

ACCESS TO REPATRIATION:  
THE VALUE OF REFUGEE'S PREVIOUS EDUCATION AND LIVELIHOODS

By

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## List of Abbreviations

BRIC	Beirut Research and Innovation Center
ILO	International Labour Organization
SRS	Self-Reliance Strategy
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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## **Access to Repatriation: The Value of Refugee's Previous Education and Livelihoods**

### **Abstract**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and even the host countries, foster policies and conditions in refugee camps that restrict refugee use of previous education or livelihoods with which they could provide for their needs in exile. Would policies, which provide access to and use of previous education and livelihoods enhance refugee camp services? Would such policies improve options for and reduce time to repatriation? Typically the majority of refugees currently spend five or more years in exile, without an option to repatriate to their previous home country and location within it. If policies improved access to use of their education and livelihoods, would this alter refugee services' expectations that refugees will adapt and acculturate to host countries, rather than eventually return to their countries of origin? This thesis will argue that by anticipating repatriation, UNHCR and host countries policies would improve refugee services by fostering programs that assist refugees in using previous education and livelihoods, and thereby, reduce time between initial exile and repatriation. The same improved programs would also aid refugees in taking care of themselves outside of camps during exile in host countries. Another benefit, I argue, is that the ability to use previous education and livelihood would allow refugees to make better decisions about where to settle in their home country when repatriating. The assumption to this is a limit of the thesis to refugees who are adults when the exile began.

## **Introduction**

On World Refugee Day in 2014, according to a United Nations report, worldwide 51.2 million persons were refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced; a number greater than that reported for persons displaced by World War II (UNHCR, World Refugee Day: Global Forced Displacement Tops 50 Million for First Time in Post-World War II Era 2014). Of this was a sub- population of 16.7 million refugees. The UNHCR controlled care for 11.7 million of this 16.7 million that were refugees in camps. Fifty percent of the 11.7 million had been in exile for more than five years (UNHCR, World Refugee Day: Global Forced Displacement Tops 50 Million for First Time in Post-World War II Era 2014). These refugees, escaped their homes, most often fleeing from civil or political unrest, to become entrapped in refugee camps established and governed by the UNHCR.

## **History of Refugee Camps**

Use of refugee camps began after World War II when displaced populations were housed in hundreds of facilities throughout Europe that had served as work and concentration camps during WWII. The housing was seen as means to use the “technology of power in the management of mass displacement” (Malkki 1995). During this period, displaced populations were perceived as a military problem, and, therefore did not include a concern for displaced persons’ education and livelihood. Works written about these camps showed how practices and technologies became standardized for the care and control of refugees. The camps were transformed into “Assembly Centres,” or as military barracks, for refugees (1995). When the UNHCR was established in 1951, refugees came to be seen as “an international social or humanitarian problem,” rather than a military responsibility (1995). But, as sedentary settings, refugee camps, while playing a vital role for refugees, remained devices for power. The UNHCR policies still did not take into account the individual refugee’s previous education and livelihood. Only for three years was a person given protection as a refugee by the UNHCR. Instead, as

Barbara Harrell-Bond and Elizabeth Voutira (1992) argue, they were viewed as a “transitory phenomena of crisis and disorder.”

Liisa Malkki (1995) notes in her article “Refugees and Exile: From ‘Refugee Studies’ to the National Order of Things,” that beginning with the Geneva Convention in 1951 refugee status was defined as:

Any person who[,]. . . owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

This basic definition, which emphasized refugees’ “unwilling to return” to their country of origin, became part of refugee law. In addition, Gil Loescher (1992) argues that “refugees have become instruments of warfare and military strategy,” and like during the Cold War, refugee movement has been used as a foreign policy tool. None of these factors encouraged programs to focus on aiding refugee repatriation.

When the world shifted from the Cold War refugee predominance of Eastern European nationalities to African and Asian populations, the UNHCR began to look for ways to deal with these refugees. Harrell-Bond and Voutira (1992) argue that at this point the UNHCR realized they had to take in account three issues: whether repatriation was voluntary, the effect integration in the country of first asylum had on the refugee, and, whether resettlement and naturalization had occurred in a third (usually Western) country. As the UNHCR sought solutions [or changes in policy] it extended the three-year limit for protection to five years because refugee’s faced problems associated with each of the three issues. Repatriation was difficult because the situations that up-rooted the refugee had not been resolved. Harrell-Bond and Voutira (1992) go on to argue that the lack of integration in the country of first asylum did not result in permanent resettlement because first countries were among the poorest states in which

95% of refugees settled. Nevertheless, resettlement in a second country was usually reserved for a select few refugees. The economic situation in these countries, made resettlement in them more difficult that may have been the case in more developed countries.

Despite these differences, within refugee camps, humanitarian workers and organization policies tended “to treat their beneficiaries as an undifferentiated mass” (1992). They neither regarded persons as having “distinctive values, norms and social organization,” nor, as I argue, took into account their previous education and livelihoods. As a result, according to Harrell-Bond and Voutira (1992), the policies created “dependency,” and “de-politicized” views of refugees as exiles. They go on to argue that the labels encoded in ‘refugee’ reinforce images of dependency, helplessness and misery” which contribute to the lack of refugees’ ability to use their previous education and livelihoods (1992). Such programs seem, at best, to provide for the refugee’s basic needs, while severely limiting their ability to provide for their own needs, which places refugees in a position that does not allow them to reciprocate for their provisions. Thus, I agree with Harrell-Bond, “the receiver [cedes] status or power to the giver” (B. E. Harrell-Bond 2002). Harrell-Bond (2002) concludes that the refugees are “disempowered through becoming clients of those upon whom they are dependent for the means of survival and security,” in ways I am suggesting might not occur if they were able to use their previous education and livelihood during exile.

