as clients or former service recipients. As Walid argued:

> The resettlement agenc[ies] [act] according to their own mission[s] because they got a grant from council members. They got a grant from local, federal [and] state agenc[ies]. They don't want to be criticized [for] any part of their policy. So, when it come[s] [to policies], they don't represent 100 percent the immigrant or refugees' voice (September 27, 2017).

Interesting future work could be done focusing on organizations and initiatives such as those launched by Walid in Buffalo or Omar in Harrisonburg, to explore whether and in what ways such entities, founded and led by members of the communities they serve, may be better able to address the needs and goals of their clients and constituents than are existing public institutions and nonprofit organizations. Such research might also consider in what ways such initiatives are working to expand the spaces available for enacting politics at the local scale described in the above section. Inquiry into these topics would be a natural extension of this

work with its focus on incorporating the knowledge and experiences of those who have been displaced into any interventions launched on their behalf.

Implications for Policy and Activism

I close by reiterating the implications and insights this research provides for fostering and enriching a democratic ethos, practices and institutions in the United States. I present the following recommendations aimed at government officials, non-governmental organization representatives and activists and advocates working to expand the democratic spaces and opportunities for individuals to author the rules, policies and laws that govern their lives in the United States. Crucially, while this work has focused on those Iraqis displaced by the 2003 American war in their country, the recommendations here and requirements for participation identified in this research are not necessarily confined only to this group of people or to resettled refugees. The suggestions outlined below are generalizable to every resident of the United States who seeks more robust democracy. There is an urgent need to:

1. Create and enlarge spaces for diversity, difference and exchange. The experiences shared by participants of this study demonstrate the possibilities for those of diverse backgrounds to live together in their communities and to share and learn from one another. The types of intentional efforts to do so that interviewees described, such as sharing of food and cultural practices; community inter-faith meetings discussing differences and commonalities; festivals incorporating the traditions of a wide array of community members; and efforts to convince national, state and local governments to adopt a welcoming, multicultural ethos all point toward activities and programs that governments, NGOs and activists might develop and adopt to create opportunities for deep engagement among those living in particular areas. Such undertakings

may assist in spreading the cosmopolitan viewpoint that every human being is entitled to equal rights, protections and opportunities to express their own identities, practices and cultures.

2. Understand the interconnected relationships between barriers and requirements for democratic participation. Not only are ensuring sufficient time to use one's voice and the need for deep knowledge to exercise democratic authorship intertwined, but both are likely also necessary to begin to ameliorate lingering fear of authoritarian government and, importantly, to understand what mechanisms are available to confront state authority. Moreover, as several of this study's participants noted, the lack of time to engage is related in some cases to the political-economic arrangements and conditions in the United States that compel residents to work long hours to support themselves and their families because there are relatively few public supports such as universal free at-the-point-of-use healthcare. An increased level of material comfort for all residents would enable everyone to have the time to engage in, and to pursue knowledge about, the decisions that affect their lives. Therefore, critically, actively building programs and institutions that improve material well-being and security must be a key goal of social movements and government policies.

3. Engage in struggles for justice in and across multiple sites and modes of action with diverse strategies and tactics. Those who participated in this research described a wide array of activities in which they had engaged, including protesting, forming NGOs, community organizing, voting, contacting government representatives, translating and teaching children and adults with the goals of improving the material circumstances of their fellow residents, building relationships within and across communities and defending and expanding their own rights and the rights of others. Participants pursued all of those goals through direct service provision, education, advocacy and engagement with government officials and direct action organizing to

bring together diverse members of communities to petition and challenge state authorities and build collective power. This research has demonstrated that all of these forms of activism are vitally important to confront and push back the current acute attacks against refugees, migrants and other marginalized groups and to envision and build more democratic and just alternatives.

Appendices

Appendix A - IRB#17-774: Approval Letter

VIRGINIA TECH

Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board
North End Center, Suite 4120
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-3732 Fax 540/231-0959
email irb@vt.edu
website http://www.irb.vt.edu

MEMORANDUM

DATE:	September 4, 2018
TO:	Max O Stephenson Jr, Jared Andrew Keyel
FROM:	Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)
PROTOCOL TITLE:	Silent Refuge? An Exploration of Voice and Authorship through Democratic Iteration Among Resettled Iraqis in the United States
IRB NUMBER:	17-774

Effective September 4, 2018, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As:	**Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 6,7**
Protocol Approval Date:	**September 14, 2018**
Protocol Expiration Date:	**September 13, 2019**
Continuing Review Due Date*:	**August 30, 2019**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Appendix B - IRB#17-774: Informed Consent Form

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants

in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Silent Refuge? An Exploration of Voice and Authorship through *Democratic Iteration* Among Resettled Iraqis in the United States

Investigator(s):	**Jared Keyel** (Student)	**jaredk1@vt.edu** / 347-367-7449	
	Name	E-mail	Phone number
	Max Stephenson Jr. (Principal)	**mstephen@vt.edu**	
	Name	E-mail	

Purpose of the Project: This study explores the experiences of Iraqis resettling in the United States after March 20, 2003. It seeks to understand whether and how legal residence and/or citizenship in the U.S. offers opportunities for resettled refugees to participate in public discussions and debates in this country. Jared Keyel is conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews with Iraqis who entered the United States through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), via asylum, or as a result of a family reunification visa to explore their experiences with public dialogue and discussion. This research project constitutes the core of the student investigator's Ph.D. dissertation.

Procedures: Participation in this study is voluntary. You are being asked to participate in an interview with Jared Keyel regarding your views and experiences as a participant in public debates, dialogue, and discussion concerning norms and laws in the United States. Jared Keyel will ask you a series of questions should you agree to be interviewed. Mr. Keyel, will take detailed notes during the process to record your thoughts. You can expect your conversation to last approximately one and a half to two hours and it will be audio-recorded. The recording will be stored on a password protected USB drive in a locked cabinet at Mr. Keyel's residence. You may choose the location of the interview, for example in your home or another location you prefer. Jared Keyel may need to follow up with you at a later point in the project. If this occurs, you will be asked for consent again before he asks you to address any additional questions.

Risks: The risks involved in participation in this study are minimal. It is possible that some questions during an interview may cause you to feel uncomfortable or trigger painful memories. Participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. Please keep in mind that you may choose not to answer a particular question or to discontinue a conversation at any time after it has begun. There are no negative consequences for declining to answer a question or ending the interview.

Benefits: The information gained from this study may help scholars to understand better the opportunities and/or limitations for resettled refugees in the United States to engage with, contest, or attempt to alter the norms and laws in this country.

Confidentiality: The student investigator will assign a pseudonym to each interviewee to protect their identity. He will file audio recordings, transcriptions, and interview notes under assigned pseudonyms and will password protect those files and store them separately from the identification key. The digital recordings, interview transcripts, and notes recorded during the interview will be kept for 5 years by Jared Keyel and only the investigators listed above will have access to them. Additionally, the Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The VT IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research at Virginia Tech.

The information obtained during this study may be published in academic journals or presented at scholarly meetings, but in such cases, interviewees will be identified by pseudonym. You will never be identified personally.

Compensation: We are unable to provide any compensation for participation in this study.

Opportunity to Ask Questions: You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions addressed before agreeing to participate. You may also ask questions at the time of your interview or later, as may occur. You may contact the investigators at any time by phone or email at the contact information listed above. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research participant, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at irb@vt.edu or (540) 231-3732.

Freedom to Withdraw: You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigator(s) or Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. You are free not to answer any questions, as you may choose, without penalty.

Consent: If you wish to participate in this study, you will be interviewed. You are voluntarily deciding whether to participate in this inquiry. Your signature below certifies that you have read and understood the information presented and have decided to participate. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

_____ Date_____

Subject signature

_____

Subject printed name

Appendix C - IRB#17-774: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Jared Keyel
Ph.D. Candidate, Planning, Governance and Globalization
School of Public and International Affairs
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, VA 24061
jaredk1@vt.edu
347-367-7449

Date –
Pseudonym –

The following questions will serve as a guide to explore themes related to resettled Iraqis' views about and experiences participating in public discussions and dialogues. I may reword these questions during the interview in order to help interviewees to understand what I am asking. The questions will be asked in English and interviewees will respond in English.

Introduction

- Introduce myself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Ask if there are questions about informed consent form previously sent electronically. Collect signed form. Provide additional blank form for signature as necessary
- Outline interview structure (audio recording, taking notes, and use of pseudonym)
- Ask if they have any questions and address all questions before proceeding further
- State that I will stop recording at any time if they want something off the record
- Test audio-recording device

Introductory Questions

1) Where are you from? (City, Region?)
2) How old are you?
3) What is your gender?
4) Is there anything else you consider important to your experiences such as religion or ethnicity?
5) When did you arrive in the United States? Through which program?
6) Did you move directly to **[location]**? Or did you arrive somewhere else first?
7) Can you describe your day-to-day life currently?

