

Between the Ground and the Air:
Refugee Residences and Integration in Berlin, Germany

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Abstract

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Integration is of critical importance to refugees displaced from their home countries and to host countries with large influxes of refugees. This actuality is especially evident in Germany, where the government introduced the Residence Rule with the August 2016 Integration Act in order to prevent residential concentrations of refugees and promote residential dispersions of these populations within the host society at the neighborhood level. Through in-depth interviews with refugees living in a collective accommodation shelter in Berlin, I learned that the informants implicitly align with the German government's perspective on the intersections between residential locations and integration. This is evident in the refugees' preferences for living in residential dispersions with Germans and Berliners, and convictions that residential concentrations of refugees impede this population's integration into the host society, while

residential dispersions facilitate integration. My methodological approach prioritizes the seldom-explored refugee perspectives on integration and refugee choices over residential locations to reveal the reasons for this unexpected alignment. First, the refugees endorse interactions with Germans and Berliners as a way to facilitate cultural exchange and ultimately increase integration and conflict mitigation with the host society. Second, the informants invoke inherent refugee experiences – from displacement, to transit, to arrival phases - to explain the importance of integrating with the majority society, or in some instances separating from other refugees. I argue that both sentiments translate to refugees favoring apartments and residential dispersions over collective accommodations and residential concentrations. This thesis is a formative contribution to refugee and forced migration studies due to its focused consideration of the refugee's volition to live in a residential dispersion and to take interim steps to achieve a high level of integration. Policymakers will find this work's recommendations for reframing approaches to refugee integration mutually beneficial to refugees and host countries.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my informants: Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb. I sincerely hope that readers may gain the same level of insight into the experiences and aspirations of these refugees that I continue to benefit from as both a scholar and a global citizen.

The staff of the collective accommodation where the informants lived were instrumental in this valuable research. Thank you for demonstrating a genuine interest in my fieldwork. I am inspired by your commitment to assist refugees in Berlin.

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Introduction

A young refugee characterized his predicament in Berlin, Germany poignantly, describing a feeling of existing “between the ground and the air.” He underlined the difficulty of planning a life in his new circumstances in Germany, specifically his residence in a collective accommodation (*Gemeinschaftsunterkunft*) shelter for refugees in Berlin’s Marzahn-Hellersdorf district.¹ The absence of having stability with two feet on the ‘ground’ did not mean he enjoyed a birds-eye view of his path forward from the ‘air.’ Instead, he was somewhere in between, as many refugees are after experiencing displacement from their homeland. This condition can be articulated as a state of “liminality,” where a refugee is “between separation from one social situation or group and reincorporation.”² A large segment of the world’s population then shares these sentiments, as there are 22.5 million refugees globally – part of the 65.6 million forcibly displaced³ worldwide – fleeing persecution and conflicts.⁴ These unprecedented figures underscore a global refugee crisis intensely publicized in Europe as the continent’s own *European refugee crisis*. Within the European Union (EU) Germany has received the most first-time asylum applications since the onslaught of the crisis in 2015.⁵ In 2017, the country registered 198,000 asylum seekers, amounting to 31 percent of the EU total.⁶ Germany deserves

¹I had an informal conversation with this refugee. He is not one of my informants represented in this thesis.

²Turner, Victor W. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967: 93; Cited in: Korac, Maja. *Remaking Home: Reconstructing Life, Place and Identity in Rome and Amsterdam*. Studies in Forced Migration; v. 26. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009: 9.

³This figure includes refugees, internally displaced people, and asylum-seekers.

⁴“Figures at a Glance.” *UNHCR*, June 19, 2017.

<http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>

⁵Connor, Phillip. “Number of Refugees to Europe Surges to Record 1.3 Million in 2015.” *Pew Research Center*, August 2, 2016.

<http://www.pewglobal.org/2016/08/02/number-of-refugees-to-europe-surges-to-record-1-3-million-in-2015/>;

“Asylum statistics.” *Eurostat*, April 18, 2018.

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics

⁶*Ibid.*

attention not only for the sheer influx of refugees, but for the reality that these populations are entering a pivotal *integration* phase in the country.

Germany, under the leadership of Chancellor Angela Merkel, began a shift from “emergency response to long-term integration”⁷ of its refugee population with the Integration Act (*Integrationsgesetz*) and the Regulation of the Integration Act (*Verordnung Integrationsgesetz*). Implemented on August 6, 2016, these acts amend the Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory (Residence Act - *Aufenthaltsgesetz*).⁸ This thesis is concerned with the new Residence Rule⁹ (*Wohnsitzregelung*)¹⁰ within the Residence Act, summarized¹¹ by the U.S. Library of Congress as the following:

The German states are given the competence to assign a place of residence to refugees who were granted asylum or who received subsidiary protection status. This allows the states to spread the burden of providing for new residents evenly and to avoid the concentration of too many refugees from one country¹² in one place, which could be detrimental to integration efforts. The rule does not apply to refugees who start vocational training, university studies, or a job that covers the minimum costs of living expenses and lodging.¹³

⁷Garrelts, Nantke, Bruce Katz, and Luise Noring. “Cities and refugees: The German Experience.” *Brookings*, September 18, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/cities-and-refugees-the-german-experience/>

⁸Gesley, Jenny. “Germany: Act to Integrate Refugees Enters Into Force.” *Library of Congress*, August 15, 2016. <http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/germany-act-to-integrate-refugees-enters-into-force/>

⁹(Official Translation) Section 12a Residence Rule from Residence Act in the version promulgated on 25 February 2008 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 162), last amended Article 10 (4) of the Act of October 30, 2017 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 3618).

https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/englisch_aufenthg.html#p0181

¹⁰To compare with the current status of the German version:

http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/aufenthg_2004/BJNR195010004.html

¹¹The label on this webpage of “Assignment of a Place of Residence” should not be confused with the “Place of Residence” to be detailed later. This summary is still referring to the Residence Rule.

¹²The specification of “refugees from one country” is not explicit in the Residence Rule but may be implied.

¹³Gesley.

The German government is particularly concerned with the concentration of refugees in urban centers, which it deems to be an impediment to integration.¹⁴ Refugee movement *to* cities and city-states is controlled by a host of regulations that include the *Koenigsberger Schluessel* which distributes asylum seekers across the 16 federal states (*Bundeslaender*),¹⁵ the Residency Requirement (*Residenzpflicht*) that prevents asylum seekers from leaving a certain area of the state,¹⁶ and the Place of Residence (*Wohnsitzauflage*) which requires refugees to take up residence in the state where their asylum procedure took place for a period of three years.¹⁷ Together, these regulations serve to prevent every refugee from concentrating in Berlin. But Merkel is evidently concerned too with refugee movement *within* cities considering the devolution of authority from the federal to the state level with the Integration Act's Residence Rule. The 16 *Bundeslaender* include three city-states – Berlin, Bremen, and Hamburg – that now have the power to ban or allocate refugees from/to certain municipalities within their territory.¹⁸ This aversion to refugee residential concentrations in favor of residential dispersions within the host society at the *neighborhood level* - specifically in Berlin - is the focus of this thesis.¹⁹ To this end, I do not intend to provide a policy analysis of the Residence Rule; Berlin has yet to

¹⁴“Integration Act to support and challenge.” *Federal Government*, July 8, 2016.

https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2016/07_en/2016-05-25-integrationsgesetz-beschlossen_en.html

¹⁵El-Kayed, Nihad and Ulrike Hamann. “Refugees’ Access to Housing and Residency in German Cities: Internal Border Regimes and Their Local Variations.” *Social Inclusion* 6, no. 1 (2018): 139.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷El-Kayed, 139-140.

¹⁸El-Kayed, 140.

¹⁹ I use the term “residential concentration” to refer to residential locations/neighborhoods with a noticeable presence of refugees living there, and the term “residential dispersion” to denote the opposite, where the area reflects the majority host society and has few refugees. I do not use any numerical distinctions between the two different types of residential locations, which is consistent with the German government. Instead, “concentration” and “dispersion” function as relative terms. I also do not use formal geographical distinctions beyond “neighborhood level” and “district” to define the residential locations (such as city blocks or apartment complexes).

implement the measure.²⁰ Instead, I use the Residence Rule to capture the German government's perspective on refugee residences and integration.

The height of the refugee crisis in December 2015 informed Merkel's perspective on refugee residences and integration, as evidenced by her public denouncement of “parallel societies” that same month.²¹ At the forefront of the Chancellor's mind were the over one million refugees who entered Germany in 2015, and the ten thousand refugees who arrived in Berlin in November 2015 alone.²² Merkel wants to avoid refugees becoming isolated and unintegrated in certain areas of the city.²³ Her remarks came just a month after 130 individuals lost their lives in the Paris terrorist attacks, which prompted increased international attention towards Paris' segregated suburbs (*banlieues*) – and comparable areas in other cities and countries – as potential breeding grounds for radicalization and violent extremism.²⁴ The Integration Act's Residence Rule is conceived as a policy solution to counter the physical manifestations of ‘parallel societies,’ or the residential concentrations of refugees, and promote residential dispersions with members of the majority society. In the German government's view, without this measure refugees will congregate in cities and live in separate, concentrated “micro-communit[ies].”²⁵ The work *Spreading the 'Burden'?: A Review of Policies to Disperse Asylum*

²⁰“Freedom of Movement.” *Asylum Information Database*, 2018.

<http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/germany/content-international-protection/movement-and-mobility/freedom-movement>

²¹Noack, Rick. “Multiculturalism is a sham, says Angela Merkel.” *The Washington Post*, December 14, 2015.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/12/14/angela-merkel-multiculturalism-is-a-sham/?utm_term=.4ea37ab1d81d

²²Garrelts.

²³Noack, “Multiculturalism.”

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Robinson, Vaughan, Roger Andersson, and Sako Musterd. *Spreading the 'Burden'?: A Review of Policies to Disperse Asylum Seekers and Refugees*. Bristol, UK; Chicago, IL, USA: Policy Press at the University of Bristol, 2003, 160.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1t894c>

Seekers and Refugees highlights this rationale, outlining that “when asylum seekers and refugees have been allowed to choose where they wish to settle within national space, they have invariably picked a small number of cities or even neighborhoods.”²⁶

Given refugees’ apparent proclivity for residential concentrations and Merkel’s corrective policy to this end, we would expect variance between refugees and the German government over the principles of the Residence Rule. However, the in-depth interviews I conducted at the collective accommodation highlighted above with Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb²⁷ overturn this expectation, as the refugees implicitly align with the German government’s perspective on residential locations²⁸ and integration at the neighborhood level. This convergence is evident on two fronts. First, the refugees conveyed preferences for living in residential dispersions with Germans and Berliners.²⁹ Second, the informants expressed that residential concentrations of refugees impede this population’s integration into majority society, and that residential dispersions facilitate integration. Why is there alignment over this seemingly discordant phenomenon? This research focuses on conversations I had in summer 2017 with the same refugees who prompted the conundrum. The accounts of Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb describing their experiences and aspirations as refugees in Germany

²⁶Robinson, 159.

²⁷Pseudonyms.

²⁸The term “residential location” will be used throughout the thesis to refer to both “residential concentrations” and “residential dispersions.” There are different types of “residential arrangements” in these locations, which refers to either a private residence/apartment or a shared residence/collective accommodation/shelter. The interchangeable terms “living situation” and “residential situation” refer to the combined “residential location” and “residential arrangement.”

²⁹“Germans and Berliners” refers to the majority society. “Berliners” is used to capture the diversity of the capital which some informants were drawn to, but still describes the host society and is separate from the refugee demographic.

illuminates seldom-explored *refugee perspectives* on integration and *refugee choices* over residential locations, and where the two intersect.

I hypothesize that there are two dominant refugee sentiments that explain the population's convergence with the state. First, the refugees endorse interactions with Germans and Berliners as a way to learn about one another's cultures. In turn, refugees believe this will yield increased integration and conflict mitigation with the host society. Second, the respondents invoke inherent refugee experiences – from displacement, to transit, to arrival phases – to explain the importance of integrating with majority society, or in some instances separating from other refugees. I argue that both sentiments translate to refugees favoring apartments and residential dispersions over collective accommodations and residential concentrations. At the core of these claims is the realization that integration is not an ideal exclusive to the German government nor an end that can only be achieved through Merkel's Residence Rule. Refugees want to integrate and conceive a process for achieving this state – or overcoming a 'between the ground and the air' existence – in terms of living in residential dispersions.

The structure of this thesis is as follows: I will begin by introducing my informants and then provide an overview of the current refugee crisis in Germany and the relevant regulations – including the Residence Rule – that refugees must navigate. This contextualizes the subsequent literature review that focuses on *integration* and *spatial segregation*. Both of these concepts are explored in order to highlight the importance of *refugee perspectives* on integration and *refugee choices* over residential locations. The methodology section is a reflection of my commitment to a refugee-driven approach to understand the intersections between residential locations and

integration. I will then analyze my interviews with Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb to answer the main inquiry of this thesis. Finally, I will be in a position to offer recommendations concerning the long-term integration of refugees.

Overview of Informants

My primary data sources in this thesis are the seven interviews I conducted with refugees. I will primarily use the term “refugee” in reference to Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, Adeeb, and their counterparts in Germany. Since I do not list the individual protection statuses of my informants, this term does not imply a legal definition here but instead captures the experience of people forced to leave their home country and seek refuge in another country. The informants range in age from 20s to 70s and represent five different nations: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, and Syria. The vast majority are male. The length of time the refugees have resided in Germany ranges from one year to over four years. For five of the informants, Germany is the first country in Europe that they have lived. Berlin is the first city in Germany that the majority of refugees in this sample lived in. I interviewed refugees who are accompanied by family or friends in Germany, as well as refugees who are alone in the country. The majority of informants are in German language and integration courses but do not work. In addition to using pseudonyms, I modified demographic information to respect the refugees’ anonymity.

(see Table 1 below)

Table 1³⁰

Informant	Age	Gender	National Origin	Time in Germany	First to Live in ³¹	Living with	Education in Germany ³²	Work	Interview Interpretation ³³
Yado	20s	Male	Kurdistan	1 year 8 months	Berlin & Germany	Family	No	No	Yes – Arabic (second language)
Nasim	40s (est.)	Male	Syria	2 years 6 months	X	Family	Yes – Intermediate	No	Yes – Arabic (second language)
Fathi	70s	Male	Iraq	1 year 8 months	Berlin & Germany	Alone	No	No	Yes – Arabic
Fadhil	40s	Male	Iran	1 year	Berlin & Germany	Family	No	No	Yes – Farsi
Abru	50s	Female	Iraq	2 years	Germany	Friend	Yes – Beginner	No	Yes – Arabic
Haaroon	20s	Male	Afghanistan	4 years 6 months	Berlin	Alone	Yes – Intermediate	Yes	No – English (second language)
Adeeb	30s (est.)	Male	Iraq	2 years	Berlin & Germany	Alone	Yes – Intermediate	No	Yes – German (second language)

³⁰Data is as of summer 2017.

³¹This column refers to whether Germany was the first country in Europe that the informants consider themselves having “lived” in, as opposed to transiting through. It also refers to whether Berlin was the first city in Germany that the informants consider themselves having “lived” in, as opposed to residing in an emergency shelter for a short period of time. If either Germany or Berlin is not listed then the informant lived in another country or city. “X” denotes that neither Germany nor Berlin were a ‘first’ living location for the informant.

³²This column specifies whether the informant is currently enrolled in integration courses. These integration courses for refugees in Germany consist of language and orientation classes at various levels of competency. Additional information is available here:

<http://www.bamf.de/EN/Willkommen/DeutschLernen/Integrationskurse/InhaltAblauf/inhaltAblauf-node.html>

³³This column indicates if an interpreter was used during the interview, the language of interpretation, and clarifies if the language used in the interview was the informant’s second language.

The Refugee Crisis and Residence Rule

The effective start of the European refugee crisis was in 2015. Ongoing conflicts and violence across the Middle East precipitated massive displacement that the regional safe-countries of Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey were stretched to accommodate. The dire situations refugees faced in these states prompted a subsequent migration to Europe.³⁴ In 2014 there were over 560,000 first-time asylum applications in the EU.³⁵ This figure swelled to over 1.2 million in 2015,³⁶ with Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq comprising the top three countries of origin respectively.³⁷ The subsequent events in the EU relative to refugees' quest for protection and member states' response center on the movement 'across and within' national borders.³⁸

The refugee experience is synonymous with crossing borders. First, refugees are forced to flee their homes. While many remain within their respective country's borders as internally displaced peoples (IDP),³⁹ others cross national borders to seek asylum. The refugees may continue on to transverse multiple borders enroute to Europe. The refugees then face the restriction of the EU's Dublin Procedure to remain within the borders of the first state they enter. Ironically, the EU's Schengen Agreement gives many refugees the opportunity to neglect the Dublin Procedure and move freely across member states' borders to reach Western Europe or the

³⁴Stewart, Rachel. "How did Europe's refugee crisis start?" *Deutsche Welle*, December 19, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/how-did-europes-refugee-crisis-start/g-36791955>

³⁵"Asylum statistics."