These problems continue as refugees move and resettle several times. Education in camps is reduced to learning about the country of resettlement. This education does not take account of their previous education as a foundation for their livelihood, even as their skills previously attained diminish through lack of use. Although, refugee services were developed to help in adaptation and acculturation in the new environment, Carol Mortland, in an article entitled “Transforming Refugees in Refugee Camps” argues that the Philippine Refugee Processing Center she studied, prepared the Southeast Asian refugees to function in American culture and speak English. Here, too, she saw education reduced to

helping change the refugee “from what they were before to what they need to be in the country of resettlement,” which focused on learning “to speak good English, be employable, be unwilling to accept welfare, and be happy” (Mortland 1987). The practices for training refugees for resettlement remained consistent with a philosophy of control and power over the masses without regard for their previous education or livelihoods remained. As a consequent, when the refugees arrived at their resettlement location, they discovered they knew little of practical use, and were “viewed by themselves and by their new countrymen as outsiders” (1987). As outsiders, they were not expected to use their previous education and livelihoods.

Following the end of the Cold War, repatriation became the main focus for the United Nations. As a result, during the 1990’s alone, an estimated “12 million refugees have returned to their countries of origin” (Black and Koser 1999). The increased rate of repatriation occurred because UNHCR considered it the “optimum and most feasible” solution for refugees. Black and Koser’s (1999) academic research show that the “the refugee crisis has risen on political agendas, so [too] repatriation has become a political issue.” The increase was also a political consequence of UNHCR promotion of short-term involuntary repatriation, rather than assisting voluntary repatriation when home-country conditions became safer. Black and Koser (1999) go on to argue that through the politics of repatriation, refugees’ priorities are overlooked, and this impacts whether refugees repatriate “in ‘safety’ and in ‘dignity’.” They conclude that two issues need to be addressed for refugees: 1) differences in what “home” came to mean for refugees and what it means to policy makers, and 2) where return occurs, whether refugees are exposed to new vulnerabilities that require monitoring following repatriation.

According to Black and Koser (1999), for refugees repatriation could have both a “cultural or spiritual meaning . . . , as well as being the returnee’s own property, imbuing it with an economic significance.” Home might also reflect refugees’ association with a specific group in a particular region, therefore more ethnic than a place identity. For the refugee, the ‘home’ also becomes difficult to define

when the person never lived in the country as, for example, was the situation for those sent to Rwanda from their exile countries of Uganda and Tanzania. Although for policy makers 'home' may mean the country of origin or a specific national identity, for refugees notions of home and national identity can become "critically blurred," and the blurring contributes to the difficulty of repatriation, and should encourage monitoring after repatriation (1999).

The speed of repatriation becomes another aspect of refugee exposure to new vulnerabilities, and the possibility that they are resettled into an unsafe region. In response to the latter vulnerability, UNHCR returned refugees to other places in their countries with lower levels of conflict when repatriation to their 'home' remained unsafe. While this response could increase the speed of repatriation, Black and Koser (1999) argue that refugees' vulnerability may increase where they are marked "for discrimination by the local population or local authorities." Overall, Black and Koser contend that through this UNHCR policy, repatriation transforms the "refugees into internally displaced persons," instead of returnees, which eliminates the possibility that return safely and with dignity (1999). For speed of repatriation, premature repatriation can result in loss of basic rights such as the right to education and food security through livelihood strategies. In light of these issues, to improve the effectiveness of return, Black and Koser (1999) take the position that policy makers aim to incorporate "refugees' own meanings of repatriation, and their perceptions and expectations of 'home'."

The change in social relations between exile and return create other repatriation vulnerabilities that affects livelihood strategies. To sustain their lives, all returnees depend on supportive social networks. Changes in these factors during exile can determine the success, or failure of returnees' livelihood strategies. Black and Koser's (1999) research demonstrates how "traditional roles of men (especially as the household's 'breadwinner') can be negatively affected by refugee flight and return," in light of which I agree the negative impact on traditional roles could be reduced if service programs facilitate refugees' use of previous education and livelihood during exile.

In the early 2000's the UNHCR developed a new strategy for refugees called the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) the programs of which were intended to allow refugees to achieve "some degree of self-reliance during asylum, either through enhanced skills or engaging in income-generating activities" (UNHCR, Handbook for Self-Reliance 2005). The rationale for new strategy assumed that self-reliant refugees could become an asset to both the host country while in exile, and when repatriated, their country of origin. UNHCR (2005) acknowledged, in the *Handbook for Self-Reliance*, that when refugees lived in refugee camps for long periods without the ability to move freely, they develop a "dependency on humanitarian aid, such as food, shelter, health care and education." The self-reliance strategy has potential to improve refugees' time in exile, through the promotion of building "from the refugees' existing skills and knowledge base before it is lost" (UNHCR, Handbook for Self-Reliance 2005). If these programs do in fact allow use of previous education and livelihoods this could facilitate retaining skills which would improve their chance of successful resettlement when repatriated.

Tania Kaiser (2006) researched the effectiveness of SRS for Sudanese refugees that arrived in Uganda as early as 1989, with many remaining through the early 2000's. She researched three hosting districts for Sudanese refugee camps – Arua, Moyo, and Adjumani, which implemented, SRS. She found that difficulties refugees faced in SRS camps resulted from four factors: 1) placement of camps, 2) size of land allocated, 3) travel permits, and 4) failure of self-reliance strategies to take account of previous education and livelihoods, instead, restricting these strategies to subsistence farming.

