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THE INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN APPROACH TO REFUGEE SELF-SUFFICIENCY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR SYRIAN WOMEN WHO ARE REFUGEES IN JORDAN

by
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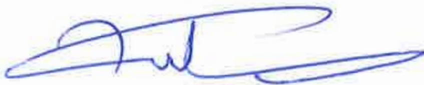

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I also send my love to my family for their support throughout my occasionally unusual and often stressful life choices, and to my partner for his big, beautiful heart.

ABSTRACT
OF THE THESIS OF

Sarah Gualtieri Moritz for Master of Arts
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The International Humanitarian Approach to Refugee Self-Sufficiency:
Economic Development Programs for Syrian Women who are Refugees in Jordan

As international humanitarian organizations shift from emergency aid to the development and self-sufficiency of refugee populations, this thesis seeks to examine the latter approach to understand in what ways its stated goals may be undermined. To do this, it uses economic development programs for Syrian women who are refugees in poverty in Jordan to critically examine the extent to which they contribute to the goal of refugee self-sufficiency, and key factors that impact its work. This thesis shows that looking at relationships of power – nationally, internationally, and historically – offers context that can help explain why these programs have been largely unsuccessful at moving toward the self-sufficiency of these communities.

Specifically, it looks at the international development assistance's approach to women's economic development, the involvement of these same neoliberal institutions in Jordan's political economy and the Jordan Compact, the role of the Government of Jordan, and the impacts these relationships have on Syrian refugees in the country. Through this, the inability of the economic development approach to refugee self-sufficiency can be contextualized within Jordan and connected to realities that exist elsewhere. In doing so, meaningful alternatives to this project of international development can be conceptualized and implemented.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

While not always considered as exceptional or unusual part of global life today, refugee populations will also be greatly increasing in frequency and in numbers in the coming decades, most notably due to climate change[1]. And the past has shown that the displacement of refugees is often not temporary, but protracted for many years, if not decades – a reality that some have pointed at to explain why international humanitarian organizations have expanded their focus to development and self-sufficiency, rather than solely or primarily on emergency aid (Betts et. al., 2017). For example, in a conference in 2010, in light of the protracted nature of refugee camps for Palestinians and the inability of temporary infrastructure and services to support these communities, recommendations were made by scholars and practitioners for the UNRWA to move from aid to development[2] (Hanafi et. al., 2014). And this larger shift in focus is partly why there are calls for the need to examine this increasingly central development approach (Betts et. al., 2017). Another reason why the refugee self-sufficiency in the Global South has become so important is that it is a central pillar to the Global Norths containment approach – that is, to prevent the migration of refugees out of the Global South, most notably into Europe (Morris, 2020). A policy that has been criticized for its role in allowing the Global North to evade equally sharing refugee resettlement with the Global South, and for profiting elites in the Global South through encouraging 'refugee rentierism' (Morris, 2020; Kelberer, 2017).

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[1] Petrass, R. M. (2018, September 23). *One Billion Climate Refugees by 2050*. The Organization for World Peace. Retrieved October 2, 2021, from https://theowp.org/one-billion-climate-refugees-by-2050/.

[2] The book *UNRWA and Palestinian Refugees* builds on this in detail (Hanafi et. al., 2014).

In light of these and other ways that humanitarian action has been disappearing the lines between its traditional stated neutrality and the political in international relations (Yamashita, 2014), including because humanitarian development is an increasingly central feature in foreign policy (Wintour, 2022), exercises and dynamics of power are important to include. And, given the increasing importance that refugee self-sufficiency has, examining the international approach to this goal through an inclusion of these exercises and dynamics – nationally and internationally – may offer useful insight. This is supported by Gill, who explains there is a need for work that 'demystifies the power relations involved in institutions' globally (2015, p. 4), and by Burlin, who explains the need to look at structural relations of power when examining refugee self-sufficiency (2020; 2021).

For Getachew (2020) and Pitts (2018), this should include discussion on unequal applications of international governance. They use political history to highlight the connection between international law and colonial Europe[3] to explain that our contemporary global governance system functions unequally, according to a colonial global racial hierarchy. Getachew explains that, because of this unequal integration into international law, the Global South has fewer rights and more burdens than the North – which can help explain the disproportionate negative experiences in the South[4] by global governance. And this includes humanitarianism and the initial use of the praxis of human rights (Getachew, 2020) and the ongoing "unidirectional flow" (Okafor,

---

[3] Europe's "law of nations" extended outward and, over time, began to include states in the Global South, including newly independent former colonies.

[4] For example, under international law or global governance – including environmental law (Natarajan, 2017) and land rights (Tzouvala, 2019) – their underlying ideologies and norms – like liberalism (Pitts, 2009) and environmental rights (Natarajan, 2017).

2017) in which they tend to be applied. There is also relevant critical scholarship regarding the international bodies in the "refugee regime" (Hanafi, 2006) which the work of Pitts and Getachew can help explain. For example, in his study on refugees in camp settlements, Agier (2010) explains how "international"[5] organizations take the lead on dictating how these spaces are run, which prevents the ability for refugee communities to govern themselves democratically. Hanafi (2014) also discusses the tensions between the hierarchical approach to the humanitarian administration and control of refugee populations, which negate the possibility of emancipatory and/or subjective actions by refugees. For Agier such examples speak to a broader issue regarding humanitarian projects globally, where this "left hand of empire" (humanitarian governance) works with military intervention to 'strike with one hand and heal with the other' (2010, p. 29). And, as much as one may see the truth in what Agier discusses, when it comes to approaches for refugee self-sufficiency, it is the position of this thesis that more context is needed than simply pointing to the sheer force colonial or imperial power has over refugees in the Global South.

Like Hanafi and Agier, Betts et. al. also recognize international humanitarianism for the control over the governance of the bodies, lives, and spaces refugees occupy, but differ in how they contextualize these areas. For example, in their examination of "refugee economies" Betts et. al. see the economic realities of refugees not as being controlled by an "empire" (Agier, 2010), or the result of unequal global governance (Pitts, 2018; Getachew, 2020), but because it is an inevitable part of refugeehood and the space they occupy between state and international regulatory environments, formal and informal institutions, and national and transnational boundaries. In terms of refugee

[5] Organizations that come from the Global North but work internationally.

economies for those in host states, for example, the authors echo concerns regarding the lack of autonomy refugees have but see it as a result of the overly state-centric approach used by humanitarian development, while short-comings of economic success are posed as a result, not of the nature of any international system per se, but factors like a lack of understanding of market supply and demand conditions. Taken alone, their approach largely understands refugee economies as something divorced from the realities of the scholars cited above and is itself ironically state-centric. But, given what has been explored, this vacuum may also be very limiting. Particularly given the history and modern operations of the global capitalist economy, which have well-established colonial and imperial roots (Nkrumah, 1966; Lenin, 1999; Dados, 2020), and the fact that international humanitarianism (Hanafi, 2006) and economic development (Forti, 2020) have also been connected to globalization and capitalism.

Given the increasing importance and centrality that international development programs for refugees will have in the coming years, and the subsequent calls to better understand this development approach – particularly in light of the very different ways in which the "refugee regime" is understood – it is important to critically examine these programs. More specifically, to identify and unpack areas that impact the international development approach for refugees to see what parts are working or not and why (Agier, 2010). And, given some of the factors explored above, to do this through an inclusion of multiple factors (i.e., historical, spatial, logistical, temporal) that may influence the design of these programs. As Gill explains, unpacking dynamics of power relations is what allows for the possibility to properly 'assess the potential for change in these relations, and to come up with ideas for more socially just and sustainable mechanisms of local and global governance' (2015, p. 4). And it may be useful for

creating a more nuanced examination that balances between Agier's focus on empire's hegemonic control and Betts et. al., who overlook post-colonial global realities in their examination of refugee economies. In doing so, it can provide a more contextual analysis of international development programs, and, in turn, provide insight that can contribute to changes that will allow these programs to be better able at achieving their goal of fostering the self-sufficiency of refugee communities. By examining the current approach to and programs for refugee self-sufficiency, this thesis seeks to use what is learned to critically examine the international development field as a whole so that changes may be envisioned to help better reach this goal. This being said, *what insights may be gained by working with an international humanitarian organization that works on economic development programs, about the international development approach to refugee self-sufficiency? Can examination of the designs and assessments in a national context provide insight that may be useful for decision-making focused on the self-sufficiency of refugees elsewhere?*

1.1. Methodology

This thesis is based on my own secondary source research, which has extended across the disciplines of sociology, post-colonial studies, international relations, development studies, refugee studies, and women's studies. The decision to extend this focus in such a diverse way was chosen out of a motivation to foster a more contextual understanding of the topic. This thesis has also been based on my work with CARE International in Amman, Jordan. This international, non-governmental humanitarian agency has been working with refugees in the country since 1948, and their long-term focus on alleviating poverty has been met with their increasing focus on the rights of

women and girls, and on economic development, all of which reflect the requirements of this thesis. CARE Jordan's programs for economic self-sufficiency are used for "men and women" [6] in poverty, with some differences, for example, in the types of vocational training or business ownership. As such, while my work will focus on these programs for Syrian women who are refugees, it will also tie these programs into broader considerations for Syrian men and women. CARE Jordan also works with Syrians in camp and in urban settings, and with vulnerable host communities, and, because CARE Jordan designs these programs and activities to be used in both areas, and assesses and reports on them simultaneously, this thesis will examine them together, rather than disaggregate them.

Compared to the size of its population, Jordan is the second-largest refugee-hosting country, globally (Gender Analysis Report, 2019). Drawing on statistics from the UNHCR, a proposal by CARE Jordan explains that the country

> currently hosts a total of 759,745 refugees and asylum seekers, primarily from Syria (88.5%), Iraq (8.8%) and other nationalities including Yemen and Somalis (2.7%)… Of this total, approximately 49.4% are female, 46.8% are under 17 years old and 4.8% are 60 years old or over. 82.7% of refugees live outside of camps in urban areas with only 17.3% living in camp settings… Of this total population, 36% are hosted in Amman, 18% in Irbid and 6.7% in Zarqa. Refugees in Jordan face a difficult socio-economic environment with little or no access to jobs and livelihoods, resulting in a majority living under the poverty line and struggling to meet daily needs (E. Proposal, 2021, p. 5).

While CARE Jordan provides services and programs to these cited communities, most of their work and resources are applied to refugees from Syria,

[6] The standardized way of discussing "gender sensitive" programing is through listing "men, women, boys, and girls".

and more specifically those in Azraq Refugee Camp, and in vulnerable host communities in the town of Azraq, Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa. The agency also works only with those who have received their official status as a refugee. I was hired on a contract basis, as a Monitoring and Evaluation Consultant, where I worked on evaluations, reports, and assessments, including through the creation of data-collection tools, and as a copy editor and researcher. This ethnographic portion of my research focuses on the designs and assessments of their studies and development programs, most notably in proposals, evaluations, assessments, and reports that are not published. The methodologies that CARE Jordan uses are a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, including interviews, visits to homes and supported businesses, participant observation, surveys, focus group discussions, and/or questionnaires.