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷"Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts." *BBC*, March 4, 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

³⁸Torpey, John. "Coming and Going: On the State Monopolization of the Legitimate "Means of Movement." *Sociological Theory* 16, no. 3 (1998): 239.

³⁹There are an estimated 40.3 million IDPs in the world as of October 2017. Additional information: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/internally-displaced-people.html>

Nordic countries. This tension between the Dublin Regulation and the Schengen Agreement is a point of contention in the EU and sets the stage for Germany's lead role in the refugee crisis.

In summer 2015 refugees were converging on Hungary en masse, after transiting Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia along the Balkan route. Hungary became the de facto entrance point to the Schengen Area, where refugees aspired to continue their journeys west.⁴⁰ Viktor Orban, Hungary's Prime Minister, thwarted these plans by forbidding refugees to board trains to Austria. Orban justified that he was upholding the Dublin Procedure,⁴¹ but these actions appeared to be part of a larger scheme to discourage future migration through Hungary. The country was already constructing a fence along its border with Serbia. In contrast, Merkel established Germany's open-border policy on August 25 with the suspension of the Dublin Procedure for Syrians, and pushed back implications of this policy decision with her optimistic August 31 statement, "We can do this" (*Wir schaffen das*).⁴² The thousands of refugees languishing within Hungary's borders – most visibly at Budapest's main train station – and thousands of others stopped outside the country compelled Merkel to take action and put this rhetoric to the test.⁴³ On Friday September 4, Merkel and Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann agreed to open their borders to the refugees stranded in Hungary.⁴⁴ It is estimated that 20,000

⁴⁰Krisztina, Than. "Austria and Germany open borders to migrants offloaded by Hungary." *Reuters*, September 4, 2015.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-hungary-idUSKCN0R40FO20150905>

⁴¹"Migrants stranded as Hungary bars them from rail station." *BBC*, September 1, 2015.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34113471>

⁴²Dockery, Wesley. "Two years since Germany opened its borders: A chronology." *Deutsche Welle*, September 4, 2017.

<http://www.dw.com/en/two-years-since-germany-opened-its-borders-to-refugees-a-chronology/a-40327634>

⁴³Vick, Karl. "Chancellor of the Free World." *Time*, December, 2015.

<http://time.com/time-person-of-the-year-2015-angela-merkel/>

⁴⁴Dockery.

refugees arrived in Germany the following weekend.⁴⁵ Long lines of refugees leaving Hungary on foot, or being welcomed in Munich's main train station by crowds of Germans are images now synonymous with Merkel's decision. In *Times'* Person of the Year feature of Merkel, the magazine described the latter scene as "transcendent, almost too good to be true."⁴⁶ As a prequel, *The Atlantic* wrote on September 12 that, "Germany and its chancellor, Angela Merkel, have emerged as contenders for the fastest international image makeover in recent memory."⁴⁷ Merkel's Germany previously earned a reputation for austerity, as demonstrated in the Greek debt crisis.⁴⁸ Evidently this characteristic was not lost – and *The Atlantic's* assertion premature – because on September 13 Germany reimposed border controls. The then Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere summarized his country's multiple 'makeovers' in such a short timespan with the statement, "Germany has shown a willingness to help, but this must not be overstretched."⁴⁹

Germany's reassertion of control over refugees crossing their border was echoed by Merkel's efforts to regulate the "legitimate means of movement" for the million plus refugees now within the nation's borders.⁵⁰ In turn, the refugees quickly came to realize what scholar John Torpey labels, "the ambiguous nature of modern states, which are at once sheltering and dominating."⁵¹ While Merkel's continued sheltering of refugees is admirable, attention needs to be drawn to the contrasting internal political response and the implications this has on the

⁴⁵Horn, Heather. "The Staggering Scale of Germany's Refugee Project." *The Atlantic*, September 12, 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/germany-merkel-refugee-asylum/405058/>

⁴⁶Vick.

⁴⁷Horn.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Karnitschnig, Matthew. "Merkel backtracks on open borders." *Politico*, September 13, 2015. <https://www.politico.eu/article/merkel-migrant-refugee-crisis-germany-imposes-border-controls/>

⁵⁰Torpey, 239.

⁵¹Torpey, 241.

refugee experience in Germany. Authors Nihad El-Kayed and Ulrike Hamann commit themselves to examining the ‘dominating’ side of the German government in their article, “Refugees’ Access to Housing and Residency in German Cities: Internal Border Regimes and Their Local Variations.” The authors write that the border is not just the “physical demarcation of a geographic entity, such as a nation-state” but an internal governance strategy that includes regulation on the “right to housing and the right of free movement and settlement.”⁵² In the German case, this narrowing of the border is due to Merkel’s determination to maintain “territorial sovereignty” – a key component of the nation state – after it appeared jeopardized with the open-border policy.⁵³ I will focus on three manifestations of Germany’s ‘internal border regime’ that El-Kayed and Hamann help outline: the Residency Requirement (*Residenzpflicht*), the Place of Residence (*Wohnsitzauflage*), and the Residence Rule (*Wohnsitzregelung*).

Upon arriving in Germany, asylum seekers are distributed across the 16 federal states based on the *Koenigsberger Schlüssel* process that takes state tax income and population size into account.⁵⁴ Refugees formally register as asylum seekers in their respective states⁵⁵ before applying for asylum at the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge - BAMF*).⁵⁶ The federal Residency Requirement stipulates that refugees must stay in the specific district to which they were assigned⁵⁷ while their asylum application is being processed.⁵⁸ During this period, asylum seekers are first housed in initial

⁵²El-Kayed, 136, 138.

⁵³Fauser, Margit. "The Emergence of Urban Border Spaces in Europe." *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 2017: 2.

⁵⁴El-Kayed, 139.

⁵⁵In Berlin this is done at the State Office of Refugee Affairs (*Landesamt fuer Fluechtlingsangelegenheiten*)

⁵⁶“Registration.” *Information for Refugees*.

<https://www.berlin.de/fluechtlinge/en/information-for-refugees/registration/>

⁵⁷El-Kayed, 139.

⁵⁸“Registration.”

accommodation facilities (*Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen*) or emergency shelters, which often amount to repurposed structures, such as high school gymnasiums or even a former airport.⁵⁹ After a period of three to six months they are often relocated to a collective accommodation in the same state, though some states permit refugees to settle in private accommodations.⁶⁰ Apartments are limited in Berlin, so the city-state's government puts a positive spin on the collective accommodations, highlighting that they are more comfortable and private than refugees' residential situation upon entering the country.⁶¹ In either residential arrangement, refugees are not allowed to leave their respective state except with permission from the Foreigner's Office (*Auslaenderbehoerde*).⁶²

After asylum seekers receive a protection status and have a residence permit, they are still subject to federal restrictions in the form of the Place of Residence. The measure mandates that these refugees take-up residence for three years in the state where their asylum procedure took place.⁶³ This 2016 regulation is only a partial extension of the Residency Requirement, as refugees are allowed to temporarily leave the state.⁶⁴ Still, they are not allowed to settle outside their assigned Bundesland.⁶⁵ At this stage refugees are permitted to live in a private residence, but the Berlin State Office for Refugee Affairs' (*Landesamt fuer Fluechtlingsangelegenheiten – LAF*) website reminds refugees that affordable housing is limited in the capital and thus they are

⁵⁹El-Kayed, 139.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹“Housing.” *Information for Refugees*.

<https://www.berlin.de/fluechtlinge/en/information-for-refugees/housing/>

⁶²El-Kayed, 139.

⁶³El-Kayed, 139-140.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

likely to remain in the collective accommodations.⁶⁶ In addition, discrimination and fraud directed towards refugees is common in the rental market. Haaron commented that he was denied an apartment just on account of the agent profiling his name (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan). I noticed signs in the collective accommodation warning residents that gentlemen's agreement handshakes were not sufficient lessee-lessor contracts, an indication of landlords previously taking advantage of trusting - and often desperate - refugees. In the Berlin context these structural factors prevent many refugees from moving out of the collective accommodations. Thus the majority of residents in a collective accommodation located in the capital have a protection status, and just a few are asylum seekers.⁶⁷ The latter possess temporary residence permits (*Aufenthaltsgestattung*) distributed by BAMF.⁶⁸ This registration of both asylum seekers and refugees is important so staff members at the collective accommodation - the majority of which work for independent for-profit or non-profit agencies⁶⁹ - can invoice LAF⁷⁰ based on the number of residents at the end of each month.

To further complicate a refugee's already difficult task of identifying an affordable apartment and negotiating with unscrupulous landlords, they often face the final 'internal border regime' in the form of the Integration Act's Residence Rule. As a new addition to the existing Residence Act, it appears the Residence Rule narrows the Place of Residence as it applies to those entitled to asylum and individuals who have refugee status, subsidiary protection, or an

⁶⁶(Translation) "Information for refugees." *State Office for Refugee Affairs*.
<https://www.berlin.de/laf/wohnen/informationen-fuer-fluechtlinge/>

⁶⁷Conversation with State Office for Refugee Affairs (summer 2017).

⁶⁸"Registration."

⁶⁹Conversation with State Office for Refugee Affairs (summer 2017).

⁷⁰The State Office for Refugee Affairs provides refugees with cash benefits on a need basis whether the refugees remain in a collective accommodation or move to an apartment. Additional Information:
<https://www.berlin.de/laf/wohnen/informationen-fuer-fluechtlinge/>

initial temporary residence permit within the same three-year period.⁷¹ With the new Residence Rule, the German government is giving states “the power to introduce more detailed regulations that can require refugees to move either to or out of specific municipalities.”⁷² In the case of city-states, it appears this implies specific districts. States can subject those living in reception/emergency shelters and collective accommodations to these regulations within a year of them receiving recognition or a residence permit.⁷³ This measure is designed to promote “lasting integration into the way of life in the Federal Republic of Germany.”⁷⁴ The Residence Rule cites “suitable accommodation,” German language, and employment as reasons to “take up residence in a specific place.”⁷⁵ In dictating circumstances where a refugee may be required “*not* to take up residence in a specific place,” the measure focuses on preventing “social exclusion” specifically where it is “expected that they will not use German as their main language of communication at that place.”⁷⁶ The government outlines that decisions may also take into account the local labor market and availability of vocational training.⁷⁷ The Residence Rule applies to everyone who received recognition or a residence permit after January 1, 2016, but there are exceptions if the refugee (or their spouse/domestic partner or child) has part-time employment with sufficient income and full social security, or if they are enrolled in vocational training or pursuing higher education studies.⁷⁸ The government is careful to note that the Residence Rule applies to dependents who subsequently join the refugee in question.⁷⁹ It is clear

⁷¹(Official Translation). Section 12a Residence Rule (1).

⁷²El-Kayed, 140.

⁷³(Official Translation). Section 12a Residence Rule (2,3).

⁷⁴(Official Translation). Section 12a Residence Rule (1).

⁷⁵(Official Translation). Section 12a Residence Rule (3).

⁷⁶(Official Translation). Section 12a Residence Rule (4).

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸(Official Translation). Section 12a Residence Rule (1).

⁷⁹(Official Translation). Section 12a Residence Rule (6).

that Merkel is drawing a causal line between residential locations and integration. Municipalities or neighborhoods with concentrations of refugees speaking foreign languages are seen as impediments to integration, while residential dispersions where German is the dominant language is viewed as beneficial to integration. The federal government explicitly provides the states with significant latitude in the application of the Residence Rule,⁸⁰ meaning local governments can interpret sections differently. While there is no specific mention of concentrations of refugees from the same national origin or religion as bases for instituting the Residence Rule, the structure of the Residence Rule allows for these more targeted justifications.

The Residency Requirement, Place of Residence, and the Residence Rule represent an ‘internal border regime’ operating at the federal, state, and municipal levels. As some restrictions lift – such as the ability to move from initial to collective accommodations and then to private residences – other “internal mechanisms”⁸¹ are put in place. The relative freedom an apartment may afford a refugee is still controlled through the state’s ability to determine where that apartment is located. This is a clear example of “residential bans and obligations,” which author Margit Fauser identifies as a form of “urban migration control.”⁸² Refugees have previously protested the imposition of internal borders. In what author Fazila Bhimji called a “radical spatial movement in Berlin,” over 500 refugees left their assigned *Bundesländer* starting in 2012 to converge on the capital in objection to the Residence Requirement.⁸³ The activists called themselves Refugee Strike Berlin and made Oranienplatz, a public square in Kreuzberg, their

⁸⁰(Official Translation). Section 12a Residence Rule (9).

⁸¹Fauser, 5.

⁸²Fauser, 9-10, 12.

⁸³Bhimji, Fazila. "Visibilities and the Politics of Space: Refugee Activism in Berlin." *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 2016, 432-433.

rallying site.⁸⁴ Although three years have passed since the campaign, one of my informants appears to pick up where it left off. I asked Yado, “What do you think the best living arrangement solution is for refugees in Germany, what should the government do or what should have they done?” He responded firmly, “To leave [refugees] alone,” and elaborated that some refugees in Berlin want to live in Frankfurt, and some refugees in Frankfurt want to live in Berlin, but the government restricts where they are able to settle (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan). He is referencing either the Residency Requirement or the Place of Residence. In a subsequent exchange, Yado outlined his solution:

In two hours I will solve the whole problem for the Germans [...] I would simply take [all refugees] and ask them, ‘where would you like to live?’ and in which situation. They [then] tell me and I send them there and they cannot change it. (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan)

Clearly, Yado and his predecessors are at odds with the government’s intrusion on refugees’ right of free movement and settlement. What we expect then is for this opposition to carry over to all three ‘internal border regimes’ detailed here. Instead, refugees engage with the tenets of the Residence Rule in a distinct way. In the Refugee Strike Berlin protests the participants also advocated for “integrated accommodations,” frustrated over the location of their shelters on the outskirts of cities.⁸⁵ This demand is akin to the sentiments of Yado and other informants, specifically the desire to increase interactions and, in turn, integration with the host society through residential dispersions. While the Residency Requirement and Place of Residence have proven to be areas of contention, there is an implicit alignment between refugees and the government over residential locations and integration at the neighborhood level. This is not to suggest that refugees prefer that the state choose which areas of a city they live in, but points to

⁸⁴Bhimji, 432-433.

⁸⁵Ibid.

the idea that refugees autonomously choose areas to live that align with the objectives of the Residence Rule: residential dispersions instead of residential concentrations. How do we make sense of this conundrum? In light of the fact that the Residence Rule is underscored by a commitment to ‘lasting integration,’ examining the concept of *integration* is a logical place to start.

Integration

On December 14, 2015 Merkel delivered a speech at her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party’s convention, in which she denounced multiculturalism in the context of the refugee crisis: “Multiculturalism leads to parallel societies and therefore remains a ‘life lie.’”⁸⁶ The Chancellor echoed her own 2010 remarks, when she explained:

*Of course the tendency had been to say, 'Let's adopt the multicultural concept and live happily side by side, and be happy to be living with each other.' But this concept has failed, and failed utterly.*⁸⁷

The influx of refugees in 2015 prompted Merkel to reassert this position. Four months later her government would unveil the Integration Act: “for the first time in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany there is to be a federal law on integration.”⁸⁸ The Chancellor highlighted that the Integration Act is a two-way process in which the government would provide services to

⁸⁶Noack, “Multiculturalism.”

