

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The Syrian civil war generated waves of refugees who flow into neighboring countries. These refugees have been creating excess supply of labor in host countries. This study involves a series of interviews in which respondents shared their perceptions of their involvement in the labor market in Iraq. These interviews provide a broad and in-depth explanation of why they became refugees, their desire to join the labor force, and their settlement preferences. The results of this study show that i) economic disintegration of Syria, unemployment, and compulsory military recruitment are significant push factors which explains the outflow of refugees from Syria; ii) Syrian refugees cited economic the well-being of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), treatment by locals, and the feeling of detachment from the host community due to their temporary status as the main barriers for participating in the host labor market. iii) A significant portion of the refugees in the camp is from the working class and currently unemployed individuals. These findings justify the decision to become a refugee, difficulties

refugees face in participating the host labor market, and their motives to settle inside the refugee camp.

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“Labor Market Situation for Syrian Refugees in Iraq”
Case Study Arbat Refugee Camp – Kurdistan Region

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Aram Mahmood, Author

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List of Acronyms

KRG: Kurdistan Regional Government-IR

KRI: Kurdistan Region of Iraq

IDP: Internally Displaced People

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

YPG: Yekina Parastena Gal 'People's Protection Unites', the military wing of Democratic Union Party, a political Kurdish party in Syria

Exchange Rate at that period was 1 US \$= 1120 Iraqi Dinars

NGO: Non- Governmental Organizations

Domizz & Arbat: Syrian refugee Camps in Northern Iraq

Dhok, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah: three provinces in the Northern Iraq

Derk, Hasaka, Latakia, Damascus, Homos: Provinces in the Syria

IRB: Internal Review Board

ISIS: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

Chapter -1- Introduction

In December 2010 a man in Tunisia immolated himself because police forced him to stop street vending, his only source of income. His act triggered a series of revolutions and uprisings in Middle Eastern countries against ruling governments. These events ranged from shaking political platforms, security and stability, and depressing economy of impacted countries. Most of those countries were categorized as lower middle-income countries with higher poverty and unemployment rates, and lower GDP per capita before the rebellions started. Civil war, unrest and instability negatively affected economic indicators of impacted countries and deepened their economic crises. Many of the affected countries passed this disturbance period and gained some stability. But for others like Syria it is a different story. Four years after the outbreak of conflict, Syria is still trapped in civil war. This persistent conflict has depressed Syria's economy and created widespread violence, which produced refugees who fled to neighboring countries.

In March 2011 protest began in the sprawling areas of Damascus, the capital city of Syria. Soon the protest spread and intensified across Syria. Violence spread into civil war. Like other armed conflicts, the civil war in Syria disrupted lives and livelihoods for many Syrians. They lost jobs, their properties were ransacked, and many of their lives were lost. In addition economic sanctions imposed against the Syrian regime brought the country's economy to its knees and added to the number of refugees leaving the country. This study is based in a one-month period of fieldwork and interviews with Syrian refugees at the Arbat Refugee camp in KRI's Iraq

between August and September 2014, and analyzes the labor market experiences of Syrian refugees there. It has three research questions.

First, why did Syrian refugees in Arbat refugee Camp leave Syria?

Second, what are the perceived barriers to formal employment locally outside the camp?

Third, why do Syrian refugees in Arbat Refugee Camp choose to settle in the camp rather than settle among locals?

The aim of this study is to analyze the importance of employment for Syrian refugees in Syria and their host region KRI's labor market conditions, and also to reveal the factors that directly or indirectly impact their opportunity and incentive to work and to seek work.

Most prior studies have been conducted on security factors leading to outflows of people from their place of origin. Others are policy research papers. Only a few studies stress the economic factors driving refugee status. Therefore the objective of the first research question is to find the main reasons that compelled Syrians to seek refuge in KRI-Iraq.

The second question is designed to expose those reasons refugees perceive as barriers to enter KRI's labor market. The aim is to distinguish and identify those barriers.

The third question aims to explore the reasons for staying in the Arbat refugee camp rather than outside it. In addition to this it aims to discover the distinctive attributes that the camped refugees have, and also encampment's impact on refugee's employment.

This study is qualitative and uses grounded theory. By using this method I aimed toward the discovery of theory from data obtained on the ground, from face-to-face interviews with respondents and observing their daily life inside the camp. Grounded theory is the most suitable approach for exploring behavior when there has been little exploration of the contextual factors that affect individuals live, as is the case for Syrian refugees in KRI.

The evidence that emerged from this analysis suggests four things. First, respondents of this study classified and profiled themselves as economic migrants and not as refugees. They referred to economic disintegration of Syria and compulsory military recruitment by Syrian rebels and government as push factors for their displacement. Also noteworthy is that respondents of this study are those who sought refuge in the period of 2011 to 2013 before the ISIS incursion of Northern Iraq and Syria, which imposed direct security concerns on the life of many minorities and others living in that region. Refugees' emphasis on economic disintegration of Syria could strip them of refugee status and redefine them under the category of economic migrant. Second, the host region's economic wellbeing, wage discrimination, and refugee's feeling of detachment from the host community affect their decision to participate in the host labor market. Third, the characteristics of encamped refugees reflect the characteristics of the working and lower-income class in Syria. Rent-free housing in the camp is another factor that incentivizes participants of this study to stay in the camp rather than relocate. However, contrary to prior research, participants in this study denied that food aid and free health service attract them to the Arbat camp.

This study will contribute to the existing literature on refugees in general as well as labor market perspectives held by refugees, and it will add a unique insight toward the experience of Syrian refugees' situation in KRI.

Syrian Economy and Civil War

The civil war in Syria inflicted immense economic costs, including destruction of infrastructure, paralyzed trade, and halted other economic activities (Ianchovichina & Ivanic, 2014). Before the civil war, the Syrian unemployment rate was under 10 percent

and its poverty rate was around 30 percent (Bank, 2010). But after the war, and with no sign of waning at ongoing conflict, these figure rise day after day. Lack of economic opportunity and persistent violence have pushed many Syrian citizens to cross their country's border into other countries. The question of whether these refugees were pushed or economically driven away is difficult to answer. According to Article 1 in the 1951 Geneva Convention, a refugee is someone who has fled his or country "*owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for the reason of race, religion or nationality, membership of a particular social groups or political opinion.*" (UN, 2015). Thus if Syrians are forcibly driven out of their country they fall into category of refugees, but if they are searching for a better life they fall into the category of migrants. This study seeks to address this question from the perspective of Syrian refugees in Arbat refugee camp in KRI, in order to identify the cause of their initial displacement. My findings show that for the respondents of this study, the economic disintegration of Syria was a greater push factor toward becoming refugees than the violence of the civil war itself.

As civil war continues in Syria, the outflow of Syrians increases day after day. This outflow reached its peak at late 2012 and early 2013 when the total number of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries reached one million (See Appendix-A-). By December 2014, the stock of Syrian refugees reached approximately 3.5 million refugees, and for the first time, the Syrians have become the largest refugee population under the UNHCR mandate (UNHCR, 2015). Main destinations of Syrian refugees are Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq, which are cumulatively host the largest number (See Appendix -B-).

A recent World Bank (2015) study showed that the influx of refugees into these countries has boosted investment, consumption, and labor supply adding to financial strains on the host country (Ianchovichina & Ivanic, 2014). Host economies cannot absorb those extra workers, and the additional supply of labor has provoked competition with locals, which may aggravate xenophobia, and block refugees from engaging in the labor force. Fearing competition and public discord, some of those host countries have created special laws for handling Syrian refugees, making it difficult for them to work locally. This is despite Article 17- 18 and 24 in the 1951 Convention mandating equal employment rights and opportunities for the refugees (UNHCR, 2015). Meanwhile, others host countries have lax rules allowing refugees to work locally.

In the next section I will provide a brief description of Syrian refugees' circumstances in Iraq and precisely in the Kurdistan region, since the great majority of refugees are stationed there. Additionally, I will briefly depict the current situation of the labor market for both Syrians in KRI and locals.

Syrian Refugees in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Iraq was among the original drafters and signatories of the 1951 Geneva Convention, and today is a destination for a large number of Syrian refugees. Iraq is also obliged to assist Syrian refugee needs in accordance to the 1967 protocol of treating refugees. Presently, Iraq hosts a quarter million Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2014; UNHCR, 2015). These refugees are either housed in the 26 distinctive camps allocated for them or self-settled throughout Iraq. However, due to turmoil and war in the rest of Iraq the overwhelming majority of Syrian refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDP) are concentrated in 3 northern provinces: Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Dhok, which are under the jurisdiction of federal entity of the Kurdistan

Regional Government-Iraq (KRG-I). As of January 2015 the KRI government has built 26 camps to accommodate Syrian refugees and IDPs across those three provinces (World Bank & KRG, 2015) (See Appendix-C-).

Regarding access to the local labor market, neither the KRG nor the Iraqi government places special restriction on refugees. This has allowed an increase in the supply of labor to the local economy, and thus an increased pressure on the local economy and labor force. A recent study implies that Iraq's economy and especially KRI's economy do not have enough capacity to absorb the additional labor supply. This recent KRG- World Bank report indicates that the refugee influx has contracted economic growth by 5% in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, and the Kurdistan poverty rate has more than doubled from 3.5% to 8.1% percent (World Bank & KRG, 2015). Moreover, Iraq's economy is not immune from the effect of the Syrian civil war. Unemployment surged when Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (ISIS is an Islamic extremist group controlling territory in at least four countries) invaded western Iraq (Factbook, 2014), which has resulted in new waves of Syrian refugees and secondary movement of internally displaced persons (IDP) to the northern region of Iraq- administrated by KRG and paralyzing trade and business activities. Both the masses of refugees and IDPs, alongside financing a war against terrorism, combined with economic crisis created even more unemployment for locals and refugees.

Currently, there are no statistical figures to support the perception that Iraqis face competition in the labor market and lower wages in the presence of Syrian refugees. However, a standard static labor market model would view the influx of Syrian refugees into Iraq as a labor supply shock, leading to lower employment and wages among native workers. Additionally, an increasing number of refugees can create a "composition problem," with

higher unemployment among refugees than locals, which can exacerbate the unemployment rate, due to receiving more refugees (Friedberg & Hunt , 1995).

Painting a more complete image of Iraq's labor market and the overall effect of Syrian refugees in the labor force is beyond the scope of this study, as sporadic and larger number of refugee in and outside the camp across the region would have made it harder for me to address with time and space constraints. Thus I have concentrated on analyzing data on Syrian refugees in the Arbat refugee camp.

The reminder of this study is divided into four chapters. Chapter 2 offers a discussion of existing literature regarding labor markets for refugees. Chapter 3 provides a description of my methods of data collection and analysis of this study. Chapter 4 discusses the main results that emerged from data analysis. And Chapter 5 discusses relevant conclusions and a discussion of the limitations of this study.

Why this topic?

I was a refugee once. At the time of the Iraqi refugee crisis 1988-1991 my family took refuge in Iran. Iran had a restrictive policy in in place regarding the treatment of refugees. The majority of these refugees were confined to refugee camps and were unemployed. Their livelihood depended on the aid they received from international aid organizations and the Iranian government. Considering this experience, the recent Syrian refugee crisis in the Middle East region grabbed my attention. The refugees' daily endeavors to feed themselves and their tactics for survival were like *Déjà vu* to me, and it brought back the entire ordeal faced by Iraqi refugees in Iran. During my last visit to the region the refugees' constant presence in restaurants, parks, and other businesses piqued my curiosity. I wanted to learn more about the circumstances

these people face while looking for work in Iraq. For this reason, I decided to conduct this study on the labor market for Syrian refugees in Iraq from the perspective of the refugees' themselves.