Substantive Questions

1) Do you see yourself staying in the U.S. permanently?
    a. If so, do you see yourself as a member of U.S. society?

    b. Do you think you are part of the U.S. democracy?
2) As a resident or citizen, do you see it as your right to help decide what the laws are in the U.S.?
    a. Do you feel you are able to express your views and opinions about what the U.S. government does and what the laws are?
3) Are you able to participate in debates or discussions about what the laws are in the U.S.?
    a. Do you feel you are *equally* able to participate in such debates as those who were born in the United States?
    b. Do you think the ongoing U.S. war in Iraq has affected how you are able to express yourself?
4) Do you participate in debates or discussions about issues that are important to you at home or in public? For example, in school, mosque, a community group, or church?
    a. Do you do so with other Iraqis or with Americans born in the U.S.?
5) Do you ever choose not to participate in debates or discussions about these issues?
    a. Why/why not?
6) Are there laws or government policies in the U.S. that you would like to change?
    a. If so, are you involved with any activities that attempt to change laws in your local government, state, or nationally? For example, have you joined an organization or debated with friends, colleagues, neighbors, etc. about a particular change?
    b. If not, why not? Do you think anything has prevented you from doing so?
    c. Have you or would you join such an activity with other Iraqis? How about with Americans who were born in the U.S.?
7) Do you find the ideas in the U.S. Bill of Rights (freedom of speech, religion, assembly, etc.) ideas you could base arguments on about what the laws should be?
    a. What about ideas such as human rights or international law and documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
    b. Are there other ideas that you think are important for basing laws on?

Concluding Questions

1.) Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences that you believe is important for me to know?
2.) Are there any issues we haven't discussed that you feel are important?

Wrapping Up Interview

- Thank them for their time and participation
- Offer to send them interview transcript to see if it reflects their observations and comments
    - Explain that I will correct inaccuracies but my interpretations will remain my own
    - Record observations, thoughts, feelings and/or reactions about the interview

References

"2016 Election Results." 2016. *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/election/2016/results (February 20, 2019).

"2017 Infrastructure Report Card." 2019. *ASCE*. https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/ (February 20, 2019).

Abrahams, Fred. 2003. *Hearts and Minds: Post-War Civilian Casualties in Baghdad by U.S. Forces*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

ACLU. 2019. "Freedom of Expression." *ACLU*. https://www.aclu.org/other/freedom-expression (April 1, 2019).

"ACT for America." *Southern Poverty Law Center*. https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/act-america (March 13, 2019).

"Admissions & Arrivals." 2019. *Refugee Processing Center*. http://www.wrapsnet.org/Reports/AdmissionsArrivals (January 1, 2019).

Agamben, Giorgio. 1998. Homo Sacer *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Agger, Ben. 1991. "Critical Theory, Poststructuralism, Postmodernism: Their Sociological Relevance." *Annual Review of Sociology* 17(1): 105–31.

———. 1998. *Critical Social Theories: An Introduction*. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.

Agier, Michel. 2008. *On the Margins of the World: The Refugee Experience Today*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Ahtisaari, Martti. 1991. *Report to the Secretary-General on Humanitarian Needs in Kuwait and Iraq*. New York: United Nations.

Ainsley, Julia Edwards. 2017. "Exclusive: Trump Administration Considering Separating Women, Children at Mexico Border." *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-children-idUSKBN16A2ES (February 2, 2019).

Akinsulure-Smith, Adeyinka M., Adriana Espinosa, Tracy Chu, and Ryan Hallock. 2018. "Secondary Traumatic Stress and Burnout Among Refugee Resettlement Workers: The Role of Coping and Emotional Intelligence." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 31(2): 202–12.

Alba, Richard, and Nancy Foner. 2015. *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York; London: The New Press.

Alonso-Zaldivar, Ricardo. 2019. “Administration Moves to Revoke Transgender Health Protection.” *The Associated Press*. https://www.apnews.com/44494a468abe4e009b0388798c16a197 (May 25, 2019).

“Americans Express Increasingly Warm Feelings Toward Religious Groups.” 2017. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewforum.org/2017/02/15/americans-express-increasingly-warm-feelings-toward-religious-groups/ (March 31, 2019).

“Americans Know Surprisingly Little about Their Government, Survey Finds.” 2014. *Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania*. https://www.annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/americans-know-surprisingly-little-about-their-government-survey-finds/ (January 25, 2019).

Antelava, Natalia. 2009. “Who Is Counting the Bodies in Iraq?” *BBC*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/8405894.stm (November 13, 2018).

Antonio, Robert J. 1981. “Immanent Critique as the Core of Critical Theory: Its Origins and Developments in Hegel, Marx and Contemporary Thought.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 32(3): 330–45.

“Arab Leaders Declare Opposition to War in Iraq.” 2003. *CNN*. http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/03/01/sprj.irq.arab.ministers/ (March 22, 2019).

“Arabic Speaker Detained from Flight after Nervous Passenger Complains.” 2015. *CBS News*. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/arabic-speaker-detained-from-flight-because-passenger-complained/ (May 1, 2019).

Arendt, Hannah. 1996. “We Refugees.” In *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, ed. Marc Robinson. Boston; London: Faber and Faber, 110–19.

Arnetz, Bengt B. et al. 2014. “Specific Trauma Subtypes Improve the Predictive Validity of the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire in Iraqi Refugees.” *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*: 1–7.

Asad, Talal. 2011. “Muhammad Asad between Religion and Politics.” In *Dr. Mohammad Asad - A Life for Dialogue*, Riyad: King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies.

Bailey, Carol A. 2007. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press.

Bakker, Linda, Jaco Dagevos, and Godfried Engbersen. 2014. “The Importance of Resources and Security in the Socio-Economic Integration of Refugees. A Study on the Impact of Length of Stay in Asylum Accommodation and Residence Status on Socio-Economic Integration for the Four Largest Refugee Groups in the Netherlands.” *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 15(3): 431–48.

Bamford, James. 2016. “Every Move You Make.” *Foreign Policy*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/07/every-move-you-make-obama-nsa-security-

surveillance-spying-intelligence-snowden/ (November 1, 2018).

Barnard, Anne. 2004. “Inside Fallujah’s War Empathy, Destruction Mark a Week with US Troops.” *The Boston Globe*. http://archive.boston.com/news/world/articles/2004/11/28/inside_fallujahs_war/?page=4 (January 20, 2019).

Barrouquere, Brett. 2010. “Ex-Soldier Talks about Slaying of Iraqi Family.” *NBC News*. http://www.nbcnews.com/id/40739938/ns/us_news-crime_and_courts/t/ex-soldier-talks-about-slaying-iraqi-family/#.XE8KUs1OlPZ (November 15, 2018).

Bauder, H. 2014. “Domicile Citizenship, Human Mobility and Territoriality.” *Progress in Human Geography* 38(1): 91–106.

Beaumont, Peter. 2006. “Sunnis Change Names to Avoid Shia Death Squads.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/oct/10/iraq.peterbeaumont (July 7, 2018).

Beinart, Peter. 2018. “How Trumpian Nativism Leads to Anti-Semitism.” *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/11/anti-semitism-inherent-trumps-nativism/574672/ (May 1, 2019).

Belasco, Amy. 2009. *Troop Levels in the Afghan and Iraq Wars, FY2001-FY2012: Cost and Other Potential Issues*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Services.

Benhabib, Seyla. 1986. *Critique, Norm, and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

———. 2004. *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents and Citizens*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2006. *Another Cosmopolitanism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 2007. “Democratic Exclusions and Democratic Iterations: Dilemmas of ‘Just Membership’ and Prospects of Cosmopolitan Federalism.” *European Journal of Political Theory* 6(4): 445–62.

———. 2011. *Dignity in Adversity: Human Rights in Troubled Times*. Malden, MA; Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Black, Beverly M. et al. 2013. “Iraqi American Refugee Youths’ Exposure to Violence.” *Violence Against Women* 19(2): 202–21.

Blanford, Andrea. 2017. “Judge Orders Documents in Case against Alleged Chapel Hill Shooter Craig Hicks Released to Defense.” *ABC11*. https://abc11.com/news/judge-give-documents-in-chapel-hill-shooting-to-defense/1800425/ (January 1, 2019).

Bloemraad, Irene, and S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, eds. 2008. *Civic Hopes and Political Realities: Immigrants, Community Organizations, and Political Engagement.* New York: Russell Sage

Foundation.

Du Bois, W. E. B. 1903. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co.

Bonsitu A, Kitaba-Gaviglio, and Monica Andrade. 2017. "ICE Continues to Detain Hundreds of Iraqis Despite Lack of Evidence of Flight Risk or Danger." *ACLU*. https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses/ice-continues-detain-hundreds-iraqis-despite (March 4, 2019).

Bouckaert, Peter, and Fred Abrahams. 2003. *Violent Response: The U.S. Army in Al-Falluja*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Brody, Reed. 2004. *The Road to Abu Ghraib*. New York: Human Rights Watch.

Brown, Dee. 1970. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

Bruno, Andorra. 2019. *Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Services.

Burnham, Gilbert, Riyadh Lafta, Shannon Doocy, and Les Roberts. 2006. "Mortality after the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-Sectional Cluster Sample Survey." *The Lancet* 368: 1421–28.

Busby, Chris, Malak Hamdan, and Entesar Ariabi. 2010. "Cancer, Infant Mortality and Birth Sex-Ratio in Fallujah, Iraq 2005-2009." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 7(7): 2828–37.