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Coalition Committee. “Angela Merkel announces first federal law on integration.” *Federal Government*, April 14, 2016.

https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2016/04_en/2016-04-14-pressekonferenz-merkel_en.html

facilitate integration, but refugees must reciprocate the effort.⁸⁹ Accompanying Merkel was the Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sigmar Gabriel, who “stressed that Germany does not aim to assimilate by force.”⁹⁰ This reference to the term assimilation in the federal government’s online announcement of the Integration Act is significant. It seems Merkel’s coalition is drawing a careful distinction between assimilation and integration, as the former is “disqualified by its association with forcible Germanization.”⁹¹ The Chancellor is separating the concepts of multiculturalism and integration as well considering her foreshadowing remarks in 2015. In this context, deriving a definition of *integration* hinges in part on exploring the terms *assimilation* and *multiculturalism* in order to define *what it is not*. These three ideas are nebulous and often conflated. Any conceptual clarity and distinction is the result of adopting a specific perspective. As author Maja Korac reminds readers this too often means a “state-centered” lens.⁹² In the following section of the literature review, I inescapably utilize this lens in order to further elucidate the government-imposed Residence Rule. In turn, a ‘state-centered’ definition of integration emerges that can be compared and contrasted with refugee perspectives on integration relative to residences. The latter will materialize in the data analysis due to my embrace of the “refugee-centered approach.”⁹³

The fact that integration supersedes assimilation as the accepted term for the German government’s refugee policies is expected. In a critique of methodological nationalism in the

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Brubaker, Rogers. "The Return of Assimilation? Changing Perspectives on Immigration and Its Sequels in France, Germany, and the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 4 (2001): 533.

⁹² Korac, 12.

⁹³ Ibid.

context of migration, where the nation-state is at the center of analysis, Andreas Wimmer and Nina Schiller write that the state responds to ethnic minorities “through a politics of forced assimilation or benevolent integration.”⁹⁴ The choice – at least on a rhetorical level – is clear for most governments since “integration is always thought of as being established, less problematical, and less fragile among those belonging to the national people”⁹⁵ compared to “racist assimilation.”⁹⁶ In Germany, assimilation carries negative historical connotations with Nazi-era Germanization, so the view of assimilation as “complete absorption” of minorities into the host society is discredited in 21st century society.⁹⁷ Authors Irene Bloemraad’s and Matthew Wright similarly define assimilation as the “erasure of difference such that minorities would become indistinguishable from the majority.”⁹⁸ The scholars provide this definition in the article, “‘Utter Failure’ or Unity out of Diversity? Debating and Evaluating Policies of Multiculturalism,” to explain how multiculturalism emerged as a reaction to assimilation. The multicultural approach is seen as a way to connect minorities to the host society and ensure “the twin goals of recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity.”⁹⁹ In the German context then, why was multiculturalism denounced and replaced by integration?

The foundational reason for the decisive shift away from multiculturalism is that it serves to define and distinguish the concept of integration, the banner under which the Residence Rule

⁹⁴Wimmer, Andreas, and Nina Glick Schiller. "Methodological Nationalism and the Study of Migration." *European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (2002): 228.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Kinnvall, Catarina. "The Postcolonial Has Moved into Europe: Bordering, Security and Ethno-Cultural Belonging." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 54, no. 1 (2016): 164.

⁹⁷Bloemraad, Irene, and Matthew Wright. "'Utter Failure' or Unity out of Diversity? Debating and Evaluating Policies of Multiculturalism." *International Migration Review* 48 (2014): 300.; Brubaker, 534.

⁹⁸Bloemraad, 300.

⁹⁹Bloemraad, 293.

lies. This pedestaling of integration as the expense of multiculturalism helps Merkel justify the control over refugee movement and settlement. Bloemraad and Wright – publishing before the announcement of the Integration Act – argue that multiculturalism functions as a public discourse in Germany.¹⁰⁰ The authors piece this together after observing that “despite Chancellor Merkel’s reproach of multiculturalism’s failure in her country, Germany is not and has not been a country of strong multicultural policies.”¹⁰¹ In other words, there were few policy outcomes tied to multiculturalism that Merkel could denounce. Curious too is the fact that Merkel’s first turn away from multiculturalism in 2010 was followed by a welcoming turn towards refugees in 2015. The authors see this as part of a larger trend in national political discourses and public policies of Anglo-settler countries and Western Europe, where they argue that “the turn away from a public discourse of multiculturalism, although not linked to dramatic change in multiculturalism policies, has been accompanied by a rise in ‘harder’ policies of civic integration.”¹⁰² The Integration Act’s Residence Rule certainly qualifies as such a policy. Merkel’s “political rhetoric” portrays multiculturalism as a facilitator of “cultural isolation and ‘parallel lives,’ which impede immigrant integration.”¹⁰³ This divisive framing¹⁰⁴ helps cast integration and policies designed in its name in a positive light. As a result, the populace can only assume that the Residence Rule will combat ‘cultural isolation’ and ‘parallel lives.’

The September 25, 2017 federal elections in Germany were a major factor behind Merkel’s discursive strategy. The Chancellor’s “political rejection”¹⁰⁵ of multiculturalism and

¹⁰⁰Bloemraad, 299.

¹⁰¹Bloemraad, 298.

¹⁰²Bloemraad, 294, 301.

¹⁰³Bloemraad 293, 299.

¹⁰⁴Bloemraad, 301.

¹⁰⁵Bloemraad, 318.

introduction of the Integration Act amid the run-up to elections served to allay the fears of many Germans susceptible to the Alternative for Germany (*AfD*), a radical right-wing, anti-refugee political party. This faction was poised to vote against Merkel's CDU to reprimand "elites for forcing multiculturalism on them and paying insufficient attention to ordinary citizens' desire for a core culture and national values."¹⁰⁶ The AfD took advantage of this dynamic through adopting an anti-Islam policy, with the stated position that "Islam does not belong to Germany."¹⁰⁷ In policy statements they asserted, "The AfD is committed to German as the predominant culture" and multiculturalism is "a serious threat to social peace and the survival of the nation state as a cultural unit."¹⁰⁸ With this zero-sum language, Merkel was left with little choice other than to polarize multiculturalism and integration further. As it were, the AfD received over 12 percent of votes and 13 percent of parliament seats – the third highest of any party – following the elections.¹⁰⁹

Voters are receptive to the diametric shift from multiculturalism to integration because the former – especially in the context of a refugee influx - becomes closely equated to the undermining of the nation state. The AfD's assertion that multiculturalism threatens 'the nation state as a cultural unit' is a case in point. Even for the vastly more moderate CDU, there was an

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷"German election: How right-wing is nationalist AfD." *BBC*, October 13, 2017.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37274201>

¹⁰⁸Sanderson, Sertan. "What the AfD means for refugees and migrants in Germany." *Info Migrants*, September 25, 2017.

<http://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/5248/what-the-afd-means-for-refugees-and-migrants-in-germany>

¹⁰⁹Clarke, Sean. "German elections 2017: full results." *The Guardian*, September 25, 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2017/sep/24/german-elections-2017-latest-results-live-merkel-bundestag-afd>

embrace of a *Leitkultur*, or lead culture, in the election campaign.¹¹⁰ As part of this initiative to “reclaim the patriotic ground” from the AfD, Merkel provided her definition of “what it means to be German”¹¹¹ in a June 23, 2017 editorial in the tabloid *Bild*.¹¹² The *A to Z* list includes stereotypical entries such as *Bratwurst* and *Oktoberfest*, but also the terms: refugees, integration, migration background, and Muslims.¹¹³ But as columnist Leonid Bershidsky notes, this view of national identity amounts to “a deep-rooted, old culture taking on some new flavors without straying too far from its traditional mainstream.”¹¹⁴ Through this lens, Merkel’s stance “only looks progressive compared with alternatives from nationalists across Europe.”¹¹⁵ The CDU is protecting the German *nation* through projecting the German *culture*. These ideas are inextricably linked in the modern nation state, which explains why the presence of refugees – with their own language, religions, and customs – are often viewed as a threat.¹¹⁶ To the host country, immigrants and refugees “destroy the isomorphism between people and nation” and thus challenge “the nation building project.”¹¹⁷ In this climate, a political embrace of *multiculturalism* would appear to fundamentally challenge Germans’ conception of their *nation*. The German government uses *Leitkultur* to clear-up any conceptual confusions over the term integration: the diversity of refugees is always subjected to a single German culture.

¹¹⁰Bershidsky, Leonid. “Angela Merkel Embraces German Nationalism with a Twist.” *Bloomberg*, June 23, 2017. <https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2017-06-23/angela-merkel-embraces-german-nationalism-with-a-twist>

¹¹¹*Ibid.*

¹¹²(Translation) Merkel, Angela. “What is German?” *Bild*, June 22, 2017.

<https://www.bild.de/news/topics/65-jahre-bild/was-ist-deutsch-52174512.bild.html>

¹¹³*Ibid.*

¹¹⁴Bershidsky.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹¹⁶Wimmer, 227.

¹¹⁷Wimmer, 228.

A deeper understanding of the German government's Residence Rule can be reached through examining the function of a key aspect of the Integration Act: reciprocity. Merkel underlined the reciprocal nature of the Integration Act in May 2016, highlighting that Germany will make "a good offer" with the expectation that refugees "take up that offer so that integration can work."¹¹⁸ In the same vein, German politicians used the motto "Promote and Demand" (*Foedern und Fordern*) to capture the framework of the Integration Act.¹¹⁹ The 'offers' or 'promotions' of the measure include access to language courses, vocational training, and employment opportunities.¹²⁰ The government's expectation or 'demand' is that refugees subsequently "make an effort"¹²¹ to learn German, participate in trainings, and work. Author Rogers Brubaker describes a similar reciprocity forming around the term assimilation, which he argues effectively transforms the concept of assimilation to resemble integration.¹²² To capture this shift, the author argues that, instead of a transitive understanding of assimilation where immigrants are seen as "mouldable, meltable, *objects*," there is an emerging intransitive understanding of the concept, where immigrants are "active *subjects*."¹²³ In this sense, the latter "is not something done to persons, but rather something accomplished by them [...]."¹²⁴ However, in the Integration Act's reciprocal-framing, the agency of refugees is constrained. In reality, the "reciprocity" just puts the onus on refugees to conform to policy prescriptions that represent the state's perspective on integration. Brubaker takes a similar tack in arguing that

¹¹⁸Knight, Ben. "Merkel presents new refugee integration law as 'milestone.'" *Deutsche Welle*, May 25, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-presents-new-refugee-integration-law-as-milestone/a-19281722>

¹¹⁹"Germany set to pass first-ever bill to integrate refugees." *Deutsche Welle*, May 24, 2016. <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-set-to-pass-first-ever-bill-to-integrate-refugees/a-19280675>

¹²⁰Gesley.

¹²¹"Germany set to pass."

¹²²Brubaker, 540, 542.

¹²³Brubaker, 542.

¹²⁴Brubaker, 543.

intransitive assimilation is “an unintended consequence of myriad individual actions and choices in particular social, cultural, economic and political contexts.”¹²⁵ In the ‘political context’ of the Residence Rule, Merkel’s government dictates refugee ‘actions’ and ‘choices’ to ensure that refugees live in residential dispersions versus residential concentrations in order to integrate. There is a distinct heavy-handedness, or “top-down process of adjustment,” in this policy area, where the host government defines, manages, and measures the integration of refugees.¹²⁶

Ultimately, the Integration Acts’ Residence Rule serves as the best indication of the ‘state-centered’ perspective on *integration*. In light of the information outlined above, I offer the following definition: *Integration is the process of refugees adapting into the German culture as dictated and facilitated by the German government.* The main consequence of this definition is that the ‘actions’ of refugees are rarely viewed independently of the government. Scholars and policymakers fall into the trap of attributing successful cases of integration to refugees submitting to state policies, and unsuccessful cases to ineffectual or absent state policies. However, my data shows that refugees living in the collective accommodation exercise tremendous foresight and agency *independent of* the Residence Rule to live in residential dispersions or adapt in the interim. Only *refugee perspectives* on *integration* make this insight possible.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Korac, 5-6.

Spatial Segregation

A common measure of refugee integration is the degree of spatial segregation of the minority population's residential location, particularly in urban environments. This connection between settlement and integration was outlined in the Chicago School of Sociology's inceptive work *The City*.¹²⁷ In Ernest W. Burgess' chapter, "The Growth of the City," the scholar illustrates the expansion process of a metropolis using concentric circles that start with a "central business district" and end with a "commuters' zone," or the suburbs.¹²⁸ Accompanying this "physical growth" are "consequent changes in the social organization and in personality types" of the various circles.¹²⁹ Burgess asks, "In what way are individuals incorporated into the life of a city?" and offers an explanation of this assimilation process for urban immigrants.¹³⁰ Using the American city as a model, he observes that "In the zone of deterioration encircling the central business section are always to be found the so-called 'slums' and 'bad lands,' with their submerged regions of poverty, degradation, and disease, and their underworlds of crime and vice."¹³¹ It is here in these 'slums' that new immigrants settle.¹³² The next circle is inhabited by second generation immigrants, who aspire to live in the further outlying zones with "single family dwellings."¹³³ This model shows "differentiation into natural economic and cultural groupings" which correlates to a population's 'incorporation' into the city.¹³⁴

¹²⁷Park, Robert E., Ernest W. Burgess, and Roderick D. McKenzie. *The City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925.

¹²⁸Burgess, Ernest W. "The Growth of the City," in *The City*, 50.

¹²⁹Burgess, 53.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Burgess, 54-55.

¹³²Burgess, 56.

¹³³Burgess, 55-56.

¹³⁴Burgess, 56.

While the model of immigrant settlement and verbiage on the topic has necessarily deviated from *The City* over the last century – Paris’ *banlieues* are a case in point – a tenant of the Chicago School remains relevant to policymakers: “the greater the degree of difference between spatial distributions of groups, the greater the social distance from each other.”¹³⁵ Merkel’s government introduced the Residence Rule with the same conviction, concerned that concentrations of refugees at the state and neighborhood level will impede integration – or increase their ‘social distance’ – with the host society. Germany is not alone in this trepidation. Across Europe, government efforts to prevent socioeconomic and ethnic segregation is largely viewed as a “noble cause.”¹³⁶ Accordingly, neighborhoods with mixed economic and ethnic populations are preferred over divided residential concentrations.¹³⁷ This section will start with a review of this ‘state-centered approach’ to resolving spatial segregation. I will then note academic efforts to incorporate a ‘refugee-centered approach’ on this topic, before concluding that *refugee choices* over residential locations are still not accurately accounted for in the literature.

The German government is taking pages out of the “ghettoization literature” that focuses on the repercussions of spatial segregation of minorities.¹³⁸ Cited concerns over these residential concentrations are that inhabitants will face social exclusion¹³⁹, “negative stigmatization,”¹⁴⁰ and

¹³⁵Van Liempt, Ilse. "From Dutch Dispersal to Ethnic Enclaves in the UK." *Urban Studies* 48, no. 16 (2011): 3387.

¹³⁶Musterd, Sako, and Marielle De Winter. "Conditions for Spatial Segregation: Some European Perspectives." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 22, no. 4 (1998): 665.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸ Drever, Anita I. "Separate Spaces, Separate Outcomes? Neighborhood Impacts on Minorities in Germany." *Urban Studies* 41, no. 8 (2004): 1423.

¹³⁹Lersch, Philipp M. "Place Stratification or Spatial Assimilation? Neighbourhood Quality Changes after Residential Mobility for Migrants in Germany." *Urban Studies* 50, no. 5 (2013): 1014.

¹⁴⁰Musterd, 666.

limited opportunities and stunted aspirations.¹⁴¹ The latter points stem in part from endemic poverty and unemployment in ‘ghettos.’¹⁴² Author Patrick Ireland offers his “contact hypothesis” to underscore an opportunity cost of segregation, writing “spatial proximity encourages interaction among members of racial and ethnic groups, thereby building knowledge and understanding that lead to tolerance and improved relations.”¹⁴³ This mutual ‘understanding’ then is difficult to achieve in a residential concentration. Scholars Richard Alba and Nancy Foner encapsulate the ‘ghettoization literature’ by asking if “immigrant neighborhoods” are simply “intensifiers of disadvantage.”¹⁴⁴ This ‘disadvantage’ may make minorities vulnerable to extremist ideologies,¹⁴⁵ and eventually lead to terrorism.¹⁴⁶ Based on the language in the Residence Rule, Merkel appears particularly concerned with refugees’ social isolation and resistance to learning German in residential concentrations.

A major impetus behind the government’s attention to the ‘ghettoization literature’ is Germany’s previous experience with Turkish guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*). Germany has the largest Turkish population outside of Turkey with roughly 3 million immigrants.¹⁴⁷ In a period of rapid economic growth in the 1960s, West Germany negotiated contracts with Turkey and other

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Haverig, Anika. "Managing Integration: German and British Policy Responses to the ‘Threat from Within’ Post-2001." *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 14, no. 2 (2013): 360.