Going into this work, I was conscious of my basic knowledge of Arabic, my position as a Canadian studying and working in Jordan, and the perceived inequalities between types of knowledge. As such, I navigated my time while I conducted my research, and as I wrote this thesis, in such ways as to avoid issues such as turning women refugees into objects of study or result in my utilizing their knowledge and work for my own gain without credit (Al-Hardan, 2013). I am aware of the ethical concerns of working with an international humanitarian organization that work with refugees, however, to critically examine international humanitarian development projects for refugees, doing so from within such an organization is an effective way for me to gain access and study their work. Additionally, working with refugee communities directly, rather than through one organization, could result in studying multiple sources of aid, including aid that is

not administered by an international organization, which will be too large or scattered of a scope for this thesis.

Additionally, my initial plan was to include conversations, meetings, and interviews with employees at CARE Jordan. However, due to protracted issues to acquire permission by AUBs ethical review board to do this, the plan was changed to focus only on data and documents that were made available to me by CARE Jordan. My supervisor[7] signed a consent form which allowed me access to these documents, and the initial interview that led to my position at this office was granted to me on my request to him and the Country Director to allow me to work there as part of my thesis fieldwork.

1.1.1. Theoretical Approach

Women who are refugees in poverty from, and living in a host community within, the Global South can then be considered as multiple identities or forms of discrimination (Lovin, 2019). For Mohanty, focusing on Third World women is an effective way to unearth "what is unseen, undertheorized, and left out in the production of knowledge about globalization" (2007, p. 230). More specifically, she points to the need to focus on "[p]oor women and girls" (2007, p. 235), as they are among "the hardest hit" (2007, p. 235) by issues that arise from war and all forms of global governance and, as such, necessarily need to be at the heart of positive, broader, global changes. Mohanty's feminist focus on poverty aligns with the population that CARE Jordan's economic development programs work with, as much of their programming focuses on poverty alleviation for women who are refugees and in Jordan's vulnerable

[7] The Program Quality Director.

host communities. CARE Jordan's own studies confirm what Mohanty states regarding the disproportionate negative impacts that women and girls experience as a result of disasters, including in terms of poverty and all forms of violence (Gender Analysis Report 2019/20). The reason for the choice of women in poverty who are refugees is because of the earlier mentioned focus on refugee self-sufficiency, and because this paper sees refugees not as a rigid category, but as existing along a continuum[8]. Categories may be limiting or problematic because they simultaneously create the false perception that the people within one are more homogenous than they really are and diminish the perceptions of similarities with those outside of that category (Master, Markman, & Dweck, 2012). As such, a continuum allows for the possibility to make connections, or see the relevancy of what is discussed in this thesis to beyond just the category of refugees. This is why, to prevent rigid categorization, when referring to Syrian refugees in Jordan, this thesis uses 'Syrians, or Syrian women, who are refugees in Jordan'.

The basis of this research is rooted post-colonial and de-colonial studies which, as Bhambra explains, are different but similar in that they both seek to challenge the narrow and 'insular understanding of historical and historiographical traditions of Europe' (Bhambra, 2014, p. 115), the relationships and impacts these traditions have with the Third World, and the ways in which they manifest. This includes knowledge production generally (Sharma, 2021), their specific manifestations, such as through the concepts of modernity and development (Bhambra, 2014; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012), and other ways in which the coloniality of power takes shape (Quijano, 2020) including through the governance by international systems (Anghie, 2006). For example, the

[8] As Professor Majed helpfully suggested in her review of the proposal of this thesis.

international humanitarian industry has been critiqued generally for its connection to the Global North, and more specifically for example, regarding its naturalization of problematic understandings and assumptions – like shared humanity (Agier, 2010) and morality and ethics (Zetter, 2019) – for the ways in which it polices bodies and undermines democracy and sovereignty (Hanafi, 2014; Agier, 2010), and the ways in which such realities coalesce to inform and/or influence the relationship between the Global North and South (Bhambra, 2014). This approach is also appropriate as "development" is a central paradigm in the relationship between the Global South and North (Young, 2016; Wintour, 2022), and it has been critically examined in terms of its post-coloniality, or relationship with colonialism and imperialism (Young, 2016; Dados, 2020; Baisotti, 2021). These approaches are also tools that can be helpful to bring attention to the articulations and roles of categories like race, class, and gender (Mohanty, 2007), which is also relevant to the case study of this thesis – that being regarding women who are refugees in poverty from and in the Global South. In other words, de- and post-colonial studies provide ways for me to problematize what has typically been the subject – that is, the international humanitarian programs themselves – and on different levels – such as epistemologically, historically, and in terms of globalization and capitalism – in relation to what has typically been the object, and to use this as a way of examining what may be negatively impacting international development programs.

In addition to what has been discussed, the position of this thesis reflects the fact that European colonial history, its imperial presence in international humanitarian development, and the Global South, can be seen as part of what Hanafi refers to as 'a relational process between social actors' (Hanafi, 2022). He argues that calling attention

to intersubjective and subjective relational processes through 'Social Love' is necessary in sociology, particularly if one is to account for complex manifestations, like the 'simultaneous involvement of autonomy and dependency, freedom and vulnerability' (Hanafi, 2022). Realities, he adds, that humanitarian agents tend to miss. As such, rather than focus solely on the connection between colonialism, capitalism, and the international humanitarian regime, or on relying on approaches that analyze refugee economies in national contexts isolated from these considerations, this thesis examines the international development approach on the ground to refugee self-sufficiency in conversation with multiple contexts. Drawing on my experience with CARE Jordan, the following chapter examines economic development programs by international humanitarian organizations for refugees in the country, to understand the extent to which they achieve their stated goals for Syrian women who are refugees. From here, the third chapter draws on analyses of the national economic landscape, which includes the role of relevant international bodies historically and today, to offer context that can help account for the degrees of the successes or failures of these programs for Syrian refugees. The fourth chapter builds on the previous chapter by specifically focusing on Syrian women, to create context on a community level that will add to the dynamics and number of considerations that appear to have been left out of program designs. And, to offer a glimpse into the significance of these larger conversations, the sixth chapter highlights the importance of looking at the methodologies used in the design and assessment of programs, to show why they may be unknowingly impacting work for refugee self-sufficiency. The final chapter then brings what has been discussed together to explain why oversimplifying the task at hand is working to the detriment of Syrian refugees in Jordan, and offers a larger discussion focused on macro-level

considerations, which includes re-imagination of what approaches to refugee self-sufficiency could look like, that may be better able to reach this goal.

CHAPTER 2

INTERNATIONAL (HUMANITARIAN) DEVELOPMENT AND SYRIAN WOMEN WHO ARE REFUGEES IN POVERTY IN JORDAN

2.1 Establishing Connections

The primary bodies of international development – like the World Bank (WB), IMF, and UN agencies – are responsible for international development in a few ways. One is directly, through its own activities or the activities of its branching organizations, and the second is through influencing or dictating the designs, mandates, and discourses of those working in international development. This includes international humanitarian organizations such as CARE Jordan. And the WBs *International Development Association* states that their poverty reduction strategy is based on global economic means to achieve 'economic growth, reduced inequalities, and the improvement of people's living conditions' (World Bank Group, n.d.). As such, it makes sense that one of CARE Jordan's central approaches to developing self-sufficiency through sustainable livelihoods for Syrians who are refugees in Jordan is through their *Economic Empowerment* (EE) and *Sustainable Development* programs. And there is an additional overall aim to their activities aside from helping Syrian women who are refugees become economically self-sufficient. That is, they are used as vehicles to promote women's empowerment and equality (which, from here on, will simply be referred to as "women's human rights"[9]) not just economically, but more broadly in domestic and public life. This mandate adheres to the approach or paradigms of international

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[9] The website of the UNs Office of the High Commissioner explains that "[g]ender equality is at the very heart of human rights" (OHCHR, n.d.).

development assistance (IDA). As Forti (2020) explains, those in charge of IDA ignored calls to address structural causes of women's inequalities and the redistribution of wealth[10], and, instead, framed women's human rights violations as individual instances that can be overcome through their representation[11] in the global economy. As such, discussion regarding CARE Jordan's program activities – such as loans, micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), business training, and skill development – will be examined with the simultaneous goals of economic self-sufficiency and addressing women's human rights, together.

2.1.1. The Successes and Failures of International Development Approaches to Refugee Self-Sufficiency

In her book, *Gender Justice and Human Rights in International Development Assistance*, Forti (2020) examines this decision by IDA, and its subsequent impacts, in detail. For example, rather than looking at the allocation or redistribution of resources, she explains that "the more politically neutral and consensual term of 'equal access to resources' was adopted as the standard phrase" and, in development policies, it was paired with 'equal control of resources' (2020, p. 65). This is reflected in CARE Jordan's stated goals to donors and partners. For example, in their *Gender Analysis Report*, the Executive Summary states that the "**main objective of this gender analysis assessment is to understand the difference in access and control of assets and resources and how this in turn affects decision-making powers in the household**" between men and women (2019/20, p. 3, emphasis original). Also in this report,

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[10] Which has, in turn, impacted other international treaties and paradigms, like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

[11] Through participation in paid labor and/or access to assets.

however, is a gap in the research conducted, and the conclusions made. The objectives of their work explained in this report – which, in addition to the goal above, is to address gender-based inequalities – focus on 'analyzing gender differences in access and control to assets and resources, and in household decision-making' (2019/20, pgs. 5-6). To do this their study uses focus group discussions (FGDs), "daily activity clocks"[12], and an "activity profile matrix"[13] for those in Azraq camp and in urban centers – the purpose of which was to understand how the time of the average day of the participants is occupied. What it found is that women in male-headed households have limited decision-making power, and that their time was "confined" to caretaking roles, while divorced and widowed women were completely in charge of decision-making. On this basis, the report concludes that "**increasing women's access and ownership of assets and resources… will provide women with the opportunity to gain autonomy and have greater say in decision-making**" (2019/20, pgs. 3-4, emphasis original) including in local policymaking. But is it the access and ownership of assets and resources that gives divorced and widowed women the control they have, or is it the absence of a male head of the household? There is a citation at the end of it to support it, however, this study[14] also does not provide any evidence that access and control of assets actually does have a proven ability to increase women's autonomy and decision-making power. Instead, it too examines the differences between men and women's access and control (in Telengana, India) and concludes, based on the inequalities in

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[12] The participants were asked 'to draw a 24-hour clock to fill in what a typical day looks likes. The purpose is to assess their priorities, to discuss the main family responsibilities of women and men, and their preference for when community meetings, events, activities, or distributions should be held' (2019, p. 6).

[13] 'Participants are asked how many hours they spend per week on specific activities' (2019, p. 6).