Chapter -2- Literature review

Introduction

This literature review provides a summary of scholarly and current policy research about refugees, Syrian refugees, and the economic conditions of refugees, particularly with concerns to their livelihood and opportunities for participating in the labor market of the host countries. While most scholars haven't specifically addressed refugees as a labor force in host countries, they focus more broadly on humanitarian aid and relief processes in tackling refugees' agony. Although they directly or indirectly touched this topic in their works, their works are not detailed or satisfactory enough to analyze refugees' perceptions of the host labor market.

Current existing literature on the case of Syrian refugees cites security as main factor, which pushed Syrians to seek refuge in host countries. But only roughly 3 million out of 9.5 million displaced Syrian refugees took refuges in host countries, while the rest are internally displaced (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; Kirisci , 2014; UNHCR, 2015). The question is if Syrians left their home out of the fear of their lives, why did they cross the border? Why haven't they stayed within Syria like other internally displaced people? Do they characterize equally as migrant even though international community grant them refugee status? This is a topic to explore and previous literature hasn't concentrated on it.

At the time of crisis refugees depend on aid and support from international and host country governments. However, relief programs are designed for the short term, and refugees' prolonged stay in the host country necessitates engagement in the labor market. However, due to host government policies, they are vulnerable to exploitation, repatriation from the host country, confinement in camps, and protection of basic human rights. Host countries pursue

different approaches in facing the Syrian refugee crisis; due to the destabilization in Syria there hasn't been any case of repatriation to Syria but refugees have limited access to the host labor market and they are subject to exploitation by locals (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; Kirisci , 2014).

This chapter consists of three sections. First, I start with a summary of modern history of refugees. Second, I will group and discuss my sources revolving around my research questions. Third and lastly, I conclude this chapter.

1- Refugees in the Modern History (Contemporary History of Refugee)

A brief history is essential and indispensable to this study. It rationalizes the use of term refugees instead of migrant and it is vital for my argument in the following chapters. These two terms of refugee and migrant are entangled and divergent. Leading contemporary theories and models of international migration can be utilized to decipher the labor market related to refugee's circumstances.

In our modern history two world wars caused not just killing of millions but also displacement of millions, according to Gatrell (2008). In the period of the World War One series of occupations and invasions ignited catastrophic humanitarian disasters and forced massive numbers of civilians to leave their places of origin and created waves of refugees.

The Netherlands received a large number of those refugees and the majority of those refugees were from Belgium. Those who had financial advantage and kin in the Netherlands resided in the cities and the rural areas, and those who were poor and no relatives in Netherlands dwelled in settlements called "Belgian villages" to avoid negative association with the

“concentration camp” (Gatrell, 2008). Those Belgian Villages were an analogue for today’s refugees’ camp.

The scale of relief provided to refugees was smaller than what is seen today. Therefore, refugees were compelled to work hard to support themselves. Their effort and contribution to the host country’s economy were exalted, but they were not immune from criticism by local people, who accused them of practicing illicit activity and prostitution (Gatrell, 2008).

2:1 Why Become Refugees?

People who have fled their country because of violence, human right abuses, internal conflict, foreign aggression, or natural disasters including floods, and earthquakes, are refugees. It is widely understood that the only source of refugeedom in the conflict-oriented areas is violence, but there are other components beside violence such as economic, social and political instability, which thrust people out of their countries as well (Jacobsen K. , Can Refugees Benefit the Sate? Refugee Resource and African State Building", 2002).

This study is concerned with Syrian refugees in Iraq who ran from protracted civil war, and explores the labor market in Iraq from their perspective. Thus I only reviewed the literature with respect to issues of refugee’s participation in the labor force of the host country. Existing literature and reports cited violence and security as the main driven factors for Syrians to seek refuge. Additionally, they emphasize two occurrences; first, refugees move back and forth through the border, and second the economic hardship of Syrians in their home country (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; Kirisci , 2014; World Bank & KRG, 2015; Oxfam, 2013). These events might be voluntary, and any mass voluntary movement can be attributed to current political or economic dissatisfaction with the Syrian government. If the

economic disintegration of Syria is the reason for these irregular movements of Syrian refugees, perhaps neoclassical theories of migration could better explain this movement.

2:1:1 Neoclassical Theories

Refugees are individuals and households. Generally an individual's decision to become a refugee is based on self-interest including fear of his/her life or better work opportunities. In addition, a household's decision is taken to minimize risks to family members, incomes, and overcome capital constraints that might impede families earning from production activities (Massey , Arango , Hugo , Kouaouci, Pellegrino , & Taylor , 1993).

2:1:1:1 Macroeconomic Theory

War and natural disasters devastate the infrastructure and the capital of the battered regions, and consequently the affected areas will lack capital. Thus according to the macro theory of international movement, people flee from capital poor labor abundant countries to the capital rich labor scarce countries. In the former wages are low and in the latter wages are high, all else equal (Massey , Arango , Hugo , Kouaouci, Pellegrino , & Taylor , 1993). Ultimately, this deprivation of capital could be one of the factors that motivate refugees to flee from their country to countries that have a higher rate of return to human capital.

2:1:1:2 Microeconomic Theory

The focal point of the micro theory of migration is individual choice. An individual as a rational economic agent decides whether to stay or to leave. If their cost-benefit analysis calculation leads them to expect higher return in other places, then they will move (Massey , Arango , Hugo , Kouaouci, Pellegrino , & Taylor , 1993). The Micro theory of migration can

be utilized to interpret individual's decision making of becoming a refugee as a mechanism to avoid higher costs and relatively lower productivity of remaining in warzones.

2:2 Barriers to Employment

2:2:1 Host Governments Policy (Legal Barrier)

Despite their attempt to harness opportunities refugees, endure many challenges and barriers implemented by host governments to prevent them from engaging in economic activities, including legal restrictions on investing in capital and business. These legal barriers do not only limit their economic opportunities but also have harmful effects on the host economy as well (Vicary, 2008).

According to Jacobson, if the government doesn't legalize or regulate the labor market for refugees, refugees only can attempt to engage in job market in two domains. First is the formal domain, which is inside the camp, and second is the informal domain, which is outside the camp where self-settled refugees, or those refugees who bypass the campsite periphery work without legal permit or protection (Jacobsen K., 2002).

Although refugees' presence brings expenses into the host country's economy, it also adds more job opportunities for the host country's population. These opportunities vary from the NGO's positions, such as creating jobs like managing the camp, to possible trade opportunities with the refugees and sending countries (De Montclos & Kagwanja , 2000). Indeed, refugees' contributions come in the form of low-cost labor and can substantially benefit the host economy. Moreover, if they are allowed to engage in the local economy as labor and

consumers, a surge in consumer spending will occur (Brees, 2008; Hansen, 2000; Jacobsen K. , 2006).

Conversely, this rapid economic growth does not end up in the interest of host country. Brees (2008) in describing Burmese refugees in Thailand attests that in Thailand both labor shortages and higher wages created a pull factor for additional refugees. In general the extra supply of lower wage labor in the market induces competition between host laborers and refugee laborers and drives the wage further downward (Brees, 2008; Ianchovichina & Ivanic, 2014). This pattern is exaggerated when encamped refugees are allowed to have access to the labor market, as encamped refugees have high degrees of competitiveness compared to host country's population due to their free access to shelter, education, and health services. Syrian refugees in Turkey have better facilities inside the camp compared their counterparts outside the camp (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013). NGOs tend to hire refugees more than local residents. And refugees have better mechanisms for generating capital, including access to credits from NGOs, selling their food rations, and receiving remittances from family members abroad (Brees, 2008).

Contrary to the other refugee cases, Akgunduz (2015) found that employment rate of native in various skill groups are unaffected by refugee presence.

For all those reasons, however, international law mandates host countries to treat refugees equally with the local population in the labor market, but some governments refuse to fully obey the rules, arguing that refugees will negatively affect native labor. Thus they reluctantly grant conditional access to the labor market only to particular refugees. Both Dincer et al (2013) and Kirişci (2014) highlighted that Syrian refugees need passports and residency permits in order to work in Turkey. Acquiring this permit will add to the cost of searching for

job and eventually will lead to job seeking being more costly for refugees (Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007). It also inversely affects those local people who are benefiting from cheap labor and new skills and techniques in doing businesses (Brees, 2008).

2:2:2 Potential Source of Income

Individuals need initial capital to start business. This capital can come into many form including tangible (cash, machinery) and intangible (social, human) capital. If refugees allowed engaging in the host country's labor market, they will need capital to establish businesses. Refugees acquire this capital by trading their food and inhabiting close to each other. Jacobson (2002) asserts refugees can restore social networks they lost either by displacement based on exchange of labor, asset and foods. Also if the local economy creates a supportive environment for refugees to integrate into the local economy, they will boost the host's economy. Self-settled Syrian refugees in Turkey opened 228 companies in the first 7 months of 2013 (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013). Besides giving refugees the right to work in the host country, which they are entitled to according to international law, Geneva Convention allows host governments to levy equal taxes on the refugees (Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007). These taxes ultimately generate revenue for the host government and support the host local economy.

Existing studies on labor markets for refugees show that refugees generally work as low-skilled workers, especially Syrian refugees (Akgunduz, Van Den berg, & Hassink, 2015), even though they might have better skills than their counterparts in the host country (Ozden, 2013). Subsequently those who work can be classified as construction workers, trash collectors, domestic worker, barbers, seamstresses, carpenters, waiters, and farmers (Brees, 2008; Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007). According to Brees (2008) and Alfaro et al. (2007) despite all the

policy barriers refugees strive to do business and work in the host country to support themselves, which depends on the several criteria that I will now explain.

The first criterion is capital generating assets. Refugees require having some amount of capital to start their businesses. This capital can be assets or money they brought with them from sending country, including money, cars, or jewelry (Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007; Jacobsen K. 2002; Jacobsen K. , 2006; Lehmann & Masterson , 2014).

According to network theory, the refugee's ethnic affinity, sharing common language with the host country, and political and ideological similarities are a form of social capital they can draw upon to gain access to employment. This social capital comes from co-nationals who have been in the host country long before the crisis, and business networks their relatives have there. These network connections significantly lower the cost and risk associated with the labor market for refugees (Massey , Arango , Hugo , Kouaouci, Pellegrino , & Taylor , 1993). It is important to not ignore that some refugee families are heavily dependent on the remittances that their families or relatives send from the third country or outside the camp to support them (Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007; Jacobsen K. , 2002; Jacobsen K. , 2006; Lehmann & Masterson , 2014).

Other sources for generating capital are aid organizations programs for supporting refugees. These programs include direct cash distribution, providing necessary tools, and vocational training, which help refugees to create and establish businesses or develop necessary skills that comply with host countries labor market demand (De Montclos & Kagwanja , 2000; Jacobsen K. , 2002). In the absence of such programs as several studies have pointed out

refugees sell or trade their additional foods and aid to generate necessary initial capital for business (Brees, 2008; De Montclos & Kagwanja , 2000; Jacobsen K. , 2002).