¹⁴³Ireland, Patrick. "Comparing Responses to Ethnic Segregation in Urban Europe." *Urban Studies* 45, no. 7 (2008): 1334.

¹⁴⁴Alba, Richard D., and Nancy Foner. *Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015: 84.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=1910579>

¹⁴⁵Haverig, 346.

¹⁴⁶Bolt, Gideon, A. Sule Özüekren, and Deborah Phillips. "Linking Integration and Residential Segregation." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36, no. 2 (2010): 170.

¹⁴⁷Noack, Rick. “Home to 3 million Turkish immigrants, Germany fears rising tensions.” *The Washington Post*, July 18, 2016.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/07/18/home-to-3-million-turkish-immigrants-germany-fears-rising-tensions/?utm_term=.ba950673be4b

Mediterranean countries to send temporary guest workers in order to fill a labor shortage.¹⁴⁸ The Federal Republic of Germany envisioned a program where rotating guest workers stayed only a short length of time.¹⁴⁹ It was anticipated “that this system would reduce expenditure for integrating ‘guest’ workers into German society.”¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, the government initially paid little attention to the spatial segregation of these populations. The foreign laborers settled in inexpensive housing close to their jobs, which translated to concentrations near city centers and industrial or harbor areas.¹⁵¹ German businesses continued to employ the same national group, so the respective ethnic neighborhoods located around these industries grew.¹⁵² This was exacerbated further with family reunification in Germany.¹⁵³ With the end of the guest worker program in 1973 and continued influx of migrants, the government started to notice spatial segregation at the neighborhood level.¹⁵⁴ In 1973, the population of Turks in West Berlin exceeded 666,000, with over half residing in just two districts: Kreuzberg and Wedding.¹⁵⁵ In 1975, Bavaria and Baden-Wurtemberg prevented further immigration of foreigners to cities and counties with foreign populations of over 12 percent.¹⁵⁶ By 1977, 45 cities – including West Berlin – implemented a similar “exclusion policy.”¹⁵⁷ Evidently then, the Residence Rule is not an unfamiliar policy to the German government. Germany has long been concerned with spatial segregation and the formation of ghettos. This anxiety seems to be focused on the predominately

¹⁴⁸O’Loughlin, John. "Distribution and Migration of Foreigners in German Cities." *Geographical Review* 70, no. 3 (1980): 253.

¹⁴⁹Yamamoto, Kenji. "Spatial Segregation of Ethnic Minorities in German Cities." *Geographical Review of Japan*, Series B 66, no. 2 (1993): 127.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁵¹O’Loughlin, 257, 259.

¹⁵²O’Loughlin, 264.

¹⁵³O’Loughlin, 255.

¹⁵⁴Yamamoto, 128.

¹⁵⁵Yamamoto, 129.

¹⁵⁶O’Loughlin, 274.

¹⁵⁷O’Loughlin, 274-275.

Muslim Turkish residents. Even Kreuzberg in Berlin – a district not immune to gentrification – continues to symbolize the ghetto for many Germans with its history of Turkish guest worker settlement.¹⁵⁸ While the historical justification for the Residence Rule is apparent, it is flawed. The migration circumstances and settlement preferences are inherently different between guest workers and refugees. Nonetheless, Merkel’s government designed a policy not only inspired by, but reminiscent of past measures to control the movement of a markedly unique group of newcomers. Fortunately, there is a body of scholarship that counters Germany’s affair with the ‘ghettoization literature.’

The ‘refugee-centered approach’ on residential locations and integration is adopted, to a degree, by adherents to “ethnic enclave literature” who examine benefits of minority concentrations.¹⁵⁹ Alba and Foner describe these neighborhoods as potential “way stations to integration,”¹⁶⁰ a sentiment echoed by other scholars, particularly as it pertains to new immigrants.¹⁶¹ Cited advantages include increased electoral power,¹⁶² economic benefits,¹⁶³ social networks,¹⁶⁴ and conflict mitigation¹⁶⁵ and protection.¹⁶⁶ In her article, “Good Segregation, Bad Segregation,” Ceri Peach notes that segregation is “one of the key methods of accommodating difference,” and the positive implications of this spatiality is greater social

¹⁵⁸Kil, Wolfgang, and Hilary Silver. "From Kreuzberg to Marzahn: New Migrant Communities in Berlin." *German Politics & Society* 24, no. 4 (81) (2006): 96-97.

¹⁵⁹Drever, 1423.

¹⁶⁰Alba, 84.

¹⁶¹Bolt, 169, 177.

¹⁶²Ireland, 1334.

¹⁶³Ireland, 1334; Alba, 86; Musterd, 666-7.

¹⁶⁴Ireland, 1334.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶Peach, Ceri. "Good Segregation, Bad Segregation." *Planning Perspectives* 11, no. 4 (1996): 387.

cohesion and maintenance of cultural identity for the specific minority population.¹⁶⁷ Peach summarizes the ‘ghetto’ versus ‘enclave’ debate in arguing that segregation is *both* “the good and the bad; the voluntary and the imposed; the ethnic village and the ghetto.”¹⁶⁸ In this framework, a ‘refugee-centered approach’ is practiced in that academics are considering the ‘voluntary’ reasons minorities remain in residential concentrations.

The central issue in the debate over whether residential concentrations of minorities impedes or facilitates their integration is that the *refugee’s choice* is misconstrued, in both the ‘state-centered’ and ‘refugee-centered’ approaches outlined here. The argument of this thesis is a testament to the limitations of the former, as the German government incorrectly assumes that refugees will choose to concentrate together at the neighborhood level. The pitfall of the latter – as it is used in the ‘ethnic enclave literature’ – is that there is also a supposition that refugees will choose residential concentrations, or the analysis is based on observations of other minority groups that are already segregated. In Ilse Van Liempt’s detailing of the revisions to the Chicago School urban theorists’ “idea of a continuum from congregate to dispersal to assimilation,” the author writes that over time “it became clear that the ‘natural’ processes of settling in inner-city areas and then dispersing were not occurring for everybody.”¹⁶⁹ As a result, social scientists started to examine structural factors that prevent movement from residential concentrations to dispersions.¹⁷⁰ Another nuanced angle centers on the “personal choice” of minorities relative to their residential location.¹⁷¹ Peach acknowledges both the structural and ‘personal choice’ factors

¹⁶⁷Peach, 379, 386, 395.

¹⁶⁸Peach, 380.

¹⁶⁹Van Liempt, 3387.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

in spatial segregation with the claim, “Segregation is the net outcome of two gross forces, the negative preventing dispersal and the positive, fostering solidarity.”¹⁷² In the author’s view then, structural factors, such as low income levels, are the first ‘force,’ while ‘personal choice’ accounts for the second. Peach succinctly captures the debate outlined in this section with her concluding sentiment, “While ghettos should be unacceptable to planners, it seems that we should be much more tolerant of ethnic areas.”¹⁷³

The space that is overlooked in the literature on *integration* and *spatial segregation* is the *refugee’s choice to pursue residential dispersions*. As it stands, structural factors are used to explain the degree of minorities’ movement from residential concentrations to dispersions, while ‘personal choice’ explains the presence of ethnic enclaves. In this framework, a refugee’s volition to live dispersed with majority society – and accordingly the interim steps a refugee takes to make this a reality or simulate this environment – is seldom accounted for. A notable exception¹⁷⁴ is Korac, who advocates for a ‘refugee-centered approach’ in order to uncover “how refugees make place for themselves by gaining control over their lives and negotiating continuity and change within it.”¹⁷⁵ Korac carves an intellectual space that this thesis operates in with her observation that academia lacks “insight into how the people who are ‘managed’ and ‘guided’ by the receiving states actually ‘nest’ themselves in their new sociocultural environments.”¹⁷⁶ The Residence Rule may tempt scholars into believing that refugees living in residential dispersions are simply ‘guided’ by the state’s policies. This presumption prevents an understanding of

¹⁷²Peach, 379-380.

¹⁷³Peach, 393.

¹⁷⁴See also: El-Kayed; O’Loughlin.

¹⁷⁵Korac, 39.

¹⁷⁶Korac, 6.

refugees' personal reasons for turning away from residential concentrations and towards dispersions, and how the population copes with their living situations before these aspirations are realized.

The final element of this literature review worth highlighting as it pertains to *refugee perspectives on integration and refugee choices* relative to residential locations, is that my thesis focuses on *refugees* versus other minorities/migrants/immigrants. It is important to acknowledge refugees as a distinct group¹⁷⁷ because as the data analysis will showcase there are aspects specific to the refugee experience that help answer the main research question. At the same time, it is critical to examine the *experience* of each refugee, or the “individuality” in this population.¹⁷⁸ In turn, a rich narrative emerges on refugee residences and integration.

Methodology

The primary objective of the ensuing analysis is to elucidate the reasons refugees implicitly align with the German government over residential locations and integration. As evidenced in the previous sections, the government's stance on *integration* and *spatial segregation* and corresponding motivations for the Residence Rule are clear. Thus, a research methodology committed to *refugee perspectives* on integration and *refugee choices* over residential locations is imperative to answering the central research inquiry. I accomplished this through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven refugees: Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil,

¹⁷⁷Korac; Gold, Steven J. *Refugee Communities : A Comparative Field Study*. Sage Series on Race and Ethnic Relations ; v. 4. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1992.

¹⁷⁸Korac, 11.

Abru, Haaron, and Adeb (see Table 1). I conducted each of these interviews over a span of two weeks in summer 2017 at a collective accommodation (*Gemeinschaftsunterkunft*) shelter for refugees in Berlin's Marzahn-Hellersdorf district.

I selected Berlin as the site of my interviews in order to examine the refugee residential experience in an urban environment. Given that the majority of refugees internationally are integrating into metropolitan areas, this strengthens the applicability of my research.¹⁷⁹ The geographic size of the capital with 12 distinct districts allows for a better assessment of residential location preferences at the neighborhood level. There are unique aspects of both the capital and the district I visited that deserve attention. Berlin is the most populated city in Germany, with 3.69 million¹⁸⁰ inhabitants.¹⁸¹ At least 18.4 percent of the population is foreign born,¹⁸² contributing to the fact that the capital has the most refugees per square kilometer than any city in Germany.¹⁸³ Thus, Berlin is a major metropolitan city that stands out from other areas in Germany. I encourage further research on refugee residences and integration in other cities and states in Germany, in addition to comparable metropolitan "melting pots" in Europe to further the understanding of themes I uncovered in this fieldwork.

¹⁷⁹Katz, Bruce and Jessica Brandt. "The refugee crisis is a city crisis." *Brookings*, November 3, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/metropolitan-revolution/2017/11/03/the-refugee-crisis-is-a-city-crisis/>

¹⁸⁰June 2017 statistic.

¹⁸¹*Migration and Its Impact on Cities* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2017), 65.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*

¹⁸³Garrelts.

Marzahn-Hellersdorf is the fourth least populated district in Berlin, and has the third lowest percentage (4.6 percent)¹⁸⁴ of foreigners in the capital.¹⁸⁵ It is the second furthest eastern district in Berlin behind Treptow-Koepenick, and was a part of the former German Democratic Republic. The district has a distinct migration history with influxes of Russian Jewish, Russian German, Polish, and Romanian immigrants.¹⁸⁶ However, many of these individuals fall under the legal category of *Aussiedler*, where they identify as ethnic Germans returning – often from eastern and southeastern Europe – to Germany, as opposed to migrants.¹⁸⁷ Accordingly, this population has German passports and are considered German in official statistics, which explains the relatively low percentage of foreigners in Marzahn-Hellersdorf.¹⁸⁸ For my informants who hail from countries in the Middle East, this district would represent a residential dispersion as opposed to a concentration. However, that is not to say it is necessarily one of the desirable locations compared to other residential dispersions in Berlin. Many people of color consider this district and other areas of east Berlin as “no-go zones” due to episodes of racial violence.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps unsurprisingly, AfD received over 20 percent of the votes in Marzahn-Hellersdorf in the 2017 federal election, the highest of any district in Berlin.¹⁹⁰ Additional research should be undertaken in all 12 districts of Berlin. Future research designs may benefit from the fact that my interviews were conducted at a collective accommodation, which exist throughout Berlin and Germany.

¹⁸⁴2014 statistics.

¹⁸⁵“Municipality of Berlin-Marzahn-Hellersdorf.” *Urbi Stat*, 2014.

<https://ugeo.urbistat.com/AdminStat/en/de/demografia/dati-sintesi/berlin-marzahn-hellersdorf/11010/4>

¹⁸⁶Kil, 102-103.

¹⁸⁷Kil, 110.

¹⁸⁸Kil, 103.

¹⁸⁹Kil, 110.

¹⁹⁰Oltermann, Philip. “Revenge of the East”? How anger in the former GDR helped the AfD.” *The Guardian*, September 28, 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/28/is-germanys-election-result-the-revenge-of-the-east>

The selection of a collective accommodation as the source and site of my interviews increases the generalizability of the data since refugees' views on residential locations *outside* the shelter are not predicated on them already living in a private residence in a residential dispersion or concentration in Germany. In fact, each informant – with the exception of Nasim – only lived in shared refugee housing in Germany prior to the interview. Moreover, everyone – with the exception of Haaron – would likely be subject to the Residence Rule because they arrived in the capital within the last three years, live in a collective accommodation, and do not appear to qualify for any other exception, such as holding a job (*see Table 1*). In effect, these informants are the Residence Rule's target group, which make their *integration-perspectives* and *residential-choices* particularly relevant. Relatedly, in El-Kayed's and Hamann's examination of refugees' access to private housing in German cities, the authors identify a “blank spot” in the research, specifically “the moment when refugees leave the camps and try to access the housing market.”¹⁹¹ Through the Residence Rule, German states may intervene at this ‘moment’ to dictate where refugees settle. It is vital then to ascertain where refugees *would* live once the time comes for them to move out of the collective accommodation. It is worth noting that the aforementioned authors did conduct interviews with refugees mostly living in “mass accommodation camps” to find that the residents expectedly desired to move out of the shelters, and prioritized the following in their hypothetical private residences:

*the availability of infrastructures such as public transport, access to social and family networks, a wish for centrality and the desire not to be isolated in rural areas, and often a preference for mixed neighborhoods in terms of spoken languages and migration histories.*¹⁹²

¹⁹¹El-Kayed, 137.

¹⁹²El-Kayed, 143.

El-Kayed and Hamann are primarily concerned with the refugees' subsequent search for housing amid German government regulations. I take the research a significant step deeper by analyzing *why* refugees have particular stances on residential dispersions and concentrations, especially as it relates to integration. Interviewing refugees in this *prospective* period of residential transition yielded insights independent of whether or not the Residence Rule is in place. In this light, even though Berlin has not yet implemented the Residence Rule, I am confident that the data can be analyzed alongside interviews conducted in collective accommodations in all of Berlin's districts, German cities, or even in urban-area shelters outside the country.¹⁹³ Refugee perspectives on integration and choice over residential locations are inherently unique in these liminal settings.

I arranged interviews at a collective accommodation in the Marzahn-Hellersdorf district after contacting numerous shelters across Berlin's 12 districts. Eventually, a few staff members took an interest in my research and allowed me to conduct interviews at their collective accommodation. At the recommendation of a staff member, I initially just observed the shelter and shadowed staff in order to become a relatively "familiar face" for the residents. I was given flexibility in arranging the interviews, in part due to the broad sample criteria in my research design: I planned to interview refugee adults (over age 18) who were in Germany legally. While the collective accommodation staff did not provide the protection statuses of each refugee I interviewed, I was assured that each resident in the shelter was officially registered in some capacity and therefore in the country legally. Staff members identified some residents as

¹⁹³There was no indication in my interviews that the informants were aware of the Residence Rule. Considering that the measures were not in place in Berlin, this makes the results even more intriguing given that the respondents still conveyed preferences for residential dispersions without any government-imposed restrictions.

potential informants prior to the interview request, while other interviews were arranged spontaneously after meeting refugees in the common areas of the collective accommodation. Occasionally, a staff member or shelter resident assisted with my interview requests. There is a potential for bias in my sampling method due to the fact that staff facilitated some introductions, and other interviews were arranged based on language competencies and interpreter availability. I was able to conduct interviews in Arabic, English, Farsi, and German. Ultimately, I conducted interviews with seven refugees at the collective accommodation: Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb. Also represented in this thesis are observations and insights gained through visits to the collective accommodation and conversations with various actors who work with refugees in Berlin, including shelter staff, social workers, and a government official.