[14] M. Milcah Paul, *Gender differences in the rural families regarding the decision making, access and control over assets-A review* (September 2018).

these areas, that increasing them for women will necessarily help their human rights. These studies share the same leap in logic. Is this proven elsewhere? Or is this a blind adoption of IDAs paradigm? For example, another study from India shows that, in the absence of addressing larger patriarchal structures, increasing women's access and ownership to assets and employment actually "increased men's hostility toward working women" (Welsh, 2019, p. 63).

Continuing this conclusion, the Gender Analysis Report explains that "equal access and control over productive resources increases [women's] participation in decision and policy making, reduces their workload and enhances their opportunities for paid employment and income" (2019/20, p. 5). But, as explained previously, their findings showed the opposite. That being, that widowed and divorced women who worked, oversaw decision-making, and ran the household "did not see these additional roles as empowering, but rather as adding more stress and responsibility" (2019/20, p. 9). Also, there is nothing to substantiate the claim about the subsequent reduction of women's workload. And, in the absence of any shift in domestic care that would take work off women, access and control and engaging in paid work would increase their workload and responsibilities, not reduce them. And CARE Jordan designs activities based on these weak or unsupported conclusions. These have included to provide information regarding work permits, to 'develop and support female-friendly livelihood opportunities' (Gender Analysis Report, 2019/20, p. 15), and to "[i]ncrease women's access to… capacity building trainings, in order to increase job opportunities and their power in the decision-making process inside the household" (Gender Analysis Report, 2019/20, p. 16). I could not find studies by CARE Jordan that explicitly supported the conclusions that they were making – the same used by IDA. So, what are the actual

results of access and ownership to assets and resources, and of these economic activities that focus on sustainable livelihood solutions for Syrian women who are refugees in Jordan? To understand this, this chapter will compare CARE Jordan's work with similar projects and activities in Jordan, and some elsewhere in the Global South.

In terms of economic self-sufficiency, the impact statement for CARE Jordan's EE program explains that 'people, especially in vulnerable communities, (including women, youth, and refugees) are self-reliant through the access to means of inclusive, sustainable, dignified livelihoods and control over income and assets' (ToR for MSME, 2019, p. 1). And its goal is to allow "poor women and men who have the potential to take advantage of improved access to assets and opportunities for livelihoods and income-generating activities" (ToR for MSME, 2019, p. 1). In the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), it explains that this program is divided into two pillars – one which focuses on 'access to the labor market' and the other on 'entrepreneurship and financial inclusion for self-employment' – each of which have their own activities (2019, p. 3) Access to the labor market activities include soft skill training, vocational training, job placement and internships, and "advocacy and attitude change" (SOPs 2019, p. 3). For the second pillar, it supports MSMEs "with business development training to innovate and scale up their market potential by providing them with business development services (including grants/tools disbursement for start-up and existed enterprises), support business development training, marketing and social media training, and mentorship and guidance" (ToR for MSME, 2019, p. 1), and by using CARE Jordan's Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) Program, vocational training, and start-up kits that are based on this training (SOPs, 2019).

Additionally, the Sustainable Development program of CARE Jordan "aims at enhancing the resilience of local communities in Jordan and supports vulnerable people in overcoming poverty and social injustice through gender transformative economic and social empowerment programing" (Rapid Assessment COVID/Businesses, 2020, p. 4). The activities for this program have included vocational training, to expand microcredit services, to support MSMEs "with business development training to innovate and scale-up their market potential" (2020, p. 4), and soft skill training. Taking the two programs together, business support – like various types of loans or grants, including micro-loans, and MSME-related training like marketing – are activities that have been done for years, but aside from highlighted, individual success stories shared in CARE Jordan documents, what does it achieve (in extent and in sustainability) for the economic self-sufficiency of Syrian women who are refugees in Jordan, or for their human rights?

Other studies nationally and globally have shown that, not only is the claim made earlier by CARE Jordan (and the field of IDA) regarding access to financial resources not true, sometimes – like in the case of microfinance – it may have the opposite effect (Zulfiqar, 2016; Haile et. al., 2012). This includes in Jordan, where microfinance has shown to have no impact on poverty, and possibly even contribute to the 'poverty trap' (Welsh, 2019). And this includes microbusinesses in Jordan (JT, 2019). And yet microloans have historically been one of the major projects funded by the WB in the country (Lenner & Turner, 2019). Even if it helps a few people in the short-term, these loans and their focus on individual means to "empower" women ultimately do not make much of a change as they are unable to contribute to challenging larger patriarchal structures or institutions (Welsh, 2019; Stromquist, 2013). If they were effective tools for the goals stated, given the very high participation rate in these

loans by women in the country[15], there would arguably be far more improvements to women's poverty and human rights (Zayyad, 2022; JT, 2019).

In a study on vocational training at Zaatari Refugee Camp, among the biggest benefits reported were that it allowed the women to connect with people in their community, it gave them skills they could use at home and at work, and it increased their sense of self-confidence (Jabbar & Zaza, 2016). The participants also reported that it helped their family's financial situation, though, it did not help them "establish a profession" and the training was not in areas that were of much interest to them (Jabbar & Zaza, 2016). In another study in Jordan, Al-Dajani and Marlow (2010) "explored how Palestinian women negotiate the operation of home-based enterprises within traditional, conservative families" (2010, p. 482). Among the issues noted was the difficulty 'to balance home responsibilities with the business, and, because home-based enterprises intrude into the domestic sphere, there is a permanent presence of 'work' in the home, which is very stressful' (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010, p. 480). The study also did not find correlation that equated access and control over assets and resources, period, with increased decision-making power or autonomy. Instead, the level of independence and control women had over what they earned largely reflected their level of formal education (2010). Benefits of these businesses were similar to the ones previous study cited, which was that it gave the women a sense of agency, led to them being more assertive, and it increased their self-esteem. They also allowed women to contribute financially to their families. And, contrary to statements that home-based businesses counteract or undo patriarchal structures, the interviews from this research

[15] In the first quarter of 2018, the Sanabel Microfinance Network of Arab Countries "estimated that 65 percent of Jordan's microfinance clients are women" while "Tanmeyah, the Jordan Microfinance Network, places women's involvement for the same quarter at 72 percent" (Welsh, 2019, p. 58).

showed “that gender hierarchies were clearly reproduced. The role of entrepreneur was positioned alongside that of wife and mother and only rarely intruded into or challenged these primary activities” (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2010, p. 481). Meaning that, women were only allowed to engage in this work by dominant family members as long as it did not interfere with their domestic responsibilities. So, it was not that ‘the traditional patriarchal family model was challenged, so much as it adapted out of economic necessity’ (2010, p. 481), which included a feeling of empowerment by women “without any substantial challenge to prevailing order” (2010, p. 481). And this is the opposite of statements made by CARE Jordan. For instance, in the Gender Analysis report cited earlier which stated that, ‘access and control over productive resources reduces women’s workload’ – because women are expected to do this paid work in addition to their regular domestic work. And it provides more nuanced understanding regarding its claim that ‘access and ownership over income and assets’ improve gender inequalities, as these changes – which occurred out of necessity rather than due to structural reasons – may not be substantial or sustainable.

As explained, CARE Jordan’s activities also include information provision, which seeks to facilitate connections to employment for Syrians in Jordan who are refugees[16]. But in a field experiment for job search assistance for (male and female) Syrians who are refugees in Jordan, and Jordanians, information provision and psychological support was completely ineffective at altering motivation to look for work, or the ability to find it (Caria et. al., 2020). The intervention that proved effective at increasing job searches for Syrians who are refugees was unconditional cash transfers

[16] This is separate from information provision by CARE Jordan about their services (Gender Analysis Report 2019).

– which helped offset the financial cost of looking for work. However, for those who found employment, this method was unable to address issues reported by participants regarding the exploitative work conditions and poor or withheld pay (Caria et. al., 2020).

The focus of soft-skill training – which is a focus of CARE Jordan's development programs, along with other international development agencies in the region – was critiqued in a personal conversation that I had with an executive from a national development agency, who said, loosely explained, that this training has shown to be unhelpful. However, it may be more problematic than this. A study from 2009 examined soft skill development within the public sector in the U.S., between IT professionals and social workers. What they found was that the IT workers (who were predominantly male) benefited from soft skills, while the caseworkers, particularly the women, were disadvantaged. Because these skills were "used as a justification to confine [women] to tasks well below their (technical) competence" (Grugulis & Vincent, 2009, p. 598), while it bolstered the appeal of the IT professionals and in turn expanded their options and employability. Ultimately, soft skills, or "[r]e-defining personal attributes and behaviours as skills" (Grugulis & Vincent, 2009, p. 599), simultaneously 'legitimizes gendered and racialized assumptions and ignores the structural aspects that create and reinforce such assumptions' (Grugulis & Vincent, 2009, p. 599). It also specifically disproportionately negatively impacts workers with medium to low-level skills. This is not to disregard the positive impacts experienced by those who participate in this or related training – like the women in the studies cited in this chapter who reported that they learned from this training and took personal benefit from it – nor is the claim being made that a study in the U.S. is applicable to the context

of this thesis. The point is to draw attention to these findings to argue for the need to study whether similar negative consequences – which, in the U.S, appear to reflect colonial biases of gender and race – come from skills training for Syrian women who are refugees. And this may be particularly important given there may be no, or very little benefit to this training in terms of its effectiveness at increasing employability. In a study on soft skill training for female youth employment conducted with students from community colleges in Jordan (Groh et. al., 2016), the findings support what the executive of the national agency said to me. In their experiment, the soft skill program used a highly qualified instructor, was long in duration, and had strongly positive assessments from participants. And yet, contrary "to the expected impact of such programs from academic audiences and policymakers" (2016, p. 15 of 23) the training showed to have "zero" impact on employability, or on patriarchal views about women.

And, to extend discussion on this form of training is an anecdotal story. A project manager for an international development organization in the region told me about a project for women in the country they are working on, which has a massive budget and is predominantly focused on soft skill development. When discussing this project, the executive from the national development agency I had spoken to said they knew of it and could do the same programming for 2.5 times less money. When I had this discussion with a project manager of the international organization, they told me that the budget is big because most of it goes to administration – like hiring people and teams and bringing in experts. Ultimately what this person estimated would end up on the ground was, unknowingly to them, the same amount that the executive of the national development agency said was needed.