A last and foremost criterion is availability of formal and informal work opportunities for refugees inside the camp. These opportunities differ for refugees depending on space and the location, whether the camp is close to the city or far. Refugees who reside in the camps have chances to do small scale business with their compatriots including small stalls, shops, vendors, and services like barber shops (Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007). Other opportunities that are available are employment positions provided by NGO's that operate inside the camp (Brees, 2008). While, self-settled refugees out-side the camp have more opportunities and access to information since they are close to the commercial centers and have freedom of movements from one place to another. Self-settled refugees are usually characterized by having higher socioeconomic status and professions than the rest of refugee's population. However as I aforementioned, refugees in most case have lower wage compare to their counterparts in the host country.

Despite all of that there are still limited work opportunities for refugees in host labor market, because they are treated as temporary guests and outsiders. These opportunities are limited further when host countries introduce and implement restricted policies and regulation in managing refugee crises. Host countries take restricted measures in confronting and managing large number of refugees. This practice is not in line with international law and country's initial obligation in treating refugees accordingly, but in the fear of creating pull factor aggregating more refugees' inflow, both government and local population are in favor building obstacles for refugees. These restrictions ranges from giving them temporary status, barring

them from acquiring property, and limiting access to the job market through permit requirement (Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007; Brees, 2008; Jacobsen K. ,2002).

If the restrictive policies continue combined with prolonged period of settlement inside the camp, the refugees' initial resources will dwindle. Thus the refugees will develop coping methods that take advantage of opportunities and remaining resources to afford their needs. These methods include by participating in the black market including smuggling, prostitution, and child labor (Duffield , 2001; Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007; Lehmann & Masterson , 2014; Gatrell, 2008). In the next section I will explain some tools refugees employ to generate capital in presence of restrictive policies or essential programs like vocational training and credits.

2:2:3 Financial Coping Strategies

There are growing numbers of studies that shows in the same situation refugees are compelled to sell or trade their aid and rations to buy and acquire their traditional diet, working tools or cash. Perouse De Montclos et al. explain that some refugees in *Kukuma* refugee camp sell their portions of food to buy other necessities, which international aid organizations do not provide or distribute. Others sell it because it is not part of their traditional diet. And this phenomenon is not only applied on food. It could be whatever they can sell that has a price attached to it, including products of development projects within and around the camp, which they convert it to money. With that money they purchase necessary commodities they lack, including shoes, clothes, meat, heating oil. For instance in *Kukuma* refugee camp, refugees are selling their food

portion to the host country's population in low prices and buying second hand clothes for themselves (De Montclos & Kagwanja , 2000).

In the subsequent sections, I will explain the right of refugee in choosing to live in or out of campus and the benefit attached to it.

2:3 Rights of Refugees Between Rock and Hard Place

The 1951 Geneva Convention mandates all signatory countries to provide refugees with the sets of rights including settlement among locals and right of employment in period of refugee crisis and while they are hosting refugees (UNHCR, 2015), albeit some host countries treat refugees differently. In some countries, refugees lack civil, economic, and social rights including freedom of movement, residency, political representation, fair trial, wage, self-employment, and access to credit, protection from fraud, and protection against the sexual abuse and labor exploitation and even deportation (Kibreab, 2003)

Furthermore, regardless of their obligation, some host countries prefer to encamp refugees. Their predilection for this policy comes from the claim that refugees erode public resources and induce competition on available resources with native dwellers. Thus for this reason they mandate refugees to settle in the isolated settlements 'camps' and only for short periods of time. They are not allowed to have freedom of movement and only allowed to leave these isolated sites with special permits they are required to have (Jacobsen K. , 2006).

Scholars argue that those countries contain refugees in camp have various reasons to justify this action. First, it offers the visibility, control of the inflow and outflow of the refugees, and control of perceived security threats. Second, it limits their access to the land and common resources. It comes from the instinct to prevent refugees as outsiders from consuming public goods allocated for local people. Based on instinct, the host governments allow themselves to

conserve scarce resources for their own people through restrictive policy. Also we can express that for local people the refugees are outsiders and they don't belong to their community, thus they are not willing to share common resources. Third, encampments will reduce refugees' risk of integrating into the host country's society, which if it happens the host country will fail to repatriate them when the situation stabilizes in the sending country (Brees, 2008; Jacobsen K. , 2006; Kaiser, 2006; Hartigan, 1992).

In recent policy research on Syrian refugees in Turkey and Iraq several scholars emphasize that these countries including Syria have "Open door policy", offering refugees relative freedom to reside in the camp or outside the camp (Kirisci , 2014; World Bank & KRG, 2015).

However, this is not the case of Syrian refugees in neighboring host countries, but arguments about whether this practice is just, ethical, effective and appropriate policy in approaching to refugee's situation has raged since 1990. But it only finds support among few scholars. Many of them conclude despondently that it is the only practical way to control refugees' ordeals (Black, 1998; Crisp & Jacobesan, 1998; Smith M. , 2004; Van Damme, 1995).

I will discuss the advantage and disadvantage of encampment from refugees' standpoint as following:

2:3:1 Reasons to Remain in Camp

Pérouse de Montclos et al. argue that refugees are motivated to dwell in the camp because, first, they don't have to pay rent, second, the camp has better health and education facilities than some host communities (De Montclos & Kagwanja , 2000).

Moreover, Jacobson argues that encamped refugees have easy access to humanitarian aid. She asserts that they may be prohibited from traveling outside the camp, but they have

easier access to the goods and the commodities that are traded by other refugees in the camp where the price of those goods are lower than the local market. Self-settled refugees lack these opportunities (Jacobsen K. , Can Refugees Benefit the Sate? Refugee Resource and African State Building", 2002).

Others argue that those who value the aid and depend on it, and those who prefer close tie with their kin and relatives should be more likely to settle in the camp. Represented in this group are expected to be children, women, adolescent and the elderly. These social groups denote refugees' most vulnerable groups, those who cannot feed or provide for themselves outside the camp (Crisp, 2003; Kuhlman, 1994).

Dinçer et al. (2013) indicate that they were impressed by the quality and quantity of the available assistance and service in Syrian refugee camps in Turkey. However, they and UNHCR reported that the majority of Syrian refugees in Turkey and even in the neighboring host countries do not settle in the camp (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; UNHCR, 2015).

2:3:2 Reasons for Self-Settlements

Access to humanitarian aid and extra services available inside the camp cannot alone determine refugees' preference for encampment rather than self-settlement. Resources inside the camp are appealing, but confinement and restriction of movement will end up being costly for refugees. It is up to individual refugees to assign values to freedom of movement, aid, and support based on their preference. Most of Syrian refugees in Turkey and Iraq are living in the

cities and rural areas and only one third of them are living inside the allocated camp (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; Kirisci , 2014; UNHCR, 2015)

Refugees are well aware that there are more economic opportunities available outside the camp and those opportunities are better than those available inside the camp. Dinçer et al (2013) and Kirişci (2014) statistically show that Syrian refugees who have legal documentation contributed to the Turkish economy by opening many companies. Dinçer et al (2013) disclose that majority of those Syrian refugees resettled in 22 campus across Syria do not have any legal documentation. Turkey's current refugee policy does not grant refugees work authorization without a passport. Having opportunity to be employed and freedom of establishing a business would lead refugees to choose self-settlement over encampment because they prefer no restriction on their movement (Brees, 2008).

With regard to refugees' economy, although restriction and encampment of refugees may be rational for the host country's economy, it has innumerable negative effects on refugees' economic activities. First, due to isolation and distance from commercial centers, encampments will prevent refugees from having easy and low cost access to the host labor market. Second, it accrue them information, transportation cost. Refugees need transportation to commute between campsite and their workplace. Third, they have small and limited trade activity compared to self-settled refugees due to their physical isolation combined with small capital market. Most importantly refugee camp build as temporary refuge for refugees, and it doesn't attract investment and capital. Fourth, considering their limited access to price, demand and

supply information of the outside market they are subject to exploitation and fraud. Refugees are subject to lower wage and more work hours (Alfaro, Werker, & Renee, 2007).

Once refugees are confined at the camp they will be treated as illegal immigrants outside the camp, and they will be highly vulnerable to exploitation, and are not in the position to demand their rights or even minimum wage (Ozden, 2013). Additionally they will be in constant risk of arrest, detention and subsequent deportation by local authorities if they spot them outside the camp. However, this is not the case of Syrian refugees due to having status of “Temporary protection” in the host countries (Kirisci , 2014; UNHCR, 2015). Encampment impedes refugees from instant responses to supply and demand changes in the local market, whereas legal status and self-settlement will enable refugees to behave accordingly and adequately to any volatility in the host country’s market (Brees, 2008). Though some self-settled Syrian refugees in Turkey do not have access to services like health and education (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; Kirisci , 2014).

3- Impetus for This Study and Chapter Conclusion:

There is a gap in the existing literature on the labor market for refugees; there are especially limited articles on the labor market for forced refugees in the larger scale. When the refugees’ influx is larger some host governments refuse to assimilate those refugees into their communities. Instead they take an immoderate approach by blocking refugees from integrating with the local communities and the markets or giving them limited access to the labor market by means of job permits or travel permits. Others governments take moderate action regarding refugees. Either way refugees are the main agents and subjects of these policies.

In this study I synthesize migration theories and integration theory with the Syrian refugee’s perspectives on the job market in order to answer the questions and hypothesis I

presented in the introduction chapter of this study. Given that this crisis is recent and immense, there are limited literatures on Syrian refugees. In those literatures scholars are generally more interested in the challenges and policies host countries and host communities face in hosting Syrian refugees (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; Kirisci , 2014; Ianchovichina & Ivanic, 2014; Lehmann & Masterson , 2014). These assessments and policy research papers are all about those refugees who sought refuge in Turkey and Lebanon. Except two, which present the current economic and social impact and challenges Iraqi government and particularly the KRG acquired by hosting refugees, IDP's, and war crises in the region. Existing studies revolve around current Syrian refugee crisis but they are concentrating on the impact that this crisis burden upon host population and government, and none address the host labor market for Syrian refugees from a Syrian refugee's perspective, specifically in KRI- Iraq. The lack and unavailability of the data related to how Syrian refugees are adapting to the host labor market and presenting their viewpoint necessitate this study. The result of this study will add to the data and literature on current Syrian refugee crisis in the Middle East region and especially Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

This chapter provides the context and rationale for this study by summarizing and outlining the existing research on the labor market for refugees in the host countries. In the next chapter I will present a detailed description of interview and data collection for this study.

Chapter-3- Methodology and Detailed Data Collection Process

Many existing refugee studies have used qualitative rather than quantitative research methods, due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate quantitative data from this population. In my approach to explore nuances related to the labor market for Syrian refugees, I drew from grounded theory, a qualitative research method, to analyze the data.

Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this methodology, theory are generated from data, rather than collecting data with a particular theory in mind. Data sources are the same as other methods, including interviews, letters, field observations, newspapers, or other forms of data. Some qualitative researchers believe that it is better to go to the field without conducting a preliminary literature review, and before formulating any questions to avoid possible bias. But it is now understood that bias is unavoidable, since some knowledge in the subject require before initiating study in it (Elliot & Timulak, 2005). In my case, I conducted field work with a clear set of topics to explore, but also allowed other themes to emerge from interaction with study participants. The approach therefore blends grounded theory with more traditional approaches to qualitative research.