All of the interviews were held at the collective accommodation and averaged over 45 minutes each. I used interpreters (four in total) for all but one of my interviews (*see Table 1*). Each interview was structured as a one-on-one conversation (not including the interpreter), and every effort was made to conduct the interview in a private setting. However, on a few occasions the interviews were necessarily conducted in common areas of the collective accommodation where other refugees were present. I believe this had a negligible effect on the interviews given the specific circumstances. In my conversations with Yado and Adeeb there were staff members from the shelter present. The staff members were listening in on the interview with Yado, and one staff member provided the interpretation for Adeeb's interview. I do not believe Yado was influenced by the presence of staff as he was the most outspoken of any informant, particularly in sharing his negative experience at the collective accommodation. Perhaps this was due to the staff members in the room, but it appeared to be more a marker of his candidness. In Adeeb's

case, he appeared reserved in his answers when asked to speak to his experience in the shelter. For both informants, the presence of staff members should only have had a negligible impact on their interviews as a whole since much of the conversation focused on residential situations outside the collective accommodation.

In my initial research proposal, I set out to examine the intersections between residential locations and integration with a focus on how a refugee's current residential situation impacted perceptions of their own integration into German society. The research scope shifted after facing difficulties arranging for an equal number of interviews with refugees living both inside and outside the shelter. In addition, I was struck by how the refugees' experiences in the collective accommodation not only influenced their current feelings of integration, but how it informed their outlook on residential situations outside the shelter relative to their ongoing efforts to integrate. In this sense, the research angle in my proposal became a code in the current analysis. After the first few interviews, I came to realize that I could capture refugee perspectives on *both* residential dispersions and concentrations by interviewing refugees who were in a unique living situation in the form of a collective accommodation.

The general outline of my interviews started with questions concerning the refugee's experience inside the collective accommodation. I then transitioned to asking about the informant's aspirations for a residential situation outside the collective accommodation but still within the host society, and how they anticipated it would compare with the shelter. Subsequent interview questions assessed residential location preferences, especially as it related to elements of their integration. In addition, I asked what the interviewee believed Germans thought of the

refugee presence in the country. Finally, I sought the informant's insight on optimal residential situations for refugees in general.

I transcribed each of my audio-recorded interviews manually, alternating between intelligent verbatim and paraphrased transcriptions. I resorted to the latter when the interpreter was providing a summary or if the topic discussed did not warrant exacting detail. I employed an inductive analysis method after completing the transcriptions. My initial impressions of the interviews led to discovering an alignment between the refugees and the state relative to the principles of the Residence Rule. I subsequently created extensive profiles of each informant in order to further articulate this alignment and situate each refugee within the main research question. To find answers to the central inquiry, I first used an "initial coding" technique on four interviews to condense the data and extract recurring content. I then conducted "focused coding" that prioritized themes with analytic value, or potential answers to my research question. At this stage I looked for similar focused codes that emerged across the four interviews to form preliminary refugee sentiments. This process was subject to elaboration and interpretation based on the major themes in this thesis: refugee residences and integration. Finally, I compared the focused codes of the remaining three interviews to the preliminary refugee sentiments and amended them accordingly to create the predominant refugee sentiments detailed in this thesis.

There are a few potential limitations in my fieldwork and my methodology that are necessary to highlight. The first item concerns the size and demographics (gender and nationality in particular) of my sample. I do not purport that interviewing seven refugees – with six males and three Iraqis – is a representative sample of the refugees in Berlin. Therefore, I do not

quantify or comprehensively delineate connections between informants' demographics and interview responses, except where I determine there is an especially compelling association. While the generalizability of the specific data in this thesis may be limited, I believe its *contribution* to refugee and forced migration studies is significant, in large part due to my methodological approach that prioritized the refugee perspective. As the following data analysis will show, the in-depth interviews yield nuanced insight into the intersection between refugee residences and integration. The second limitation in this research concerns the languages used in the interviews. Due to budget constraints, I could not hire professional interpreters. As a result, four of the interviews were conducted in the refugees' respective second language (*see Table 1*). In addition, English functioned as a foreign language for each of my interpreters. I attempted to remedy the situation by utilizing my own knowledge of Arabic and inviting informants and interpreters to use alternative languages for clarifications. In addition, I revised interview questions to compensate for any linguistic confusions that arose. Despite some language barriers, I am confident the informants' voices are accurately captured. It is my hope that scholars will be inspired to undertake further research on the topic of refugee residences and integration that account for these limitations. Additional interviews in different locations will only yield a richer understanding of the refugee sentiments I uncovered in this thesis.

Data Analysis

The organization of this data analysis reflects the larger framework of the thesis. The central research question - *why do refugees implicitly align with the German government's*

perspective on residential locations and integration at the neighborhood level? - is posed after uncovering a dual convergence between the respondents and state:

First, the refugees conveyed preferences for living in residential dispersions with Germans and Berliners. Second, the informants expressed that residential concentrations of refugees impede this population's integration into majority society, and that residential dispersions facilitate integration.

The main distinction between these two points of convergence is that the former draws on the respondents' personal preferences, while the latter invites the informants to speak to the optimal residential location in terms of integration for refugees in general (a population they may not include themselves in). Both statements represent the informants' convictions. However, as expected each refugee is not necessarily a flag-bearer on *both* fronts, as "refugees are not a homogenous category of people whose needs can fit a single so-called integration model."¹⁹⁴ Yado, Nasim, and Abru fit both points, while Fathi, Fadhil, and Haaron exclusively fit the second point.¹⁹⁵ Of the four informants not listed under the first point of convergence, only Haaron prefers residential concentrations. I was unable to make a determination for Fathi and Fadhil. Adeeb does not sync with either point for reasons outlined later in the analysis. The first section of the data analysis addresses this overall distribution to demonstrate that the two points reinforce - not preclude - each other, and the main outliers – Haaron and Adeeb - still relate to

¹⁹⁴Korac, 18.

¹⁹⁵The second point of convergence has two sub-points relative to informants' comments on residential concentrations and/or dispersions. It should be noted that Fadhil and Fathi are split between the two sub-points. Fadhil believes residential concentrations impede integration - "When too many Arabs gather from different places, problems are made" (Fadhil, 40s, M, Iran) - but his position on residential dispersions could not be determined. Fathi acknowledges the benefit of residential dispersions - "If I went to this apartment [in a German majority neighborhood] with 50 words, after one month I could have 100 words of German" (Fathi, 70s, M, Iraq) - but does not voice any criticisms over residential concentrations in and of itself. Abru is skeptical that integration will occur, and therefore minimizes the impact of residential dispersions on populations of refugees who do not want to integrate. She is adamant though that residential concentrations impede a refugee's transition to the host society (Abru, 50s, F, Iraq).

the other informants over a shared desire to integrate. Due to this interconnectedness, the second section of the data analysis draws on sentiments from all interviewees - irrespective of where they sit relative to the two points of convergence – in order to answer the main inquiry of the thesis. It is critical to examine the insights and experiences of all respondents because each individual is naturally engaged in the process of integration and the navigation of space ‘between the ground and the air.’

A few key concepts in these points of convergence require clarification. The concept of *integration* proved difficult to translate for some informants, especially if I tried to elicit a refugee’s definition of the term. Yado, Abru, and Adeb all understood the concept and offered their own interpretations of *integration* which are provided in the analysis that follows. In discussing *integration* with the other informants, I needed to break-down the concept. I did this by drawing on responses from the refugees who offered definitions of *integration* and asking the other informants open-ended questions, such as why they voiced a preference for one living situation over another. Through this process, I learned aspects of *integration* that refugees consider important, which I applied to subsequent interviews. Ultimately, the data analysis represents the informants’ comprehensive understanding of *integration*, whether they were speaking to it directly or indirectly.

In order to determine some refugees’ conceptualizations of their desired *living situations* relative to residential *concentrations* and *dispersions*, I needed to comprehensively examine their interviews. Since all the informants conveyed preferences for private residences, at times their responses focused on this residential arrangement without explicit reference to the accompanying

residential location. I remedied this by looking for evidence elsewhere in the interview that suggested where the refugees envisioned these apartments to be located. In each case where it was possible to make a determination – with the exception of Haaron who cited a specific neighborhood – a residential dispersion best characterized the desired location of the private residence. This type of residential location is part of the reason the informants desire apartments.

Section One: Unexpected Convergence between Refugees and the Government

Analyzing the cases of each informant reveals a common denominator between the two points of convergence: *residential dispersions are viewed favorably to residential concentrations*, albeit with different articulations.

I posed similar interview questions to Yado, Nasim, Abru, and Haaron regarding their residential location preferences for districts or neighborhoods within Berlin. Yado is attracted to the diversity outside the collective accommodation (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan). To illustrate his preference, Nasim describes his ideal neighborhood as “full of Germans and very, very few refugees” (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). Abru is drawn to an apartment because she believes it will be in a residential location that is inherently dispersed (Abru, 50s, F, Iraq).¹⁹⁶ Haaron, in contrast, cited a clear preference for a residential concentration. I asked him, “what district [in Berlin] do you want to live? Is there a certain district where you would like [...] your apartment [to be located]?” In response, Haaron listed the neighborhoods of Kreuzberg, Schoeneberg, and Charlottenberg. He then added Tiergarten, reasoning that “it’s also in the center plus there is

¹⁹⁶In this light, Abru is not opposed to living near refugees because ultimately any location outside the concentrated collective accommodation will feel dispersed by comparison.

many Muslims. And also many mosques. You can pray every Friday there. [...] Also [there is a] Muslim supermarket” (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan). Tiergarten is in the district of Mitte which has the highest percentage¹⁹⁷ of foreigners in Berlin, at 28.2 percent.¹⁹⁸ The other locations listed are in districts with similarly high percentages of foreigners. Haaroon’s preference is *expected* from the perspective of the German government. In turn then, it spotlights the *unexpected* outlooks of Yado, Nasim, and Abru since the refugees *did not* list Berlin neighborhoods with high percentages of foreigners, nor did they state preferences for living with others with the same religion or nationality.¹⁹⁹ In fact, Nasim expressed his residential location preference by listing Marzahn-Hellersdorf due to the absence of refugees and the formidable presence of Germans (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). This district has just 4.6 percent foreigners,²⁰⁰ which is a stark contrast to Mitte’s demographics.²⁰¹

Haaroon’s residential location preference appears to align perfectly with the German government’s concerns that prompted the Residence Rule, specifically the fear that concentrations of Muslims will contribute to spatial segregation that is both a barrier to integration and a carrier of terrorism. However, a thorough analysis of Haaroon’s interview reveals the limitations of translating his desire to live in Tiergarten to his stance on residential locations and integration. Haaroon fits the second point of convergence in his acknowledgement of the positive effects of residential dispersions and the negative effects of residential

¹⁹⁷2014 statistic.

¹⁹⁸“Municipality of Berlin-Mitte.” *Urbi Stat*, 2014.

<https://ugeo.urbistat.com/AdminStat/en/de/demografia/dati-sintesi/berlin-mitte/11001/4>

¹⁹⁹Religion was not collected as demographic information but some informants appeared to have been religious minorities in their countries of origin. The effect this may have on their residential location preferences is an area for future research.

²⁰⁰2014 statistic.

²⁰¹“Municipality of Berlin-Marzahn-Hellersdorf.”

concentrations relative to integration. He emphasizes the importance of interacting with Germans in order to increase language proficiency and places a premium on a refugee's residential location in this respect. Interestingly, he underlines that even living in a refugee shelter - as long as it is located in the city center - can facilitate language acquisition because there are more activities and amenities refugees can take advantage of outside their residence, naturally leading to more interactions with Germans. In response to the question of what he thought of a neighborhood similar to Kreuzberg²⁰² he responded:

No, it's not good, it's not good. It's not good if you are living among those people who are speaking in your native language because you will never learn the language. You have to live among the German people then you can learn the language faster and easier. (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan)

Earlier in the interview Haaroon demonstrated his own commitment to learning German: "it is better to communicate with people if you are talking with German people in {the} German language" (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan). Even though Haaroon counters the first point of convergence, he still recognizes the efficacy of residential dispersions for other refugees' integration. Moreover, his *personal* preference for residential concentrations is clearly not an indictment of his overall effort to integrate.

There are logical explanations for why Haaroon prefers a residential concentration while the other refugees gravitate towards residential dispersions. Haaroon is the only informant with a job in Berlin and has lived in Germany for 4.5 years, compared to average of just under 1 year 10 months for the other respondents. Nasim is the next highest, at 2.5 years (*see Table 1*). This

²⁰²Kreuzberg was framed by the interviewer as a neighborhood with a lot of immigrants living together and speaking in their native languages.

demographic distinction is significant because Haaron does not face the same immediacy to integrate as the other refugees. In analyzing the process of “emplacement” refugees undertake in their host country – to contrast with their displacement in their home-country – Korac posits that newly arrived refugees in particular “function in more than one social world – the one that is familiar and the other that has yet to become known.”²⁰³ Since Haaron has resided in Germany for a relatively significant length of time and has a job that guarantees daily interaction with locals, he does not need his residence to be located in the ‘social world’ of the host society. In contrast, I believe Yado, Nasim, and Abru gravitate towards a residential dispersion because the German ‘social world’ is still so unknown. There is a greater urgency to learn the German language and culture, and the immersive experience in the right residential location can expedite this integration process. Perhaps in a few years and after acquiring jobs, the other informants will feel comfortable using their place of employment as their main way to connect to the host society. Another potential factor in Haaron’s pursuit of a residential concentration is that he wants to live with Muslims while other refugees may be averse to this demographic. He shared that when living in another shelter his roommate at the time criticized him for praying. Haaron was particularly frustrated because he accepted his roommate’s decision to denounce his own Muslim identity, yet the roommate was not understanding of Haaron’s faith. He concluded his story with, “Just respect my religion and I will respect your religion” (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan). With this background, it is understandable that Haaron would feel more comfortable in a private apartment in a location surrounded by Muslims.

²⁰³Korac, 12, 42.

The other outlier in my informants is Adeeb, who negotiates his integration into host society in a unique way, independent of any residential location. Adeeb clarified that he is indifferent to which area of Berlin he lives in after detailing his efforts to move into an apartment. One explanation for this ambiguity is that Adeeb conceptualizes the connection between integration and residential locations different from the other informants. Speaking to the concept of integration and the steps refugees need to take in order to integrate with the host society, Adeeb stated, “Maybe one can learn from the Germans’ traditions and customs. When you are in Germany you have to learn everything” (Adeeb, 30s, M, Iraq). He then underscored refugees’ obligation to ‘learn everything’ in order to integrate, which may involve asking locals or the appropriate German authority for assistance or information. I then asked if this outreach was easier if a refugee lived in an apartment versus a shelter. Adeeb responded that a refugee will only be able to move into an apartment if he has asked enough questions. This exchange shows that Adeeb is viewing a living situation not as a facilitator or impediment to integration but a testament to how well a refugee has integrated into German society. Since Adeeb characterizes integration as a process of learning through asking questions and believes that is the only way to obtain an apartment, the respondent believes living in a private residence is a sign of integration. Adeeb’s commitment to integrating - and therefore living in an apartment - is evidenced with his statement, “We as refugees have to integrate with the Germans” (Adeeb, 30s, M, Iraq).

Both Haaron’s and Adeeb’s cases demonstrate the interconnection between the informants, despite different articulations of integration relative to residential locations. The fact

that all the refugees want to integrate informs the approach of the next section of the data analysis, which captures sentiments from all informants to answer the central research question.

Section Two: Reasons for the Unexpected Alignment

There are two dominant refugee sentiments that explain why refugees align with the German government's perspective on residential locations and integration. In the subsections to follow, each sentiment is delineated in order to highlight significant themes across the interviews with Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb that connect the refugees' perspectives to the objective of answering the main inquiry of the thesis.

Sentiment One: Cultural Exchange

The refugees endorse interactions with Germans and Berliners as a way to learn about one another's cultures. In turn, refugees believe this will yield increased integration and conflict mitigation with the host society. This translates to refugees favoring apartments and residential dispersions over collective accommodations and residential concentrations.