Bush, George W. 2001. "Remarks by the President Upon Arrival." *The White House*. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010916-2.html (January 15, 2019).

———. 2003. "President Bush Announces Major Combat Operations in Iraq Have Ended." *The White House*. https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2003/05/20030501-15.html (February 5, 2019).

Cameron, Bobby Thomas. 2014. "Reflections on Refugee Studies and the Study of Refugees: Implications for Policy Analysts." *Journal of Management & Public Policy* 6(1): 4–13.

Capps, Randy, and Ariel G. Ruiz Soto. 2018. *A Profile of Houston's Diverse Immigrant Population in a Rapidly Changing Policy Landscape*. Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.

Caron, Christina. 2017. "Heather Heyer, Charlottesville Victim, Is Recalled as 'a Strong Woman.'" *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/13/us/heather-heyer-charlottesville-victim.html (June 28, 2018).

Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. 1984. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees.

Chappell, Bill. 2019. “Americans Who Were Detained After Speaking Spanish In Montana Sue U.S. Border Agency.” *NPR*. https://www.npr.org/2019/02/15/695184555/americans-who-were-detained-after-speaking-spanish-in-montana-sue-u-s-border-pat (February 20, 2019).

Cheng, Amrit. 2017. “The Muslim Ban: What Just Happened?” *ACLU*. https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/muslim-ban-what-just-happened (March 15, 2019).

Chilcott, John. 2016. *The Report of the Iraq Inquiry: Executive Summary*. London: House of Commons.

Chishti, Muzaffar, Sarah Pierce, and Jessica Bolter. 2017. “The Obama Record on Deportations: Deporter in Chief or Not?” *Migration Policy Institute*. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/obama-record-deportations-deporter-chief-or-not (May 1, 2019).

Chivers, C. J. 2014. “The Secret Casualties of Iraq’s Abandoned Chemical Weapons.” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/10/14/world/middleeast/us-casualties-of-iraq-chemical-weapons.html (February 1, 2019).

Chrisafis, Angelique et al. 2006. “Millions Worldwide Rally for Peace.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/feb/17/politics.uk (May 15, 2018).

Chulov, Martin. 2009. “Huge Rise in Birth Defects in Falluja.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/13/falluja-cancer-children-birth-defects (May 1, 2019).

———. 2010. “Iraq Littered with High Levels of Nuclear and Dioxin Contamination, Study Finds.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jan/22/iraq-nuclear-contaminated-sites (May 1, 2019).

“Cities Jammed in Worldwide Protest of War in Iraq.” 2003. *CNN*. http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/02/15/sprj.irq.protests.main/ (May 15, 2018).

Cleveland, William L., and Martin Bunton. 2009. *A History of the Modern Middle East*. United States of America: Westview Press.

Cockburn, Patrick. 1998. “UN Aid Chief Resigns over Iraq Sanctions.” *The Independent*. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/un-aid-chief-resigns-over-iraq-sanctions-1175447.html (January 5, 2019).

———. 2015. *The Rise of Islamic State: ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution*. London and Brooklyn: Verso.

———. 2016. *The Age of Jihad: Islamic State and the Great War for the Middle East*. London and Brooklyn: Verso.

Coll, Steve, and William Branigin. 1991. “U.S. Scrambled to Shape View of ‘Highway of Death.’” *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1991/03/11/us-scrambled-to-shape-view-of-highway-of-death/05899d9a-f304-441d-8078-59812cdacc5c/ (January 1, 2019).

Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. 2010. Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

“Convicted US War Criminal Steven Green Dead in ‘Suicide.’” 2014. *BBC*. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-26265798 (May 14, 2018).

Cooper, Patrick. 2003. “Coalition Deaths Fewer than in 1991.” *CNN*. http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/04/17/sprj.irq.casualties/ (May 1, 2019).

Crawford, Neta C. 2018a. *Human Cost of the Post-9/11 Wars: Lethality and the Need for Transparency*. Providence, RI: The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University.

———. 2018b. *United States Budgetary Costs of the Post-9/11 Wars Through FY2019: $5.9 Trillion Spent and Obligated*. Providence, RI: The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University.

Crowder, Nicole. 2015. “Starting over in Dearborn, Michigan: The Arab Capital of North America.” *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-sight/wp/2015/03/05/starting-over-in-dearborn-michigan-the-arab-capital-of-north-america/ (March 3, 2019).

“Danger In Conflation: Separating Islam From Acts Of Terror.” 2013. *NPR*. https://www.npr.org/2013/04/21/178291522/danger-in-conflation-separating-islam-from-acts-of-terror (May 1, 2019).

Darby, Luke. 2019. “There’s Nothing Controversial About Calling Stephen Miller What He Is.” *GQ Magazine*. https://www.gq.com/story/stephen-miller-is-a-white-nationalist (May 1, 2019).

Darweesh, Hameed. 2017. “I Risked My Life for the U.S. Army in Iraq. But When I Came Here, I Was Nearly Sent Back.” *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/02/10/i-worked-for-the-u-s-army-in-iraq-but-when-i-landed-in-america-i-was-detained/?utm_term=.c131fadf1a67 (March 15, 2019).

“Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans.” 2017. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans/ (May 1, 2019).

“Demographics.” 2018. *Arab American Institute*. http://www.aaiusa.org/demographics (March 3, 2019).

Dhaliwal, Sukhwant, and Kristen Forkert. 2016. “Deserving and Undeserving Migrants.” *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture* 61: 49–61.

Dickerson, Caitlin. 2018. “Migrant Children Moved Under Cover of Darkness to a Texas Tent City.” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/30/us/migrant-children-tent-city-texas.html (October 1, 2018).

Docherty, Bonnie, and Marc E. Garlasco. 2003. *Off Target: The Conduct of the War and Civilian Casualties in Iraq*. New York; Washington; London; Brussels: Human Rights Watch.

Duelfer, Charles A. 2004. *Comprehensive Report of the Special Advisor to the DCI on Iraq’s WMD With Addendums*. Washington, D.C.: Iraq Survey Group.

Dyson, Tim. 2006. “Child Mortality in Iraq since 1990.” *Economic And Political Weekly* 41(42): 4487–96.

Eisenhower, Dwight D. 2019. “April 16, 1953: Chance for Peace.” *Miller Center of Public Affairs*. https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/april-16-1953-chance-peace (March 22, 2019).

Elsouhag, D. et al. 2015. “Factors Associated with Healthcare Utilization Among Arab Immigrants and Iraqi Refugees.” *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 17(5): 1305–12.

“Embargo against Iraq: Crime and Punishment.” 2000. *UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*. https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/embargo-against-iraq-crime-and-punishment (February 8, 2019).

Espiritu, Yến Lê. 2014. *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees*. Oakland: University of California Press.

“Executive Power.” *Cornell Law School*. https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/executive_power (March 16, 2019).

“F-1 Student Visa, Optional Practical Training Risks Continue.” 2018. *The National Law Review*. https://www.natlawreview.com/article/f-1-student-visa-optional-practical-training-risks-continue (January 25, 2019).

Falzon, Andrew. 2017. “Thousands Gather At Battery Park, March For Second Day Of Protests.” *CBS New York*. https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2017/01/29/battery-park-protest/ (July 20, 2018).

Ferencz, Benjamin B., and Mort Mecklosky. 2003. “Benjamin Ferencz Interviewed on Radio by Mort Mecklosky.” *State University of New York at Stony Brook Radio (WUSB)*. http://www.benferencz.org/2000-2004.html#warcrimetrials (May 8, 2018).

Ferrigno, Lorenzo. 2015. “Donald Trump: Boston Beating Is ‘Terrible.’” *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2015/08/20/politics/donald-trump-immigration-boston-beating/

(March 26, 2019).

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena, Gil Loescher, Katy Long, and Nando Sigona, eds. 2014. *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

FitzGerald, David Scott. 2019. *Refuge beyond Reach: How Rich Democracies Repel Asylum Seekers*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Frankovic, Kathy. 2015. "Americans 'remember' Opposing the Iraq War." *YouGov.com*. https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2015/05/21/americans-remember-opposing-2003-war-iraq (May 1, 2019).

———. 2019. "What Is Terrorism? For Americans, Who Matters More than What." *YouGov.com*. https://today.yougov.com/topics/politics/articles-reports/2019/03/26/terrorism-in-america-constitutional-rights (May 1, 2019).

Fraser, Nancy. 2008. "Abnormal Justice." *Critical Inquiry* 34(3): 393–422.

"Full Text of Iraqi Constitution." 2005. *The Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/12/AR2005101201450.html (March 22, 2019).

Gangamma, Rashmi. 2018. "A Phenomenological Study of Family Experiences of Resettled Iraqi Refugees." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* 44(2): 323–35.

Garamone, Jim. 2012. "Iraq 'a Grave and Gathering Danger,' Bush Tells U.N." *U.S. Department of Defense*. http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=43466 (January 5, 2019).

Gardham, Duncan, and Paul Cruickshank. 2009. "Abu Ghraib Abuse Photos 'Show Rape.'" *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/5395830/Abu-Ghraib-abuse-photos-show-rape.html (May 14, 2018).