In a proposal to an international donor, CARE Jordan explains that their programs seek to help "empower [women] to address the urgent needs of women" (CARE C., 2019, p. 7), 'empower them economically' (CARE C., 2019, p. 16), and to help 'women and refugees become self-reliant through the access to means of inclusive, sustainable, dignified livelihoods and control over income and assets' (ToR for MSME, 2019, p. 1). Yet, as has been shown, such 'help women help themselves' programs and activities do not appear to meaningfully improve women's economic self-sufficiency. Even years after the implementation of the Jordan Compact, which was meant to facilitate access to the labor market, "an estimated 63% of refugees are unemployed and over 90% of Syrian refugees live below the national poverty line" (Caria et. al, 2020, p. 4). For Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018) this failure reflects the neoliberal definition of self-sufficiency, which is overly focused on the individual. For Welsh (2019) it is the individualistic way empowerment is defined. While this thesis agrees with their general arguments, it argues, as will be shown, that their focus is too narrow to explain the failures of economic development programs as a whole. However, the focus on the individual can help explain why – beyond reports by some women that they feel more able to speak on their own behalf, financial benefit for individual households, or the conditional economic participation women undertake out of necessity – they have not appeared to result in substantial improvements to women's self-sufficiency or human rights in Jordan. Women's human rights – for Jordanians and Syrians – continue to be an established, pressing issue (Zayyad, 2022). In fact, they may have regressed, as CARE Jordan itself recently explained that "[b]oth Jordanian and Syrian adults report that men and women have become less equal in the last five to eight years"[17] (CARE C.

[17] While COVID-19 has exacerbated areas of women's rights globally, including for Syrian women in Jordan, this timeline puts this as being an issue prior to the pandemic.

2019, p. 10). Considering these realities, the fact that the paradigm created by IDA has shown to be insufficient at addressing its stated goals related to women's empowerment, and in light of critiques of the WB and IMF, including for being "crucial" to the support of the feminization of labour specifically (Akorsu, 2016), maybe there are more appropriate sources for economic development projects for women who are refugees in poverty in the Global South.

In a paper on the labor market and entrepreneurship programs in fragile states[18], Blattman and Ralston[19] state that the links associated "from labor market and entrepreneurship interventions to employment, and from employment to stability – are based first on faith, second on theory, and last on evidence" (2015, p. i). Which is why these 'programs, including standard interventions like skills training and microfinance, have failed to deliver jobs, poverty relief or stability' (2015, p. i). And the studies in Jordan cited in this chapter, including those focused on women and refugees, largely support this. For Al-Dajani and Marlow, Groh et. al., and Blattman and Ralston the reason for the failure of the programs cited in this chapter is because, as the latter two explain, "they are based on faulty assumptions and diagnosis" (2015, p. iv). This thesis agrees and argues that the shortcomings or failures of these economic development programs should be seen as the result of larger and complex realities. Ones that are unique to Jordan, and, particularly regarding the neoliberal institutions and approaches involved exist outside of Jordan as well.

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[18] Not limited to refugees or by gender.

[19] Ralston works for the World Bank at the time of this publication.

CHAPTER 3

JORDAN’S POLITICAL ECONOMY, THE JORDAN COMPACT, AND REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT

One of the unique contexts in Jordan concerning refugee self-sufficiency is the Jordan Compact. Issued in 2016 between the Government of Jordan (GoJ) and Western partners (the WB and EU), Lenner and Turner (2019) explain that this was a “benchmark” for a few reasons, as it sought to ‘turn the Syrian refugee crisis into a development opportunity’ (2019, p. 66), that would simultaneously help Syrian refugees (through providing 200,000 Syrian refugees work permits so that they can access formal employment), the Jordanian economy, and Europe’s containment interests[20]. However, regarding the first two goals, it has been seen as a failure (Morris, 2020; Lenner & Turner, 2019). It is not within the scope of this thesis to go into the details of why it failed[21], but key points will be highlighted with regards to the current approach to the economic self-sufficiency of (male and female) Syrian refugees in the country. Following this, Chapter 4 will build on this with regards to the self-sufficiency and human rights of Syrian women who are refugees in the country.

3.1. Jordan’s Political Economy

In their very thorough and insightful paper on the Compact, Lenner and Turner explain that the policymakers involved relied on the same “policies and rationalities”

[20] The Compacts mantra put ‘Jordan as the example of this projected ‘win-win’ solution’, that would ‘simultaneously address the economic issues of Syrians, give a boost to Jordan’s economy, and reduce the numbers of those going to Europe’ (Lenner & Turner 2019, p. 66).

[21] For an excellent analysis see the paper *Making Refugees Work? The Politics of Integrating Syrian Refugees into the Labor Market in Jordan* by Katharina Lenner and Lewis Turner.

used in the past in Jordan, "that purport to solve [the country's] socioeconomic challenges through globally-circulating neoliberal solutions" (2019, p. 71) and ultimately 'reorganize the space to suit the interests of capital' (2019, p. 71). And it took this approach while simultaneously failing to include consideration of the "political economy and labour market" (2019, p. 71) of the country. The shape and organization of which is the result of "more than 20 years of neoliberalizations" (2019, p. 71) that 'reorganized the political economy of Jordan to suit the interests of capital' that came because of the country's long history with technocratic rationalities of the Washington Consensus and bodies like the WB and IMF (Lenner & Turner, 2019; Nazzal, 2005). The result has been a macroeconomic strategy that, when combined with factors like the historical and ongoing migration of Jordanians out of the country[22], has led to the development of special economic zones (SEZs) which, among other things[23], have led to heavy reliance on migrant labour.

For migrant workers this means that the realities of "(non-)regulation" (Lenner & Turner, 2019, p. 73) and partial formalization of their status in the country – which gives the power to the employer, leads to exploitative working conditions, and keeps wages low (Lenner & Turner, 2019) – are likely not going to change in any substantial way, as they are fundamental to the functioning of Jordan's economy. This is reflective of Benjamin Selwyn's analyses of capitalism and development. He explains that the concept of development is based on

[22] For instance, to work in the oil-rich Gulf states.

[23] Policies that focus on "foster[ing] entrepreneurialism and self-reliance, e.g., through microcredit programs" (Lenner & Turner, 2019, p. 71), and "(community) development projects in urban and rural spaces" (Lenner & Turner, 2019, pgs. 71-2).

> an elite subject-subordinate object (ES-SO) conception of social transformation, where elite subjects are conceptually allocated decision-making power, while subordinate objects are conceived of as achieving social betterment by following rules established by elite subjects (2020, pgs. 39-40, emphasis original).

Which is reflective of critiques of the Compact, notably that it "demonstrates a high degree of control and coercion over individuals" (Morris, 2020, p. 93). Additionally, Selweyn explains that "[u]nder capitalism, productivity drives are not intended to improve the living standards of workers, but to cut costs" (2020, p. 38), while its other strategy "is (strict) labour management" (2020, p. 38) which includes the use of "poverty wages" (2020, p. 39) and in turn, the need for informal labor. Which reflects Jordan's economic structure. And, while Syrian refugees are not formally migrant workers, they exist "in a gray zone between local and migrant workers" (Lenner & Turner, 2019, p. 90), which is why Syrian refugees typically compete with migrant workers, rather than Jordanians, for jobs (Mencutek & Nashwan, 2020). In her paper on work permits in Jordan from 2017, Kelberer explains that MSMEs that employ 5-10 people "are much more likely to employ the informal labor force in Jordan and thus provide a viable avenue towards formalizing the Jordanian labor and business markets" (p. 26). However, this paper by Lenner and Turner from a few years later shows why the opposite is true (2019). Because an MSME, even if CARE Jordan formally registers it, will have a hard time making money unless it relies on informal labor.

As Selweyn (2020) explains, capitalism is a vehicle of economic growth for some. Within Jordan, this includes elites. For the GoJ, the Compact was, first, a vehicle through which they could get more development aid – assistance which has become such a significant source of revenue for refugee-host states that it has become known as

"refugee rentierism"[24] (Kelberer, 2017; Morris, 2020) while, as a result of the Compact, Jordan specifically has been referred to as a "refugee rentier state" (Empociello, 2022). Second, the Compact was seen as a vehicle to facilitate a trade agreement with the EU which, in turn, was supposed to serve as a conduit for increased investment in Jordanian businesses and a productive export market (Mencutek & Nashwan, 2020) but ultimately only helped a few connected businesses (Empociello, 2021) [25]. To understand the economic benefits for actors outside of Jordan, one should look to the IMF and WB. As explained, these international financial and development institutions have a long history in Jordan that extends back to the Washington Consensus, and they were instrumental in shaping the country's economic landscape. They have also provided significant funds in the form of policy-based funding to the GoJ in the past (Harrigan & El-Said, 2009), and more as part of the Compact (Lenner & Turner, 2019). In discussing the need for alternative economic models, Baisotti discusses the role of the Washington Consensus in Latin America, and how its structural reforms ended up 'increasing important issues such as social inequality and poverty, and the regions dependence 'on the outside world' (2021, p. ix). But what he does not address, which can be seen in Jordan, is that the involvement of these institutions profit national elite as well. This is not to disregard other considerations, like perhaps how challenging it is for those who may want to make changes to do so, particularly when faced with significant and entrenched national

[24] "[T]he phenomenon of using host status and refugee policy as primary mechanisms of international rent-seeking" (Morris, 2020, p. 91).

[25] However, because of many issues in its implementation – like the lack of inclusionary measures for small or medium firms – the handful of firms that did benefit "tended to be older, larger, and traditionally export-oriented firms. This outcome seems to be a function not only of such firms being a natural fit with the program's designs, but of their positioning within social networks and their knowledge of sites of power" (Empociello, 2021). Like, for example, having connections with the Chamber of Commerce.

economic structures. But the reciprocally profitable nature is important to include. This is clearly visible in comparing observations by Lenner and Turner, and Morris. The former two observed that the Compact appeared like a project that was concerned with utilizing the potential productivity of the "unused human capital" of Syrian refugees "as a new category of migrant workers" (2019, p. 74) to exploit. The latter applies a framework of *extractivism*[26] to the Compact – which is a process of capital accumulation utilized by colonial powers to the detriment of poorer countries, most notably those in the Global South (2020).

3.1.1. The Grey Zones of Legality, Illegality, Formality, and Informality

When one looks at the realities of work permits promised for Syrian refugees by the GoJ, one may understand why focusing solely on what is officially legal and illegal, and formal and informal, can be problematic for the analysis of economic development programs and activities in Jordan, and for future program designs and policymaking. It also can help explain why looking to paid employment as the solution to economic self-sufficiency likely cannot succeed.

The basic purpose of the work permits was to give Syrians who are refugees the right to work legally in the country, which was supposed to benefit their ability to be economically self-sufficient and help Jordan's economy. This has not been the case. Regarding the former goal, setting aside the extensive procedure involved in acquiring a work permit, and the noted high probability that administering 200,000 work permits was not possible (Kelberer, 2017), the employment and working conditions have not

[26] Morris explains that it "is a mode of accumulation, with deep roots in colonial and imperial endeavours, whereby natural resources are removed at a high intensity for export markets" (2020, p. 89) and "has been essential in the industrial development and prosperity of the Global North at the expense of poorer countries, particularly in the Global South" (2020, p. 89).

appeared to have been positively impacted by the Compact. The informal labor market is still the dominant form of employment for Syrian refugees, while the working conditions in some areas have been reportedly getting worse (Burlin, 2020). Kelberer also explains that 'while work permits technically guarantee a minimum wage, formal wages are often less than what refugees make in the informal market' (2017, p. 29). As a result, refugees are not just competing with migrant workers but are at a disadvantage in this competition, as migrant workers – who typically do not come with their families, and do not share the same expenses as refugees, who live there more permanently – will often accept lower wages and are willing to work longer hours (Mencutek & Nashwan, 2020). Additionally, refugees have explained that work permits have done nothing to avoid the issues of exploitation (Mencutek & Nashwan, 2020; Harris, 2016; Morris, 2020) which includes being forced to work in harsh and unsafe environments, for very low wages, and with a lack of enforcement of labor law protections (Mencutek & Nashwan, 2020; Harris, 2016). It also does not provide guaranteed or stable hours (UN Women, 2018).