The inspiration for the title of this sentiment, "Cultural Exchange," and subsequent subtitles, is the summarizing view on integration that Yado provided at the end of his interview:

*Just to wrap it up in terms of the integration, let people integrate together like physically, like get together so I can learn from [Germans and Berliners] and they can learn different things about my culture and I learn about their culture.
(Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan)*

This emphasis on *interaction* between refugees and the host society to foster cultural exchange is a prominent view of the informants. The refugees often communicate this idea as a frustration

over the forced interactions with collective accommodation residents and the difficulty of interacting with individuals outside the shelter. Yado faults the German government for not allowing “integrating or [...] mixing with people outside” the collective accommodation, and thus preventing refugees to “learn or integrate with others.” (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan). He illustrates the effectiveness of these interactions by explaining that if a Syrian was placed with other Syrians for two to three years, then that individual would not change. But, if the same Syrian was placed between two Germans, then there would be a noticeable change in his or her ability to speak German and understand the German culture. To understand the refugees’ desire for cultural exchange outside the collective accommodation, it is necessary to discern the culture inside the shelter.

Collective Accommodations as Liminal Environments

Despite the outward appearance of the collective accommodation as a diverse space²⁰⁴ in terms of nationalities represented, certain refugees made it clear that this diversity has its limitations. To a degree, this view is tied to the respondent’s demographics. Yado – a Kurd - expressed discontent with the large presence of Afghans and Syrians at his collective accommodation. In his opinion, these residents are close-minded and anti-social:

If there is someone who is German, [...] American, [or] French, you [can] speak with this person for a bit and so on and so forth and you learn different things from different cultures but in here it is very limited. Just Syrians, Afghans. (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan)

²⁰⁴Just observing the children playing and speaking to each other in a common German language is one indication of this diversity.

Yado clarifies that he does not believe that the Afghans and Syrians are close-minded in a religious sense, so perhaps he is pointing to a social divide between Arabs and non-Arabs because he made it very clear that he does not consider himself Arab. Another refugee vocalized a similar sentiment, although did cite religion as a factor. However, based on other responses, I believe discontent with collective accommodation residents goes beyond demographics. For example, based on Yado's experience, Haaron – an Afghan – should be among the most social in the shelter because he can interact with his countrymen. However, Haaron clarified “I don't communicate with people here” because he dislikes the residents (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan). It is telling that Haaron wants to move outside the collective accommodation only to move into a neighborhood with high concentrations of Muslims, and presumably Afghans. There is something inherent to the shelter that dissuades Haaron from interacting with the same demographics he plans on living with. Considering that Haaron wants to integrate into Germany, there is a sense that interaction with any population outside the collective accommodation is seen as a step towards this goal.

I argue that a unitary culture of liminality in the collective accommodation disincentivizes interactions between residents. Abru helps articulate this point. In stressing the importance of living situations to refugees in Germany, Abru believes that if a refugee lives in a private residence then they would be more interested in making connections with others. In the same response, the informant notes that most residents in the collective accommodation will become depressed because of their losses in the country of origin and their difficult experience in the host country. Abru then clarifies that there is no difference between nationalities or religions in this respect - all refugees feel this despair because all refugees are human. Abru notes in a

separate answer that many refugees may arrive in Germany hoping to change their predicament in their country of origin, but when faced with the realities of living in Berlin - particularly in a collective accommodation - they lose this faith (Abru, 50s, F, Iraq). This collection of thoughts is insightful. The pervasive feelings of depression, stress, despair, and cynicism characterize the liminal experience of many refugees. With the high concentration of refugees living in the collective accommodation, a culture of liminality emerges. There is little motivation for meaningful interactions or connections within the collective accommodation because the refugees face massive uncertainty.

Comments from shelter residents illuminate the social climate. Nasim describes the interactions at the collective accommodation as follows:

We have a slight relation of like, 'good morning, good afternoon' [...]. But there is no strong relation with the people here. (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria)

Yado explains that he does not feel integrated because he is living with people - specifically Syrians and Afghans - who are pessimistic and do not love life (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan).

Haaroon has given up on interactions with fellow residents and mostly stays in his room. A staff member confirmed that this social withdrawal is common for many refugees at the collective accommodation, elaborating that while there is communication between residents, these interactions are surface level. These references are not intended to imply that encounters among residents are all negative. There are positive aspects. Fadhil notes, "We [at the collective accommodation] are all here brothers" (Fadhil, 40s, M, Iran).²⁰⁵ Abru shares that she tries to

²⁰⁵A younger refugee sitting in on the interview laughed at this statement, perhaps signaling a bit of sarcasm on Fadhil's part.

provide emotional support for other residents (Abu, 50s, F, Iraq). But there is still a sharp contrast between articulations of interactions inside the collective accommodation versus what the refugees aspire to outside the shelter.

This disparity is further explained by the integration process, or the “processes of place making.”²⁰⁶ Korac notes that while a “liminal existence” can be a “disempowering experience” for refugees, it is also something they “actively confront in a variety of ways in their search for and creation of solutions to their predicament.”²⁰⁷ The collective accommodation in its present form is not a ‘solution’ to a refugee’s ‘liminal existence,’ and actually appears to exacerbate this state of being. Nonetheless, refugees often need to negotiate this living situation as they attempt to integrate into the host society. It is logical that refugees do not engage with the collective accommodation any more than necessary, as it would be counterproductive at their stage in the integration process. As a result, the informants prioritize interactions outside the shelter over relations with fellow residents. This translates to a desire to move out of the collective accommodation and into an apartment, and often entails a preference for residential dispersions over concentrations. Together this living situation embedded within the host society is conceived by the refugees as a sure way to break out of a liminal environment and into a learning environment.

²⁰⁶Korac, 7.

²⁰⁷Korac, 10.

Apartments as Learning Environments

Interactions between refugees and the host society is a means of cultural exchange, which results in increased integration and conflict mitigation. The informants highlight that these important interactions are not just a way for refugees to learn about Germans and Berliners, but a way for the host society to learn about refugees. Although the respondents look forward to the opportunity to change living situations for this reason, they attempt to interact with Germans and Berliners in the interim through convening their own social groups. A desire to invite others over to the collective accommodation is one indication of this proactive approach. While it is not explicitly clear who the refugees would invite, there are suggestions that the informants are keen on hosting members of the host society.

Yado expresses a frustration that his guests at the collective accommodation were not allowed to stay late. Based on other exchanges during the interview with Yado, it appears he wants to host others in order to compensate for the demographics inside the shelter. After asserting that the most important thing for a refugee's integration is not to keep him in a shelter, and instead "put him out there with the Germans," Yado explains that the collective accommodation would improve if Europeans, Americans, and other nationalities lived there (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan). These comments appear to be connected to Yado's commitment to intercultural interaction.

I immediately sensed Nasim's eagerness to host others during our interview. After agreeing to a conversation, Nasim invited the interpreter and me into his room. Instead of

escorting us through the building's front door and hallway, Nasim asked that we enter his room directly through the tall first-floor window. He invited us to take a seat on the couch and served tea. I noticed the walls were specially painted and adorned with tapestries. These observations before even posing the first interview question are significant. I believe Nasim wanted his room at the collective accommodation to simulate a private apartment as much as possible. The window functioned as his front door and he clearly took pride in his space, pointing out all the decorations. I learned that he has five German friends – a number he proudly prefaced with, “Even though I am living here [in the collective accommodation]” – and even more German friends from a previous shelter who would invite him over for coffee and tea (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). While Nasim feels a part of German society - “I’ve been here for two and a half years and I know about the culture and their habits and everything” - he acknowledges that his integration would increase if he lived in an apartment: “For example, if I’m going back to my flat I have a neighbor here, a neighbor there, so I’ll get mixed with them” (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). Clearly, Nasim understands the value of cultural exchange. Even as a resident of the collective accommodation he is forming relationships with Germans and appears eager to host them in his current residential situation.

‘I [can] learn about their culture’

Yado, Nasim, and other informants are anxious to learn about the host society to improve integration and mitigate conflict, and take responsibility and initiative to make this happen. The refugees speak to both the tangible as well as the abstract aspects of integration. Nasim wants his kids to learn the German language and culture and believes this can best be achieved living

outside the collective accommodation, citing that there are too many cultures represented in the collective accommodation to make for a conducive learning environment (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). Fathi also recognizes the benefits of language immersion. He explains the relative ease of learning German if he were to live in an apartment: “A word that you hear is better than a word that you read” (Fathi, 70s, M, Iraq). Earlier in the interview Fathi shared that he was enrolled in a German language course but left because it is difficult to learn German at his age. Evidently he is still committed to the language component of integration with his desire to interact with Germans instead of a textbook. Yado conceptualizes integration as progress, explaining that despite living in Germany for multiple years he has not progressed in any way because it is difficult to learn about life outside the collective accommodation (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan).

Yado speaks to another value of learning about Germans and Berliners: conflict mitigation. He explains his apprehension in interacting with this population, saying that “some of them they don’t treat you as a human being they just treat you as just a chair” (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan). When asked to elaborate on this fear, Yado was quick to correct the interviewer: “There is not fear, there is totally no fear in dealing with them or being anxious. But breaking my feelings is not nice” (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan). In response to a subsequent question of whether his experience with Germans would be more positive if he lived outside of the collective accommodation, he confirmed yes and explained:

I will get to know how [Germans] think, at least I wouldn't be anxious of [them] breaking my feelings because at least I would get to know how they function, how they think.
(Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan)

Yado believes that even learning about a German's negative side will benefit him in avoiding, or at least preparing for, potential conflict. There is a certain utility to understanding a hypothetical adversary.

'They can learn different things about my culture'

Haaroon's excitement over the prospect of hosting Germans points to another benefit of intercultural interactions: the host society can learn about refugees. Haaroon explains that in an apartment he can invite Germans over and cook for them: "I can invite them and say, 'see what I cook, you can test how it is.' Because there are many people that want to try [Afghani food]" (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan). This remark is significant because Haaroon is speaking to the reciprocal aspect of integration. He wants Germans to experience and accept positive parts of his culture. Fadhil also references the value of Germans learning about refugees, explaining that it is important for the host society to understand the dire situation in a refugee's country of origin and the suffering refugees endure coming to Germany (Fadhil, 40s, M, Iran).

The respondents also focus on the benefits of Germans and Berliners understanding the refugees as individuals. The subsequent breakdown of group-based stereotypes is a form of conflict mitigation. Haaroon confronts a common stereotype that refugees will not work or learn German. He recalls an interaction with a German woman he met while working at a store in Berlin. The lady remarked that she was pleased Haaroon was working and could speak German well because this was not the case for many refugees. According to the informant, the woman said, "I want those people who doesn't work, who doesn't speak German...I want the German

government to send them back because we don't want people like that'" (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan). Since Haaroon experiences these types of positive interactions with Germans at work, he is conscious of how individual actions on the part of the refugee can change the narrative and image for this population as a whole. Later in the interview, he advises that all refugees follow his lead to work and learn German: "If you are working here, we are good and then every people think 'oh [refugees] are good people'" (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan). The reason Haaroon is motivated to change Germans' opinions of refugees is not due to one off-hand comment he heard at work, but instead stems from a basic need to feel safe. He explains that he feels "so scared" returning from work late at night because the neighborhood surrounding the collective accommodation is "the place from Nazis" (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan). Haaroon formed this fear after other residents explained that they were advised by Germans not to sit on a bench in the neighborhood because neo-Nazis live close by.

Nasim also speaks to the fringe neo-Nazis that still exist in the capital. In arguing that every nationality has its good and bad individuals, he states, "Germans are just a little bit Nazi. They look at the [foreigner] as if he is not a human or someone less" (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). It is surprising that, despite the recognition of these violent elements, the refugees are not inclined to withdraw into separate refugee concentrations. In fact, Nasim lists Marzahn – 'the place from Nazis' according to Haaroon – as his preferred residential location (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). Living in a residential dispersion is seen by the informants as a way to increase interactions with Germans and Berliners and ultimately counter the harmful stereotypes the host society may harbor against refugees.

A few informants speak to the negative associations Germans have of Arab refugees in particular. Haaron points to the German fear that Arab refugees are terrorists, explaining that he used to travel on public transportation with a backpack but he now just carries a small bag to avoid the worrying stares that he is a suicide bomber (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan). Following the December 19, 2016 Berlin terrorist attack carried out by Anis Amri, a Tunisian failed asylum seeker, Haaron says he felt nervous because:

just one person do something bad and then we [Muslim refugees] got the problem. Because every [German] don't think 'oh he is good, he is not good,' but [Germans] are thinking, 'oh, every Muslim is a terrorist [...].' (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan)

To compound this stereotype, Arab refugees are often assumed to be Muslim. Haaron is describing the process of stereotyping exactly, where the individual is subjected to irrational fears of entire religions. This unfortunate reality is part of Haaron's motivation to work and learn German. Fathi has first-hand experience where intercultural interactions led to a new understanding of Arabs. While riding a bus - a particularly stressful setting for both Germans and refugees according to Haaron - Fathi noticed an elderly German man with a walker trying to find a seat. No one on the bus assisted the man so Fathi vacated his spot and helped him sit. The German asked if Fathi was Arab and was surprised to learn of the refugee's ethnicity, thanking him for his actions. Fathi concludes his story by saying, "When you work for humanity, it's good" (Fathi, 70s, M, Iraq). Fathi notes that he fortunately has not yet experienced negative interactions with Germans, but this anecdote suggests he is at least aware of the tensions that exist between majority and minority society and envisions steps that refugees can take to mitigate potential conflict.

The intercultural interactions detailed above serve as *a way to learn* for both the refugees and the host society and point to the fact that integration and conflict mitigation are both two-way streets that require increased understanding from both populations. Korac emphasizes the importance of this “web of interpersonal relationships [...] at the micro-level of society” in order to be “part of the local social fabric.”²⁰⁸ It is logical then that residential situations at the neighborhood level of society are considered by refugees as ways to increase cultural exchange. An apartment located in a residential dispersion is seen as a conducive learning environment – not just so the refugees can better understand Germans and Berliners, but so the latter can understand refugees on an individual level. The spatial aspect of this dynamic warrants more discussion.

Visible as an Individual and Invisible as a Group

In the pursuit of cultural exchange, refugees gravitate toward residential dispersions rather than concentrations because the former makes them *visible as an individual and invisible on a group level*. Refugees anticipate that this spatiality will result in increased integration and conflict mitigation. A major influence on this outlook is the collective accommodation, which fuels a desire for the opposite residential situation.

In the Berlin context, a collective accommodation is one of the most visible markings of the refugee influx. Although significant attention is fixed on emergency shelters, in the long-term collective accommodations in the current form may draw the most scrutiny from locals because

²⁰⁸Korac, 41.

of the fact that they are often newly constructed facilities built exclusively for refugees in areas of the capital where the structures do not blend in. Moreover, Germans and Berliners are faced with the prospect that residents in the collective accommodation may be their neighbors for a long time. As a result, these spaces risk fomenting tension between refugees and the host society. In reviewing the impetuses behind European countries' residential dispersion policies targeted at asylum seekers and refugees, the authors of *Spreading the 'Burden'?* claim that some governments are concerned with "community relations" and address the "visibility" of minorities accordingly.²⁰⁹ The scholars elaborate that, "although numbers are important in themselves, they are amplified by concentration."²¹⁰ The number of residents at a collective accommodation may not be overwhelming, but they certainly contain a high concentration of refugees. Thus, these shelters can become targets of stereotypes and violence. In fact, dispersal policies in Europe are often justified as a way to "undermine prejudice through the debunking of stereotypes."²¹¹ Moreover, it is a strategy of "placating disadvantaged local people" who feel refugees are competing with them over resources.²¹² Haaron acknowledged this sense of entitlement that neo-Nazis have (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan).

In this setting, it is logical that refugees aspire to a residential situation precisely opposite that of a collective accommodation. Residential concentrations become closely associated with conflict and difficulties of integrating. Thus, even if refugees move to a private apartment, there is a hesitation to situate that residence in an ethnic enclave. A residential dispersion appears to offer refugees the best chance of becoming invisible as a group and visible as an individual. As a

²⁰⁹Robinson, 164.

²¹⁰Ibid.

²¹¹Ibid.

²¹²Robinson, 23.

result, individual actions a refugee takes to integrate are actually noticed instead of being superseded by the raw emotions a collective accommodation often elicits, such as fear and anger, which incite conflict. Controlling this outcome hinges on interacting with the host society, which the refugees anticipate will only increase while living in an apartment in a residential dispersion.