The first three factors together culminated in making the SRS settlements difficult situations for refugees, because, Kaiser (2006) argues, camps were placed in "remote and marginal areas close to the international border," especially where such placement increased insecurity from "ongoing conflict" in Adjumani district. Remote locations made access to markets difficult for obtaining necessary items and selling surplus from subsistence farming. In addition, Kaiser argues that the land allocated was determined by the size of the family at time of arrival, and as families grew the allocation was not

increased, therefore, farming did not provide enough food for the growing family and the already marginal quality of soil was soon depleted of nutrients necessary to sustain successful farming. Even if farmers managed a surplus for sale, Kaiser notes that a lack of travel permits prevented refugees from marketing goods to gain income needed for other purposes. With the camps designed only for subsistence farming, the refugees' had no opportunity to use previous education and livelihoods, which contributed to a lack of "employment and other income-generating opportunities" for family members whose labor was not required to farm the small land allocations (2006).

Kaiser (2006) also describes self-settled refugees as those who "live in both refugee hosting districts and urban areas." She notes that "UNHCR refused to register and assist refugees outside the context of the settlement system," and therefore, those that chose this method for their exile occupied "a precarious and ambiguous status, enjoying neither the rights of Ugandan citizens..., nor the protection and limited material support of refugees in settlements" (2006). Nevertheless, those that lived outside the camp benefited from "availability of better quality land and economic opportunities..., and even access to superior education and health services" (2006). Kaiser's findings support my contention that refugee services strategies directed at use of refugees' previous education and livelihood could have benefitted the self-settled refugees, which Kaiser's (2006) research also showed included "business interests or the wherewithal to get involved in trade, professional activities or other non-agricultural activities" needed for self-reliance in the urban settings. Such programs, I contend could also have enhanced the contributions from family members outside the refugee system that Kaiser's research shows assisted self-settled refugees through monthly stipends this income provided in place of dependency on UNHCR support.

### **Data Selection**

Although demographic data for refugee's previous education and livelihoods is difficult to obtain, because of inadequate reporting, information can be gleaned from academic and governmental research.

Two articles I will discuss give information on the range and variation in refugee's education and forms of livelihoods, based on research conducted on resettled refugees in Canada and The Netherlands.

## **Canada**

In the first work reviewed, based on his dissertation research, Navjot Lamba argues that “a significant proportion of refugees find that their human capital has little or no value in the Canadian labour market,” and they experience “downward occupational mobility” (Lamba 2003). For Lamba's (2003) research, he interviewed 616 refugees with 50.5% women and 49.5% men, and the ages for almost half were between 31-40 years. Refugee's previous education shows that 81% had received their High-school Diploma, and 50% had some Post-secondary training. Livelihoods in their home countries revealed “about one third of the sample were employed in professional/managerial positions, while the remaining two-thirds were employed in semi-professional or blue-collar jobs” (2003).

At the time of the interviews “70% of the sample were not satisfied with their current occupation, while 60% reported being over-qualified for their current job” (2003). Lamba reports that refugees who suffered the greatest downward mobility were trained in managerial/professional careers. Three quarters of these refugees “remained in jobs below their educational training level” (2003). Of those interviewed seven per cent held professional/managerial positions in Canada as opposed to one third in their home countries, another 28% were working in part-time positions, and 30% held temporary positions.

Lamba (2003) argues that about 42% “experienced problems with foreign credential recognition.” The evidence Lamba (2003) shows is that “a refugee's quality of employment in Canada is still below the quality enjoyed in his or her former home.” Lamba (2003) found that common problems for refugees entering the new labor market resulted from “foreign credential recognition, or lost documentation verifying the occupational and educational status,” along with language, time in resettlement country, age, and gender differences. Lamba (2003) goes on to show that refugees with professional-level

occupations find “professional associations (for example, in medicine) and trade unions” apply “stringent standards in the adjudication of foreign credentials.” Educational institutions offer shortened recertification programs for former medical professionals which also contributes to the downward mobility because refugees cannot work during this time in their chosen profession.

Another finding from Lamba’s (2003) research that supports my thesis, was during the time spent in a refugee camp, refugees were not able to work or their education was interrupted, and this became a deterrent for future jobs. Ten per cent of Lamba interviewees had been in camp 12 months, an additional 15% had spent one to five years, and six per cent had spent five years or more in camp. The time refugees were unable to work was increased on arrival to Canada through the additional education and training as:

Most refugees were enrolled in some form of English-language training, the majority (71%) receiving up to one year of language training. Over one third (37%) of the sample obtained some other form of additional training or education in Canada. Twenty-nine percent of the sample received up to one year of additional training. Only a small minority (6%) of respondents received between 14 and 24 months of training, and even fewer (2%) spent more than two years obtaining additional training (2003).

In light of these demographics, Lamba (2003) concludes that while “a longer time invested in obtaining additional training may reflect a need to improve upon current skills” ultimately it becomes a “barrier to achieving a higher quality of employment.”

## **The Netherlands**

Joop Hartog and Aslan Zorlu researched the impact of education on refugee’s economic positions in The Netherlands. Their research results showed “education beyond secondary does not yield any additional monetary returns” (Hartog and Zorlu 2007). Dutch immigration records

revealed that a contributing factor to the results was the “measurement of their education” from their home country (2007).