George, Nick. 2015. "I Was Arrested for Learning a Foreign Language. Today, I Have Some Closure." *ACLU*. https://www.aclu.org/blog/speakeasy/i-was-arrested-learning-foreign-language-today-i-have-some-closure (May 1, 2019).

George, Susannah. 2016. "Iraqi City of Ramadi, Once Home to 500,000, Lies in Ruins." *The Seattle Times*. https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/iraqi-city-of-ramadi-once-home-to-500000-lies-in-ruins/ (March 14, 2019).

Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. 2016. "How U.S. and Western Troops Will Help in the Battle for Mosul." *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/checkpoint/wp/2016/10/17/how-u-s-and-western-troops-will-help-in-the-battle-for-mosul/?utm_term=.46308404ed28 (July 1, 2017).

Gjelten, Tom. 2015. *A Nation of Nations: A Great American Immigration Story*. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, New Delhi: Simon & Schuster.

Glabe, Scott. 2010. “The Original Privatization of Intelligence: Iran-Contra Revisited.” *American Intelligence Journal* 28(1): 113–20.

Glantz, Adam. 2017. “Did Defense Secretary Nominee James Mattis Commit War Crimes in Iraq?” *Reveal*. https://www.revealnews.org/article/did-defense-secretary-nominee-james-mattis-commit-war-crimes-in-iraq/ (June 10, 2018).

Goldman, Adam, and Matt Apuzzo. 2012. “NYPD: Muslim Spying Led to No Leads, Terror Cases.” *The Associated Press*. https://www.ap.org/ap-in-the-news/2012/nypd-muslim-spying-led-to-no-leads-terror-cases (May 1, 2019).

Goldman, Russell. 2013. “For Muslim Americans, Boston Bombings Bring Added Anxiety.” *ABC News*. https://abcnews.go.com/US/muslim-americans-boston-bombings-bring-added-anxiety/story?id=18988357 (May 25, 2019).

Goldsmith, Mark A. 2017. “Hamama v. Adducci - Opinion and Order Granting Preliminary Injunction.” *ACLU*. https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/hamama-v-adducci-opinion-and-order-granting-preliminary-injunction (March 4, 2019).

Gomez, Alan. 2017. “Lawyers Try to Free Immigrants Still Trapped at U.S. Airports.” *USA Today*. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/01/30/immigrants-detained-at-us-airport-president-trump-executive-order/97253348/ (March 15, 2019).

Gonyea, Don. 2007. “Jesting, McCain Sings: ‘Bomb, Bomb, Bomb’ Iran.” *NPR*. https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9688222 (January 15, 2019).

Gordon, Joy. 2010. *Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Gramlich, John. 2017. “How Countries around the World View Democracy, Military Rule and Other Political Systems.” *Pew Research Center*. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/10/30/global-views-political-systems/ (March 11, 2019).

Grieco, Elizabeth. 2003. “Iraqi Immigrants in the United States.” *Migration Policy Institute*. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/iraqi-immigrants-united-states-0 (March 22, 2019).

Haddad, Emma. 2008. *The Refugee in International Society: Between Sovereigns*. Cambridge; New York; Port Chester; Melbourne; Sydney: Cambridge University Press.

“Haditha Killings Fast Facts.” 2018. *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2013/10/30/world/meast/haditha-killings-fast-facts/index.html (May 13, 2018).

Hagopian, Amy et al. 2013. “Mortality in Iraq Associated with the 2003–2011 War and Occupation: Findings from a National Cluster Sample Survey by the University Collaborative Iraq Mortality Study.” *PLOS Medicine* 10(10): e1001533-.

Haldane, Joanne, and Angela Nickerson. 2010. “The Impact of Interpersonal and

Noninterpersonal Trauma on Psychological Symptoms in Refugees: The Moderating Role of Gender and Trauma Type." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 29: 457–65.

Hammar, Tomas. 1990. *Democracy and the Nation State: Aliens, Denizens, and Citizens in a World of International Migration*. Avebury: Aldershot.

Harding, Scott, and Kathryn Libal. 2012. "Iraqi Refugees and the Humanitarian Costs of the Iraq War: What Role for Social Work?" *International Journal of Social Welfare* 21(1): 94–104.

Harper, Andrew. 2008. "Iraq's Refugees: Ignored and Unwanted." *International Review of the Red Cross* 90(869): 169–90.

Harris, Shane, and Matthew M. Aid. 2013. "Exclusive: CIA Files Prove America Helped Saddam as He Gassed Iran." *Foreign Policy*. http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/08/26/exclusive-cia-files-prove-america-helped-saddam-as-he-gassed-iran/ (December 1, 2015).

Harvey, David L. 1990. "Introduction." *Sociological Perspectives* 33(1): 1–10.

Hassan, Carma, and Catherine E. Shoichet. 2016. "Arabic-Speaking Student Kicked off Southwest Flight." *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2016/04/17/us/southwest-muslim-passenger-removed/index.html (February 1, 2019).

Hauck, Fern R., Elsbeth Lo, Anne Maxwell, and P. Preston Reynolds. 2014. "Factors Influencing the Acculturation of Burmese, Bhutanese, and Iraqi Refugees Into American Society: Cross-Cultural Comparisons." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 12(3): 331–52.

Hay, Andrew. 2019. "FBI Arrests Leader of Armed Group Stopping Migrants in New Mexico." *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-militia/fbi-arrests-leader-of-armed-group-stopping-migrants-in-new-mexico-idUSKCN1RW0O5 (June 1, 2019).

Hersher, Rebecca. 2017. "Federal Judge Stays Trump Travel Order, But Many Visas Already Revoked." *NPR*. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/02/03/513306413/state-department-says-fewer-than-60-000-visas-revoked-under-travel-order (May 1, 2019).

Hillyard, Vaughn. 2015. "Donald Trump's Plan for a Muslim Database Draws Comparison to Nazi Germany." *NBC News*. https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2016-election/trump-says-he-would-certainly-implement-muslim-database-n466716?nc=4444 (March 31, 2019).

Hitchens, Christopher. 2007. "Defending Islamofascism." *Slate*. https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2007/10/defending-the-term-islamofascism.html (January 1, 2019).

Hochschild, Jennifer L, and John H Mollenkopf, eds. 2009. *Bringing Outsiders In: Transatlantic Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Holder, Eric. 2013. *Letter to: The Honorable Rand Paul, United States Senate*. Washington, D.C.: Office of the Attorney General.

Hong, Mai Linh K. 2016. “Reframing the Archive: Vietnamese Refugee Narratives in the Post-9/11 Period.” *Melus* 41(3): 18–41.

Horkheimer, Max. 2002. “Traditional and Critical Theory.” In *Critical Theory: Selected Essays,* New York: The Continuum Publishing Company.

Horst, Cindy. 2006. *Transnational Nomads: How Somalis Cope with Refugee Life in the Dadaab Camps of Kenya*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Hsu, Spencer S., and Victoria St. Martin. 2015. “Four Blackwater Guards Sentenced in Iraq Shootings of 31 Unarmed Civilians.” *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/crime/four-blackwater-guards-sentenced-in-iraq-shootings-of-31-unarmed-civilians/2015/04/13/55b777e0-dee4-11e4-be40-566e2653afe5_story.html?utm_term=.d0388130182b (May 15, 2018).

Huber, Lindsay Perez. 2016. “Make America Great Again: Donald Trump, Racist Nativism and the Virulent Adherence to White Supremecy Amid US Demographic Change.” *Charleston L. Rev* 10: 215–48.

“HuffPost: Iraq War.” 2018. *YouGov.com*. http://big.assets.huffingtonpost.com/tabsHPIraqwar20180315.pdf (May 1, 2019).

“Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen Remains the Worst in the World, Warns UN.” 2019. *UN News*. https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1032811 (May 1, 2019).

ICRC. 2004. *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the Treatment by the Coalition Forces of Prisoners of War and Other Protected Persons by the Geneva Conventions in Iraq During Arrest, Internment and Interrogation*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Committee of the Red Cross.

“In Depth: Topics A to Z, Iraq.” 2019. *Gallup*. https://news.gallup.com/poll/1633/iraq.aspx (May 1, 2019).

Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders by Bias Motivation, 2014. 2015. Washington, D.C.: FBI.

Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders by Bias Motivation, 2015. 2016. Washington, D.C.: FBI.

Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders by Bias Motivation, 2016. 2017. Washington, D.C.: FBI.

Incidents, Offenses, Victims, and Known Offenders by Bias Motivation, 2017. 2018. Washington, D.C.: FBI.

Iraq: One Year on the Human Rights Situation Remains Dire. 2004. Amnesty International.

“Iraq’s Hardest Fight: The US Battle for Falluja 2004.” 2014. *BBC*.

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29984665 (January 25, 2019).

"Iraq War in Figures." 2011. *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-11107739 (May 1, 2019).

Iraqi Deaths from Violence 2003–2011. 2012. Iraq Body Count.

Irwin, Neil, and Emily Badger. 2019. "Trump Says the U.S. Is 'Full.' Much of the Nation Has the Opposite Problem." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/09/upshot/trump-america-full-or-emptying.html.