The relationship between intercultural interactions and residential locations for minorities can be better understood with author Robert Putnam's concept of social capital.²¹³ Authors Karin Borevi and Bo Bengtsson utilize Putnam's bridging and bonding social capital theories²¹⁴ in their exploration of how housing and integration policies for new urban migrants account for the social environment.²¹⁵ The authors note that, "social capital is created when people meet and socialize," and access to these "social environments is a more pressing issue for new arrivals than native citizens, since the former typically lack contacts and social networks to support their integration to the institutions of the new country."²¹⁶ The refugees living in the collective accommodation are anxious to 'meet and socialize' with Germans and Berliners in order to build their own social capital. Access to these individualized interactions is optimized in apartments in residential dispersions. While Borevi and Bengtsson connect the ideas of social environments, social capital, and integration, the authors characterize the interplay among the three as being

²¹³Putnam, Robert D., Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

²¹⁴Putnam, Robert D. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

²¹⁵Borevi, Karin, and Bo Bengtsson. "The Tension between Choice and Need in the Housing of Newcomers: A Theoretical Framework and an Application on Scandinavian Settlement Policies." *Urban Studies* 52, no. 14 (2015): 2599-615.

²¹⁶Borevi, 2602.

tense because they focus on the state perspective, or the “national political discourses on settlement policy.”²¹⁷

The first tension the authors identify is that “between choice and need,” where it is assumed that the neighborhood a refugee chooses will be at odds with the neighborhood the state deems as the best location for a refugee to settle in.²¹⁸ In the context of my thesis, this assumed tension is between a residential concentration and a residential dispersion. However, my findings show that there is in fact no tension between ‘choice and need’ because refugees’ need for interactions (social capital) informs their choice of residential locations (dispersions). The German state also believes the refugees need to live in residential dispersions. By prioritizing the refugee perspective over the state perspective in this analysis, I can dispel the first tension.

The second tension Borevi and Bengtsson detail is over “what particular social environment (if any) should be promoted via state measures.”²¹⁹ The authors identify “two opposite strategies” that correspond to Putnam’s distinction between bridging and bonding social capital.²²⁰ The bridging social capital approach leads to “socially mixed environments, since this could enable integration to the overarching citizenship community.”²²¹ In contrast, the bonding social capital approach advocates for “certain subnational cultural identities” in order to preserve multiculturalism.²²² Relative to my thesis, these approaches describe residential dispersions

²¹⁷Borevi, 2599.

²¹⁸Borevi, 2602.

²¹⁹Ibid.

²²⁰Ibid.

²²¹Borevi, 2603.

²²²Ibid.

(bridging social capital) or residential concentrations (bonding social capital). The authors conclude that “it is virtually impossible to achieve a social environment that is both bridging and bonding at the same time.”²²³ However, in the respondents’ perspective, integration and multiculturalism are not mutually exclusive categories. The refugees pursue and advocate for intercultural interactions in residential dispersions as a means to integrate or mitigate conflict, but without dismissing multiculturalism. The respondents voice a commitment to their cultural identity, even as they demonstrate a desire to integrate. Fathi explains this approach perfectly:

I can't forget my culture because it is my culture but the way of communicating with the other people and merging with the other community, the German community, might change. (Fathi, 70s, M, Iraq)

Korac arrives at a similar conclusion in her use of Putnam’s social capital. She writes that “by putting emphasis on the formation of bridging social capital, people searching for ways to reconstruct their lives in exile do not necessarily have to abandon their ethnic identity or ‘roots’ and links with their native cultures.”²²⁴ In this respect, bonding social capital can also be maintained as a refugee attempts to balance their position between the country of origin and the host country.²²⁵ The refugee perspective challenges the idea that the state needs to make policy decisions based on “either-or” notions of integration and multiculturalism. The respondents demonstrate that a multicultural society can still be conducive to integration - especially if those integrating make themselves visible to Germans and Berliners on an individual level through relationships with the host society. Private accommodations in residential dispersions is the

²²³Ibid.

²²⁴Korac, 30.

²²⁵Ibid.

optimal living situation for these intercultural interactions. As will be evident in the following section, it is also the most logical residential situation in light of *refugee experiences*.

Sentiment Two: ‘Everyone in this shelter is like me, they are all refugees’

The respondents invoke inherent refugee experiences – from displacement, to transit, to arrival phases – to explain the importance of integrating with majority society, or in some instances separating from other refugees. This translates to refugees favoring apartments and residential dispersions over collective accommodations and residential concentrations.

In his interview, Nasim observes, “Everyone in this shelter is like me, they are all refugees, they are like me, they are poor” (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). This characterization points to a refugee experience common to each resident at the collective accommodation. The *refugee* experience - unique from that of immigrants and migrants - proves to be a critical link in the connection between integration and residential situations for the respondents. While Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb are all refugees, each of their *experiences* is also unique. To this end, author al-Rasheed writes, “Perhaps an approach which emphasizes the diversity of refugee experiences and orientations has a better chance of grasping the mechanisms which influence refugee adaptation in the host country.”²²⁶ The research methodology utilized in this thesis simultaneously allows for exploring individual refugee experiences through interviews and analyzing these accounts to draw conclusions relative to ‘adaptation,’ or integration in Germany. Ultimately a rich narrative of refugee experiences emerges, from displacement, to transit, to arrival. Each of these migration phases helps answer the central inquiry in this thesis and will thus provide the structure for this section of the data analysis.

²²⁶Al-Rasheed, Madawi. "The Myth of Return: Iraqi Arab and Assyrian Refugees in London." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 7, no. 2-3 (1994): 218.

Displacement Phase

The United Nation's principle definition of a refugee is "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence."²²⁷ The 'push factors' that lead to a refugee's displacement are central in this framing, in contrast to the 'pull factors' that are often cited to characterize immigrants or migrants, such as economic opportunity. Unsurprisingly then the respondents' experience with displacement emerged in the interviews and can explain their stance on integration relative to residential situations. Abru points to the common push factors that affect the refugees in the collective accommodation. She says that the majority of residents would not have moved if they did not have problems, explaining that many of these individuals may have owned homes or cars in their home country. When asked why she wants to move out of the shelter to an apartment, Abru shared that she ran away from her country because of persecution so it is understandable that she is scared about living with certain demographics at the collective accommodation. Abru expects that an apartment - and the accompanying residential dispersion - will provide her with privacy, anonymity, and safety. Abru conveys that this need for privacy is common, and logical, for refugees (Abru, 50s, F, Iraq). She provides an illustration:

The bird, the animal, the first thing they need is like a place for living and they will never let any other animal stay there. (Abru, 50s, F, Iraq)

I confirmed that Abru wants to live in an apartment instead of a shelter. She seems to convey that, for a refugee already displaced from their home country, any shared accommodation in the

²²⁷“What is a Refugee?” UNHCR.
<https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/>

host country is simply unnatural. She explains that there is a compounding feeling of pain for the refugee, both due to events that caused the initial displacement and their experiences in Germany, particularly at the collective accommodation (Abru, 50s, F, Iraq). Therefore, in Abru's mind a private residence is critical for allowing the refugee time to process and address what already happened to them instead of just adding to their stress with tense social dynamics. Haaron's anecdote about tension over religion with a previous roommate is a related example. The shared bedrooms, restrooms, and kitchens at the shelter were frequently cited by informants as a frustration, and only exacerbate any conflict among residents because contact in these settings is unavoidable. In interviews with 131 asylum seekers and refugees as part of an analysis of integration processes in the EU, the European Foundation for Democracy found that newcomers "often felt harassed by their peers, who they say feel entitled to impose on them what they deem their authentic culture of origin."²²⁸ The displacement experience, combined with the experience in the collective accommodation, causes some refugees to want to separate from their peers and avoid any form of a residential concentration with other refugees. Many of the informants identified privacy as a benefit of apartments.

This desire for privacy does not equate to a desire to live apart from Germans and Berliners. As the first section of this data analysis underlines, refugees are motivated to interact with the host society. A refugee's displacement contributes to their desire to integrate into Germany because of the stark contrasts the refugee observes between their home country and host country. Fadhil shared that upon arriving in Germany refugees have the chance to be human

²²⁸Virgili, Tommaso. "Refugee Integration in Europe: good practices and challenges." *The Parliament*, May 16, 2018.
https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/partner_article/european-foundation-democracy/refugee-integration-europe-good-practices-and

again because their lives are no longer threatened (Fadhil, 40s, M, Iran). Fathi concurs with this sentiment, saying, “Everything that I see here is beautiful and I wish that I came 50 years before in Germany” (Fathi, 70s, M, Iraq). This positive view of Germany compared to the situation in their home country that displaced them in the first place informs a refugee’s desire for a residential dispersion. This idea raises the importance of examining the pull factors influencing a refugee’s decision to come to Germany in particular. While displacement first and foremost denotes a ‘push,’ once a refugee is displaced it is necessary to examine what is ‘pulling’ them to particular countries. In this light, McAuliffe and Jayasuriya refute the literature that “depicts refugees as more passive than active when selecting a destination country,” by surveying over 35,000 refugees to show that there is a preference for certain destination countries over others.²²⁹ With this finding, they coin the term, “proactive asylum seekers.”²³⁰

Nasim certainly constitutes a ‘proactive’ refugee. He was displaced from Syria over a decade ago and has lived in multiple countries prior to arriving in Germany. In explaining why he prefers to live in a neighborhood ‘full of Germans and very, very few refugees,’ Nasim points to the country as a whole. He says he is most concerned for his kids’ future and believes Germany is best for their manners and education. He makes a point of explaining that he chose Germany over another EU country where he already has a residency permit because he believes Germany is better for his kids (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria). Nasim adds:

²²⁹McAuliffe, Marie, and Dinuk Jayasuriya. "Do Asylum Seekers and Refugees Choose Destination Countries? Evidence from Large-scale Surveys in Australia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka." *International Migration* 54, no. 4 (2016): 44.

²³⁰McAuliffe, 45.

Even here in court in front of the judge, I don't go and say because of the bombing that happened in Syria, because the situation is difficult or the destruction or anything like this. All that I tell to them is my kids and their future. That's the only thing. That's the reason I want to be here. For the future of my kids. (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria)

This is clear evidence that even though Nasim is a forcibly displaced refugee, he is exercising agency in selecting his destination country. If Nasim was solely focused on receiving protection, he would have remained in the country where he has a residency permit. There are other reasons he traveled to Germany. Nasim clearly connects his preference to live in an apartment in a dispersed German-majority location to his positive impression of Germany. For refugees also choosing Germany as a destination country, the constraint of a collective accommodation is difficult to accept. In Nasim's case, if he were provided the opportunity to move out of the shelter, it would be irrational for him to live among other refugees because he decided to come to Germany for reasons inherent to the country.

Policymakers often overlook this type of refugee decision making. In the rare event that the state acknowledges refugee agency, there is an underlying assumption that asylum seekers select Germany as a destination only because of the high number of refugees already within the country. This leads to the conjecture that refugees will then try to concentrate together on the neighborhood level once inside Germany. As this analysis shows, the reasons for a refugee's decision to come to Germany are much more varied than just whether other refugees are present. One explanation may be the positive "preconceived perceptions" of the country.²³¹ This is owed in large part to Germany's infamous *Willkommenskultur* towards refugees at the onset of the

²³¹McAuliffe, 47.

crisis.²³² This attraction to Germany in the first place means newcomers are more apt to want to live with Germans in residential dispersions.

Transit Phase: ‘*We are like in a jail, it’s not freedom*’

Despite the need for a private residence that the displacement experience generates for many refugees, the respondents all found themselves in the collective accommodation. In this section I will focus on the refugees’ experience in the shelter since the residence is contributing to their liminal existence. In this sense, even though the informants arrived in Germany they remain in a state of transit. It is important to clarify that while Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb all express their desire to live in an apartment rather than the collective accommodation, their experiences in the shelter are not all negative. Fathi, Fadhil, and Adeeb have generally positive opinions of the space, so their wish for an apartment is not driven by a negative experience in the collective accommodation. The other respondents express stronger aversions to the shelter, focusing on the concentration of refugees and even describing the collective accommodation as a “prison.” These contrasting views are a testament to the push and pull factors that impact refugees throughout the transit stage. Some informants were clearly pulled to alternative residential situations based on perceived benefits, such as increased interactions with Germans and Berliners. Other informants were pushed to apartments and residential dispersions on account of their experience in the collective accommodation. In this section I will focus on the latter.

²³²Dockery.

The notion that there is an absence of freedom at the collective accommodation is expressed by the majority of respondents. Yado, Abru, and Haaron intensify this sentiment by describing the shelter as a prison. Yado is critical of the German government for putting refugees in the facility, arguing that the unfavorable accommodation is part of a larger state strategy not to deport the refugee but to force the refugee to make a decision to leave Germany. Yado notes that the shelter is not a prison in the traditional form but is instead “an emotional prison” (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan). Foucault describes the function of security as trying “to plan a milieu in terms of events or series of events or possible elements of series that will have to be regulated within a multivalent and transformable framework.”²³³ The ‘milieu’ then is “the space in which a series of uncertain elements unfold.”²³⁴ The French philosopher believes that “town planners” and the “apparatuses of security” can anticipate a ‘milieu’ to a certain extent through “modify[ing] urban space.”²³⁵ However, in the context of a ‘milieu’ “the sovereign,” or government, may no longer assert “power over a territory on the basis of a geographical localization of his political sovereignty.”²³⁶ Foucault draws on Jean-Baptiste Moheau to argue that in this situation the state needs to “intervene” to exercise control over the “physical and moral existence of their subjects.”²³⁷ The refugee influx in Germany certainly constitutes ‘a series of uncertain elements’ that the government attempts to ‘regulate’ to ensure national security. With its territorial sovereignty over national borders fundamentally compromised, the German government resorts to a form of control better suited for the ‘milieu.’ The ‘physical existence’ of refugees is governed through the ‘internal border regime,’ which includes the Residence Rule. In Yado’s

²³³Foucault, Michel, Michel Senellart, François Ewald, and Alessandro Fontana. *Security, Territory, Population : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1977-78*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan: République Française, 2007, 20.

²³⁴Foucault, 20.

²³⁵Foucault, 21.

²³⁶Foucault, 23.

²³⁷Ibid.

view, the state is succeeding in taking control over the ‘moral existence’ of refugees as well through the collective accommodation’s function as an ‘emotional prison.’ Indeed, Yado’s moral existence is already compromised in the shelter, with his exclamation: “I don’t feel like a human here” (Yado, 20s, M, Kurdistan). Abru’s and Haaron’s comments lend further credence to Yado’s characterization of the shelter. Abru describes the collective accommodation as a prison, adding that even though the residents are not locked in, there are still rules to control them (Abru, 50s, F, Iraq). Haaron expressed frustration over needing to present his identification to the security guards and sign in each time he enters the shelter:

We are like in a jail, it’s not freedom [...] I think also jail is better, maybe jail is better, you can do many things in jail but here it’s....they are telling you [that you] are free but we are not free. We are in a jail here, it’s a jail. (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan)

Interestingly, the informants’ depiction of the collective accommodation as a jail syncs with my observations I recorded upon first visiting the site. While I did not specifically use the terms prison or jail, I used related descriptors: *enclosed*, *remote*, and *isolated*. The noticeable securitization of the space strongly shapes refugees’ positive conception of living outside the collective accommodation and the freedom it would afford. Fathi shared, “The refugee who is living outside, in an apartment outside this shelter, has freedom” (Fathi, 70s, M, Iraq). Accordingly, the respondents gravitate towards a residential situation opposite that of the shelter, which is a private residence in a German and Berliner majority setting. The prospect of a residential concentration becomes too closely equated with the informants’ time in “prison,” and thus there is a desire to separate from the other “inmates” because continuing to live with refugees is a barrier to integration.

Arrival Phase

The migration phase of arrival to Germany is not yet a realization for the informants in this thesis because they reside in the collective accommodation. El-Kayed and Hamann refer to this phenomenon as a “deferred social arrival for refugees.”²³⁸ In this section, I will reference both the refugees’ past arrivals to other EU states and their conception of a future arrival to Germany in order to highlight how this migration phase impacts their views on integration and residential situations.

It is rare for a refugee in Germany to have arrived in the country directly from their country of origin, with one respondent crossing seven states before arriving in Germany. This transit is never fluid, so there is often an ‘arrival’ phase in an EU state along the way, where a refugee lives for an extended period of time. These experiences influence a refugee’s integration strategy once in Germany. Haaron lived in an EU country for one year before continuing to Germany. He boasted that locals did not believe he was from Afghanistan because he could speak, read, and write in the local language so well. Haaron achieved this language competency without any formal training, and instead just communicated with the locals. He explained that he lived in an apartment in a neighborhood with many locals, and he was “just the lone refugee there” (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan). He felt great in this residential situation and reminisced about a nearby park he visited each night to play and “communicate with peoples” (Haaron, 20s, M, Afghanistan). He elaborated:

²³⁸El-Kayed, 143.