Table 1: Education Levels from Countries of Origin (N=13,436)

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Education Missing	45%
No Education	7%
Basic (including Extended Basic)	23%
Secondary Education	14%
Tertiary Education	11%

(Adapted from Hartog and Zorlu 2007)

The reliability of a test to determine education levels based on occupation was difficult because of the varied education levels, for example, some whose livelihoods were in auto mechanics or farm hands yet had completed a tertiary education, while a pharmacists may have only an extended basic education” (2007). Categorizing for incomplete education levels created more problems for measurement of education attained than did completed degrees.

These problems notwithstanding, Joop Hartog and Aslan Zorlu (2007) findings for refugees’ home country schooling showed “there is a positive effect of schooling on the probability to work.” When Hartog and Zorlu (2007) split the levels of education into three groups: “less than basic education, basic up to secondary general and secondary vocational and higher,” they found that the “*probability of work* increases markedly between steps and is quite similar within the steps.” Splitting secondary schooling into general and vocational revealed a “stronger effect on the *probability of work*” in the secondary vocational than a general secondary education, but those with the highest education did not show an increase in probability of employment over the secondary vocational education (2007). Hartog and Zorlu (2007) concludes from this that “vocational skills are directly transferable, whereas general academic skills are not.”

Hartog and Zorlu (2007) then compared earnings with education and found that “educations in the middle of the distribution” consistently resulted in the highest earning for

immigrants. They also found a “consistent drop in earnings for immigrants with education beyond secondary” (2007). Most important for comparison with refugee time restricted to camps Hartog and Zorlu (2007) found that benefits “from education clearly increase with time spent in The Netherlands.” Although overall, the education refugees “acquired at home” does not “pay off in the Dutch labour market,” Hartog and Zorlu (2007) concludes that occupations “associated with higher education, understanding the Dutch language is vital, much more so than for lower levels of education.” Adding to the difficulty of accessing higher-income employment for immigrants with the highest education levels was the finding that to practice professions associated with higher education required certification in resettlement countries. While programs that goals of which are to facilitate refugees return to the professions on repatriation would need to provide means for retaining skills, professional qualifications have already been obtained in the home country.

## **Repatriation**

Refugee’s repatriation and the effects from UNHCR and host country’s policies concerning use of previous education and livelihoods can be seen in the two countries of Mozambique and Afghanistan, along with the current Syrian refugees. Host nation’s divergent policies for refugees contributed to different exile experiences within each country and whether repatriation was successful in the country of origin and also for each individual.

### **Mozambique**

Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975, after a ten year war for independence. The war, was won by *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*, or the Frelimo party, incorporated Marxism into the new government (Huffman 1992). The Mozambican Civil War began in 1977 with *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*, led by Renamo’s forces, who were against the new Marxist government. By 1992, when the Mozambican General Peace Accord was signed, there was “an estimated 1.7 million”

Mozambican refugees in “Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland” that were to be repatriated (Dolan 1999). With a population of “9.76 million people,” Malawi alone was refuge to one million exiles (NationMaster, Malawi Stats 2003). The most of any nation, although South Africa and Zimbabwe also received large numbers of refugees.

Robert Huffman (1992) argues that the estimated one million refugees who fled to Malawi placed a “tremendous strain on Malawi’s limited resources.” The refugees mainly “concentrated in the southern region of Malawi;” it’s most densely populated area (Feder 1998). Malawi’s refugee policies allow refugees to settle freely, use “local health facilities, infrastructures, and lands,” and enroll their children in school, and work in the communities in which they settled (1998). Because of the large increase in refugees, in 1987, the government asked for support from UNHCR, which established 18 refugee camps to “provide food, shelter, water, and health assistance to refugees” (1998). Half of Mozambique refugees remained self-settled as was allowed by Malawi refugee policy, which did not change, but only the half residing in the camp were protected and provided for by UNHCR. This UNHCR policy, along with not assisting the host community, contributed to depleting Malawi’s resources for its citizens and the refugees. Resulting food and water shortages led to malnutrition and created serious health conditions. The situation was worsened by the shortage of health professionals and facilities. Although, farming outside the camp was permitted, the shortage of water and arable land made it difficult for refugees to fully cover their nutrition needs.

I argue, that UNHCR’s inadequate policies for aid to host countries, combined with placing refugee populations in camps rather than supporting self-settled, diminished the positive effects Malawi’s refugee policies offered Mozambique refugees, especially in regards to using previous education and livelihoods. Refugee’s gained free access to improved education and equal employment in Malawi, but through UNHCR’s inadequate policies the effectiveness of this access was diminished for repatriation, because of serious health problems that had resulted from malnutrition. UNHCR policy also required

repatriation, which began in 1992, to be finished by 1995. This short time allowed for assisting repatriation was a challenge, because as Hoffman (1992) argues, the “destruction inflicted on Mozambique by Portuguese colonialism, the war for independence and insurgent destabilization” all contributed to the difficulty confronted by the 1.7 million repatriated refugees.

South Africa had a stronger economy than Mozambique, which, in the early 1980s, led many Mozambicans to migrate “as contractual labourers” (Dolan 1999). Where Mozambique maintained 81% of its population’s labor force through agriculture, only 30% of South Africans were agriculturalists (NationMaster, Mozambique stats 2003) (NationMaster, South African Stats 2003). With 25% employed in industry and 45% in services, the economic structure allowed greater opportunity for Mozambican refugees to learn and use other livelihood strategies to supplement the family farm income on which they had relied before fleeing Mozambique. When UNHCR planned to repatriate 240,000 refugees living in South Africa, many that had arrived as contract laborers wanted to stay to improve their livelihoods. Along with this, Dolan (1999) argues, that until September of 1993 many that fled to South Africa were not granted refugee status. When this status was granted it included many that were living there as contract laborers. The refugee status allowed the UNHCR to implement repatriation with regard to this distinction and the desire of some contract laborers to remain in South Africa.