In coordination with my advisor, we designed 31 questions from previous surveys and studies relevance to refugee case (See Appendix -F-). Formulating these questions took place during the period of April to May 2014. The questionnaire consists of many open-ended questions plus several closed-ended questions. Then I collected data in the field through intensive interviews and observation. I categorized this data by theme. The major themes that

emerged were of the nature of refugee status, refugees' relationship with the labor market, and reasons for encampment versus settlement outside the camp.

To illustrate this method step by step, in this section I start with a brief introduction of the Arbat refugee camp, and then provide figures on Syrian refugees in the Sulaymaniyah Province up to the time of this study. After that I describe each component of the study. Chronologically, I began by explaining the formulation of the research problem followed by creating and formulating the questionnaire. And then I explain the type and aim of every question in the questionnaire followed by IRB procedure and approval for initiating this study. Next I discuss the translation process, type of interview that I conducted, data collection, data preparation and sampling strategies. Lastly I present the strategies I used in data analysis.

Arbat Refugee Camp

Arbat refugee camp is located in the south of Sulaymaniyah city, in Sulaymaniyah Province, in the Northern region of Iraq, within the territory of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Sulaymaniyah Province houses refugees from diverse backgrounds. Alongside internally displaced Iraqis (IDPs) from the southern part of the country, it hosts refugees from neighboring countries including Iran, Turkey and Syria. This study principally emphasizes Syrian refugees in Northern Iraq, with stress on those refugees residing inside the Arbat refugee camp in Sulaymaniyah province. Syrian refugees in Sulaymaniyah Province are segmented into two groups: those who self-settled among the locals, and those who live inside the camp. According to the UNHCR, in Sulaymaniyah alone 20,951 Syrian refugees (or 9,411 households) are self-settled. Additionally, 5,200 Syrian refugees (1,371 households) live inside the Arbat refugee camp (UNHCR, 2014). I selected this camp among other camps in the region because it was only viable option I had given time and space constraints. Also, I am familiar

with the interwoven knots of culture, politics, and religions of people in this region. It is relatively small in size and population compared to other refugee camps (UNHCR, 2014). Geographically, the size of the camp is 300,000 m², and it has capacity to fit 5,000 refugees (UNHCR, 2014) (see Appendix-D-). Despite this fact the refugees who stationed inside the camp surpass this number. The camp opened in June 2014 to settle and shelter those Syrian refugees who cannot afford to rent houses in the Sulaymaniyah city or sprawling villages and cities. The camp is stationed in the rural area near Arbat city, far from the city center and commercial areas. One has to drive 10 minutes from the closest city, Arbat, to approach the camp.

Questionnaire

Data collection was by tape recording 15 face-to-face interviews of working-age Syrian male refugees residing in the Arbat refugee camp. Alongside these interviews observational data were also taken. It has been affirmed that face-to-face interview is more reliable than third party accounts, because this method allows the researcher to get direct and insightful information from subjects themselves (Elliot & Timulak, 2005). Moreover, each question was designed in the way to obtain relevant information from targeted population. The targeted population for this study is male adult refugees aged 18 or older.

Additionally, the questionnaire contains questions designed to obtain information toward answering my research questions. Several questions, such as, “Why did you leave Syria?” and “Why did you move to the Kurdistan region of Iraq?” address the first research question, Why did Syrian refugees in Arbat refugee Camp leave Syria?). In regard to the second research question (what are the perceived barriers to formal employment locally outside the camp?), I asked respondents, “What barriers are there for you to work?”, “What benefit do you see from

work?”, “If you work outside the camp, do you face risk?”, and “How long does it take to get job permission here? And is it costly?” Finally, in order to get sufficient information to answer my last research question (why do Syrian refugees in Arbat Refugee Camp choose to settle in the camp rather than settle among locals?), I asked questions including, “Is it easy for you to reside outside the camp and rent/buy a house among the local community? Do you face legal or social problems?”, “What are those jobs that refugee in the camp has access to?”, and “What is your main source of income?” Data from these questions provide the results of this study.

Aim and Type of the Question

Barker et al. (2008) suggests that explanatory open-ended questions are suitable for qualitative inquiry (Barker, Pistrang, & Elliott, 2002). This condition only applies when there is little known about the research area, and when the topic is highly complex. Considering the limited available data on Syrian refugees and the complexity of the civil war in Syria, the proper way to do research on Syrian refugees is by employing open-ended explanatory questions.

The first four questions are close-ended questions to establish the participant's identity as a refugee and his demographic background. However, they do not reveal their personal identity, but they helped to confirm their age, marital status, previous residence, and whether he currently lives inside or outside the camp.

The second set of questions are descriptive, and ask about the type of place, the respondent lived in Syria (urban or rural), the type of the assets he had, and his educational background. Discovering these characteristics will signal the socioeconomic status of the respondents.

The third set are deconstruction questions, which include several questions relevant to the refugee's physical wellbeing, type of aid he receives or has received, and his living condition inside the camp. The answers to these questions will illuminate the refugee's decision to stay in the camp rather than self-settle, and the impact of his disability or physical wellbeing on his chances of getting hired.

The remaining questions vary and include a combination of interpretive, definitional and critical questions. They emphasize the refugee's living situation, factors driving of their refugee status, and their relationship with local people.

Internal Review Board (IRB) Approval

This study involves human subjects, and includes voice recordings and face-to-face interviews. Thus it is subject to pre-approval from IRB before processing any data collection. For this purpose, in coordination with my advisor, I completed and submitted an initial application and protocol to IRB office, and consequently received approval to embark on this study in July 2014 (See Appendix-G-).

Translation

The initial questionnaire was in English and then I translated it to Kurdish and Arabic. Syrian refugees in the Arbat refugee camp commonly speak these two languages. Before I began conducting interviews with a potential interviewee, I asked the prospective interviewee

which language he prefers to speak. The interview was conducted in the interviewee's preferred language.

Study Sample

I collected the data for this study during fieldwork carried out between August 10 and September 8, 2014. I was the only enumerator and interviewer in the field. Given the nature of the data collected, and the time consuming nature of analysis, the size of this sample is small. Consequently, I employed available-sampling strategies (Convenience Sample) (Berg, 2009). I only relied on those who were within the approved study population, willing to participate in the interview, and available at the time of each visit. Over several visits to the campsite, I conducted 16 semi-standardized interviews with participants. Subsequently I dropped one interview because the recorder was dysfunctional at the time of the interview, and the interview wasn't properly recorded. The interviews were conducted according to approved IRB protocol. Every respondent agreed to have the interview, and I verified their age by checking their refugee identity card. The age range of the refugee respondents was from 21 to 57 years of age. Out of 15 respondents, 5 were unemployed, 7 had permanent jobs, and the other 3 were temporarily employed. All were living inside the camp, and all but one was living in a Syrian village prior to becoming a refugee. I asked the questions in order printed in the questionnaire, but reordered the questions if respondents began talking about topics addressed by later questions. If a refugee

was puzzled by any question, I slightly altered it to remove any jargon and make it understandable.

Data Collection

There is only one security checkpoint in the gate of the camp, but there are no restrictions for either outsiders or refugees who pass through the camp's gate. Outsiders will be questioned about the purpose of their visit, the length of their stay, and the nature of their businesses in the refugee camp but will not be restricted or prevented from entering the campsite if they have legitimate purpose. Contrary to the outsiders, no questions will be asked if you are a refugee and wanted to pass through the gate either to enter or exit. After I visited the campsite multiple times, I became a familiar face to the security guards and to the refugees, and I had easy access to get into and out the camp.

For the purpose of interviews, I personally approached the prospective refugees in the tents' alley, or near the gate, or at the interviewee's tent. After introducing myself, the brief introduction of my study, and getting permission from respondents, I began tape-recording and interviewing respondents. I notified each interviewee that the purpose of this interview is not for reassessing aid program, and it will neither affect the current or future amount of aid he might receive. I treated respondents in accordance with ethical codes of conducting research, and I guaranteed them that the sole purpose of this interview is academic, and the outcome would not negatively affect their status as a refugee.

On average each interview took an hour and 10 minutes. Some interviews took longer and others were shorter than I expected. In order to have a more diverse and representative sample, I conducted all interviews during the evening. I wanted to interview refugees who

worked outside the camp, inside the camp, and those who are unemployed. The sample would have been biased if I had conducted these interviews during working hours.

Data Preparation

I translated the data first, and then meticulously transcribed interviews to get all information refugees provided. I interwove the transcripts with my field notes and existing available statistical data on UNHCR website. All names, as IRB requires, were changed to pseudonyms or converted to numbers to protect the identity and privacy of refugees. Therefore, all names in this study are pseudonyms and cannot be traced back to the respondents. If I needed to use my interpretation and reaction, I clearly labeled it with different font to distinguish it from the refugee's reaction. At last all data were secured and locked as stated in IRB protocol.

Coding Process and Analysis

I adopted open coding procedure to codify the data. Open coding procedure is illustrated as unrestricted coding of data (Berg, 2009). I thoroughly and minutely read transcripts line-by-line and word-by-word to organize the concepts and phenomenon into different processes and phrases. These different processes and phrases are referred to as domains (Elliot & Timulak, 2005). As I was working with and deciphering these domains, patterns, behavior and plausible themes began to emerge. Then I sorted and categorized these patterns and themes based on possible kinds of relationship between them or existing literature. Next I arranged and interpreted these relationships, including correlation or causes (for instance, what influenced

refugees to seek a job?), temporal sequence (what happened before they become a refugee?), and significations (that is what encampments means now).

Overlapping Events:

During fieldwork, a series of terror events unfolded in the region, and the security of the region was at stake. The area was overwhelmed with new refugees and internally displaced people from the southern part of Iraq. It was hard to distinguish between new refugees who sought refuge because of security concerns from those who migrate from the city to the campsite. Nonetheless, I was able to identify those who came earlier to the region from those who have arrived recently by checking their UNHCR identification card.

Chapter-4- Results

4:1 Introduction

After analyzing the interviews and other observations, I categorized the respondents' perceptions based on the research questions, which relate to the KRI-Iraq's labor market for Syrian refugees. I arrange and discuss these answers under several subsections based on their significance to the labor market. The subsections are: what influenced their decision to become refugees? What are perceived barriers to formal employment? And why do they reside inside the camp rather than among locals? Several patterns emerged from the respondents' responses to my interview questions.

The first sub-section explores the primary reasons behind their decision to cross the border into Iraq and to the Kurdistan region in particular. This relates to my first research question "why did Syrian refugees in Arbat refugee Camp leave Syria?" Within this sub-section I present three reasons that respondents regularly attributed to their decision to become refugees: deterioration of the Syrian economy, compulsory military service, and cultural and linguistic connection with KRI's population (Ethnic Affinity).

The second sub-section details the patterns and aspects that respondents indicated as the reason for avoiding the formal labor force in the host country, or the perceived barriers they face in engaging in the host labor market. In addition, this subsection pinpoints those factors that respondents expressed and could be framed to answer my second research question, "what are the perceived barriers to formal employment outside the camp?" Within this subsection I concentrated on the elements that discourage respondents from participating in KRI's-Iraq's

labor market, including: KRI's economic situation, relations with local people, and why refugees do not plan to integrate into the local economy.