And there I have one [local] friend [...]. When I come here to Germany he crying. Because he [said], 'you are like my family. And if you are going then I am so sad. Because you people are like my family.' And he cried like a mama. [Haaroon laughs] (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan)

Haaroon referred to this migration history to demonstrate why he thinks interactions with the host society are so important to learning the local language. Immediately prior to pointing to his experience in the other EU country, Haaroon was explaining that refugee residential arrangements need to be located in central Berlin to facilitate intercultural interactions (Haaroon, 20s, M, Afghanistan). Nasim also references previous arrival experiences to explain how to best learn German:

I was not able to speak the language but bit by bit by interacting with people I was able to speak. (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria)

It seems host governments mistakenly expect that refugees within their borders are desperate to hide behind other refugees as part of their transition. However, as Haaroon shows, he is a “seasoned veteran” in the displacement-transit-arrival nexus and already has experience integrating as a minority into majority society. This may translate to the refugee forgoing the ethnic enclave in favor of a residential dispersion, or at the very least putting themselves in a position to integrate quickly.

A component of the United Nation’s definition of a refugee is the difficulty for the individual to return home.²³⁹ This reality points to another reason refugees want to integrate. If refugees reach Germany and receive formal asylum or refugee protection status, it is unlikely

²³⁹“What is a Refugee?”

they will return home unless their country of origin is completely safe. Accordingly, refugee families may be reunified in Germany instead of their home country. The arrival phase could be indefinite. The concept of a future in Germany makes a refugee more inclined to integrate, and often this translates to wanting to live in a residential dispersion. Nasim's commitment to living in Germany for the future of his kids is a case in point, as it dictates where specifically in Berlin he wants a residence. He wants to put his kids in the best position:

I would love my kids to learn about the German culture and I would love for one of them to be a teacher and I want the other one to be a doctor. That's all I want. (Nasim, 40s, M, Syria)

At the conclusion of my interview with Abru I understood one of the reasons she made German friends: she sees a future in Germany. I tried to ask her where she *thinks* she will be living just one month from the date of the interview. She replied that she *wants* to go to her home and intends to build this home in Berlin (Abru, 50s, F, Iraq). Many refugees share this long-term projection of a life in Germany. It would be prudent then to examine ways to best accommodate the long-term integration of these refugees.

Conclusion

International conflicts and humanitarian disasters continue to displace millions of individuals. In Syria, what began as a civil war in 2011 is expanding to a global power struggle. Famine and health epidemics persist in Yemen due to regional geopolitics. Iraqis and Afghans are still plagued with terrorist attacks. Citizens in other countries are subjected to the iron fist of authoritarian rulers or are victims of multiple proverbial fists competing for authority in failed

states. These deleterious situations show little sign of abating and thus will perpetuate the global refugee crisis. This protraction challenges Germany and the EU on two fronts. First, refugees will continue to cross national borders. Attempts to physically restrict migration routes will merely redirect the migrant influx, as evidenced by increased traffic across the central and western Mediterranean Sea after curbs on movement between Turkey and Greece and through the Balkans were instituted. Over 200 refugees perished within the first five months of 2018 attempting to reach Spain, compared to 59 refugees along the same route for all of 2014.²⁴⁰ This figure reveals a stark reality: any EU efforts to “restrict” or “regulate” movement²⁴¹ will not remedy a refugee’s need for refuge. Second, refugees already within the EU are increasingly unable to return to their countries of origin in the immediate future. The average length of displacement for refugees today is 20 years, over two times that of the early 1990s.²⁴² The prospect of refugees remaining in a host country for this duration should compel host governments to plan for the long-term integration of refugees.²⁴³

Yado, Nasim, Fathi, Fadhil, Abru, Haaron, and Adeeb represent the refugee population facing the prospect of an indefinite stay in Germany. Are these individuals destined for a perpetual state of liminality, described as a feeling of existing ‘between the ground and the air?’ The prevailing answer in this thesis is *no*. This conclusion does not stem from the Integration Act’s Residence Rule but is inspired by the sentiments of each refugee I interviewed. The shared

²⁴⁰“Missing Migrants.” *IOM*, May 22, 2018.

<http://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>

²⁴¹Torpey, 240-241.

²⁴²Katz.

²⁴³The March 2016 EU-Turkey deal is an indication that EU member states are trying to export an obligation to protect and integrate refugees. There is also an increasing “externalization of border control” evident in the EU, with Mediterranean patrols and consideration of external processing centers for asylum claims.

Source: Fauser, 4-5.

desire to integrate drives the informants' "engage[ment] in confronting liminality."²⁴⁴ As Korac reminds readers, refugees still manage "proactive and goal-oriented actions" despite the prevalence of migrant camps and strict admission policies.²⁴⁵ In a similar context, the respondents in this thesis still demonstrate a commitment to integration while living in a collective accommodation.

The data analysis reveals that this *commitment* indeed has its limitations in a collective accommodation but will be fully realized in a private residence situated in a residential dispersion with Germans and Berliners. The respondents pursue intercultural interactions with Germans and Berliners in the hopes this will facilitate their integration and mitigate conflict. The informants try to achieve these ends through making friends with locals, learning German, working, or simply offering an act of kindness. However, hosting these friends, hearing and speaking German, or escaping stereotypes proves difficult at the collective accommodation. A new residential situation is seen as a solution. In addition, respondents certainly internalize their refugee experiences from displacement to transit to arrival and attempt to accommodate or embrace aspects of these experiences in order to integrate into the host society. This may include retreating into their dorm rooms to avoid contact with residents or making every effort to establish a future in Germany through education and work. But these strategies also have their pitfalls in a collective accommodation that is described by some refugees as a prison. An apartment in a residential dispersion is viewed as a resolution to the vicious cycle of displacement-transit-arrival that refugees face.

²⁴⁴Korac, 9.

²⁴⁵Korac, 10.

Considering that refugees want to integrate and envision a path to achieve this state in terms of living in apartments in residential dispersions, *how can academics and policymakers best contribute to integration efforts?*

The first set of recommendations centers on the objective to transition refugees out of collective accommodations and into private residences or move refugees directly from emergency shelters to apartments. While the German government seems to justify the Residence Rule as a way to avoid refugee concentrations and promote residential dispersions in the name of integration – a view that largely aligns with the respondents’ stances – it risks becoming a means of exclusion instead of inclusion. Merkel’s devolution of the measure to the 16 *Bundeslaender* evidently inspired Salzgitter in Lower Saxony to place a temporary ban on refugees settling in the city.²⁴⁶ The mayor cited the increase of foreign integration and decrease of native resentment as justifications for the decision.²⁴⁷ Even though Berlin does not have such measures in place, this occurrence is still troubling. In examining refugees’ access to housing and residency, authors El-Kayed and Hamann offer a helpful characterization of Germany’s approach:

*German federal law deliberately allows for differences in the internal border regimes in different federal states, and the implementation of these regimes can diverge further between municipalities in the same federal state.*²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶Nelson, Soraya Sarhaddi. “German City Bans Refugees From Settling There, Other Cities May Follow.” *NPR*, December 12, 2017.
<https://www.npr.org/2017/12/12/570093100/german-city-bans-refugees-from-settling-there-other-cities-may-follow>

²⁴⁷Nelson.

²⁴⁸El-Kayed, 139.

With some states or municipalities preventing refugees from living in certain areas – even if well intentioned - there can be “an unequal treatment of refugees who hold the same legal status.”²⁴⁹ The German federal government should address this issue through instituting uniform policies that increase access to affordable housing. Efforts at LAF to provide rent assistance and counsel refugees searching for a private residence is noteworthy,²⁵⁰ but institutional changes are necessary. Merkel should reverse the trend of the government withdrawing from social housing programs,²⁵¹ especially in light of the continued movement of refugees to urban centers. Scholars may assist in these efforts by researching the major barriers refugees face in accessing apartments,²⁵² particularly in Berlin where access to the housing market for low-income households has decreased since 2008.²⁵³ This will help build on the Berlin 2030 Urban Development Concept, which includes plans for apartment construction and rent control, in addition to integration and market-access measures for refugees in shelters.²⁵⁴ *Facilitating* instead of *restricting* refugee access to optimal residential situations has better optics. Instead of telling a refugee they can’t live in a particular neighborhood or must live in a certain zip code, residential policies should equip these populations with resources to make a transition to private residences and individually choose the arrangement and location. Implicit in this policy should be an understanding that refugees want to integrate and make decisions on residential situations accordingly. Even if a refugee gravitates toward a residential concentration – as is the case with Haaron – this does not necessarily translate to the individual resisting integration.

²⁴⁹El-Kayed, 144.

²⁵⁰(Translation) “The way to your own apartment.” *State Office for Refugee Affairs*.
<https://www.berlin.de/laf/wohnen/informationen-fuer-fluechtlinge/wohnungen/>

²⁵¹El-Kayed, 142.

²⁵²See: El-Kayed.

²⁵³El-Kayed, 142.

²⁵⁴“Migration and Its Impact on Cities,” 65.

The second set of recommendations confronts the harsh truth that private rentals are severely limited in urban environments where ~60 percent of the world's refugees reside.²⁵⁵ This issue is felt all around the world, from Berlin to Seattle. It is especially evident in Berlin, where in 2016 there was an estimated deficit of 275,000 affordable apartments for households on social welfare.²⁵⁶ This only exacerbates an emerging homeless crisis in Germany, which saw the number of people without a residence increase by 25 percent between 2014 and 2016.²⁵⁷ This figure does *not* include the 440,000 refugees who would also qualify as homeless given their temporary or shared accommodations.²⁵⁸ A testament to the continued effects of limited housing on refugees are the 5,000 refugees still residing in emergency shelters in Berlin at the end of 2017.²⁵⁹ Even for refugees in a collective accommodation, there is no guarantee that a private residence awaits. LAF anticipates that refugees will remain in these collective accommodations for ten years unless they are fortunate enough to find an apartment.²⁶⁰ With Berlin's projected population growth, this seems unlikely. Berlin's government estimates that the city-state will see the influx of 24,000 refugees by 2020, and a population increase of at least 157,000 by 2030.²⁶¹ It is projected that Berlin needs to construct up to 20,000 new apartments every year.²⁶²

In the context of this thesis, the task then becomes transforming the collective accommodations – a *shelter* to many, a *prison* to others – into *homes* that can facilitate

²⁵⁵Katz.

²⁵⁶El-Kayed, 142.

²⁵⁷Bosen, Ralf. "Europe faces growing homeless population as housing costs soar." *Deutsche Welle*, March 20, 2018.

<http://www.dw.com/en/europe-faces-growing-homeless-population-as-housing-costs-soar/a-43058016>

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*

²⁵⁹El-Kayed, 141.

²⁶⁰Conversation with State Office for Refugee Affairs (summer 2017).

²⁶¹"Migration and Its Impact on Cities," 65.

²⁶²*Ibid.*

integration. Taking into account the informants' perspectives, there are tangible measures that can be taken to this end. Policymakers should consider the implications of privatizing collective accommodations. The majority of shelters in Berlin are run by independent for-profit or non-profit entities, with support from LAF.²⁶³ While this helps conserve limited state resources in order to accommodate more refugees, in effect it creates a monetary incentive for keeping the shelters at full-capacity. As El-Kayed and Hamann note, "there are indications that social workers at camps and shelters were told by camp operators to not inform their clients about their housing rights."²⁶⁴ As a result, refugees may languish in shelters longer than necessary, which adversely affects their integration.²⁶⁵ Privatization of these spaces also leads to the securitization that respondents lamented, as private security agencies are often hired at shelters. Whether a collective accommodation is private or state-run, they should be constructed and licensed for the long-term so that the integration needs of refugees remains a priority. Every effort should be made to construct collective accommodations in central areas of Berlin instead of the outskirts of the capital where there is little opportunity for organic interaction with locals. Academics in a diverse of disciplines as architecture, engineering, and urban planning have a role to play in designing shelters that feel less like prisons and more like homes.

There are steps that can be taken to improve existing collective accommodations as well. Given the strong desire of refugees to interact with the host society, policymakers should entertain the idea of inviting locals to live with refugees in collective accommodations.

²⁶³Conversation with State Office for Refugee Affairs (summer 2017).

²⁶⁴El-Kayed, 142.

²⁶⁵ I believe this is an institutional-level issue that does not translate to commitment of staff at these shelters. I was very impressed with the care, dedication, and professionalism of the staff at the collective accommodation I visited.

Amsterdam is experimenting with shared housing, where students and low-income Dutch citizens live and socialize with refugees.²⁶⁶ The Refugio in Kreuzberg is an example of a similar project.²⁶⁷ Refugio also houses a café and organizes events open to the community. These community outreach strategies are critical to collective accommodations as well in order to embed the facilities into the neighborhood. I was encouraged to learn of plans to open cafes in collective accommodations, which would be managed by both locals and refugees. There are also occasional potlucks at collective accommodations open to the wider community. The European Foundation for Democracy recommended combatting “mistrust and prejudice against refugees” with “any activity bringing together [refugees] with host communities [...]”²⁶⁸ These actions can range from shared housing to coffee shops since ultimately both initiatives help overturn locals’ “fear and ignorance about refugees”²⁶⁹ through cultivating cultural exchange. As evidenced in the data analysis, this intercultural interaction is a critical condition for integration and conflict mitigation.

The German government should bear in mind the recommendations outlined above for collective accommodations as officials prepare to introduce Anchor Centers (*Anker-Zentren*), or asylum seeker processing centers, where refugees will have to live for up to 18 months until there is a determination on their application.²⁷⁰ This appears to be a tightening of the current

²⁶⁶“In this Amsterdam housing project, Dutch youth and refugees live together – and run the place.” *CitiScope*, December 8, 2016.

<http://citiscopes.org/story/2016/amsterdam-housing-project-dutch-youth-and-refugees-live-together-and-run-place>

²⁶⁷Additional information: <http://www.refugio.berlin/>

²⁶⁸Virgili.

²⁶⁹Ibid.

²⁷⁰MacGregor, Marion. “One-stop asylum-seeker processing centers planned for Germany.” *Info Migrants*, March 3, 2018.

<http://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/8216/one-stop-asylum-seeker-processing-centers-planned-for-germany>

allowances, where asylum seekers are at least permitted by some German states to live in private accommodations after three months.²⁷¹ The approval by Merkel's coalition government of these processing centers – which will have concentrations of refugees – seems counterintuitive for an administration that promotes residential dispersions through the Residence Rule.²⁷² It is consistent though with Germany's practice of imposing 'internal borders.' The Anchor Centers are part of the current Interior Minister Horst Seehofer's larger "Master Plan for Migration," which was introduced in the name of efficiency for processing asylum claims.²⁷³ While quicker asylum determinations can benefit refugees, the government should consider the repercussions these Anchor Centers have on integration. With the initial "pilot" centers planned to open in autumn 2018,²⁷⁴ there is time to at least strategize over small integration measures that can be introduced in the event the government decides to make these Anchor Centers widespread. Selecting appropriate locations for the accommodations – such as central metropolitan areas – should be a top priority.

The integration of refugees in the current global context is paramount. While host countries certainly have a role in welcoming new populations, governments and citizens around the world need to recognize that refugees *want* to integrate and are taking steps – specifically relative to residential situations – to achieve this. Thus, I offer the following 'refugee-centered' definition of integration: *Integration is the process of refugees transitioning into the host country*

²⁷¹El-Kayed, 139.

²⁷²MacGregor.

²⁷³(Translation) Ferstl, Max. "Seehofer wants to 'make pace' in asylum procedures." *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, April 6, 2018.

<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/zuwanderung-seehofer-will-bei-asylverfahren-tempo-machen-1.3934483>

²⁷⁴Ibid.

using individualized strategies to normalize their situation quickly and for the long-term, in an effort to become accepted members of the host society.

Over the course of my interview with Abru, I noticed her drawing on a sheet of paper in between my questions and conversations with the interpreter. Eventually what I initially perceived as nervous pen strokes formed into a picture of a house, complete with a pathway leading to a door, three windows, flowers in the front yard, and trees in the backyard. In light of Abru's expressed resolve to build a home in Berlin, I was able to imagine with her what this house would look like. I'm hopeful that the feeling of existing 'between the ground and the air' will soon be a distant memory for Abru, because standing in that space will be her home. It will be a beautiful addition to Berlin's skyline.

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