Based on ethnographic work conducted in Jordan, Burlin shows why it is important to understand the safety and security realities of all Syrians in Jordan through their experiences, where what is technically law versus how it is practiced, are very different (2021). In one story, a refugee explained that even a work contract in combination with their work permit is not an effective protection mechanism, as most refugees cannot afford a lawyer for when issues arise, and because Jordanian business owners are connected, so the rule will not be in their favour. This is echoed elsewhere by refugees as well who have said that papers do not actually offer them protection (Morris, 2020). In another story shared by a student who was living in Amman, the

student explained that, during a bus check on a trip with non-Syrian friends, they (and not their friends) were detained and harassed by the authorities. These authorities called them a refugee and threatened to either send them to a refugee camp or to deport them (Burlin, 2021). Such realities "makes clear, 'illegality' can be arbitrarily produced for Syrian refugees in Jordan" (Burlin, 2021, p. 132). In light of this, Burlin explains that '[a] lack of economic rights is not the only factor that contributes to the economic disempowerment of Syrian refugees' (2021, p. 131). As such he argues to shift the focus of illegality from being a framework as a status, to one as a condition, as doing so allows us to "s*ee how it is a product of a structural relation of power*, and not a lack of a work permit" (2021, p. 131, emphasis mine). And this can help avoid problems noted with the approach of the WB, whose technocratic focus on what is formally the law has been critiqued for not accounting for the social, political, and economic relationships of power that exist in practice (Forti, 2020). And the pervasive critiques regarding "the inability of technocratic development interventions to address the complex challenges posed by local environments" (Burlin, 2020, p. 121) more generally. However, Burlin applies his examination of these structural power relationships on isolated national considerations, such as the failures of and decisions made by the GoJ. But, given the role international agencies have played in the design of the political economy of Jordan, and in the praxis of and programs for refugee economic self-sufficiency, including international considerations in this conversation allows for a more contextual understanding.

While the relationship the international refugee regime, and/or field of IDA have to refugees in the Global South has been looked at, Harris offers an account of the

relationship between business owners in Jordan and the GoJ. Drawing on an interview, she explains that

> [b]usiness owners in Jordan benefit from a lack of effective government regulation with regards to labor migration, and have used their influence in the Jordanian government to limit enforcement and push for policies that match their interests. Employers profit off of non-citizen workers who do not qualify for the same minimum wage, do not ask for benefits, and are "willing to work longer hours for less pay"… they [also] have a great deal of power within the government. Over the past twenty years… all but one of the ministers of labor have been from the business sector… large-scale farm owners and domestic worker recruitment agencies also have a great deal of influence in Jordanian politics (2016, p. 41).

The neoliberal economic structure of Jordan's economy, explains Harris, has resulted in the institutionalization of "strong worker protection laws and weak enforcement mechanisms as a way of creating favorable labor market conditions for Jordanian business interests" (Harris, 2016, p. 37). When applied to Syrian refugees, this has resulted in a consistent record by Jordanian authorities to "support business interests by enacting strict regulations while deliberately undermining enforcement" (Harris, 2016, p. 37). And ongoing issues related work conditions, employment, and poverty means that the participation of international institutions – like the IMF and WB – are seen as important as their support, such in the form of loans, can support the GoJs efforts to solve them. These being the same institutions that originally helped create the country's economic landscape, and the same ones who then did not, as Lenner and Turner explain, include consideration of that landscape in their design of the Compact.

This chapter has sought to put national and international contexts in conversation with one another, to highlight the role that both national and international actors and bodies have played, and continue to play, in shaping and supporting Jordan's

economic system. This includes the GoJ and national elites, and the reciprocal relationship between these groups and international financial and development institutions. The role that "empire" or colonialism has played in impacting those in Jordan can be seen through the role of neoliberalism and capitalism. More specifically, through the role of bodies like the IMF and WB, and the neoliberalization of the country's political economy – realities that have been critiqued elsewhere in the Global South (Baisotti, 2021). In Jordan, this has created an economic landscape that is arguably incapable of providing Syrians who are refugees with the ability to be economically self-sufficient. However, looking to this international system and these bodies alone as the cause of these issues overlooks the reciprocal relationship that elites in Jordan have with them, which can work to the detriment of workers in the country. While focusing on national contexts – as Burlin and Betts et. al did – leaves out important international considerations. And this includes that this national elite-international relationship can be seen as a manifestation of the larger reality that colonial systems – while they may work to the detriment of many of whom have been colonized – can be upheld by those who have been colonized who profit from them (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Amadiume, 1987; Forti, 2020).

Through this the realities of refugee experiences – who must navigate grey zones between formal and informal labor, legal and illegal status, with their subordinate and precarious position as a Syrian refugee – can be better understood. Doing this helps avoid the mistakes technocrats made in designing the Compact – that is, overlooking local contexts – and creates a more thorough picture of why the focus on economic development for (male and female) Syrian refugees in Jordan, and subsequent humanitarian development programs, are not successfully meeting their goal of self-

sufficiency. That being because Jordan's economic landscape does not appear to be able to provide wages and working conditions necessary to make this possible. And, aside from wages that are too low to move Syrians who are refugees out of poverty, they are expected to undertake this labor without the actual and reliable protection of their rights by employers, or the GoJ. Getachew's argument about how the Global South has fewer rights and more burdens than the Global North can be seen through Syrians who are refugees in Jordan – where national contexts reproduce, maintain, and profit from these power structures. And, given the relevancy that exercises of power have on the lives of refugees – excersises which are not confined to or abide by what is formally or legally stated, and the impacts of which are very much consequential to the economic self-sufficiency of refugees – it is arguably necessary to include these realities in policy decision-making. Something technocratic approaches, which, as seen in the case of Jordan, do not do. It also provides partial context that can help explain why these economic programs are also failing their attached goal of improving disaggregated incidents of women's human rights. One reason being that the economic landscape of Jordan can do little else but perpetuate violations. As such, focusing on these programs as the cause of, and solution to, this ongoing issue will likely result in little change; as they are designed from an idealistic or very simplistic view, where refugees can get themselves out of poverty if they try hard enough with the few tools made available to them. The next chapter will expand on what has been explained here, which was a contextual foundation from which a focus specifically on Syrian women who are refugees in poverty can now be built.

CHAPTER 4
SYRIAN WOMEN WHO ARE REFUGEES IN JORDAN

4.1. The Experiences of Syrian Women in Jordan

While the realities and challenges shared above – which were of male and female Syrian refugees in Jordan who are in poverty – are extensive and complex, they are exacerbated and multiplied for females. Focusing on poverty, refugee households in Jordan with a female head or principal applicant tend to be in a home where there is no male partner, or where he is absent (Hanmer et. al, 2018). With regards to female-headed households as compared to their male counterparts, females experience higher poverty rates (Hanmer et. al, 2018), they tend to have lower education, and when they do have equal education, that education results in a larger reduction in poverty risk for males than it does for females (Hanmer et. al, 2018). Even when both are legally in a country, men experience lower poverty rates. Female-headed households also tend to have more children (Hanmer et. al, 2018).

Notably, due to issues like having to balance paid work with homecare and childcare, the long distances between where they live and where work is, Syrian women cannot work the same very long hours as Syrian men, but particularly of migrant workers (Mencutek & Nashwan, 2020). Many also face logistical challenges such as the fact that these work environments require them to work with men they do not know, and make them feel unsafe and usually, because of the lack of regulations, the lack of rights for refugees, compounded by the lack of rights for women (or lack of enforcement of these areas) do make them unsafe (UN Women, 2018). Using a vocational training course in a camp by International Relief and Development as an example, Mencutek and Nashwan explain that even when women are able to get a job as a result of this

training, and the working contract, permit, and forms necessary to leave the camp, that there are many other realities – like the ones listed above – that make this work unfeasible for many in camps generally, and women specifically (2020). While Syrian women who are refugees in urban settings[27] may not always have the same issue regarding proximity to work as those in camps, their access to aid is more difficult (IDS, 2018), their expenses are higher, they live in fear of harassment by authorities which includes threats of being sent to a camp (UN Women, 2018). Many also complained that the limited work that has been made available is not at their educational or professional level, others have said that the degrading nature of the work makes them feel "inhuman" (UN Women, 2018, p. 19). Even under the "perfect" program, which provided childcare, transportation, and "decent working hours and conditions, they still failed to retain workers" (Morris, 2020, p. 93).

Women who are the head of the household explained that the burden of decision-making has negatively impacted their psychological well-being, that the separation from their families has placed far more responsibilities onto them than before (UN Women, 2018), and that balancing these responsibilities with paid work is also very stressful (Gender Analysis Report, 2019). And there are others who share the benefits they have felt from certain changes, for instance, the pride they have in being able to financially contribute to their family, and the enjoyment in participating in areas of the community or personal development that they had not previously done (UN Women 2018), and, as has been mentioned, the personal growth that has come for some as a result of particular development programs or activities. In terms of safety and security, women have reported verbal, physical, and sexual harassment both in camps

[27] 80% of Syrian refugees in Jordan do not live in camps https://bit.ly/3nuBKqO.

and in urban settings, by family members and by those in Jordan such as store owners, cab drivers, and neighbours (UN Women, 2018). The forms of this harassment reflect both their position as a Syrian refugee, and as a woman, and their experiences have taught them that reporting such incidents cause them more harm than the harasser (which again reflects their lack of rights as a refugee and as a woman). Some women also reported that these events did not bother them much, or that the harassment is not that severe, one interviewee reported that Syrian women cannot do much in Jordan, as their rights and physical movement are significantly restricted (UN Women, 2018), while another said restrictions on their movement are not because of patriarchal norms, but because of a lack of finances (UN Women, 2018). When a researcher asked a Syrian refugee if Syrians in Jordan had human rights, she replied that "[o]f course we do not have human rights. "First of all, our name is 'refugee'. Anything after that does not matter" (Zayed, 2016, p. 29).