The third subsection presents the reasons respondents give for their encampment, which addresses my third research question, "Why do Syrian refugees in Arbat Refugee Camp choose to settle in the camp rather than self-settlement among locals?" I divided this subsection into four subtitles: socioeconomic status of encamped refugees, availability of food aid and basic needs, camp has rent-free shelters, and disability and health issues.

4:2 Why Did Syrian Refugees in Arbat Refugee Camp Leave Syria?

According to the respondents, a great majority of those dwelling in Arbat refugee camp became refugees between 2011 and 2013. The participants attributed their current status as refugees to three topic areas: first, the economic disintegration in Syria due to persistent civil war, which led to higher unemployment rates, scarcity of necessary goods, and deficiency in many services including healthcare and utilities; second, mandatory military recruitment implemented by rebel groups, third, their ethnic affinity and cultural similarities with the Kurdish population in the northern Iraq, as reasons for seeking refuge in this particular region of Iraq.

4:2:1 Deterioration of the Syrian Economy

Almost all the respondents emphasized that economic disintegration in Syria was a greater factor in their decision to become refugees than the violence resulting from the civil war alone. There was a consensus about this factor as the main push factor, primarily in the form of unemployment: "*There is no job...Before civil war I was driving the combine harvester, now that job doesn't exist anymore,*" Abu Salma said. They reported that a shortage of consumer goods and other daily necessities were other reasons. "*Everything is expensive there.*" "*The*

economic situation there is so bad, there is scarcity in everything, people are fleeing to Europe, those who have money or house they sell it and they go to Europe, the rest who don't have money they become refugees in Kurdistan (Dhok, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah) or they go to Turkey"

Abu Omer said. Respondents revealed that there was no direct threat on their lives or on their family members' lives. But instead they emphasized decreasing job opportunities in their home areas due to a combination of civil war and the economic sanctions imposed on Syria, which in turn led them to migrate to other countries. *"Turkey and KRG imposed sanctions and an embargo on us." "To say the truth I came here because of bad economic situation at home. Security is one of the reasons but there wasn't any the threat on our lives."* Khalid said. *"The economic life there is dead. But our security is relatively good and we are protected, however, every now and then ISIS target us with improvised explosive device (IED) and booby traps and explosion but we are relatively safe."* Sherwan said. Notably, when I asked them where they were living before becoming refugees, the majority of respondents reported that they were living in the North Eastern Syria. Those areas are under the control of YPG 'People's Protection Unites' rebel groups, which were relatively safe and secure and far away from the warzone during the time of this study. *"My village which is located in the Rumeilan area is secure and safe, I can say we are protected by YPG."* Khalid said. *"The war is far away from where I used to live."* *"Generally in the areas around Qamishli a Kurdish region in northern Syria the security situation is relatively better than the rest of Syria, but the economic situation is bad and there are lack of everything. People don't have financial resources, and they are in needs*

for cash, for example if someone is a government employee he is lucky to have stipend, otherwise there isn't any source of income." Rebwar said.

To elaborate this point more, some respondents confessed that they still have family members there, and they support them with remittances from the income they generate from casual work or selling their foods. *"Some of those who still live there have relatives or siblings outside Syria, who work and send them money. Or some of them have siblings here, who work for and provide them with cash. Also those who still live in Syria are eldest or women, or that person's wife, daughter, father and so on. It is hard for them to mobilize easily so they are staying there,"* Rebwar said. *"If we spare \$100 monthly we send it back to our relatives and siblings at home,"* Khalid said. As one of the respondents mentioned the large number of those family members who still stay in Syria are elders or retirees, who either cannot work or travel.

Several respondents spoke about lack of basic services as a push factor. They pointed out scarcity in services like healthcare and utility services. *"I came here because I needed a health treatment, we don't have a proper health service there in Syria,"* Abu Salma said. *"There are shortages in medicines and healthcare personnel."* *"There is a shortage of water, electricity, propane, and breads,"* Marwan said. Also, most respondents indicate the limited availability of generating capital, for instance they mentioned that farms were left fallow due to the lack of machinery and fuel. *"They stole my combine harvester,"* Abu Salma said. *"Some villages lack water pumps because there were stole."* Khalid said. The respondent's insistence

on those facets shows the significance of economic disintegration in their decision to cross the country's border.

4:2:2 Compulsory Military Service

The respondents spoke of forced conscription by rebel groups in the refugee-originating areas. This phenomenon was frequently quoted by a slight majority and they affirmed that it was one of the factors that drove them out of Syria. *“Now YPG declared that everyone at age of 18 and over men and women has to join their armed group and every family has to send someone for military service. I cannot do military service. Who would go to war in this situation?”* Rebwar said. *“There is a compulsory military duty, so YPG forces every family to send their children to join the military.”* Abu Shamal said. *“My father gave me a call and told me my brothers were drafted to join the YPG, so I arranged for them to come here and live with me,”* Rebwar said. With higher rate of poverty, unemployment, and no other employment option, people are inclined to join rebel groups. At the same time, rebels extend their influence and gain more territory forcing more people to join their ranks. Those who are reluctant to join are accused of aligning with rival groups and detained or forced to leave their homes.

Although previous literature reports that different rebel groups use refugee camps for recruitment, respondents in this study show no concern about any recruitment activity within camp. This may be due to the Arbat camp's location far from the Syrian border. In contrast, one respondent reported that he and his sons were willing to join local forces to fight in the recent

war against ISIS, but local authorities rejected their frequent requests. *“I told them to give us guns. We are willing to fight ISIS, but they said we have enough force and they do not need us.”*

4:2:3 Cultural and Linguistic Connection with KRI Population (Ethnic Affinity):

All respondents are from the Kurdish ethnic group and from the northeastern part of Syria, including the Syrian northern cities (such as Derk, Hasaka, Qamishli, and Sari Kani). They are culturally and linguistically close to the majority of people in the host regions of (KRI), who are also of the Kurdish ethnic group. A number of respondents stressed this as a reason for seeking refuge in this region rather than Turkey, Lebanon or Jordan. *“I feel this is my land, and people here speak Kurdish,”* Rebwar said. *“Because I feel this is my country” “I feel safe here.”* Marwan said. Also they emphasized that ethnic discrimination in their workplaces in Syria was one of the reasons that they had limited work opportunities there. *“We were discriminated because we have Kurdish name and we were deprived from receiving health and education service,”* Ali said. *“90% of the Kurdish population in Syria are poor because the Syrian regime has not allowed us to prosper and do businesses,”* Abu Shamal said.

Despite the ethnic bonds between Syrian and Iraqi Kurds, there is no guarantee that harmony between locals and refugees will persist. The longer this displacement lasts, the more likely tensions will mount between refugees and the host local people.

4:3 What are the Perceived Barriers to Formal Employment Outside the Camp?

The respondents recognize that there are no restrictive policies preventing them working within the designated geographical boundary of Sulaymaniyah Province. *“They allow us to do every type of work outside the camp.”* Rami said. But respondents implied that they

have difficulties getting permits to travel further beyond Sulaymaniyah Province. *“They told us, in order to be able to work here, we have to go and change our address from Dhok province to Sulaymaniyah Province, and then they will allow us to work,”* Rebwar said. *“They told us you could not stay and work here because your residency permit shows that I am supposed to be in Dhok province not Sulaymaniyah province,”* he added. Therefore, we can infer that refugees cannot move within the KRI region in response to labor demands.

Overall, respondents stated their willingness to work. *“If we want to feed ourselves we have to work,”* Hamza said. But perceptions of respondents suggest that there are limited work opportunities available for them. *“We are looking for job but there are not any available jobs,”* Ali said. *“If there were jobs, we would do them, but there is no available job.”* *“I wanted to buy a taxi to work as taxi driver and earn some income, but I do not have enough money to buy it, it is expensive,”* Rebwar said. *“If there is any job, yes I am willing to do it, but right now there is no job and I can’t find any,”* Saleh said.

Beside the burden of hosting refugees, the current situation in Syria undoubtedly has a negative spillover effect, affecting Iraq in many dimensions, especially economically. The economic situation was one of the major themes respondents cite for it to their current lack of work. They also assert that the attitudes of the region’s population toward them, and the respondent’s perception about integrating into local communities have influenced their decision to in engage (or not engage) in the region’s labor market. I address those concerns bellow.

4:3:1 KRI’s Economic Situation

Ianchovichina et al (2014) and World Bank (2015) showed that Iraq is one of the Levant countries that have suffered the most serious economic backlash of the Syrian war, in addition to Syria itself. Up until the time Ianchovichina et al study, the war had dragged down Iraq’s per

capita welfare by 16% (Ianchovichina & Ivanic, 2014), which exceeds Syria's per capita loss of 14%. This economic downgrade is observable in the daily life of Iraqis. It has affected their lifestyle and stalled many development projects, which directly diminished job opportunities for Iraqis and refugees. In particular, the host region in northern Iraq is hit harder because Iraq's central government withheld its 17% share of the budget as retaliation for its independent oil exportation activity. These factors, combined with new waves of internally displaced people from southern Iraq have impacted the KRI economy, employment and ongoing projects.

Refugees are aware of and affected by these issues. Many respondents admitted that it has adversely affected them and they shared similar frustrations as the locals. *"Now that there are lots of refugees here, the aid organization and the KRG cannot support all of us,"* Saleh said. Nonetheless, KRI attempts to prioritize and aid the most recent refugees with the limited resources it has. *"We acknowledge the economic situation here, and we know that people who are trapped in Mount Sinjar are in dire need and they are highest priority at this moment."* Hamza said. Dwindling employment in the region has impacted refugees as well. *"All my kids are all unemployed due to the lack of job here. The economy seems worse here,"* Abu Shamal said. *"I have 4 sons, all married and all unemployed,"* Rami said. Iraq's involvement in the war against ISIS accelerated displacement and refugees acknowledge that fact. *"We know that currently Iraq is at war with ISIS,"* Khalid said. They attribute their unemployment to the depressed economy of the host region. *"In every ten days, I only get one day to work. It is not just me. Everyone is like that, even local people,"* Ali said.

4:3:2 Relations with Local People

Respondents in these interviews unanimously emphasized that initially local people were supportive. However, this sentiment might not truly reflect their opinion because I am, as

the only interviewer, from KRI. But they were all concordant in saying, *“They are kind with us.”* *“In general their treatment is good.”* *“The security force and the local people are good with us and supportive.”* They overwhelmingly described that they and most other refugees experienced fair treatment by locals. However, respondents also voiced some recent incidents and concerns. The locals’ behavior towards them has changed, especially after the latest inflow of Syrian refugees and presence of Internally Displaced People (IDP) from Southern Iraq.

Respondents expressed that recently they feel marginalized by the local people, and they explained that IDPs are at an advantage in many respects including renting housing and finding employment opportunities. Locals and authorities seem to prioritize those who hold Iraqi citizenship, possess passports, and are financially able to afford available resources. Furthermore, they reported that they themselves and some refugees who are presently working are experiencing wage discrimination by their employer. *“It would be a lie if I say they are treating us well,”* Ali said. Respondents reported late payrolls. *“We haven’t received our salaries for last two months,”* Khalid said. *“It has been three months since my last payment and I haven’t got paid for the work I did there.”* Rebwar added. There is also wage gap between them and other foreign workers and no compensation for work-related injuries. *“The Turkish and Indian workers get higher wage than us,”* Hamza said. *“I got electrocuted at work and I sustained some injuries, neither humanitarian aid nor the local government helped me with my health bills.”* Rebwar added.