The low number of Mozambicans that repatriated from South Africa resulted from the desire of the heads of households to remain in order to maintain their livelihoods to better support their families than they would be able to do if they returned to Mozambique. Dolan (1999) also points out that UNHCR “refused to take any individuals, particularly young men, insisting that they would only transport family groups.” This made strategic livelihood planning difficult for refugee families that wanted some family members to “maintain whatever structural advantage was to be derived from exile while at the same time sending other members to the place of origin to reestablish a base there” (1999). Dolan (1999) goes on to argue that UNHCR’s vision of refugees “as a mass of undifferentiated ‘rural folk’ that sought

‘agricultural self-employment opportunities’ was somewhat anachronistic.” He also shows how the UNHCR policy made difficult refugees’ ability “to reestablish the balance between subsistence agriculture and a cash income from migrant labour,” on which they had relied before the war in Mozambique (1999).

Education for the younger generations was another reason to remain in South Africa. Dolan (1999) argues that “this socialized them and afforded opportunities to acquire the status of South African citizens if their headmasters were prepared to sponsor them.” If the parents chose to repatriate, the children would “forfeit the educational and economic opportunities of South Africa” (1999). The school and health facilities in Mozambique “were problematic or non-existent in many areas, obliging some returnees to leave their children in South Africa or in urban areas” of Mozambique when they repatriated (1999).

Many of the Mozambique refugees that went to Zimbabwe “found their way to the Tongogara refugee camp, but a good number preferred to self-settle and farm in the Zimbabwean small-holder community of Vhimba” (Hughes 1999). David McDermott Hughes (1999) argues that those who crossed this border have found “emigration strips them of rights and privileges they enjoy in their own country.” Because of the refugee encampment policy the Zimbabwean government has, “only those with valid reasons for remaining in urban centers, such as employment, education or medical treatment” are allowed to live in urban centers (Harare 2007). Hughes (1999) argues that refugees that chose to self-settle in the community of Vhimba were allocated farmland on much less favorable terms than to those granted Zimbabwean that migrated to the community. He goes on to argue that refugees were “used as pawns in turf wars,” by which he meant because many Mozambique refugees had received no formal education, this rendered them, “in Vhimba’s view, backward and uncouth,” the headmen took advantage of them as “naïve in territorial matters” (1999). To avoid deportation to Tongogara camp the refugees in the

Vhimba region accepted their fate, and thus, “depended absolutely upon the collusion of headmen” (1999).

In each of these three countries to which refugees fled, refugees used livelihood strategies to improve income strategies during exile and to gain education for their children. Because of the high percentage of the Mozambican population that participated in agriculture, especially in the rural communities, looking for other means of livelihood strategies was important. Except for Malawi all the host countries had larger portions of their population employed in industry and services than in agriculture, and thus offer employment opportunities to improved livelihood strategies through migrant labor jobs.

Table 2: Comparison of Labor Force Occupations: Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa and Zimbabwe

	<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>Malawi</b>	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>Zimbabwe</b>
<b>Agriculture</b>	81%	90%	30%	66%
<b>Industry</b>	6%	10% combined	25%	10%
<b>Services</b>	13%		45%	24%

(NationMaster, 2014)

Thirty years of instability in Mozambique contributed to lower education levels for Mozambican adults. The average time in school was 1.1 years. By spending their exile time in countries where their children could attend better schools became a livelihood strategy for the refugees and, in part, accounts for why when the war was over many remained in South Africa.

Table 3: Comparison of Adult Education Levels and Illiteracy Rates: Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa, and Zimbabwe

	<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>Malawi</b>	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>Zimbabwe</b>
<b>Adult avg. yrs. in school</b>	1.1 (2000)	3.2 (2000)	6.1 (2000)	5.4 (2000)
<b>Illiteracy rate (1992)</b>	64.5%	46.6%	17.9%	17.7%
<b>Illiteracy rate (2003)</b>	52.2%	37.3%	13.6%	9.3%

(NationMaster, 2014)

### **Afghanistan**

Repatriation of refugees from Afghanistan remains difficult to complete because of the Soviet invasion and the war against the Taliban. The Soviet invasion began in December of 1979, when Soviet

troops invaded Afghanistan. A mass exodus of refugees followed – the largest movement of refugees occurred between 1983 and 1991, at the end of which 3.27 million refugees had fled to Pakistan, and 2.9 million had escaped to Iran (Marsden 1999). Peter Marsden (1999), explaining the assistance the refugees received, wrote that those which went to Pakistan were placed in camps on the border and provided with tents and some household equipment, along with “free access to food, health centres and schools in the camps” (1999). While refugees were permitted to seek employment in Pakistan, they were restricted to specific trading activities. Among those that fled to Iran were many “especially the educated, urban middle class” persons, whose income levels were “more than 10 times higher” than was typical in Afghanistan (Hugo, Abbasi-Shavazi and Sadeghi 2012). Nonetheless, these refugees were only “permitted to work in designated menial occupations” (1999). Although they were allowed access to free health and education and entitlements to “food and other subsidies on the same basis as Iranians,” they were responsible for their own housing (1999).