"Islam In America." 2014. *PBS*. https://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/feature/islam-in-america/ (May 1, 2019).

Jamail, Dahr. 2012. "Seven Years after Sieges, Fallujah Struggles." *Aljazeera*. https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/01/201212102823143370.html (January 5, 2019).

Jamal, Amaney, and Nadine Naber, eds. 2008. *Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Jamil, Hikmet et al. 2002. "A Retrospective Study of Arab American Mental Health Clients: Trauma and the Iraqi Refugees." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 72(3): 355–61.

———. 2012. "Post-Displacement Employment and Health in Professional Iraqi Refugees vs. Professional Iraqi Immigrants." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 10(4): 395–406.

Jen, K -L Catherine, Kequan Zhou, Bengt Arnetz, and Hikmet Jamil. 2015. "Pre- and Post-Displacement Stressors and Body Weight Development in Iraqi Refugees in Michigan." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 17(5): 1468–75.

Jensen, Tom. 2015. *Trump Leads Grows Nationally; 41% of His Voters Want to Bomb Country From Aladdin; Clinton Maintains Big Lead*. Raleigh, NC: Public Policy Polling.

Johnson, Jenna. 2015. "Trump Calls for 'Total and Complete Shutdown of Muslims Entering the United States.'" *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/12/07/donald-trump-calls-for-total-and-complete-shutdown-of-muslims-entering-the-united-states/?utm_term=.37a7812c2fc7 (March 23, 2018).

"Joint Press Conference by Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, and Mr. Massoud Barzani, President of the Iraqi Governing Council - Baghdad." 2004. *UN News*. http://www.un.org/apps/news/printinfocusnews.asp?nid=723 (June 10, 2018).

Jordan, Miriam, and Caitlin Dickerson. 2019. "U.S. Continues to Separate Migrant Families Despite Rollback of Policy." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/09/us/migrant-family-separations-border.html (March 1, 2019).

Judt, Tony. 2006. “Bush’s Useful Idiots.” *London Review of Books* 28(18).

Kaczynski, Andrew. 2016. “Michael Flynn in August: Islamism a ‘Vicious Cancer’ in Body of All Muslims That ‘Has to Be Excised.’” *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2016/11/22/politics/kfile-michael-flynn-august-speech/index.html (January 15, 2019).

Kearns, Erin M., Allison E. Betus, and Anthony F. Lemieux. 2018. “Why Do Some Terrorist Attacks Receive More Media Attention Than Others?” *Justice Quarterly, Forthcoming*: 1–53.

Kelkar, Kamala. 2018. “The Racial History of the Electoral College — and Why Efforts to Change It Have Stalled.” *PBS*. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/the-racial-history-of-the-electoral-college-and-why-efforts-to-change-it-have-stalled (February 20, 2019).

Kelle, Alexander. 2012. “Chemical Weapons Destruction Deadline Missed.” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. https://thebulletin.org/2012/04/chemical-weapons-destruction-deadline-missed/ (April 17, 2019).

Kennedy, Edward. 2006. “Limiting Diversity Visas Closes America’s Doors.” *The Hill*. http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/politics/30478-limiting-diversity-visas-closes-americas-doors.

Kinzer, Stephen. 2007. *Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. New York: Times Books.

Kira, Ibrahim et al. 2012. “The Linear and Nonlinear Associations between Multiple Types of Trauma and IQ Discrepancy Indexes in African American and Iraqi Refugee Adolescents.” *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma* 5(1): 47–62.

Kira, Ibrahim A. et al. 2009. “The Effects of Post-Retribution Inter-Group Forgiveness: The Case of Iraqi Refugees.” *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 15(4): 385–413.

Kramer, Ronald, Raymond Michalowski, and Dawn Rothe. 2005. “‘The Supreme International Crime’: How the U.S. War in Iraq Threatens the Rule of Law.” *Social Justice* 32(2): 52–81.

Kristensen, Hans M., and Robert S. Norris. 2018. “United States Nuclear Forces, 2018.” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 74(2): 120–31.

Kumar, Deepa. 2012. *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*. Chicago, Ill: Haymarket Books.

bin Laden, Osama. 2002. “Full Text: Bin Laden’s ‘Letter to America.’” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/nov/24/theobserver (January 5, 2019).

Landers, Elizabeth. 2018. “Trump Tweets Support for Arming Teachers, Says ‘up to States.’” *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/24/politics/trump-tweet-arming-teachers/index.html (June 15, 2018).

Lane, Alexander. 2008. “McCain’s Record on Iraq: Eager to Attack.” *Politifact*. https://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2008/aug/21/barack-obama/mccains-record-on-iraq-eager-to-attack/ (January 10, 2019).

Leadership Failure: Firsthand Accounts of Torture of Iraqi Detainees by the U.S. Army’s 82nd Airborne Division. 2005. New York: Human Rights Watch.

LeMaster, Joseph W. et al. 2017. “Acculturation and Post-Migration Psychological Symptoms Among Iraqi Refugees: A Path Analysis.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 88(1): 38–47.

Leonhardt, Andrea. 2018. “Celebrate the Diversity of Brooklyn at the 5th Annual International Day of Friendship.” *BK Reader*. https://www.bkreader.com/2018/08/01/celebrate-diversity-brooklyn-5th-annual-international-day-friendship/ (January 5, 2018).

Levenson, Eric. 2017. “Protesters Heckle Richard Spencer at Univ. of Florida Talk.” *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2017/10/19/us/university-florida-richard-spencer-speech/index.html (January 5, 2019).

Levinson, Jessica A. 2013. “The Original Sin of Campaign Finance Law: Why Buckley v. Valeo Is Wrong.” *University of Richmond Law Review* 47(3): 881–938.

Levitz, Eric. 2019. “If You Are Defending Stephen Miller, You Are an Ally of Anti-Semitism.” *New York Magazine*. http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/04/ilhan-omar-is-right-stephen-miller-is-a-white-nationalist.html (May 3, 2019).

Lewis, Bernard. 1990. “The Roots of Muslim Rage.” *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/304643/ (February 2, 2019).

Lindencrona, Fredrik, Solvig Ekblad, and Edvard Hauff. 2008. “Mental Health of Recently Resettled Refugees from the Middle East in Sweden: The Impact of Pre-Resettlement Trauma, Resettlement Stress and Capacity to Handle Stress.” *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 43(2): 121–31.

Liptak, Adam. 2017. “Supreme Court Allows Trump Travel Ban to Take Effect.” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/us/politics/trump-travel-ban-supreme-court.html (April 1, 2018).

Liptak, Kevin. 2017. “Why Iraq Was Removed from the Revised Travel Ban.” *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/06/politics/iraq-travel-ban/index.html (July 7, 2018).

Lister, Matthew. 2013. “Who Are Refugees?” *Law and Philosophy* 32(5): 645–71.

Little, Becky. 2019. “Native Americans Weren’t Guaranteed the Right to Vote in Every State Until 1962.” *History.com*. https://www.history.com/news/native-american-voting-rights-citizenship (May 1, 2019).

Long, Colleen, and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar. 2019. “Watchdog: Thousands More Children May Have Been Separated.” *U.S. News and World Report*. https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/articles/2019-01-17/watchdog-many-more-migrant-families-may-have-been-separated (February 2, 2019).

Luke, Tim. 1994. “Toward a North American Critical Theory.” *Telos* 1994(101): 101–8.

Maass, Peter. 2003. “‘Good Kills.’” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/20/magazine/good-kills.html (May 1, 2019).

MacAskill, Ewen. 2000. “Second Official Quits UN Iraq Team.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/feb/16/iraq.unitednations (February 1, 2019).

MacAskill, Ewen, and Julian Borger. 2004. “Iraq War Was Illegal and Breached UN Charter, Says Annan.” *The Guardian*. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/16/iraq.iraq (April 11, 2016).

MacAskill, Ewen, and Michael Howard. 2007. “US Soldier Sentenced to 100 Years for Iraq Rape and Murder.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/feb/23/usa.iraq (May 14, 2018).

Macguire, Eoghan, Ali Gostanian, and Erik Ortiz. 2017. “Trump Travel Restrictions Leave Refugees Stranded: Reports.” *NBC News*. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/trump-travel-restrictions-leave-refugees-stranded-reports-n713591 (March 15, 2019).

Mahajan, Rahul. 2001. “‘We Think the Price Is Worth It.’” *FAIR.org*. http://fair.org/extra/we-think-the-price-is-worth-it/ (April 4, 2016).

Malkki, Liisa H. 1996. “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization.” *Cultural Anthropology* 11(3): 377–404.

“Marine to Serve 8 Years in Killing of Iraqi.” 2007. *CNN*. http://www.cnn.com/2007/US/02/17/marines.hamdaniya/ (June 11, 2018).

Marr, Phebe. 2004. *The Modern History of Iraq*. Boulder, Colo: Westview Press.

McCarthy, Justin. 2018. “U.S. Support for Central American Refugees Exceeds Norm.” *Gallup*. https://news.gallup.com/poll/245624/support-central-american-refugees-exceeds-norm.aspx (March 31, 2019).