Clearly, the realities of Syrian women who are refugees in Jordan are highly varied – meaning that their experiences and subsequent needs cannot be explained or understood properly through blanket statements often relied on in CARE Jordan documents, such as being "confined" to domestic responsibilities or by 'gender norms and dynamics'. This is not to disregard the significance of these realities, but to say that it is that this is a very simplistic framework. And, as such, it may be very limiting, and problematic, to use one universally applied paradigm – participation in the global economy – as the solution to women's poverty and human rights issues. And to do this by using almost the identical programs for men and women[28]. Dynamic lives may

[28] In comparing CARE Jordan's self-sufficiency programs for men and women, they all use the same activities. The main differences are that vocational training may be in different gendered skills, and that these programs, while not attached to goals of "empowerment" for men, are for women.

benefit more from dynamic "solutions". None of the women interviewed for the UN Women (2018) report being cited had work permits, either – which is reflective of the fact that only 4% of the Compacts work permit recipients have been women (Burlin, 2020). Which is why many women have reported the fear they feel to be caught without a work permit (IRC, 2017) and why many women in CARE Jordan's studies, such as the Gender Analysis Report (2019/20), engage in informal labour, usually at home. If, as the field of IDA argues, women's participation in the global economy through paid labor is supposed to be the vehicle through which they can get themselves out of poverty and earn their human rights, individually, how are they supposed to do this when the GoJ is not issuing permits to them? Or when this work is often physically isolated to the home? And, considering that work under a permit offers no protections against issues of informal labor in the country and does not offer them much else but "poverty wages", and does not give them rights that protect against harassment and threats based on their status as a refugee and on their gender – including protection from exploitation and harassment by their employer – it does not seem to be a conduit to foster their human rights. And this position of IDA does not consider women who do not want to work, or who think that it is more important for Syrian men to find work before they do (Burlin, 2020). Nor does it account for the fact that the logistical ability to engage in paid labor is only one factor of many that prevent them from doing so. And it does not account for women who cannot work, for instance, due to physical or psychological reasons (Australian Aid, 2019). Does their inability to engage in paid labor mean they forfeit the chance to be self-sufficient? Does this also therefore mean that these women forfeit the ability to have their human rights? And given the highly varied experiences and needs explored, IDAs approach overlooks that for some women

– like those who are heads of households – participating in paid labor may actually be disempowering.

4.1.1. Women's Participation in Paid Labor

And trying to avoid the exploitative nature of Jordan's existing industries, for example, through MSMEs or other entrepreneurial businesses, offers limited benefit. This area of women's economic participation has been critiqued for decades for many reasons, including not only their inability to address the structural causes of women's human rights issues, but the fact they can perpetuate them, and because of their poor track record for poverty alleviation (Stromquist, 2013; Akorsu, 2016). Rather than look at the definition given to the changing labels of employment – for instance, from MSME business owner, to entrepreneur, to the emerging emphasis on "gig" work by international development agencies[29] (OECD, 2018; IFC, 2022) – and whether they are formally in the informal sector or not, this thesis places them on a continuum. A position whose validity and importance may be supported by the examination of the "grey zones" above, including the fact that the 'market forces in Jordan encourage informality' (Mencutek & Nashwan, 2020, p. 623). For Lisa Hsin (2020) it is necessary to place labor exploitation on a continuum of informality. In doing so, the problematic traits shared by these areas of employment – whether legally informal or not – can be better understood. For example, their informal, flexible, or precarious orientation, their relationship to the feminization, gendering (Stromquist, 2013; Akorsu, 2016) and racialization (Bonacich, Alimahomed, and Wilson, 2008) of labor, their 'long hours for

[29] Which, they explain, helps women "leapfrog" over patriarchal barriers to entering the job market (OECD, 2018).

minimal pay, the fact that they are labor intensive and unorganized, and ultimately serve as fragile and insecure sources for income generation' (Stromquist, 2013, p. 276). All realities of which tend to disproportionately negatively impact women in poverty in the Global South (Chen, 2001; Bonacich, Alimahomed, and Wilson, 2008; Mohanty, 2007).

The growth of the informal sector and women's labor force participation occurred in concert with one another (Ortiz-Ospina & Tzvetkova, 2017). Was this increase in participation due to addressing structural barriers to women's rights, or because of the lack of barriers to the informal economy? If it was solely explained by women's rights, one would assume that women's wages would reflect this, and that small-scale and/or flexible employment options would not come with so many other issues that disproportionately negative impact them generally, and women of color specifically (Chen 2001), who are employed in them. In light of these realities, while these flexible employment areas are promoted by international development institutions for their ability to accommodate women's homecare and childcare responsibilities (OECD, 2018), maybe there is another explanation. The significant issues that come with IDAs preferred forms of labor force participation for Syrian women who are refugees in Jordan appear to reflect capitalisms historical reliance on the feminization and racialization of labor[30]. And, given that efforts are focused on getting these women to work, but not addressing structural barriers or offsetting that with childcare or paying them for their domestic labor, the flexibility of this employment may be less about accommodating Syrian women, and more about maximizing Syrian women's time, for as little money as possible.

[30] See Dados, 2020; Bonacich, E., Alimahomed, S., & Wilson, 2008; Chen, 2001; Akorsu, 2016.

And there is a significant irony in IDAs neoliberal economic paradigm that women's human rights or equality are disaggregated issues that can be overcome with the universal solution of the global economy. That being that this idea ignores the fact that women have always engaged in labor (in the form of unpaid domestic and care work) – the estimated value of which is around $11 trillion USD annually (Gleeson-White, 2021). But this has never been counted in domestic or global GDPs (Gleeson-White, 2021; Chen, 2001) because the global capitalist economy was designed to not recognize it (Gleeson-White 2021). And this is in addition to issues surrounding paid labor because, as Chen notes, it is not just women's unpaid household labor is left out of official statistics, but their (invisible) paid labor as well (2001). It also ignores global pay gaps between races and genders[31], and the fact that women's employment globally has already drastically increased over the last few decades (Ortiz-Ospina & Tzvetkova, 2017)[32]. In other words, women have always been not just "represented" in the global economy, but they have been at least equal participants to it as men, and in recent decades, are participating in paid labor at a higher rate than men. And yet, women's disproportionate experiences of poverty and human rights violations persist, including among Syrian refugee communities in Jordan. In other words, women's human rights issues are not simply disaggregated incidents, they are also – as seen through the design and impacts of the patriarchal global economic system itself – a universal issue. And it is one that is exacerbated when it comes to women of color. As such, the general premise of IDAs development approach does not appear to be a viable solution to the

[31] Refer to inequality.org for detailed statistics on economic inequalities between races and genders.

[32] With regards to this last point, this increase happened at the same time as the growth of the informal sector, which, as will be discussed shortly, may not be entirely or predominantly to the benefit of women.

economic self-sufficiency or human rights of Syrian women who are refugees in Jordan, not just because of Jordan's economic landscape. It is also, this thesis argues, as does Forti (2020), because IDA chose not to connect women's economic development and rights issues to global, structural barriers. Which is likely because doing so would have made its current neoliberal, capitalist approach an unviable solution to women's poverty and human rights. Which is why this thesis argues is that to really understand IDAs approach to refugee self-sufficiency – in Jordan and elsewhere – it is important not just to include these foundations of IDA, but the relationship they have with colonialism. Doing so gives fuller context to IDAs political economy, particularly with regards to the relevance of race and gender in its economic development programs for refugees. This is not to say that the focus should be solely on global, structural barriers, however – as Third World feminism argues, universalisms have been problematic for Third World women (Forti 2020). It is that work that does not also address larger barriers – as seen in the case of this thesis – does not appear able to meet the goal of self-sufficiency or human rights for the Syrian women in this study. The Country Director of CARE Jordan recognizes this, which can be seen in his strong call for action by the GoJ to end its tokenistic gestures and make meaningful changes to its patriarchal economic system (Zayyad, 2022). But if the patriarchy is a foundation of the current capitalist approach to self-sufficiency, then this is also a global issue. And, given the criticism that it is the goal of the patriarchy to keep its power and, as such, it is detrimental to human rights (Burkhardt, 2022), relying on a patriarchal system or bodies feels counter intuitive.

CHAPTER 5

RECONSIDERING HOW DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR REFUGEES ARE STUDIED

While it is not within the scope of this thesis to go into detail regarding the use of "expertise" in international development, it will be discussed briefly, because the current approach may contribute to inequalities. With the Washington Consensus came structural adjustment policies and the neoliberal understanding and approach of technocratic expertise, which has since been critiqued by many scholars. For instance, as discussed, it does not consider local contexts in policymaking, and the development programs under it take overly individualistic approaches to social and economic issues. For Forti, Mosse (Forti, 2020), and Matthews (2022) the business-like nature of international humanitarian development and the subsequent narrow definition of expertise came from the WB and IMF and their structural adjustment policies of this Consensus, and its stated goal to have globalization work in favor of those in poverty.

For instance, the way the design of data collection tools defines and measure the success or improvement of a program or activity is done in very limited ways. Through an examination of several documents of CARE Jordan, quantitative methodologies, where the measurement of success is indicated by numbers and percentages of beneficiaries reached are heavily relied on to assess the impact of a program[33]. But what about looking at the dynamics of what results from participation within these activities

[33] Drawing on one study as an example, CARE Jordan examined whether targeted beneficiaries are "provided with income generating skills and resources", "with livelihood life-skills training", and "are linked to income generating opportunities" (Protracted Crisis Response Proposal 2021, p. 13) through measurements for representation and participation. This being the numbers of households and percentages of beneficiaries that are provided with resources.

outside of just the delivery of them? What about other approaches to measure the impacts of these activities? For example, of those who have been tangibly 'linked to opportunities' for income generation, could these individuals describe the quality of these 'links' – for example regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of them? While qualitative data – like focus group discussions (FGDs) – is used, it tends to be utilized more for studying areas of interest prior to implementing programs, or after to gauge the experiences that participants had from a program or activity, rather than to assess the medium- or long-term impacts of those programs. And this appeared to be the case across the documents that I reviewed at the agency, where the focus is on standardization and reach. Other examples include CARE Jordan's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) regarding their EE activities, where they refer to their community center as a "one stop shop" of services and programs (2019, p. 4). And through marketing terms like "community-based targeting" (2019, p. 5) and procure/ment, (2019, p.10). This is not to say that reach is unimportant, as it is arguably very important that as many people as possible have consistent access to services and programs that they need. But the lack of inclusion of other forms of knowledge, and lack of focus on the nature and sustainability of changes of programs may be problematic if the goal is to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Based on his ethnographic work in Jordan, Burlin explains this focus reflects 'the "upward" movement that accountability takes place, to the donor' (2021, pgs. 129-30). Which can explain why an NGO worker in Jordan said that entrepreneurial courses are used because they are easy to implement and cover a lot of beneficiaries simultaneously (2021). And these factors can help explain the oversaturation of jobs in one particular area or trade, such as tailoring, in a small geographic region, that these

programs can result in (Thorne, 2020). Matthews points out that this combination of technocratic study and business language is what has allowed neoliberal agendas in development to evade confronting their political orientation (2022). An observation supported by Barnett regarding the colonial history and ongoing racism in international humanitarianism and how this impacts their work and North-South inequalities (2020 & 2013). In practice, I found that a disproportionate reliance on one kind of data made accounting for the complexities of the socio-political world difficult. It also ran the risk of being interpreted as disproportionate concern with the perfection with which the business operates over meaningful changes for "beneficiaries". And this is not to say that quantitative data cannot be a dynamic measuring tool. It is pointed at to explain that the narrow ways in which programs or activities are examined appears to hinder dynamic understanding of their impacts, including the nature and sustainability of them. And this is not necessarily reflection of the priorities of those who work at CARE Jordan, who, in my experience are largely driven by their desire to positively impact the world in which they live. It is, as mentioned earlier, a result of IDA standards and subsequent donor demands.