After the fall of the Soviet-backed government in 1992, refugees began to repatriate, and by 1997 an “estimated 2.61 million refugees had returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and 1.33 million had returned from Iran” (1999). This left 2.6 million in Pakistan and Iran. Those that returned to Afghanistan were provided with small provisions to establish themselves wherever they chose to settle. UNHCR was concerned “that returning refugees should not be too advantaged relative to those who had remained” during the occupation of the Soviets (1999). Perhaps as result of this concern, the reconstruction programs were mostly for agriculture production, health and veterinary care, and education. Some that repatriated kept families in Pakistan because “of the virtual absence of educational opportunities in Afghanistan, particularly for girls” (1999). Those refugees that repatriated from urban areas came without “skills or inclination to reestablish themselves in the agriculture sector” (1999). For many refugees the skills learned in Pakistan were from licit and illicit day labor such as “working in brick kilns, mines, prostitution or in bonded labour” (1999). In the urban areas of Afghanistan livelihoods were

highly precarious. Marsden argued that the UN did not correctly assess the livelihood strategies of those that lived in the refugee camps and other areas of return, which created difficulties for refugees in their repatriation. Because of these difficulties urban areas were not improved and even more significant was the continual change in authorities that resulted in “the departure of professionals” (1999). Marsden concludes that at this point the reconstruction of the Afghan economy could not “provide for the remaining refugees in Pakistan and Iran” (1999).

With the war against the Taliban that started in 2001, Afghanistan became the “source of one in four refugees” (2012). By 2011 it was still “one of the world’s least developed nations” (2012). This is reflected in the education levels, with 1.7 as the average years of schooling for adults in 2000 with a literacy rate of 28.1% for the total population (NationMaster, Afghanistan Stats 2012). Another aspect of the development of a country is in the employment percentages of a nation. In 2004 Afghanistan’s source of livelihoods was: agriculture – 80%, industry – 10%, and services – 10%. Hugo et al (2012) points out that the majority of the workers were in low-skilled occupations. The Afghan unemployment rate in 2008 was 35%, and 36% of the population lived below the poverty line in 2009 (NationMaster, Afghanistan Stats 2012).

Hugo et al (2012) research, of Afghan refugees that fled to Iran, argues that there was “significant upward mobility among the refugees especially between the first and second generations” in spite of restricted occupations. Their research focuses on the education for Afghan refugees along with involvement in the Iranian work force during the 30 year time frame which refuge was extended. Documentation from Hugo et al (2012) shows “Iranian natives having the highest literacy rates and first generation Afghan migrants having the lowest with the second generation occupying an intermediate position.” They go on to note that the two Afghan generation’s literacy levels is above those in Afghanistan, especially for girls. The education for Afghans and Iranians are shown in Iran’s 2006 census:

Table 4: Education Levels of Afghan First and Second Generation Refugees Compared With Iranians

Age	Education level	Native	FG Afghan	SG Afghan
<b>6-14 years old</b>	No formal education	4.3	39.1	30.9
	Primary	57.7	51.8	55.8
	Lower secondary	32.2	8.8	12.6
	Upper Secondary	5.8	.3	.7
	University education			
<b>N</b>		203,572	6,572	17,940
<b>15-29 years old</b>	No formal education	4.6	61.8	24.8
	Primary	17.9	24.9	26.8
	Lower secondary	21.8	9.0	25.1
	Upper Secondary	43.8	3.9	21.2
	University education	11.9	.4	2.1
<b>N</b>		439,029	21,528	12,667
<b>30 and older</b>	No formal education	37.9	74.0	51.9
	Primary	28.9	17.9	23.7
	Lower secondary	12.8	4.4	10.3
	Upper Secondary	12.9	2.5	8.6
	University education	7.5	1.2	5.5
<b>N</b>		496,114	24,160	2,620

(Adapted from Hugo, Abbasi-Shavazi and Sadeghi 2012)

Afghan’s involvement in the Iranian workforce, although limited by the government “to certain areas of employment,” shows a “greater engagement with the workforce than native Iranians” (2012). Hugo et al (2012) argues and I agree that “the extent to which refugees engage in the economy of the destination country is relevant not only to their own well-being but also in terms of their contribution to development in the origin and destination countries.” In an International Labour Organization (ILO) study in 2006 the restrictions are reflected in the following work sectors which show 80% Afghans versus 26% Iranians work: manufacturing, construction, trade, and commerce (Wickramasekara, et al. 2006). Hugo et al (2012) continues to argue that by meeting the demand for “low-cost, unskilled labour in sectors like construction and agriculture” these areas will be threatened if labor is not there when refugees repatriate.

Between 2002 and 2011 UNHCR estimated the 5.7 million Afghan refugees repatriated with a population increase of 25%. Hugo et al (2012) noted that of these, approximately 886,000

have come from Iran. In an assessment from UNHCR “in both urban and rural Afghanistan found that more than 40% of returnees have not been able to re-integrate into their home communities” (UNHCR, UNHCR Country Operations Profile - Afghanistan 2012). Hugo et al (2012) argues that “the continuing insecurity on Afghanistan is stifling” the potential impact of the refugee’s increased “human capital and other resources accumulated while they were in exile to assist in development of their homeland.” I argue that through employment restrictions from the Iranian government, this restricted the few Afghans with higher education levels from pursuing their previous livelihoods. Thus these limitations on employment has decreased the future development of Afghanistan with experienced workers with higher education.

### **Syria**

Despite 20 to 30 years of refugee services, the situation, which began in 2011 for over three million refugees from Syria, has changed little. The three million refugees fled to their immediate neighbors of Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan -- 200,000 to Turkey, over one million to Lebanon, and 619,000 to Jordan (Centre 2014). Within their borders, the development of SRS has not changed how these host countries work with refugee populations’ previous education and livelihoods.