McCarthy, Rory. 2004a. “‘US Soldiers Started to Shoot Us, One by One.’” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/may/21/iraq.rorymccarthy (May 13, 2018).

———. 2004b. “Wedding Party Massacre.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/may/20/iraq.rorymccarthy (May 13, 2018).

McCarthy, Rory, and Peter Beaumont. 2004. “Civilian Cost of Battle for Falluja Emerges.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/nov/14/iraq.iraq3 (January 2, 2019).

McGreal, Chris. 2010. “Wikileaks Reveals Video Showing US Air Crew Shooting down Iraqi Civilians.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/05/wikileaks-us-army-iraq-attack (May 1, 2019).

Memorandum: Additional Information about Blackwater USA. 2007. Washington, D.C.: Congress of the United States House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

Milliken, Jennifer. 1999. “The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods.” *European Journal of International Relations* 5(2).

Misra, Tanvi. 2018. “On Weaponizing Migration.” *CityLab*. https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/11/weaponizing-migration-caravan-trump-immigration/574012/ (February 25, 2019).

Morgan, David. 2008. “Clinton Says U.S. Could ‘Totally Obliterate’ Iran.” *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-politics-iran/clinton-says-u-s-could-totally-obliterate-iran-idUSN2224332720080422 (January 15, 2019).

Morris, Sam. 2018. “Mass Shootings in the US: There Have Been 1,624 in 1,870 Days.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2017/oct/02/america-mass-shootings-gun-violence (January 20, 2019).

Mroziak, Michael. 2016. “Buffalo Police to Implement Language Access Plan.” *WBFO*. http://news.wbfo.org/post/buffalo-police-implement-language-access-plan (May 1, 2019).

Mueller, Benjamin, William K. Rashbaum, and Al Baker. 2017. “Terror Attack Kills 8 and Injures 11 in Manhattan.” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/nyregion/police-shooting-lower-manhattan.html (January 1, 2019).

Myers, Steven Lee. 1999. “U.S. Wields Defter Weapon Against Iraq: Concrete Bomb.” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/1999/10/07/world/us-wields-defter-weapon-against-iraq-concrete-bomb.html (January 1, 2019).

“National Survey Finds Just 1 in 3 Americans Would Pass Citizenship Test.” 2018. *Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation*. https://woodrow.org/news/national-survey-finds-just-1-in-3-americans-would-pass-citizenship-test/ (June 15, 2019).

Naurath, Nicole. 2011. “Most Muslim Americans See No Justification for Violence.” *Gallup*. https://news.gallup.com/poll/148763/Muslim-Americans-No-Justification-Violence.aspx (May 1, 2019).

Neiwert, David. 2017. “Trump’s Fixation on Demonizing Islam Hides True Homegrown US Terror Threat.” *Reveal*. https://www.revealnews.org/article/home-is-where-the-hate-is/ (January 15, 2019).

Neiwert, David, Darren Ankrom, Esther Kaplan, and Scott Pham. 2017. “Homegrown Terror.”

Reveal. https://apps.revealnews.org/homegrown-terror/ (January 15, 2019).

Nelson, Matthew, Julia Meredith Hess, Brian Isakson, and Jessica Goodkind. 2016. "'Seeing the Life': Redefining Self-Worth and Family Roles Among Iraqi Refugee Families Resettled in the United States." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 17(3): 707–22.

Neuman, Scott. 2017. "U.S. Appeals Court Tosses Ex-Blackwater Guard's Conviction In 2007 Baghdad Massacre." *NPR*. https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/08/04/541616598/u-s-appeals-court-tosses-conviction-of-ex-blackwater-guard-in-2007-baghdad-massa (May 13, 2018).

Newell, Jason M., and Gordon A. MacNeil. 2010. "Professional Burnout, Vicarious Trauma, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and Compassion Fatigue: A Review of Theoretical Terms, Risk Factors, and Preventive Methods for Clinicians and Researchers." *Best Practice in Mental Health* 6(2): 57–68.

Newkirk II, Vann R. 2018. "Trump's White-Nationalist Pipeline." *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/08/trump-white-nationalism/568393/ (October 20, 2018).

Newport, Frank. 2018. "Americans Not Convinced U.S. Needs to Spend More on Defense." *Gallup*. https://news.gallup.com/poll/228137/americans-not-convinced-needs-spend-defense.aspx (March 22, 2019).

Nguyen, Mimi Thi. 2012. *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Nickel, Patricia Mooney, ed. 2012. *North American Critical Theory After Postmodernism: Contemporary Dialogues*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nickerson, Angela et al. 2010. "The Impact of Fear for Family on Mental Health in a Resettled Iraqi Refugee Community." *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 44(4): 229–35.

———. 2014. "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Prolonged Grief in Refugees Exposed to Trauma and Loss." *BMC Psychiatry* 14(1): 106.

"Number of Strikes per Month, in Iraq and Syria." *Airwars.org*. https://airwars.org/data/ (July 10, 2017).

Nyers, Peter, and Kim Rygiel. 2012. *Citizenship, Migrant Activism and the Politics of Movement*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ó Tuathail, Gearóid. 2002. "Theorizing Practical Geopolitical Reasoning: The Case of the United States Response to the War in Bosnia." *Political Geography* 21(5): 601–28.

———. 2003. "'Just Out Looking for a Fight': American Affect and the Invasion of Iraq." *Antipode* 35(5): 856–70.

Otterman, Sharon. 2005. “IRAQ: The U.N. Role.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/iraq-un-role (February 1, 2019).

“Our Story.” *U.S. Department of Defense*. https://www.defense.gov/Our-Story/ (February 27, 2019).

Owen, Tess. 2018. “ICE Says It Won’t Arrest People Seeking Shelter from Hurricane Florence.” *Vice News*. https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/qvapdb/ice-says-it-wont-arrest-people-seeking-shelter-from-hurricane-florence (February 20, 2019).

Pan, Esther. 2005. “IRAQ: Justifying the War.” *Council on Foreign Relations*. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/iraq-justifying-war (May 1, 2019).

Phillimore, Jenny. 2011. “Refugees, Acculturation Strategies, Stress and Integration.” *Journal of Social Policy* 40(2011): 575–93.

Pilkington, Ed. 2018. “NYPD Settles Lawsuit after Illegally Spying on Muslims.” *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/apr/05/nypd-muslim-surveillance-settlement (May 1, 2019).

Pillar, Paul R. 2003a. *Principal Challenges in Post-Saddam Iraq*. National Intelligence Council.

———. 2003b. *Regional Consequences of Regime Change in Iraq*. National Intelligence Council.

Popper, Karl R. 1947. *The Open Society and Its Enemies. Vol. I: The Spell of Plato*. London: George Routledge & Sons, LTD.

Poushter, Jacob. 2015. “In Nations with Significant Muslim Populations, Much Disdain for ISIS.” *Pew Research Center*. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/11/17/in-nations-with-significant-muslim-populations-much-disdain-for-isis/ (February 20, 2019).

“Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Geneva, 17 June 1925.” *International Committee of the Red Cross*. https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/280?OpenDocument (May 1, 2019).

Public Information Section. 2003. “Chronology: 1991 Gulf War Crisis.” *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*. https://www.unhcr.org/subsites/iraqcrisis/3e798c2d4/chronology-1991-gulf-war-crisis.html (March 26, 2019).

Pyle, Richard. 2006. “Haditha Killings Recall Vietnam’s My Lai.” *The Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/02/AR2006060200936.html (January 1, 2019).

Rawlings, Nate. 2012. “The Warrior Ethos: Why We Leave No One Behind.” *Time*. http://nation.time.com/2012/05/17/the-warrior-ethos-why-we-leave-no-one-behind/ (April 9, 2019).

Rayburn, Joel D., Frank K. Sobchak, and Rayburn. 2019. 1 *The U.S. Army in the Iraq War: Volume 1 Invasion, Insurgency, Civil War 2003-2006*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press.

Refugee Arrivals: From March 20, 2003 through September 30, 2017, Nationality of Iraq. 2019. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of State: Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

Regan, Michael D. 2016. "What Does Voter Turnout Tell Us about the 2016 Election?" *PBS News Hour*. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/voter-turnout-2016-elections (February 20, 2019).

"Remarks by the President on Comprehensive Immigration Reform." 2010. *The White House*. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/realitycheck/the-press-office/remarks-president-comprehensive-immigration-reform (May 1, 2019).

Rempfer, Kyle. 2019. "Trump's Pardon of US Soldier Is an Endorsement of War Crimes, Says ACLU." *Military Times*. https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2019/05/07/trumps-pardon-of-us-soldier-is-an-endorsement-of-a-war-crimes-says-aclu/ (May 7, 2019).

Roberts, Joel. 2005. "6 Months For GI In Iraqi Drowning." *CBS News*. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/6-months-for-gi-in-iraqi-drowning/ (June 12, 2018).

Rodgers, Lucy, and Dominic Bailey. 2019. "Trump Wall - All You Need to Know about US Border in Seven Charts." *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-46824649 (May 1, 2019).

Roth, Kenneth. 2004. "War in Iraq: Not a Humanitarian Intervention." *Human Rights Watch*. https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/01/25/war-iraq-not-humanitarian-intervention (February 15, 2019).