The respondents said that wage discrimination discourages them from working or searching for work. Furthermore it reduces their desire to continue on their current jobs. Some of them expressed that they stopped their current jobs in protest of the late payments. *“The Syrians are smart and hard workers, and they are continuously working on their part just for*

\$500 and \$600. Why does a Turkish worker get \$1800- \$2000? They even don't do anything. That is a Syrian refugee who comes and goes up the scaffold and works up there. And a Turkish guy is only sitting in the shadow and smoke cigarette and get paid more. Why is that? It is not fair," Saleh said. "I left the job not because I am not willing to do it, but because they don't pay me. Another thing is, can you see I am limping, I got injured at work, and I can't work like this." Hamza added.

Moreover, they pointed out ethnic affinity with people in the KRI region does not wind up in their favor when trying to obtain jobs outside the camp. Within the KRI region, they claim that they are not treated equally when competing for work compared to other international counterparts. *"The Indian workers have contracts; we don't."* Rami said. *"The Turkish workers get paid more than us. When we complain, the security force tells us they have a passport and we don't."* Rebwar said.

Those Syrians willing to take lower wages and longer hours face risk of exploitation. Some respondents indicate that employers take advantage of them by giving them extra hours for lesser payment in return. *"They give us extra hardship for no raise in our wage. I worked from 7:30 am up until 6:30 pm,"* Rami said. *"He told us to stay for night shift up to 11pm or 12 pm."* *"I get paid 10,000 dinars for an extra hour at night, but on the other hand the Turkish worker get paid \$50 just for sitting on the bench."* *"He told me if you can't do the night shift you are fired,"* Rebwar said. *"All the local employees get paid earlier before us and on time. They pay us a week later. They delay it intentionally..."* *"Syrian workers get less than others. Turkish workers get more than \$1000 monthly but Syrian workers only \$350, or \$400. Only a few of us are lucky and earn \$500 and we work from 6 am to 6 pm,"* Hamza added. Because some of these refugees do not possess passports they cannot pursue legal action to defend their

rights as workers. *“The police told us they can’t take any actions because we don’t have passport and they do have,”* Rebwar said.

4:3:3 Refugees Don’t Plan to Integrate Into Local Community

One of the main challenges facing refugees trying to integrate into the host community is finding a suitable job. And if they do not intend to integrate into local community, they are not enthusiastic to find jobs. It is becoming clear that refugees are not going to be able to return home anytime soon, but Iraq’s government does not have any intentions to give them permanent status or a path to citizenship. All of Syria’s neighboring countries, Iraq included, refuses to give Syrian refugees the status of asylum seekers as a path to citizenship and to accommodate their integration into local communities. In Iraq and its Northern region, Syrian refugees are under the status of “temporary protection” (UNHCR, 2014). The only rationale these governments have for applying this status is the fear of structural demographic change in the region due to higher number of refugees. The “temporary protection” status strips from the refugees any right to stay and to take the path of citizenship in the future, and it will put them in the line for repatriation and jeopardize their desire for staying in the region after the crisis in their home country ends.

Strang et al. (2010) argued that the ability to gain legal rights as resident and growing feelings of belonging to a host country are fundamental for refugees to integrate into the host communities. More importantly one of the main pillars of the integration and assimilation of refugees and migrants into a host country’s community is employment. If refugees do not desire to stay, they do not have reason to seek employment.

Several respondents stressed that they don’t have desire to stay in Iraq, which has influenced their feelings about the local labor force. In these cases, they decided not to seek any

employment. All but two of the respondents expressed their willingness to stay and both of them were employed at the time of interview. *“Yes I want to stay,”* Rami said. *“Yes I will I consider here as my land and home,”* Ali added. Other respondents expressed their desire to go back soon as the crisis is assuaged and they feel confident that they will be able to support themselves and their families. *“I am going back to Syria,”* Saleh said. *“If tomorrow the situation in Syria gets better, I will not stay here for another day. Syria is my home and my wealth and assets are all there,”* Mohsin said. *“I was debating that with my father and I am considering to go back but he is against it,”* Rebwar said.

4:4 Why do Syrian Refugees in Arbat Refugee Camp Choose to Settle in the Camp Rather than Self-Settlement Among Locals?

Iraq does have an open door policy and does not confine refugees in the camp, giving refugees the freedom to choose to live among local communities or in the camp. Many refugees chose to reside in the camp. The respondents spoke of several reasons, discussed in the following subsections. Settlement in the camp deprives them of proper access to market information, including the price of commodities, and supply and demand for labor. Furthermore, if refugees stay in the camp and commute between the camp and their workplace outside the camp, they incur transportation costs and other related costs of being isolated from the local community.

4:4:1 Socioeconomic Status of Encamped Refugees

The recent incursion of ISIS intensified the refugee crisis and increased the number of refugees and IDP's who sought refuge in the region. The magnitude of refugees and IDPs in the KRI increased housing prices. Consequently, due to higher housing prices, many refugees who previously self-settled inside cities and surrounding areas were obliged to move to the

camp. Respondents of this study reported and profiled themselves as representative of the working class of Syrian society. Low-skilled and unskilled workers in Syria were hit hardest economically by its civil war. It appears this segment of Syrian society is more likely to choose to live in the camp than professionals and higher income segment. For instance, when I asked respondents what they were doing in Syria before became refugees, they replied, “*I was a taxi driver.*” “*I had a teahouse in Damascus*” “*I was a farmer.*” “*I was a Construction worker*” “*I was a preacher.*” “*I was a casual worker.*” This assumption is built upon the respondent’s replies to the questions about their previous work, their educational background, and the assets they possessed before the civil war, including cars and houses. “*We were living in poverty in Syria,*” Abu Shamal said. The educational backgrounds of respondents are diverse from elementary and secondary school to high school diploma. Only one of them has a college degree.

Also, it appears refugees who were professionals before they were displaced, or those from upper class-income families either have assets and savings or better job opportunities outside the camp. They use these assets to support themselves and rent houses instead of living in lower quality shelter inside the camp. “*My brother, who has a Bachelor’s degree in English, works as a receptionist in one of the well-known hotels in the town for a monthly salary of 500,000 thousand dinars.*” Rebwar said. In contrast, working and lower income classes have limited options and opportunities and cannot generate enough income to afford living outside the camp without the support of direct aid organizations. However, the longer the refugees stay in Iraq the more they deplete saving, which leads more of the refugees who were living within

the community to move into the camp. This is leading to a more diverse camp based on class and socioeconomic background.

4:4:2 Availability of Food Aid and Basic Needs

All respondents were concerned about the quality, quantity, and abrupt frequency in distribution of food aid. *“Every month we get rations like oil, rice and noodles. The quality of those foods is very poor and not edible,”* Enwer said. Some of them emphasized that these rations are not part of their traditional diet. *“We do not eat that type of noodles, rice, and grounded wheat,”* Saleh added. Consequently, they trade the food aid at lower prices for other nutrition. They do not consider this food trade as a type of employment because it doesn’t grant them a secure income and it depends on the availability of aid and the distribution time. *“We sell everything we get.” “We sell our rations for 8000 dinars because we don’t eat it, and we will buy yogurt, tomato, and cheese with the money we earn from selling aid foods,”* Mohsin said. *“The ration box contains lentil, oil and other foods. Believe me no one will consume it, whatever we get we sell it, except oil and sugar.”* Khalid added. *“We sell one bag of rice for only 1500 dinars, one bag of lentil for 1000 dinars, and one bag of noodle for 500 dinars. This is a monthly ration which last only for one day. Then we will buy yogurt for 1250 dinars, 6 eggs for 1000 dinars,”* Mohsin said. This trade created new temporary job for some of them but they don’t consider themselves as employed. They buy food rations from other refugees and sell it in the local market for little amount of profit. *“I buy those rations and sell it in the local market.” “I made 500.000 thousand dinars last month out of trading rations,”* Mohsin added.

Moreover, all respondent pointed out that their aid portions lack the necessary commodities like formula and diapers. This is a hardship for those families who have infants and newborns. *“One of my children is only 6 month old and he needs formula and diapers. I*

cannot get debt to buy formula and diapers and I need money to buy those needs,” Rebwar said. These scarcities mandate them to employ negative coping strategies as alternative sources for income, including getting involved in the informal market, and selling their food rations. *“We need money to buy our needs.”* Sherwan said. *“I know a person here who has a monthly salary of \$300, his family is small and they are just only 3 persons, but he told me he is spending \$200 monthly on his newborn, mostly on the formulas and diapers.”* Khalid said. *“I have to work another 5 or 6 hours in evening and night to support my family,”* Rami added. Most respondents critiqued the current aid system and said they prefer vouchers (Electronic Card) or a direct cash system. *“We told them (aid organizations) to change the food distribution system to a voucher system,”* Khalid said. *“Why they don’t pay us money instead of aid.”* Rebwar added.

Finally, I cannot confirm that availability of aid incentivizes refugees to relocate inside the camp, since the respondents of this study all live inside the camp and are not those who self-settled. I also lack accounts from self-settled refugees to determine whether they are eligible for the same aid that refugees inside the camp receive.

4:4:3 Camp has Rent-Free Shelter

A great majority of respondents expressed their concern about rising housing prices in Sulaymaniyah city and the surrounding areas. This sudden price increase has had a direct effect on both refugees inside and outside the camp. Refugees who intended to move out of the camp cannot rent affordable houses, while refugees who rented housing outside the camp can’t afford it anymore, hence they move inside the camp. This trend is increasing the number of refugees

in the camp, which has compelled authorities and UNHCR to increase the capacity of the Arbat refugee camp (See Appendix-D- &-E-).

Although the sudden surge of encampment in Arbat refugee camp can be attributed to increases in housing demand in the cities and rural areas of Sulaymaniyah Province, some respondents indicated that the current phenomenon of migration into the camp is mirroring the increasing rate of layoffs and unemployment among refugees, due to the economic downgrade of the region. *“The majority of these people lost their jobs at Sulaymaniyah city and they cannot afford renting a house anymore.”* Saleh said. Stiff competition for housing between refugees, IDPs, and locals ends in disadvantaging refugees who have lower savings and wages than IDPs or locals. *“People from south have more money and they bid on the houses,”* Ali said. *“Before the ISIS incursion in Iraq some of the Syrian refugees were renting houses in Sulaymaniyah. Now after the incursion Arabs come from the south and this increased demand on housing. Renting a place became more expensive and unaffordable for us. For instance a Syrian refugee after long hard working days might only be able to earn enough to afford rent for a monthly payment of 100,000 to 200,000 dinars, but an Arab who just came from the south will convince the landlord that he will pay more like 600,000 dinars. So it is in the landlord’s best interest to evict the Syrian guy. Currently, a lot of Syrian refugees in Sulaymaniyah have been notified that they have to evict the house by the end of this month. We are expecting more refugees to come and the camp will be over-crowded.”* Hamza said. Their lack of secure income put them at a disadvantage compare to locals. *“If I get a good job I will rent a place in the city and will move out from camp,”* Marwan said.