The Turkey governments’ hostility toward “the Syrian regime” affected migration of Syrian refugees as it became “linked with Turkish domestic politics and foreign policy” (Ozden 2013). Şenay Özden reported that when Turkey assessed the extent of the problem in Syria and the high numbers of exiles a law was passed that allowed Syrians “who entered the country with passports to extend their stay to one year,” but also placed “geographical” limits on their asylum as the policy “implemented a ‘temporary protection regime’ for Syrians” (2013). These protections offered: “an open border policy, no forcible returns (*non-refoulement*),” although they also required registration with the Turkish authorities and support was restricted to services “inside the borders of the camps” (2013). Those who fled to Turkey are “recognized not as refugees but as ‘guests’”; a status which Özden (2013) argues “increases

the vulnerability of Syrians who have fled their country for political and humanitarian reasons.” This status means Syrians do not have “rights in Turkey,” and they can be deported at any time (2013). Guest status also prevents UNHCR or other international organizations from interfering with Turkish “control over the Syrian migrant situation” (2013). To manage the impact of large numbers of registered ‘guests,’ Turkey established 13 tent cities and two container camps (2013). An estimated 100,000 unregistered entrants live in cities outside these camps (2013). Özden argues that a general perception is that those Syrian who live in the cities are wealthier and “prefer to rent apartments rather than stay in camps,” which suggest a class division between Syrians in the cities and in camps, but there are also large numbers “outside the camps who are living in poverty” (2013).

Syrians living in Turkey do not have a right to work, and thus, are unable to make a living from their previous education and their livelihoods. Özden argues that those who do work are employed without work permits, and “thus without any work benefits” (2013). Many workers “are over qualified for the jobs they are doing; so we have law school and business school graduates” making a living from seasonal work (2013). Özden goes on to argue that farm and factory owners “exploit Syrian workers” because “their vulnerable situation” allows the owners to pay lower wages and to offer less benefits (2013).

To avoid bringing the conflict into its borders, Lebanese officials “attempt to maintain a principle of non-intervention in Syrian affairs” (Centre 2014). One result of which is that there are no official refugee camps in Lebanon. Instead about “half of the refugees live in rented housing, while the other half are in nomadic camps or [are] hosted by families or local communities” (2014). Only in 2013 did Lebanon start to register Syrian refugees. Those that chose to flee to Lebanon, came because unlike other neighboring nations Lebanon offered an open border policy. Lebanon may also have received the largest number of exiles, because before the conflict in 2011, as many as 500,000 Syrians already lived in Lebanon. This population comprised “family, political, and business networks,” which assisted refugees

by offering “shelter, local knowledge, and logistical help” (Thibos 2014). Even with this assistance, many refugees according to Thibos, currently reside in areas with high poverty rates, where strains on “employment, education, healthcare, housing, sanitation, physical infrastructure, or living costs” are insufficient (2014).

According to the Beirut Research and Innovation Center (BRIC), the refugee community “tends to have a slight over-representation of urban middle and lower middle class” compared with the pattern in Syria (BRIC 2013). BRIC also found that only “32 percent of the working age population” reports paid employment (2013). In Syria the level of “dependency on the main income earners of the family” is very high, and BRIC (2013) found that this remained true for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. The majority of whom are unable to find work in their professions, and, therefore “have had to change careers and seek less skilled work to secure an income” in Lebanon (2013). At least half of BRIC’s respondents “had jobs that required a high level of skill prior to leaving Syria,” but “half stated that the jobs available [to] them in Lebanon require unskilled labour” (2013). Nevertheless about one quarter of the research population said they lacked the skills needed to find work in Lebanon (2013). As previously noted, there is also a segment of Lebanon employers “who are interested in hiring Syrians because they provide cheaper labour than their Lebanese counterparts” (2013). BRIC (2013) argues that this situation is better than those “in closed refugee camps in other countries where refugees are totally dependent on aid and remittances from family members still working in Syria” (2013). A comparison table of previous livelihoods for heads of households in Syria shows that the skill levels were higher for employment in Syria than the levels needed for work found now in Lebanon.

Table 5: Previous Syrian Skill Levels Compared with Exile in Lebanon (N=137).

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Syria</b>	<b>Lebanon</b>
Begging	NA	1%
White collar	1.5%	.5%
Skilled services	2%	1%
Sales clerks	3.5%	9%
Public servants/teachers	7%	2%
Never worked/retired	7.5%	NA
Skilled crafts	13.5%	19%
Small business owners	13.5%	1%
Farmer	15%	5.5%
Low skilled services	16%	43%
Construction	21%	18.5%

(adapted from BRIC 2013).

One other livelihood strategy that refugees use is sending “the women out of harm’s way while the men remain in Syria,” which accounts for the shift of household structures in accord with which 20 percent of Syrian “families are now headed by women” and the men travel “back and forth to Syria” (2013). Income from the labor of various household members in Syria cover about 50 per cent of living expenses, which those in Lebanon seek employment there to supplement.