As mentioned with Barnett, hegemonic reliance on Western scientific knowledge and expertise may exacerbate inequalities. Claims that Western science is objective has been debunked by many scholars because, as Sharma explains, and as Foucault (1980; 2002) would agree, science is also "intimately linked to those in power" (2021, p. 28). For example, Western, modern science has reproduced colonial claims about the world in the past[34]. And today, there are still issues that come from

[34] In the 19th century, some European scientists justified some racisit characteristics of gender categories using science, and men's superiority over women, the latter of which was justified on grounds that intersected with biological studies of race. For instance, a German scientist said white women's skulls were more like the skulls of Black people than of white men. And scientists argued that "women" were

patriarchal and racialized assumptions or positions, which can result in designs that marginalize people according to colonial constructions of race and gender (EQUALS & UNESCO, 2019; Kendi, 2019; Thomas, 2019) and can protect the lives of people better according to them (Perez, 2022). Sharma accurately explains that reliance on this form of knowledge also increases the divide between the Global North and South, and Barnett's critiques supports this[35]. He explains that the false idea that that "[e]xpert knowledge is objective while local knowledge is subjective" (Barnett, 2020) eradicates the possibility of equality between "the global color line" in humanitarian development work. During a recent webinar with the Center for Feminist Foreign Policy, ActionAid, The Feminist Humanitarian Network, and Shifting the Power Coalition, Michelle Higelin – Executive Director of ActionAid – offered a statement in support of what has been explored here (Rolls et al., 2022). She explained that the fields use of technical language and narrow forms of expertise has worked to silence patriarchal power structures and, as such, works to the detriment of women (Rolls et al., 2022). For her, it is necessary to get rid of the expertise as we understand it, because, as Sandra Macías del Villar[36] explains, such purported "neutrality works in favour of the oppressor" (Rolls et al., 2022). And this is supported by Barnett, who, like these women cited, argues for the need to shift focus to existing knowledge within communities (2020).

intellectually and physiologically different than "men" in a way that framed women as developmentally behind men similar to how colonialists perceived their civilizational superiority to the primitiveness of those in their colonies (Russett, 1995). This has had disproportionately negative consequences for women of colour which have carried into today (Holmes, 2016).

[35] He points out how "evidence-based humanitarianism" requires 'collection, analysis, and evidence' (2020), and that these tools and the skills required to execute them come from the Global North, resulting in narrow and hierarchical definitions and standards of "expertise" that overshadows local knowledge.

[36] Program Director of the Crises Department at Global Fund for Women.

Another example I observed in CARE Jordan reports was the reliance on repetitive generalizations – for example, regarding the blanketed experiences of women's oppression and "confined" lives of domesticity – which silence the dynamic lives that actually exist[37]. This is arguably the opposite of empowering. Or the fact that the blame for oppression is almost always placed on so-called cultural or traditional norms, including being "deeply rooted in Arab social and cultural norms", or because of "social and cultural norms" (Gender Analysis Report, 2019, p. 3). As if patriarchy does not exist elsewhere? Including, as it has been argued in this thesis, in the very solution posed by IDA (global capitalism) for the self-sufficiency of Syrian women who are refugees, and in the technocratic methods used to implement and study its development programs. For Forti, this isolated focus on cultural factors as the barriers to women's self-sufficiency reflects IDAs choice to avoid tackling global patriarchal structures. This thesis agrees but adds that, in the case of Jordan, this hegemonic framework ignores the economic landscape of the country – which the bodies of IDA themselves helped design and implement, and which needs to be included in the design of economic programs for refugees. As this landscape appears to prevent the possibility for refugees to be economically self-sufficient.

This is not to devalue Western science or argue to eradicate its use. The aim is to draw attention to historical and current power dynamics, and the subsequent issues that come from relying on it as a purely "objective" tool. And, as such, why relying on Western expertise and methods alone may not be the best way to reach the goal of refugee self-sufficiency. Additionally, re-evaluating the processes from the design, implementation, and evaluation phases of international humanitarian development

[37] The UN Women report (2018) cited in this thesis does a good job at capturing the different experiences and realities of Syrian women in Jordan.

programs may be useful, as, in my experience, having the same agency or body design a program, implement it, and then be responsible for evaluating and reporting on its performance is concerning. Particularly considering the research methods noted above, which do not focus on medium- or long-term impacts and are very focused on donor requirements.

CHAPTER 6

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

6.1 Economic Development Programs and the National Political Landscape

Plans for the economic self-sufficiency of Syrian refugees in Jordan need to do more than provide these communities with the limited options of exploitative work environments, and labor competition with migrant workers for poverty wages. And these efforts need to be inclusive of the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in the country that are unable to work (Lenner & Turner, 2019; Australian Aid, 2019), women, and women who cannot work. And nowhere in CARE Jordan's program designs and considerations, assessments, or reports to donors or partners did I find any inclusion of the economic landscape of the country. It does not seem feasible for economic development programs and activities to help communities get out of poverty if their design does not include the realities of the economic landscape that they are working in. And in the case of Jordan, if this information was included in their frameworks, it would be understood that focusing on earning money in paid labor alone is an insufficient answer for (male and female) refugee self-sufficiency. And, as such, would help explain the lack of success economic development programs have for their economic self-sufficiency. And this is particularly so with regards to Syrian women, who experience poverty more than men and who already have an unpaid full-time job. Critics of the Compact say that it left Syrian refugees out of the planning process (Lenner & Turner, 2019; Barbelet et. al., 2018), which is true, but the reality for Syrian women is compounded. They were left alone for humanitarian development agencies to use neoliberal solutions to 'help them help themselves' with their economic self-sufficiency and human rights against national and international obstacles. Obstacles that

are insurmountable for them to overcome on their own and cannot be solved by having individual women work for the global economy or gain individual 'access and ownership over assets'. Instead of the economic landscape of Jordan, what is given almost all the attention in CARE Jordan documents is that "Arab" and "cultural" traditions and norms. And this is cited so frequently, and in such consistent isolation from the economic realities of Jordan, that reading them gives the impression that Arab culture and its men are the sole barriers to the issues Syrian women who are refugees in Jordan face to economic self-sufficiency and their human rights. This is not to say that men do not serve as a barrier, but, as this thesis showed, the experiences and realities of these women are highly varied and cannot, therefore, be explained with a sole or dominating use of this framework.

For Getachew the position of Syrian refugees in Jordan is reflective of colonialisms global racial hierarchy, which results in fewer rights and more burdens placed on the Global South, and, in this case, particular communities within it. Jordan is the second-largest refugee-hosting state in the world. Within the country live Syrians who are refugees, who navigate grey zones that place them in precarious states of semi-legality with a lack of enforcement of rights, in an economic situation that cannot provide them with economic self-sustainability. And yet they were given the responsibility to improve their own economic circumstances, and the country's economy (Lenner & Turner, 2019). And, in the case of Syrian women, to do this in addition to their unpaid domestic labor, while the men are pointed to in isolation, making it seem as though they are the cause of and solution to Syrian women's poverty and human rights issues. Burlin said that, for refugee self-sufficiency, the Compacts focus on economic rights is not enough. However, when it comes to Syrian women,

they were not given this, even though “women and girls” equal about half of the Syrian refugee population in the country (UN Women, 2018). And this is in a country where the employment of women generally is very low (Morris, 2020; Zayyad 2022). As such, if economic self-sufficiency of refugee communities was actually the goal, focusing on and including women’s economic rights would have been fundamental to the Compact, to the field of IDA, and to CARE Jordan’s economic development programs. For example, at a bare minimum, women’s domestic care would finally been paid – and not at the wages that are reflective of the historical devaluing of the labor of women of color. As such, this thesis sees the Compact as a patriarchal project with a gender hierarchy – which is reflected in the nature of the WBs neoliberal basis and technocratic approach, and in Jordan’s social, political, and economic landscape, which pervasively excludes women. It is also present in the design and studies of CARE Jordan’s economic development programs, which appears to place responsibility onto Syrian refugees in false isolation from national and international obstacles, uses technocratic methods that can opaque power structures and complex dynamics, and is not focused on economic rights.

In their historical account of the paradigm of refugee self-sufficiency, Easton-Calabria and Omata explain that the discourse of ‘helping refuges help themselves’ has been a central feature of the refugee regimes policymaking since the 1920s (2018, p. 1495). But time has shown that employment ‘does not necessarily lead to refugee self-reliance, nor serve as a remedy for protracted situations’ (2018, p. 1459). And, as some of the studies cited in this thesis showed, the little benefit IDAs development programs have is not limited to Jordan. As mentioned, Lenner and Turner discuss how technocratic approaches to policymaking tend to overlook local contexts and, in the

case of the Compact, this played out with the WB overlooking the realities of the very economic system it helped create. But was this overlooking intentional, or unintentional? An interviewee of Burlin's – who was involved in the design of the Compact – explained that it was known that, economically, it "did not make sense" (Burlin, 2021, p. 124) but, due to pressure from the EU and GoJ, it was pushed through anyway. Reading this made me reflect on something a policy professor of mine said regarding the WB and IMFs loan negotiations with Lebanon during the economic crisis. They said 'do you think that they [the WB and IMF] did not know what was going to happen here? Of course they knew. They have the best researchers and minds in the world working for them. They knew for years that this was going to happen eventually'. It is arguably idealistic to rely on an international system run by neoliberal and capitalist businesses – whether because of the nature of this business, as Sassen (2016) explains, or because of their colonial history, as Getachew (2019) would argue, profit from human rights issues – to solve these very issues. Particularly those experienced by refugees in poverty in the Global South. Recently, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss announced a significant 'cut by the UK in their funding to major multilateral bodies, including the World Bank and UN'[38], which she referred to as being "malign actors" in aid and development (Wintour, 2022). She critiqued them for "treat[ing] economics and development as a means of control, using patronage, investment and debt as a form of economic coercion and political power" (Wintour, 2022). For her, the answer is in the private sector. But will this shift be enough? For some, the private sector and aid are part of neoliberalism's political-economic organization, which place "responsibility for solving problems on the shoulders of those who have them" (Tobin & Campbell, 2016).

[38] A decision that has been critiqued as a "double whammy to the world's poor" (Wintour, 2022).

Will this solution avoid this? And how will it be able to foster the self-sufficiency and human rights of refugees in countries where economic landscapes do not provide them with the means to achieve this? Will it include the dynamic realities of refugees – and include refugees themselves – in its operations? Work in the field of international development should include complex realities – including structural relations of power involved between international economic development, national elites, and refugees in poverty in the Global South. Which includes the roles race and gender play in the refugee regime. Rather than look solely at a programmatic level, or organizational level, larger political economic perspectives can provide insight as to the short-comings or failures of the self-sufficiency paradigm.