Rouen, Aynur de. 2015. "Leaving the Homeland: Kurdish Diasporic Experience in Binghamton." *Anthropology of the Middle East* 10(2): 119–26.

Roy, Arundhati. 2004. "The 2004 Sydney Peace Prize Lecture: Peace and the New Corporate Liberation Theology." *The University of Sydney*. https://sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newsstoryid=279 (July 10, 2019).

Rubin, Herbert J, and Irene Rubin. 2004. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data (Second Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Running on Hate: 2018 Pre-Election Report. 2018. . Muslim Advocates.

Saadi, Altaf, Barbara E. Bond, and Sanja Percac-Lima. 2015. "Bosnian, Iraqi, and Somali Refugee Women Speak: A Comparative Qualitative Study of Refugee Health Beliefs on Preventive Health and Breast Cancer Screening." *Women's Health Issues* 25(5): 501–8.

Said, Edward W. 1995. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*. London: Penguin Books.

Saldaña, Johnny. 2013. 2nd *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Sanders, Richard. 2013. "The Myth of 'Shock and Awe': Why the Iraqi Invasion Was a Disaster." *The Telegraph*. https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/9933587/The-myth-of-shock-and-awe-why-the-Iraqi-invasion-was-a-disaster.html (May 1, 2019).

Sanford, Jonathan E. 2003. *Iraq's Economy: Past, Present, Future*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service˜The Library of Congress.

Sassoon, Joseph. 2009. *The Iraqi Refugees: The New Crisis in the Middle East*. New York; London: I.B. Tauris.

Scahill, Jeremy. 2015. "The Drone Papers." *The Intercept*. https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/the-assassination-complex/ (May 31, 2016).

Schmidt, Michael S. 2012. "Anger in Iraq After Plea Bargain Over 2005 Massacre." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/25/world/middleeast/anger-in-iraq-after-plea-bargain-over-haditha-killings.html (June 11, 2018).

Schofield, Matthew. 2011. "WikiLeaks: Iraqi Children in U.S. Raid Shot in Head, U.N. Says." *McClatchy Newspapers*. http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/special-reports/article24696685.html (June 1, 2018).

Schwarz, Jon. 2018. "Lie After Lie: What Colin Powell Knew About Iraq 15 Years Ago and What He Told the U.N." *The Intercept*. https://theintercept.com/2018/02/06/lie-after-lie-what-colin-powell-knew-about-iraq-fifteen-years-ago-and-what-he-told-the-un/ (January 5, 2019).

Searcey, Dionne, and Emmanuel Akinwotu. 2018. "Nigerian Army Uses Trump's Words to Justify Fatal Shooting of Rock-Throwing Protesters." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/02/world/africa/nigeria-trump-rocks.html (January 25, 2019).

Segarra, Lisa Marie. 2017. "Watch John McCain Strongly Defend Barack Obama During the 2008 Campaign." *Time*. http://time.com/4866404/john-mccain-barack-obama-arab-cancer/ (January 15, 2019).

Seville, Lisa Riordan, and Hannah Rappleye. 2018. "Trump Admin Ran 'pilot Program' for Separating Migrant Families in 2017." *NBC News*. https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/immigration-border-crisis/trump-admin-ran-pilot-program-separating-migrant-families-2017-n887616 (January 15, 2019).

Shacknove, Andrew E. 1985. "Who Is a Refugee?" *Ethics* 95(2): 274–84.

Shaheen, Jack G. 1984. *The TV Arab*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press.

———. 2003. "Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 588: 171–93.

Shanker, Thom, Eric Schmitt, Richard A., and Oppel Jr. 2006. "Military to Report Marines Killed Iraqi Civilians." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/26/world/middleeast/26haditha.html (May 13, 2018).

Sherry, Virginia N. 1991. *Needless Deaths in the Gulf War: Civilian Casualties During the Air Campaign and Violations of the Laws of War*. New York.

Shiblak, Abbas. 2005. *Iraqi Jews: A History of Mass Exodus*. London: Saqi.

Shoeb, Marwa, Harvey M. Weinstein, and Jodi Halpern. 2007. "Living in Religious Time and Space: Iraqi Refugees in Dearborn, Michigan." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20(3): 441–60.

Sides, John, and Dalia Mogahed. 2018. *Muslims in America: Public Perceptions in the Trump Era*. Washington, D.C.: The Democracy Fund Voter Study Group.

Siegal, Mark. 1999. "Former UN Official Says Sanctions against Iraq Amount to 'Genocide.'" *Cornell Chronicle*. https://news.cornell.edu/stories/1999/09/former-un-official-says-sanctions-against-iraq-amount-genocide (January 5, 2019).

Silvers, Janson. 2017. "Hundreds Protest Immigration Ban in Downtown Harrisonburg." *WHSV-TV3*. http://www.whsv.com/content/news/Hundreds-gather-in-downtown-Harrisonburg-to-oppose-travel-ban-412100243.html (July 18, 2018).

Sim, David. 2017. "The Devastation of Mosul After ISIS, in Photos." *Newsweek*. https://www.newsweek.com/photo-report-victory-over-isis-mosul-comes-terrible-cost-634190 (March 12, 2019).

Singh, Amrit. 2013. *Globalizing Torture: CIA Secret Detention and Extraordinary Rendition*. New York: Open Society Justice Initiative.

"SIPRI Military Expenditure Database." 2019. *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*. https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex (March 3, 2019).

Slater, Alice. 2018. "The US Has Military Bases in 80 Countries. All of Them Must Close." *The Nation*. https://www.thenation.com/article/the-us-has-military-bases-in-172-countries-all-of-them-must-close/ (February 27, 2019).

Slewa-Younan, Shameran et al. 2012a. "Measures of Psychophysiological Arousal Among Resettled Traumatized Iraqi Refugees Seeking Psychological Treatment Shameran." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 25: 348–52.

———. 2012b. "Measures of Psychophysiological Arousal Among Resettled Traumatized Iraqi

Refugees Seeking Psychological Treatment Shameran." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 25: 2006–8.

Slewa-Younan, Shameran, Maria Gabriela Uribe Guajardo, Andreea Heriseanu, and Tasnim Hasan. 2015. "A Systematic Review of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression Amongst Iraqi Refugees Located in Western Countries." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 17(4): 1231–39.

Smith, Alexander, Caroline Radnofsky, Linda Givetash, and Vladimir Banic. 2019. "New Zealand Mosque Shooting: Attacker's Apparent Manifesto Probed." *NBC News*. https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/new-zealand-mosque-terrorist-may-have-targeted-country-because-it-n983601 (March 26, 2019).

Sontag, Susan. 2003. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Picador: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

von Sponeck, H.C. 2006. *A Different Kind of War: The UN Sanctions Regime in Iraq*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Staff, WGRZ. 2015. "A Segregated City." *WGRZ*. https://www.wgrz.com/article/news/local/buffalo/a-segregated-city/71-126017873 (January 25, 2019).

Starr, Barbara. 2016. "US Iraq Agree on Plan to Send More American Troops." *CNN*. http://www.cnn.com/2016/09/28/politics/us-iraq-agree-on-plan-to-send-more-american-troops/ (July 10, 2017).

"State Department Rejects More than 37,000 Visas Due to Travel Ban." 2019. *Aljazeera*. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/02/state-department-rejects-37000-visas-due-travel-ban-190227210725292.html (May 1, 2019).

Stolberg, Sheryl Gay. 2017. "Senate Passes $700 Billion Pentagon Bill, More Money Than Trump Sought." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/us/politics/senate-pentagon-spending-bill.html (October 17, 2018).

Stolberg, Sheryl Gay, and Brian M. Rosenthal. 2017. "Man Charged After White Nationalist Rally in Charlottesville Ends in Deadly Violence." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/12/us/charlottesville-protest-white-nationalist.html (June 28, 2018).

Stouffer, Holly. 2016. "Harrisonburg City Council Passes 'Welcome America' Resolution by Faith in Action." *WHSV-TV3*. https://www.whsv.com/content/news/Harrisonburg-City-Council-passes-Welcome-America-resolution-by-Faith-in-Action-391137152.html (January 25, 2019).

Szczepanik, Marta. 2016. "The 'Good' and 'Bad' Refugees? Imagined Refugeehood(s) in the Media Coverage of the Migration Crisis." *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies* 10(2):

23–34.

Taguba, Antonio M. 2004. *Article 15-6 Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade*. United States Army.

Taylor, Eboni M et al. 2014. "Physical and Mental Health Status of Iraqi Refugees Resettled in the United States." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 16(6): 1130–37.

Telhami, Shibley. 2015. *American Attitudes Toward the Middle East and Israel*. Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings.

"Text of EU Statement on Iraq." 2003. *CNN*. http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/meast/02/18/sprj.irq.europe.text/ (March 22, 2019).

"Text of President Bush's 2002 State of the Union Address." 2002. *The Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/sou012902.htm (June 1, 2018).

The Empowerment of Hate. 2017. Washington, D.C.: Council on American-Islamic Relations.