Approximately 80 percent of Jordan’s Syrian refugee population lives in urban areas, with the remaining 20 per cent in refugee camps (Centre 2014). Before the conflict, many Syrians and Jordanians had intermarried and regularly crossed back and forth over the northern border of Jordan. When the conflict began, Syrians were able to cross this border with ease, and once in Jordan were able to stay with relatives, however as the war escalated fewer Syrians fleeing to Jordan had relatives living there. In 2012, the Jordanian government built a refugee camp in the desert where conditions to refugees seemed bleak. Because Jordan is not a party to neither the 1951 convention nor to the 1967 protocol relating to the status of refugees, it treated Syrian refugees “as foreign nationals” subject for the purpose of “entry and residence in accordance with national laws” (Olwan and Shiyab 2012). If a refugee held a valid Syrian passport, Jordan allowed the refugee “to enter the Kingdom without a visa or a residence permit,

provided that they hold valid passports,” but, as foreign nationals, to gain employment the person had to obtain a work permit (2012).

Mohamed Olwan and Ahmad Shiyab reports that most of the Syrian emigrants entered with “lower than high school education (71.4%)” and that most were “previously self-employed (36.2%)” (2012). Table 6 illustrates previous education and livelihoods for a surveyed portion of this population.

Table 6: Frequencies and Percentages of Refugees Previous Education Levels (N=105)

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Illiterate	13	12.4
Less than general secondary degree	75	71.4
Diploma	9	8.6
BA/Bsc	7	6.7
Higher education	0	0
No Answer	1	1
Total	105	100%

(Olwan and Shiyab 2012).

Table 7: Frequencies and Percentages of Previous Occupations in Syria and Current Types of Employment in Jordan (N=105)

<b>Category</b>	<b>Syria</b>	<b>Jordan</b>
Employee in public sector	1.0%	NA
Employee in the governmental sector	NA	5%
Employee in private sector	31.4 %	30%
Self Employed	36.2%	45%
Other	25.7%	20%
No answer	5.7%	NA
Total	100%	100%

(Olwan and Shiyab 2012).

Of those who were surveyed, 80% were not working in Jordan and 20% were working. When those unemployed were asked if they expected to find work, 48.8% replied no and 39.3% said yes. When comparing both the previous livelihood and current livelihood, Table 6 shows that when the refugees are allowed to work using their previous education and livelihood they maintain their livelihoods and improve their time spent in host countries. Also on return they are able to aid the country of origin’s reconstruction and total population’s repatriation experience is improved.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis has argued that UNHCR and host countries policies would improve refugee services by providing programs that assist refugees in using previous education and livelihoods. Further research is needed to confirm whether such programming would reduce time between initial exile and repatriation, but evidence available does suggest strongly that such programming would improve time in exile by aiding refugees in self-reliance outside of the camps, and ease repatriation. Evidence reviewed also support my contention that the ability to use previous education and livelihood would allow refugees to make better decisions about where to settle in their home country, as their education and livelihoods could be used in different places and home would become a new place to improve their future.

Given that such programming is not part of current refugee services, required turning to research that suggest the value of attention to such programming. For this purpose, of the literature I reviewed for Mozambican, Afghani, and Syrian refugees exile experiences, only Malawi and Jordan allowed for previous education and livelihoods refugees brought from their countries of origin. The benefit of Malawi's open policies for employment was hampered by UNHCR policies that did not assist host countries resulted in malnutrition among repatriated the Mozambique refugees. Syrians living in Jordan maintained a foreign national status, which allowed for employment, but Jordan's non-involvement with the 1951 UNHCR convention, and the 1967 protocol concerning the status of refugees, prevented assistance from UNHCR while refugees were exiled in that country. Nevertheless, despite an 80 per cent unemployment rate for Syrian refugees in Jordan at 80 percent, those that found employment often did so by using their previous education and livelihoods, which allowed them to maintain their livelihood skills and improve their time in exile. These two examples show the impact of policies which provide refugees access to their previous education and livelihoods, and suggest the negative impact of

lack of cooperation between UNHCR and host countries, the disjointed policies of which made exile and repatriation less successful.

Although South Africa and Lebanon gave their respective refugee population from neighboring countries access to employment, their policies and UNHCR's created obstacles to improving exile and repatriation livelihoods. South Africa's improved economy and educational system provided a place for refugees from Mozambique to work as migrant workers and to attain better education for their children. Although once migrant workers were placed under UNHCR's system as refugees, under South Africa's policies they lost the right to work and, were classified as illegal status. Thus, the combined policies reduced their ability to improve their livelihood. Lebanon maintained a non-intervention policy for Syria while opening its border to those needing a place of exile. The benefits of its open door policy was decreased by the large number of exiles that, resided mainly in the poorer areas of the country in which forms of available employment resulted in refugees working jobs that required less skill and education levels than they had attained in their home country and, thus did not allow them use of their previous livelihood skills.

To the detriment of the refugee, limited right of movement and encampment policies, placed that restricted use of previous education and livelihoods also negatively affected host countries, and on repatriation, the country of origin. The limited employment Pakistan and Iran allowed Afghan refugees restricted their income during exile and on return from Iran they could not fill the types of employment vacated, which negatively impacted Iran's ability to fill the vacancies. UNHCR's policies that emphasized subsistence farming and rural employment did allow for the new forms of urban employment that the refugees wanted to embrace from Pakistan's and Iran's limited employment policies they followed in exile. The majority of Mozambique refugees were agriculturalist and they were able to use previous livelihood skills. Although, because of Zimbabwe's encampment policies, refugees were hampered in doing so because there was little

assistance for them in dealing with local politics among headmen in the area where they were given land. They also could not take advantage of combining other forms of income gathering that might have been available in urban areas. Turkey and Zimbabwe encampment policies further illustrate how such policies produce dependency on aid, rather than promoting self-reliance, which could be facilitated by allowing use of previous education and livelihoods.

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