This criticism is not to negate the positive work that is done by those at CARE or other similar agencies. As explained, "beneficiaries" do share positive feedback regarding their experiences from certain programs, and, in the case of CARE Jordan, their *Annual Needs Assessments* are effective at bringing attention to the needs and rights of the populations that they work with, to the extent that they have become used by refugee rights advocates. But, given the extensive history and generally poor track record of neoliberal approaches to refugee self-sufficiency by the field of IDA, looking at alternatives may be useful. This is not just because of the issues of globalization or global capitalism for those in poverty in the Global South, but because of its individualistic approach to areas of development. Maybe it is time we focus on moving toward alternative and collective approaches? And to ideas that do not use a one-size-fits-all approach.

6.1.1. Alternative Approaches

A position that may help expand what is currently seen as possible with regards to refugee self-sufficiency is that of Social Love and convivialism. Social Love can be seen as a reaction to secularization and rationalization, while a feminist approach to it can be useful for opposing domination (Hanafi, 2022). It is also generative in such a way that allows people to use their actions to critique the competitive nature of the world, and, as Cataldi points out, 'is focused on the power and productivity of the common and accomplishes this through differences' (Hanafi, 2022). Convivialism – which may seem idealistic in some ways but can also serve as a useful catalyst for rethinking the design of the industry within smaller contexts. In his book, Adloff explains that

> Illich contends that control over societal tools should not lie in the hands of infrastructures and expert systems, but rather with the community – it is only in this way can conviviality be reached. Yet, in order for this to happen, a radical reshaping of societal institutions along convivial criteria is needed (2018, p. 38).

What if development was undertaken less hierarchically, and where accountability was examined on a community level, rather than upward? For example, Caillé, calls for "alternative, civically organised economic forms" of society which have "the possibility to link non-capitalist modes of transferring goods with… traits of respect and bonding" (2018, p. 40). The goal is not to 'replace the capitalist economic form, but to supplement it with alternative forms of exchange' (2018, p. 40) which centers on people "pooling their material resources, their knowledge and their activity for a common end which is not primarily geared toward profit-making" (2018, p. 40). It is an approach that asks, "Who are we as a community?", "What do we want?", "What are we missing?"" (2018, p. 41). In the case of those working in local contexts within the field of IDA, this

would mean relationships that stress “equality and self-organisation and calls for non-hierarchical and democratic forms of organisation” (2018, pgs. 45-46). With this said, while the fact that conviviality does not seek to eradicate society entirely from capitalism may be problematic, it may also be more realistic. And, in this case, it can serve as a way for those under IDAs umbrella to have more democratic participation and representation, and to earn a living in a space that encourages mutual support.

A tangible example that can be seen as reflective of elements of this is the Social and Solidarity Economic (SSE) Model. Baisotti draws Quijano who explains that this model is originally meant for those caught in “the current phase of capitalism, accepting any form of exploitation to survive through the so-called “informal economy” (Baisotti, 2021, p. ix). The SSE model can be seen as “an alternative mode of production, distribution and consumption” where the goal is to create “socioeconomic, political and cultural counter-alternatives” (Baisotti, 2021, p. viii). The immediate goals of this “more inclusive, solidarity-based and “human” economy” are “to ensure basic food supply, to eradicate poverty, and to promote decent work by providing equal opportunities” (Baisotti, 2021, p. vii) for those in the Global South. In other words, to achieve refugee self-sufficiency, the programs, activities, and advocacy work that are now framed as being *for* refugees and administrated down an international hierarchy – where refugees are the objects – become things that take place within and by these communities. Just like a feminist approach to humanitarianism, a feminist approach to Social Love and IDA is not simply focused on what should be done for women, it is addressing what is needed to transform systems that work in the best interest in, and are accountable to, all of those within communities (2022).

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

In light of the increasing populations of refugees in the coming years, the protracted nature of these living arrangements, and the growing importance refugee self-sufficiency has to the Global North's containment policy, there have been calls regarding the need to study this international development focus. As such, this thesis sought to provide a contextual analysis of international development programs, and, in turn, provide insight that can contribute to changes that will allow them to be better able at achieving their goal of fostering the self-sufficiency of refugee communities in and from the Global South. Using international economic development programs for the self-sufficiency of Syrian women who are refugees in poverty in Jordan as its study, this thesis seeks to use what is learned about the current international approach to critically examine the field of IDA as a whole, so that changes may be envisioned to help better reach this goal. And it sought to do this by balancing between hegemonic focus on colonialism in international humanitarianism and the "refugee regime", and work that ignores its role, for instance, through focusing on formal or national contexts alone.

Following Chapter 1's introduction of the topic, methodology, and theory, Chapter 2 moves into the topic. It explains that those in charge of the field of international development assistance (IDA) did not listen to calls for redistribution of wealth and gender justice and chose instead to focus on women's access to and participation in the global economy as the means for their self-sufficiency. Which would also then serve as the way for women to overcome the barriers they face, individually, that negatively impact their human rights. From here it looks at the Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Livelihood programs of CARE Jordan, which

focus on the economic self-sufficiency and empowerment of Syrian women who are refugees in poverty, to see how IDAs framework is used in the field. While the foundational argument and logic of their programs is that access and ownership to assets and income will improve their self-sufficiency and their overall empowerment, their work appears to be based off an assumption rather than evidence. To better assess the effectiveness of this approach, this thesis compared their activities with similar ones both in Jordan and globally, all of which have had no to very limited success. Specifically, there is no improvement in alleviating poverty, while women's human rights have not only seen no improvement in Jordan, but, as CARE Jordan explains, appears to have regressed. Instead, the positive impacts appear to be limited to individual feelings of self-improvement, and income to support individual households.

Chapter 3 situates the economic landscape in which these programs and activities are taking place, through assessments of the Jordan Compact. It is explained that the Compact failed to help refugees become economically self-sufficient because it was based on a framework that overlooked the realities of the country's political economy; one that cannot offer Syrian refugees anything but labor that puts them into competition with migrant workers for low wages, and exploitative and unsafe work environments. While studies have critiqued the Compact for not including refugees in the design process, this thesis adds that not only were Syrian women not included in the design, but they were almost entirely excluded from its implementation since – compounding its unviability as a mechanism for self-sufficiency. As such, the project appears to be more of one that reflects the best interests of Jordanian elites, for example, to extract as much migrant labor as possible out of Syrian refugees, and of the Global

North, where the natural resource of human labor is being utilized to service the global economy.

Chapter 4 focuses on Syrian women. By drawing on reports from Syrian women, their dynamic and often contradictory and diverse experiences, combined with the fact that IDAs approach does not include those who cannot engage in paid labor, make it clear that its one-size-fits-all approach to self-sufficiency is impossible. This is compounded by the fact that its current approach is an extension of capitalisms design, which does not account for women's unpaid domestic labor. And distilling women's experiences and voices down to make a program appear applicable is arguably the opposite of empowering. Notably, CARE Jordan's reporting points almost entirely to "Arab" culture as the source of women's livelihood issues. Which, when combined with their consistent lack of discussion regarding the realities of Jordan's economic landscape, falsely makes it seem as though Arab culture and men are women's primary barriers, or that patriarchy is limited to this local context. In fact, another reason why IDAs approach does not appear to be a viable solution for economic self-sufficiency is precisely because its system to achieve this – global capitalism – has been problematized in terms of its exploitation and undervaluing of race and gender.

Chapter 5 brings the discussion down further, to the narrow use of science and definition of "expertise" used by international humanitarian development. Western science is, contrary to how it is posed, not necessarily objective, as it is intimately linked to power. The ways in which it is used – which tends to focus on business priorities like number of "beneficiares" reached, rather than substantial changes like the nature and sustainability of impacts – also fails to capture the nature of these programs, while its privileging of specific forms of knowledge exacerbates North-South

inequalities. As such, calls to move beyond Western technocratic approaches – which scholars and practitioners argue opaque the role of race and the patriarchy in international humanitarian development – may be beneficial to listen to if these programs are to move toward their stated goals.

Lastly, Chapter 6 reflects on and adds to what has been discussed. Specifically, it looks at the futility of applying IDAs approach to Jordan's economic landscape, and reflects on why, due to the patriarchal nature of the projects put forth by IDA, and by Jordan, can only fail, or, at best, have minor or piecemeal positive impacts on Syrian women who are refugees. It is also argues that it is idealistic to rely on an international system run by neoliberal and capitalist businesses, which profit from and have been critiqued for perpetuating human rights issues, to solve these very issues. As such, the paper looks to Social Love, convivialism, and the Social and Solidarity Economic model for alternative ideas. Models that move away from the centrality of capitalism, and that dissolve current hierarchies in humanitarian development in favor of societies that are socially, politically, and economically inclusive, and are based on cooperation and equal accountability, for alternatives.

This thesis has sought to critically examine structural relations of power in international humanitarian economic development by turning the lens onto the field of IDA itself, within a national context. The purpose of this has been to explain why it is necessary to include power dynamics and structures – internationally, nationally, and epistemologically in IDAs programs on the ground – to understand why neoliberal international development programs for refugee self-sufficiency in Jordan have been greatly unsuccessful at reaching its stated goals. The reason I find this focus necessary is because I believe that critical inclusion of power relationships should be a standard

part of ones work in research and policymaking. As should a non-, or at least less hierarchal approach, where the people that policies and programs impact are involved in decision-making. Without this, one risks creating “solutions” that are more idealistic than they are practical or useful, and that may perpetuate harmful or oppressive situations – which appears to be the case for IDAs approach to refugee self-sufficiency in Jordan. And, given the focus of this thesis, these discussions of power necessarily include colonialism, as seen through capitalism and neoliberalism, and the ways in which they instrumentalize unequal relations of race and gender, and North-South relations. Rather than focus solely on dominance, however, the goal was to show the textures of these systems, their relationships, and their impacts. This includes the significance of IDAs economic self-sufficiency paradigm, how development programs are subsequently conceptualized and analyzed, and the role of Global South elites. In doing so, relevant connections may be possible to contexts outside of Jordan. Given the decades of failures to alleviate refugee poverty and economic self-sufficiency, rather than continuing to look at development programs, looking at the political economy of the field provides useful insight. And this thesis is not rooted in a position that claims to be neutral. It is very much one that is motivated by a desire to see spaces that are genuinely capable of providing refugees in poverty with what they need, rather than what international agencies say is needed. And that people who genuinely want them to have this are there to support them, rather than govern and decide for them. It is also a position that seeks a more balanced approach to the use of “objective” and “rational” Western normative positions, scientific facts, and technical language, to show why the “subjective” positions of social love and care, and the arguments, concerns, and realities raised from these positions, are, as Hanafi argues, also scientifically valid.

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