In contrast to expensive rent outside the camp, the campsite provides rent-free shelter for those who intend to stay or to relocate inside the camp. The data from this study shows

refugees prefer to live in the cities. They asserted their intention to reside outside the camp if they could afford it, through permanent sources of income and secure jobs. Presently, for those who work and are self-settled outside the camp, rent takes up a high percentage of their current income and they are spending their own saving to remain outside the camp. This will levy tremendous pressure on the Syrian refugees to make them think about migrating into the camp.

4:4:4 Disability and Health Issues

Two respondents reported that they have disabilities, but they emphasized that it does not impede them from working nor did it influence their decision to reside inside the camp. One respondent mentioned his son's disability and their search for treatment is what led to their decision to become refugees. But he neither associated it with his choice to reside inside the camp nor his current status as unemployed. Moreover, respondents indicate that they have relatives who have disabilities or have health issues that directly affect their financial capability. This financial capability prevents them from residing outside the camp. There is no significant evidence that indicates refugees prefer encampment because of availability of health service. Quite to the contrary, they discussed the lack of health staff and medicines. "*There is no doctor in our clinic.*" "*They close it at 4pm.*" "*They should have night shift there.*" Additionally, in such circumstances there are no proper accommodations such as "accessible work environments" or particular arrangement for refugees with disabilities to pursue livelihoods or even access simple necessary equipment like wheelchairs.

Chapter-5- Conclusion and Limitations

This study identified several factors that led Syrian refugees to leave their homes and cross the border into the KRI region in Northern Iraq, the perceived obstacles they face in the host labor market, and the reasons for their encampment. The general objective of this study is to contribute to the field of refugee studies, particularly in the area of labor market for refugees, with a special focus on Syrian refugees in Iraq. Specifically the goals of this study were to address factors driving refugee status, labor market participation, and encampment, and to highlight those factors from the standpoint of refugees rather than policy makers. Additionally, because the Syrian refugee crisis is recent there is limited available literature on the topic. This study will add to the existing literature about Syrian refugees in neighboring countries, especially in Iraq.

As of 2014, the number of Syrian refugees- registered and unregistered- who sought refuge in Iraq's Kurdistan region reached approximately a quarter of a million individuals. Therefore, refugees have become a main force in KRI's labor market. Those Syrian refugees who participated in this study are encamped and registered refugees in the Arbat refugee camp in the province of Sulaymaniyah- KRI.

As shown in the results section, the analysis revealed several discrepancies between what the refugees narrated and what scholars mentioned in previous studies. I address and highlight those discrepancies below.

First, prior literature on Syrian refugees expressed security concerns as the main push factor for seeking refuge in neighboring countries (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; Kirisci , 2014; Ozden, 2013; World Bank & KRG, 2015). Although this is the

main reason, respondents of the previous survey and studies may have downplayed economic factors driving their refugee status for fear of repatriation. Contrary to the previous studies on Syrian refugees, the refugees who participated in this study cited economic disintegration and higher unemployment as the main push factors for refugeedom. Noticeably, the majority of those refugees whom I interviewed are those who entered Iraqi soil during the period between 2011- 2013, before the ISIS offensive in Northern Syria, which is the home to majority of them.

Additionally, none of the previous literature on Syrian refugees cited conscription practiced both by rebel groups and the current Syrian government as one of the elements that forced Syrian refugees to seek refuge. In contrast, the participants of this study showed their concern about being drafted and dragged involuntarily into the Syrian civil war. Thus they preferred to seek refuge rather than putting their fate in the hand of adversaries in the Syrian civil war.

With regard to ethnic affinity, the respondents in this study reported experiences similar to what previous studies already emphasized; refugees are likely seeking refuge in places where people are culturally and linguistically similar to them.

Second, refugees have desire to work but they perceive a set of challenges and barriers that do not allow them to engage in formal employment in the host country. The perceived barriers include the host country's depressed economy. Iraq and especially KRI is experiencing an economic downturn due to engagement in the ongoing war on terrorism and plummeting oil prices, which have limited its capacity to absorb pools of Syrian refugees in KRI. World Bank (2015) revealed the economic impact of the Syrian refugee influx on Iraq and KRI's economy,

but what they didn't reveal is the depressed economic impact on the livelihoods of the Syrian refugees. In this study, respondents revealed and narrated the impact of the region's depressed economic situation on their opportunities for finding and getting jobs.

Initially the respondents of this study expressed their gratitude and praise for the locals in return for their good treatment. However respondents narrated different anecdotes that contradict their initial expressions about locals especially with regard to the economic recession and lack of work opportunities for locals and refugees. These anecdotes revealed wage discrimination practiced by large employers and locals. This phenomenon has concerned other scholars in their analysis of Syrian refugees in neighboring countries (Dincer, Federici, Ferris, Karaca, Kirisci, & Carmikli, 2013; Oxfam, 2013; Kirisci, 2014; Ozden, 2013; World Bank & KRG, 2015).

With no sign of civil war in Syria abating, locals and refugees recognize that the refugees will stay longer than they expected. This long-term dwelling in a community other than one's own requires integration into that community. Besides education and familiarity with the host region's culture and language, employment is one of the major pillars of integration. Respondents of my study revealed another interesting factor that discouraged them from seeking work. Despite some respondents of having been in KRI for a period of 2 years or more, they do not desire to stay in KRI and they feel they are there temporarily. This feeling discouraged the respondents from seeking work. Refugees lack a feeling of belonging to Iraq and KRI, and they hope to go back when the situation in Syria improves.

Third, and finally, although majority of Syrian refugees- registered and unregistered- in

Sulaymaniyah Province self-settled, a noticeable number of refugees are living inside the camp. Their responses revealed several factors behind this choice, some of which were previously mentioned by earlier literature and others in contradiction to what scholars emphasized. The respondents' educational background and their previous jobs in Syria revealed that encamped refugees are from the low-income "blue collar" class in Syrian society. Respondents expressed that if they had had secure income, and permanent jobs, they would have been able to afford housing in the local community. The campsite is rent-free and also provides an incentive to live inside the camp. These two reasons are frequently repeated by respondents, which elaborate how significant they are in determining those refugees' encampment, in contrast to previous literatures that highlighted the availability of easy and free access to service inside the camp as encouragement to reside in the camp (De Montclos & Kagwanja , 2000). However, the respondent of this study all admitted that they sell their food aid, which might be an attractive factor for refugee to stay in the camp, but they downplayed influence of aid and availability and other free services as factors to remain the camp. In contrast they expressed concern about the unavailability of services, especially health and education. Notably, while I was in the field there was an effort to increase the capacity of the camp (See Appendix-D-&-E-). Respondents cited the increasing unemployment rate among self-settled refugees as being a factor responsible for residing in the camp.

I observed several notable direct and indirect factors that also influence and determine refugees' position in the host labor market, which respondents of this study only rarely expressed. But due to their importance, I am compelled to reveal them. First, kinship and ethnic affinity haven't granted Syrian refugees in KRI easy access to work or equal opportunity

compared to local or even other Syrian counterparts. Second, Syrian refugees are politically marginalized. They neither have representatives nor an established union who could defend their basic rights or rights to work as refugees. Three, escalating waves of internally displaced people from Southern Iraq to Northern Iraq worsened KRI's economy, induced competition for available work opportunities and limited public and private goods. As of February 2015 the number of Syrian refugees combined with internally displaced people from Southern Iraq surged to 1.5 million in the region, which has only have only 5 million population (World Bank & KRG, 2015). Newly arrived IDPs limited the labor market for Syrian refugees, thus many were compelled to migrate into the camp. During the period I was inside the camp there were 100 newly migrated refugee families in the camp due to the severity of recent events.

Recommendation

The Syrian refugee crisis will continue to be a source of great humanitarian concern since there is no sign of fading protracted conflict in Syria. And the number of Syrian refugees in the neighboring country keeps growing. Thus that I think the implementation of the following recommendations would benefit refugees, host countries and international organizations.

To scholars:

- Conduct a demand study to assess current demand among registered and unregistered Syrian refugees in the cities and in the camps for jobs and other services.
- Conduct study to assess the impact of host countries economic wellbeing on Syrian refugees work opportunities.

For international Aid organizations and International communities:

- Providing legal representation for Syrian refugees to aid and guide them to access justice system in the host countries, and protect their rights as worker.
- Grant refugee entrepreneurs' microcredit to support them to establish businesses in the host country.
- Coordinate with local authorities to build housing projects for refugees within host cities or sprawling areas around the cities. This will benefit both refugees and locals by reducing demand on housing and stabilize housing prices in host country. Also it will give refugees easy access to commercial centers.
- Refugees reported that current aid system is not effective and efficient. Reforming and changing it to direct cash assistance system will benefit both refugees and host country.

For KRI- Iraq as host country:

- Removing travel barriers to enable refugees to mobilize without restriction between the three KRIs provinces in response to labor market demand.
- Remove legal restrictions that inhibit Syrian refugees from obtaining formal employment, including the requirement that refugees must hold a passport.

Future Research

Further work should be done on host labor market for refugees from their perspective. Respondents of my study, who were all male adult refugees of age 18 or above, reported that employers and enterprises, especially NGOs, practice discriminatory hiring strategies by favoring females over males for the jobs. For instance respondents expressed that females, even those with much lower qualification, have more chances to get hired than males with similar qualifications. Respondents claimed that females have easy access to labor market and can get

a job more easily than men. “*Why do they hire our women while majority of us are unemployed?*”

“*Generally those who work in the Sulaymaniyah city are women, who either work in the mall as shopkeeper or private companies.*”

Limitation:

This study is not flawless, some caveats are important to stress.

Validity:

I confronted a challenge in the data collection, because respondents might provide me with the inaccurate information if they believe that the interviews constituted a reassessment of the camp's needs or misunderstood me as an aid worker. However, I repeated many times during interviews that I am just a researcher and this interview has an academic purpose, which would neither benefit them directly nor bring any harm to them.

Lack of available and reliable data:

There is a lack of reliable statistical data on refugees as part of the labor force in Iraq. The international community, humanitarian aid organizations, and Iraq (particularly Kurdish) region are all prioritizing aid, providing shelter, and health services for refugees rather than providing them with alternative sources to earn income. Thus recording statistical data from refugees is a matter of less concern for them.

Self-reporting data:

Since this research is qualitative and relies only on accounts from refugees, it may contain several potential sources of bias. Those biases include selective memories, where refugees might just recall the bad experiences and events that occurred in the past considering the violence they have seen or the discrimination they experienced. Another potential source of bias is telescoping, that is recalling the most current experiences at work or in work seeking

that happened to them rather than express their entire experience. Attribution is another; they might attribute their effort of finding work as positive and negatively rating local community, and companies, as major barriers in front of them. And last is exaggeration; respondents might have exaggerated their accounts.

Time:

Time was another constraint that I had. One-month fieldwork wasn't sufficient enough to get more insight and convince more refugees to participate in the study.

Funding:

I had no source of funding for this study. The study would have had better outcome if I have had a source of funding for it.

Chapter Conclusion:

As the Syrian Civil War continues to create more refugees and internally displaced people, it is important to invite more scholars to conduct research on this phenomenon from the refugee's perspective. I believe future research will help aid organizations and host countries to better assist and accommodate refugees. Additionally, conducting interviews with more refugees in future could provide more information about the source of their refugee status and highlight the push and pull factors that ignite it.

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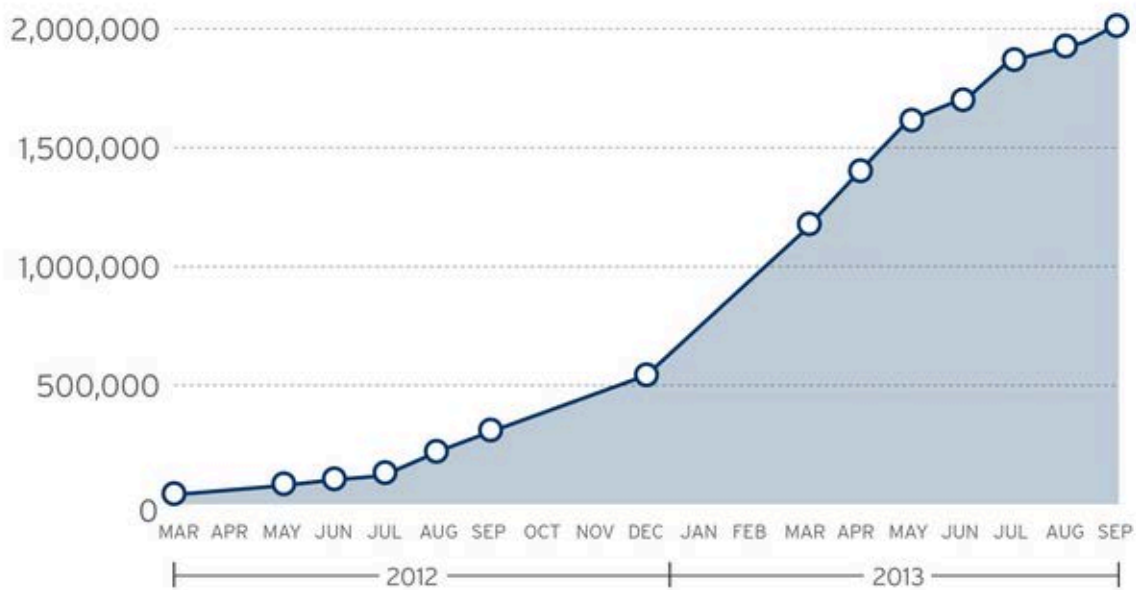
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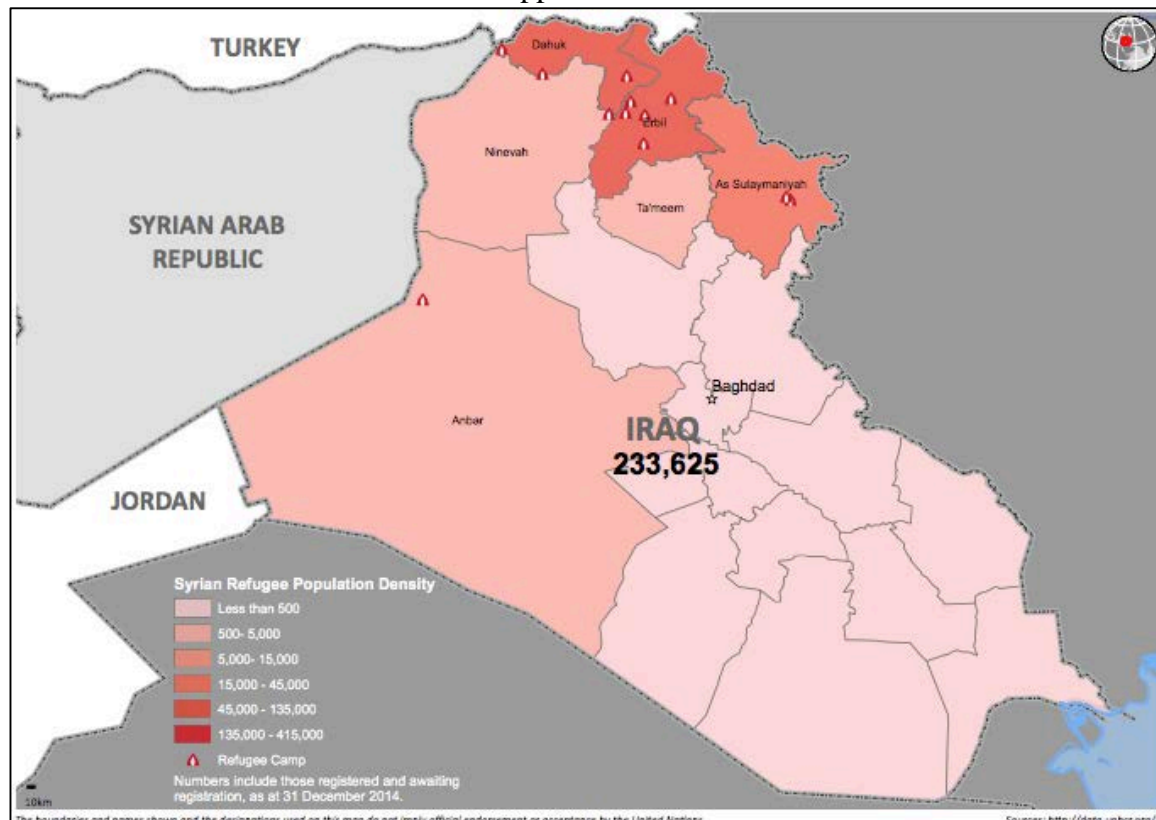
Appendixes:
Appendix-A-

Syrian Refugee Population, March 2012 through September 2013



Note: Figures are not always available for the exact end of the month due to varying OCHA reporting times. Hence, a month's data may be taken from the earliest report of the following month in order to capture the most complete refugee flow statistics for the previous month. For example, by 21 June 2012, there were 86,293 refugees, but 103,000 as of 5 July 2012, with 3,000 of them fleeing in the first three days of July. Sources: OCHA, Humanitarian Bulletin: Syria, Issues 1-33.

Appendix-C-



Source: UNHCR website (Nov, 2014)

Appendix-D-

Arbat Refugee Camp Profile, Dec 14
Geographic Snapshot and Contextual Bckground
GPS coordinates : 45.56437482 35.40950474
Region and State : Sulaymaniyah. KR - Iraq
Size of camp area : 300,000 m²
Pattern in Population Change : Relocation from old Arbat transit camp. In October, November 2014 the camp hosted new arrivals from Kobane.
Areas of Origin : Majority is from Qamishli, Syria.
Camp opened: 25.08.2013
Refugee Population: Approx 5,200 (Persons)
Planned capacity: 5,000(Persons)

Source: UNHCR website (Dec, 2014)

Appendix-E-

Arbat Refugee Camp Profile, 31 Dec 14
Geographic Snapshot and Contextual Bckground
GPS coordinates : 45.60941029 35.37659238
Region and State : Sulaymaniyah. KR - Iraq
Size of camp area : 300,000 m²
Pattern in Population Change : Relocation from old Arbat transit camp. In October, November 2014 the camp hosted new arrivals from Kobane.
Areas of Origin : Majority is from Qamishli, Syria.
Camp opened: 25.08.2013
Refugee Population: Approx 5,595 persons
Planned capacity: 10,200 persons

Source: UNHCR website (Dec 31, 2014)

Appendix-F-

Interview questions

Quick intro:

Thanks for joining me today. The pure purpose of this study is academic. I am concerning about the labor market for refugees in the host country. The conversation we will have today will provide me with information about the refugee labor situation and the factors that affect willing refugees to work in the host country. So thank you so much for taking the time to be with me today.

1- Age

- 18
- 26-35
- 36-45
- >46

2- Marital Status

- Single
- Married

Widowed

3- Where did you live?

Urban

Rural

4- Where do you currently live?

City

Rural and villages

Camp

5- What is your educational background?

Illiterate

Some elementary and secondary school

College graduate

6- When did you arrive here (Host country)?

7- Did you receive some assistance when you came here? If yes who when and how?

8- What is your main source of income?

9- Do you work? Why or why not?

10- If No, What barriers are there for you to not work?

11- How many family members in your family are working?

12- How long does it take to get a job permission here? And is it costly?

13- When needed help, most people go to where they have relative, some will go to places that they found political, emotional ...etc. support beside aid. Do you have any relative here? Or there are other factors that made you come to this direction and resettle here?

Family members and relative

Political affiliation

If others please indicate

14- Do you have any physical disabilities that might impede your working ability?

15- Do you need any special assistance in order to work? Like workplace accommodation or special equipment

16-When civil war breaks out in Syria and people forcibly displaced, uprooted from their places they lost their properties, assets...etc. I am sure that you lost something besides your job. And you all been forced out in rush and left your belongs behind or you were looted by other groups what you were possess before becoming refugee?

17- What benefit do you see from work?

18- What are those jobs that refugee in camps has access to?

19- Have you been through training to gain additional skill compatible with demand for job here in host country? Does the Aid organization here have a vocational training course for you as refugee?

20- Where do you work?

Inside comp

Outside camp

21- If you work outside the camp. Do you face or incur risk?

22-Do you feel safe? If No, why?

23-What type of job do you have? Is it related to your previous job before becoming refugee?

24- How many days per week do you work? How many hours?

25- Why did you left Syria?

26-Where are you come from? Where in Syria?

27- Did you came directly to the Kurdistan region of Iraq or you been in neighboring country?

Yes

No

28- If yes? Why you moved here?

29-Given that this crisis will end one day, Will you plan to stay? Or what do you plan to do after crisis? Stay? Or will you going back to Syria?

30-Is it easy for you to reside outside the camp and rent/buy house among local community? Do you face any legal or social problem?

30-Are there any advantage (Specially treated) refugee groups that have better opportunity in getting a job? Why?

Appendix-G-

STUDY ID
6326

Notification Type	APPROVED		
Date of Notification	07/14/2014		
Study Title	Labor Market Situation for Syrian Refugees in Iraq		
Principal Investigator	Todd Pugatch		
Study Team Members	Aram Mahmood		
Submission Type	Initial Application		
Level	Expedited	Category(ies)	6, 7
Number of Participants	100 <i>Do not exceed this number without prior IRB approval</i>		
Waiver(s)	Documentation of Informed Consent		
Risk Level for Children	N/A		
Funding Source	None	Proposal #	N/A
PI on Grant or Contract	N/A		

The above referenced study was reviewed and approved by the OSU Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Approval Date: 07/14/2014

Annual continuing review applications are due at least 30 days prior to expiration date

Expiration Date: 07/13/2015

Documents included in this review:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Protocol | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recruiting tools | <input type="checkbox"/> External IRB approvals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Consent forms | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Test instruments | <input type="checkbox"/> Translated documents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assent forms | <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment A: Radiation | <input type="checkbox"/> Attachment B: Human materials |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alternative consent | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative assent | <input type="checkbox"/> Grant/contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of support | <input type="checkbox"/> Project revision(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

Comments:

Principal Investigator responsibilities for fulfilling the requirements of approval:

- All study team members should be kept informed of the status of the research.
- Any changes to the research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. **This includes, but is not limited to, increasing the number of subjects to be enrolled.**
- Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others must be submitted to the IRB within three calendar days.
- Only consent forms with a valid approval stamp may be presented to participants.
- Submit a continuing review application or final report to the IRB for review at least four weeks prior to the expiration date. Failure to submit a continuing review application prior to the expiration date will result in termination of the research, discontinuation of enrolled participants, and the submission of a new application to the IRB.