The New York City Commission on Human Rights, Somjen Frazer, and Erin Howe. 2018. *Xenophobia, Islamophobia, and Anti-Semitism in NYC Leading up to and Following the 2016 Presidential Election: A Report on Discrimination, Bias, and Acts of Hate, Experienced by Muslim, Arab, South Asian, Jewish, and Sikh New Yorkers*. New York: NYC Commission on Human Rights.

Tilghman, Andrew. 2017. "Near ISIS Front, U.S. Marine Artillerymen 'Fire Every Day.'" *Military Times*. http://www.militarytimes.com/story/veterans/2016/04/07/near-isis-front-us-marine-artillerymen-fire-everyday/82748578/ (July 15, 2017).

Totenberg, Nina, and Domenico Montanaro. 2018. "In Big Win For White House, Supreme Court Upholds President Trump's Travel Ban." *NPR*. https://www.npr.org/2018/06/26/606481548/supreme-court-upholds-trump-travel-ban (May 1, 2019).

Trentacosta, Christopher J et al. 2016. "Potentially Traumatic Events and Mental Health Problems Among Children of Iraqi Refugees: The Roles of Relationships With Parents and Feelings About School." *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 86(4): No Pagination Specified.

Trial of the Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal. 1947. Nuremberg, Germany: International Military Tribunal Nuremberg.

"Trump Migrant Separation Policy: Children 'in Cages' in Texas." 2018. *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44518942 (January 1, 2019).

Tucker, Jonathan. 2014. "American Firms' Supplying Iraq's Chemical Weapons Production." *The New York Times*.

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/10/14/world/middleeast/american-firms-supplying-iraqs-chemical-weapons-production.html?mtrref=undefined&gwh=025E33F277D9C40E835945E9FBCD55B2&gwt=pay (December 28, 2018).

Turse, Nick. 2017. "Donald Trump's First Year Sets Record for U.S. Special Ops." *Tomdispatch.com*. http://www.tomdispatch.com/post/176363/tomgram%3A_nick_turse%2C_a_wider_world_of_war/ (February 27, 2019).

Tyner, Adam, and Yuan Ren. 2016. "The Hukou System, Rural Institutions, and Migrant Integration in China." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 16(3): 331–48.

"U.S.: Hundreds of Civilian Deaths in Iraq Were Preventable." 2003. *Human Rights Watch*. https://www.hrw.org/news/2003/12/12/us-hundreds-civilian-deaths-iraq-were-preventable (February 5, 2019).

"U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream." 2017a. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/how-the-u-s-general-public-views-muslims-and-islam/ (May 1, 2019).

———. 2017b. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/findings-from-pew-research-centers-2017-survey-of-us-muslims/#roughly-half-of-muslims-say-they-have-experienced-recent-discrimination (March 31, 2019).

Uehling, Greta. 2015. "The Responsibilization of Refugees in the United States: On the Political Uses of Psychology." *Anthropological Quarterly* 88(4): 997–1028.

Uggen, Christopher, Ryan Larson, and Sarah Shannon. 2016. ACLU *6 Million Lost Voters: State-Level Estimates of Felony Disenfranchisement, 2016*. New York.

Ullman, Harlan K., and James P. Wade. 1996. *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominace*. Washington D.C.: National Defense University.

"UN Charter." 1945. *United Nations*. http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/index.html (April 1, 2016).

"US and British Aircraft Attack Iraq." 2001. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/feb/16/iraq (December 18, 2018).

"US Embraces Cluster Munitions." 2017. *Human Rights Watch*. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/01/us-embraces-cluster-munitions (February 6, 2019).

"US Expands Travel Ban to Include N Korea." 2017. *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41382585 (May 1, 2019).

Valenciana, Christine, and Rosario Ordoñez-Jasis. 2012. "Unconstitutional Deportation of the

1930s: Learning from the Voices of the Past." *The Social Studies* 103(2): 81–89.

Vandewalker, Ian, and Keith Gunnar Bentele. 2015. "Vulnerability in Numbers: Racial Composition of the Electorate, Voter Suppression, and the Voting Rights Act." *Harvard Latino Law Review* 18: 99–150.

"Views of Violence: What Drives Public Acceptance and Rejection of Attacks on Civilians 10 Years after 9/11." 2011. *Gallup*. https://news.gallup.com/poll/157067/views-violence.aspx (February 20, 2019).

Vine, David. 2015. *Base Nation: How U.S. Military Bases Abroad Harm America and the World*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Wagner, Jens. 2015. *Body Count - Casualty Figures after 10 Years on the "War on Terror."* Washington, DC, Berlin, Ottawa: International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Waldman, Steven. 2016. "'Islam Is Not a Religion': The Real Reason Michael Flynn's Appointment Is Ominous." *Washington Monthly*. https://washingtonmonthly.com/2016/11/25/the-real-reason-michael-flynns-appointment-is-ominous-islam-is-not-a-religion/ (January 15, 2019).

Weisbrot, Mark, and Jeffrey Sachs. 2019. *Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Economic and Policy Research.

Weiser, Benjamin. 2018. "Man Charged in Manhattan Truck Attack Speaks Out at Hearing." *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/22/nyregion/manhattan-truck-attack-trial.html (January 1, 2019).

Welcoming America. 2019. "What's the Difference between a Welcoming City and Sanctuary City?" *Welcoming America*. https://www.welcomingamerica.org/difference-between-welcoming-city-sanctuary-city (January 1, 2019).

Westcott, Lucy. 2015. "A Brief History of Refugees Paying Back the U.S. Government for Their Travel." *Newsweek*. https://www.newsweek.com/brief-history-refugees-paying-back-us-government-their-travel-403241 (April 27, 2019).

White, Josh. 2005. "Documents Tell of Brutal Improvisation by GIs." *The Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/02/AR2005080201941.html (June 12, 2018).

———. 2006. "Military Cleared in Raid on Iraq House." *The Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/02/AR2006060201796.html (June 1, 2018).

Whiteside, Logan, Richa Naik, and Peter Valdes-Dapena. 2017. "Capital of Arab America Stung by Travel Ban." *CNN*. https://money.cnn.com/2017/02/01/news/dearborn-arab-americans/index.html (March 3, 2019).

Whitlock, Craig. 2009. “Army Sergeant Pleads Guilty to Murder in Iraqi Prisoner Deaths.” *The Washington Post*. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/30/AR2009033001352.html?noredirect=on (June 1, 2018).

Willard, Cynthia L., Mara Rabin, and Martha Lawless. 2014a. “The Prevalence of Torture and Associated Symptoms in United States Iraqi Refugees.” *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 16(6): 1–8.

Willard, Cynthia L, Mara Rabin, and Martha Lawless. 2014b. “The Prevalence of Torture and Associated Symptoms in United States Iraqi Refugees.” *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 16(6): 1069–76.

Williams-Harris, Deanese, Liam Ford, and Megan Crepeau. 2015. “2 Dead, 6 Wounded, Including Rapper King Louie, in Chicago Shootings.” *Chicago Tribute*. https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-chicago-shooting-violence-20151223-story.html (April 9, 2019).

Wright, A. Michelle, Abir Aldhalimi, et al. 2016. “Determinants of Resource Needs and Utilization among Refugees over Time.” *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* 51(4): 539–49.

Wright, A. Michelle, Abir Dhalimi, et al. 2016. “Unemployment in Iraqi Refugees: The Interaction of Pre and Post-Displacement Trauma.” *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 57(6): 564–70.

Yako, Rihab Mousa, and Bipasha Biswas. 2014. “‘We Came to This Country for the Future of Our Children. We Have No Future’: Acculturative Stress among Iraqi Refugees in the United States.” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 38(1): 133–41.

Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2003. 2004. U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington D.C.: United States Department of Homeland Security.

Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2013. 2014. U.S. Department of Homeland Security Washington D.C.

Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2016. 2017. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Homeland Security.

“YouGov: November 20 - 23, 2015.” 2015. *YouGov.com*. https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/236fb46xyh/tabs_OP_National_Registry_20151123.pdf (March 31, 2019).

Young, Iris Marion. 2006. “Comments on Seyla Benhabib, Situating the Self.” *New German Critique* 62(Spring-Summer): 165–72.

Zielbauer, Paul Von. 2007a. “Army Says Improper Orders by Colonel Led to 4 Deaths.” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/21/world/middleeast/21abuse.html?_r=1 (June 1, 2018).

———. 2007b. “Civilian Claims on U.S. Suggest the Toll of War.” *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/12/world/middleeast/12abuse.html (June 12, 2018).

Zogby Analytics. 2017. *American Attitudes: Immigration, Civil Rights, Surveillance, Profiling, and Hate Crimes*. Arab American Institute.

Zogby International. 2010. *American Views on Arab and Muslim Americans*. Arab American Institute.

Zwijnenburg, Wim, and Foeke Postma. 2017. *Living under a Black Sky: Conflict Pollution and Environmental Health Concerns in Iraq*. Utrecht, The Netherlands: PAX.

Zwijnenburg, Wim, and Doug Weir. 2016. *Targets of Opportunity: Analysis of the Use of Depleted Uranium by A-10s in the 2003 Iraq War*. Manchester, UK and Utrech, tThe Netherlands: PAX and The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons.