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UCL Migration Research Unit

UCL Migration Research Unit
UCL Department of Geography
University College London
26 Bedford Way
London WC1H 0AP

www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/mru

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"Welcome to Canada": Hospitality, Inclusion and Diversity in Private Refugee Sponsorship

Anna Hutchinson

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"Welcome to Canada": Hospitality, Inclusion and Diversity in Private Refugee Sponsorship

Anna Hutchinson

Supervisor: Dr. Tariq Jazeel

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Abstract

During the Canadian election campaign in the fall of 2015, Trudeau's Liberal government emphasized a strong commitment to opening Canada's doors and resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees. This commitment was honoured within several months of the Liberals taking office and was met with widespread support across the country. The resettlement initiative was portrayed by the federal government as a means of strengthening and continuing Canada's humanitarian tradition and history of inclusion and diversity. According to information provided by the Government of Canada, between the 4th of November 2015 and the 29th of January 2017 more than 40,000 Syrian refugees were resettled in Canada. Nearly half of all resettled refugees during this period were sponsored though a unique program of private sponsorship by individual residents and citizens of Canada. Private sponsors support the resettlement of refugees to Canada by providing all financial and logistical support for the first year after arrival, including help with housing, education, and health care. This dissertation explores how discourses of Canadian hospitality, inclusion and diversity are negotiated, embodied, and performed by the federal government and individual Canadians sponsoring refugees through analysis of government documents, newspapers, and interviews with private sponsors. While hospitality cannot be fixed as a singular experience or relationship, sponsorship provided space for gestures and moments of hospitality where the double imperative of unconditionality and naming could exist simultaneously. This dissertation provides an opening towards further work on hospitality, Canadian national identity, and the private refugee sponsorship program in Canada.

Word Count: 10,753

Acknowledgements

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Acronyms

BVOR: Blended Visa-Office Referred

CBC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

CIC: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

CG: Constituent Group

CS: Community Sponsor

G5: Group of Five

GAR: Government Assisted Refugees

GTA: Greater Toronto Area

PSR: Private Sponsorship of Refugees

SAH: Sponsorship Agreement Holder

UNHCR: United Nations

1. Introduction

The 1976 Immigration Act, called into force in 1978, marked the beginning of the private sponsorship system in Canada. According to section 6(4) of the Act, any group of Canadian citizens or permanent residents may sponsor the admission of any Convention refugee or any other permitted class of immigrant (Government of Canada, 1976). Private sponsorship was first put into action by the Canadian public to assist the government in resettling nearly 60,000 Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees to Canada in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Hydman *et al.,* 2017). Over the past few decades, community groups and private citizens have sponsored thousands of refugees to resettle in Canada. During the election campaign in the fall of 2015, Trudeau's Liberal government emphasized a strong commitment to opening Canada's doors and resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees. This commitment was honoured within several months of the Liberals taking office and was met with widespread support across the country. The resettlement initiative was portrayed by the federal government as a means of strengthening and continuing Canada's humanitarian tradition and history of inclusion and diversity. According to information provided by the Government of Canada, between the 4th of November 2015 and the 29th of January 2017 more than 40,000 Syrian refugees were resettled in Canada.

Refugees are primarily resettled in Canada through three broad streams of assistance and sponsorship, consisting of the Government-Assisted Refugee (GAR), Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugee (BVOR), and Privately Sponsored Refugee (PSR) programs (Government of Canada, 2017a). The GAR program resettles refugees who are entirely funded by the Government of Canada and supported by NGOs in partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. BVOR support is partially funded by the Government of Canada, while the remainder of the funds and all social and logistical support are provided by private sponsors. Finally, the PSR program is entirely funded and supported by individual Canadians and, as with the other two programs, support is provided for the duration of one full year. Of the 40,000 Syrians who arrived in Canada from late 2015 to early 2017, more than 14,000 were sponsored privately, and a further 4,000 were supported through the BVOR program (Government of Canada, 2017b).

Within the PSR program, applicants for refugee sponsorship are classified into two separate categories. Convention refugees officially recognized as such by UNHCR are those who are outside their home country and cannot return due to a well-founded fear of persecution

based on race, religion, political opinion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group (Government of Canada, 2017b). Convention refugees can be sponsored through Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs), which are faith-based organizations and community groups that hold a long-standing agreement with the government to facilitate refugee sponsorship. SAHs typically authorize Constituent Groups (CG) to sponsor refugees. CGs are groups of individual citizens or permanent residents within the local community where the refugee will be resettled who provide all support, including financial support, to sponsored refugees. Convention refugees can also be privately sponsored by groups of five (G5) or more individual Canadian citizens or permanent residents as well as community sponsors (CS) who don't already have a partnership with the government.

The other permitted class of refugee is the country of asylum class. While not formally recognized by UNHCR, they must be outside their home country and have been seriously affected by civil war or been denied basic human rights on an ongoing basis (Government of Canada, 2017b). However, under normal circumstances, country of asylum class refugees can only be sponsored by a SAH and their authorized CGs. Between 2015 and 2017, the government temporarily changed the regulations to allow Syrian and Iraqi applicants to be recognized as *prima facie* refugees and be sponsored by G5s or CSs (McCallum, 2016). Sponsors may decide to provide resettlement support for a sponsor-referred refugee, typically a family member or someone otherwise known to the sponsor, or a visa office-referred refugee. In all cases, the applicant for sponsorship must qualify as eligible for resettlement within the regulations set out by the Canadian government.

Private sponsors, regardless of how they sponsor, enter into a one-year commitment to provide all support to a designated number of newcomers. This support can include, but is not limited to, financial support in the form of accommodation, furniture, seasonally appropriate clothing, food, transportation costs, and a living allowance. Sponsors are typically responsible for assisting newcomers with all aspects of their arrival in their new community, including registering their children in schools, applying for a social insurance number, making appointments with doctors and dentists, enrolling adults in English classes and making connections with local settlement agencies to help provide any additional training and support. Sponsored refugees arrive in Canada as permanent residents, which provides them with access to the right to work, the right to healthcare, and the right to education. They are also entitled to receive social assistance following the one year period of sponsorship if they are not yet financially independent. Given their permanent status upon arrival, this research will refer to those who have arrived in Canada through sponsorship as newcomers, rather than refugees.

In the context of the recent large-scale resettlement effort, this dissertation explores how discourses of Canadian hospitality, inclusion and diversity are negotiated, embodied, and performed by the federal government and individual Canadians sponsoring refugees through the BVOR and PSR programs. The Liberal government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has articulated a commitment to resettlement through a language of inclusion and diversity. The program to resettle Syrian refugees has become a constitutive element of the government's vision of what Canada is now, has been, and will be in the years to come. While the government's rhetoric towards Canada's diverse population has been met favourably, both domestically and internationally, the implications of this discourse demand more rigorous analysis. Following international praise at the UN Summit in New York, the Canadian government has partnered with the UNHCR and the Open Society Foundations to launch the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, which aims to bring Canadian resettlement best practices to countries around the world (Hyndman *et al*, 2017). The prospect of exporting the Canadian program of resettlement calls for critical analysis to ensure that the potential for harm can be mitigated on a global scale. This research comes at a pivotal time when the large scale private sponsorship program across the country begins to slow down, yet interest and support remains. However, the process of reflecting on and analysing the private sponsorship program in Canada must continue in the years to come.

In order to explore official discourses and individual experiences of Canadian hospitality I have framed my research around a set of questions divided into two broad themes. The first examines the national rhetoric of Canadian hospitality and how it is discursively and politically constituted by asking:

1. What is the relationship between hospitality and Canadian national identity?
2. What are the limits and conditions for Canadian hospitality?
3. How is Canadian hospitality articulated through the private sponsorship program?

Secondly, I explore how hospitality is understood and performed by private refugee sponsors and privately sponsored refugees by answering the questions:

1. To what extent does the national rhetoric of hospitality inform practical, day-to-day hospitality?
2. How is hospitality practiced on an individual level?
3. What are the limits of hospitality in practice?
4. To what extent can hospitality be reciprocal?
5. What are the power relations at work in hospitality?

2. Literature Review

This dissertation draws on a body of critical academic literature on cosmopolitanism, hospitality, and responsibility. It further examines issues of diversity, multiculturalism, tolerance, and inclusion in the context of nation states, particularly within Canada. Since PSR formally began in 1979, there has been a wealth of academic literature on the program through various theoretical lens (Hyndman *et al,* 2017; Krivenko, 2012; Labman, 2016; Lenard, 2016). Krivenko's work on private refugee sponsorship as an application of a unique form of sovereignty, which can extend unconditional hospitality, has been most relevant to this research project (2012). However, this dissertation takes a more critical stance on the capacity for individual sponsors to extend unconditional welcome and hospitality to refugees. Literature on the historical context of PSR within Canada and the shifting government priorities within the program has also been particularly useful (Hyndman *et al,* 2017; Labman, 2016). Recent work by Patti Tamara Lenard provides an analysis of the PSR program within Canada to highlight the potential for harm between newcomers and sponsors (2016). There have been concerted efforts within the academic community in Canada to continue to focus on the implications and impacts of the most recent resettlement efforts, including private sponsorship. The Social Science and Humanities Research Council put forward a call for targeted research on Syrian Refugee Arrival, Resettlement and Integration in June 2016. Of the recipients of the competition, research entitled 'The sponsor's perspective: motivations, expectations and experiences of private sponsors of Syrian refugees' is currently being led by Dr. Audrey Macklin at the University of Toronto (Social Science and Humanities Research Council, 2016). This research closely aligns with the objectives and design of this dissertation, yet is being conducted on a much larger scale.

2.1 Hospitality

In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant argues that a right to hospitality, also referred to as the right to visit, must be extended to all men, 'by virtue of their common ownership of the earth's surface' (1991,106-108). Cosmopolitanism, or a universal community of human beings, creates and allows for this right to hospitality. Yet the concept of cosmopolitanism is fraught with debates about its value in creating the conditions for living with difference in a globalized world (Appiah, 2007; Gidwani, 2006; Gilroy, 2004; Harvey, 2009; Jazeel, 2011; Pollock et.

al., 2002, Spivak, 2012). Martha Nussbaum has gone back to the concept's Kantian roots to employ the notion of cosmopolitanism as a tool to achieve a world based on equality and respect (1994, 1997). However, David Harvey is critical of the way that cosmopolitanism is implicated in Kant's racist geographical imagination and implicit Eurocentrism (2009). In response to concerns about the capacity for cosmopolitanism to address the realities of living together with and among difference, there have been attempts to revitalize the term in the form of Gidwani's (2006) subaltern cosmopolitanism, Bhabha's (2004) vernacular cosmopolitanism, and Gilroy's (2004) cosmopolitanism from below, among others. Pollock *et al* suggest that cosmopolitanism is yet to come, a practice and concept that escapes definition and instead, exists in the space of transitions and interstices (2002). Other scholars have suggested doing away with the term entirely in favour of geographical imaginations inaccessible within the confines of western knowledge systems (Jazeel, 2011; Keith, 2005; Spivak, 2003). The concerns surrounding cosmopolitanism suggest discomfort with fixity and the totalizing process of understanding and knowing, particularly through western knowledge frameworks.

Scholarly work on hospitality, as a right provided by the condition of cosmopolitanism, has been similarly critical of the idea that the concept of hospitality can be objectively known and realized (Barnett, 2005; Bulley, 2017; Dikec, 2002, Dikeç *et al,* 2009; Rosello, 2001). For Derrida and Levinas, hospitality is about the potential for other ways of relating to alterity made possible by the lack of certainty or a stable foundation (Barnett, 2005). Widely quoted for his work on hospitality, Derrida argues for the impossibility of unconditional hospitality towards the foreigner (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). The Law of hospitality requires that the host unconditionally welcome the guest, without the need for identification and question. This is the kind of hospitality exemplified in the welcome given to Telemachus as he arrived in Lacedaemon in Homer's *Odyssey* (Stronks, 2012). Yet, the laws of hospitality necessitate limitations, rules, and finitude that restrict the Law of hospitality (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). The capacity to extend hospitality requires sovereignty over one's home or state, which is exercised by selecting who is permitted to enter. Therefore, 'a certain injustice, and even a certain perjury begins right away, from the very threshold of the right to hospitality' (Derrida, 2000: 55). The violence at the threshold of hospitality also begins with language. In order to be welcomed, the foreigner must understand and speak the language of welcome (Derrida, 2000; Dikeç, 2002). Inherent in hospitality is the possibility of violence, 'perpetual indebtedness,' and 'the madness of the unjust encounter' (Leung and Stone, 2009: 203). Leung and Stone further argue that the violence of hospitality is most visible in confronting the other

that does not desire inclusion or welcome (2009). Despite the contradiction, or aporia, the Law of hospitality requires the laws of hospitality, and vice versa. As Derrida says, 'it is in the name of unconditional hospitality that we must try to determine the *best* conditions' for the laws of hospitality (2006: 7). The imperative of unconditional hospitality is equal to the imperative of greeting, naming, addressing and acknowledging the guest in order for hospitality to become effective (Barnett, 2005).

Dikeç further expands on the conception of hospitality as a process of engagement, negotiation and contestation (2002). The space of hospitality, as a space belonging originally to neither the host or guest, is a space where host becomes guest and guest become host. It is the space of the gesture of hospitality (Dikeç, 2002). Hospitality, as a gesture, moment, instant, has the potential to give time and space (Dikeç *et al,* 2009). Faithful readings of Derrida, in conversation with Levinas, focus on the temporal aspect of hospitality in the surprise arrival of a guest (Barnett, 2005, Dikeç, 2002). However, in his recent book, Bulley diverges from temporality to focus instead on spaces of hospitality to explore the ways that hospitality can be managed and controlled when extended beyond the threshold, beyond the moment of the gesture (2017). While engagement and responsibility has long been presumed to exist on the level of the local, scholars have reimagined space bound up with the relationality of identity (Amin, 2004; Massey, 2004). Amin argues that propinquity need not be restricted to the everyday, and instead extend to the politics of connectivity and the way that place is constructed through negotiations of difference (2004). Reconceptualising space and place in this way has implications for 'geographies of responsibility' and engagement beyond the local (Massey, 2004).

Hospitality has long been used as a conceptual tool to examine the actions towards the foreigner in national immigration systems. Stronks examines the contradiction of hospitality at work in Dutch migration laws in the case of Abdirizaq Salah Sheekh (2012). In *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest,* Rosello focuses on the definition and representation of hospitality within French discourse as it relates to immigration (2001). Derrida's work on hospitality itself arose from contemporary immigration and citizenship debates around the *sans-papiers* in France and the abolition of the decree of 1870 granting French citizenship to Algerian Jews (Derrida, 2005). This dissertation uses the conceptual framework of hospitality to analyse how private sponsorship can create and allow for spaces of hospitality between the Canadian government, sponsors, and newcomers.

2.2. Multiculturalism and Diversity in Canada

In an order to begin a project of analyzing hospitality as a process of destabilizing interiors, which Bulley argues for, it is first necessary to explore what constitutes Canadian national identity (2017). Since Confederation 150 years ago, the history of Canada has been fraught with debates about what it means to be Canadian. In 1971 multiculturalism became the official policy of Canada and a mechanism for distinguishing the Canadian national mosaic against the melting pot policy of its neighbour to the south (Fortier, 2008; Wayland, 1997). Since the late 1970s, multiculturalism has been expanded from a policy of promoting cultural diversity to a recognition of multiculturalism as a fundamental element of Canadian identity (Wayland, 1997). Within the literature there have been critiques of multiculturalism, including various debates about the fall of multiculturalism and the realities of living in a 'post-multicultural' world (Kymlicka, 2010; Vertovec, 2010). Multiculturalism has been blamed for creating ethnic segregation, 'parallel lives,' and for the failure of integration (Fortier, 2008; Vertovec, 2010). Kymlicka argues that, rather than do away entirely with multiculturalism, there needs to be greater attention paid to establishing the conditions for implementing a multicultural framework through which living with diversity can happen (2010). However, in *Multicultural Horizons* Fortier argues that multiculturalism, rather than a policy or governing response to diversity, is an ideal through which to imagine national identity (2008). National policies of multiculturalism and diversity can work as mechanisms of bordering and exclusion. While avowed multiculturalism as a defining feature of a national identity claims to accommodate for the difference within, it also sets limits as to who can be accommodated and under what circumstances. Wendy Brown has shown how western states use the rhetoric of tolerance as a technology of regulation that serves to define what is acceptable (2006). Values, such as multiculturalism and tolerance, constitute the inside of national identity in ways that require the unmarking of difference in an appeal to a universalism that is in fact understood as western and white (Brown, 2006; Fortier, 2008). Fortier argues that Britain has developed a multiculturalist nationalism that involves 're-writing the national same so that 'we' could love ourselves as different' (2008: 22). Scholars working within the Canadian context have critiqued a similar process of projecting narratives of inclusion and multiculturalism backwards to erase problematic histories of racism, violence, and exclusion (Abella and Troper, 2012; Johnson, 2014; Wayland, 1997). This dissertation draws on critiques of multiculturalism as a technology of regulation to analyse the national discourse of private refugee sponsorship.

3. Methods

This research is informed by two sets of data collected between May and July 2017 using archival research and semi-structured interviews. The data has been coded and analysed to examine both national discourses and individual experiences of hospitality, inclusion and diversity. This section will outline the research methods and analysis and discuss the ethical considerations, positionality, and limitations of this work.

3.1 Data Collection Methods

3.1.1 Archival Research

The archival data is drawn primarily from government documents, including statements and news releases issued by the Prime Minister's Office between his election on the 4th of November 2015 and the 150th Anniversary of Canada on the 1st of July 2017, the 1976 Immigration Act, and guidance provided to immigration officials working in visa offices abroad. Independent evaluations, reports and overviews provided by the interviewed sponsors and agencies were also analysed. The statements and news releases, 85 in total, address a range of important dates, including religious holidays, national independence days around the world, and anniversaries of historical events. Speeches made by the Prime Minister to the UN, the EU, and at various other state dinners and international events are also included. However, several statements that did not seem relevant to the current research were omitted, along with information about the Prime Minister's daily itineraries. The full text of the 1976 Immigration Act and guidance documents for visa officers have been analysed to provide insight about the official priorities of the Canadian government in terms of immigration, private sponsorship, and resettlement. In addition to the government sources, nearly 200 newspaper articles from three major Canadian news sources, available in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and published between summer 2015 and spring 2017, were read and analysed for greater clarity about the Canadian resettlement programs and the articulation of narratives of Canadian hospitality by government officials and the experience of individual sponsors. Along with the three Canadian news sources, the *CBC* (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), *The Toronto Star*, and *The Globe and Mail*, a 4-part series published by *The New York Times* was also analyzed, which followed the experiences of sponsors and newcomers over the whole year of

sponsorship. However, while interviews were conducted in London, Ontario, as well at the GTA, local papers were not analysed as the sponsors interviewed there would likely have had access to the three GTA news sources.

3.1.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

In order to explore individual experiences of sponsorship, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted in June and July 2017 with private sponsors who had sponsored or were continuing to sponsor Syrian refugees during the recent resettlement initiative (see Table 1 below). These interviews were mainly conducted in several neighbourhoods within the GTA, but 5 interviews were conducted in London, Ontario, a smaller city located two hours outside of Toronto. In most cases, more than one sponsor from each sponsorship group was interviewed in order to gain a fuller picture of the experiences among the group. The table below (Table 1) has been colour coded to indicate where respondents were part of the same sponsorship group. In addition to interviews with sponsors, 4 interviews were conducted with key informants, including one newcomer, a local advocate and community organizer, a GAR settlement worker in London, and a PSR settlement facilitator in Toronto (see Table 2). Interview participants were contacted through previous connections established in Toronto and the majority of interviews were arranged as a result of snowballing, with the exception of one interviewee contacted by cold calling. Efforts have been made to include sponsors and newcomers from a variety of sponsorship scenarios, including those resettled through PSR and BVOR, and sponsorships facilitated by CGs of SAHs and G5s. In addition, the sponsorships included those who had been named or sponsored by family members already in Canada, and those referred by UNHCR. The sponsorship groups themselves were somewhat diverse in terms of the individual backgrounds of those involved, their size, and the way they were formed; groups lived on the same street or in the same neighbourhood, were part of the same faith group, or were well-established friends. The newcomers had all arrived at very different times throughout the past year and a half. While a few groups made the cut off, the majority of sponsors interviewed welcomed families after the government's initial resettlement effort between December 2015 and February 2016, which meant that they often waited up to a year for them to arrive. Semi-structured interviews were used for both sets of participants to allow for open-ended responses and a more informal atmosphere (Longhurst, 2016). Efforts were made to make each participant feel comfortable to disclose any information they felt was relevant or important. However, each participant was asked the same set of questions and

follow up questions were used to gain a full picture of each sponsorship experience (see Appendix 1 and 2).

Table 1. Interviews with Sponsors

Name*	Date of Interview	Period of Sponsorship	Type of Sponsorship	Country of Origin	Location of Interview
Sheila	27.06.2017	October 2016 – Ongoing	G5	Canada	Toronto
Skylar	28.06.2017	September 2016 – Ongoing	SAH/CG	USA	Toronto
Marcie	06.07.2017	July 2016 – July 2017	SAH/CG	Canada	Toronto
Theresa	07.07.2017	February 2016 – February 2017	SAH/CG/BVOR	Canada	Toronto
Sandra	10.07.2017	September 2016 - Ongoing	SAH/CG	Canada	Toronto
Birgitte	11.07.2017	June 2017 – Ongoing	SAH/CG/BVOR	Denmark	London, ON
Mia	11.07.2017	June 2017 – Ongoing	SAH/CG/BVOR	UK	London, ON
Bennett	11.07.2017	June 2017 – Ongoing	SAH/CG/BVOR	Canada	London, ON
Helen	12.07.2017	June 2016 – June 2017	SAH/CG	Canada	London, ON
Margot	18.07.2017	September 2016 – Ongoing	SAH/CG	Canada	Toronto
Rebekah	18.07.2017	November 2016 – Ongoing	G5	Canada	Toronto
Haiping	21.07.2017	November 2016 – Ongoing	G5	China	Toronto

Table 2. Interviews with Key Informants

Name*	Date of Interview	Role in Sponsorship	Location of Interview
Adnan	04.07.2017	Newcomer from Syria	Toronto
Stephen	06.07.2017	Refugee advocate, community organizer and sponsor.	Toronto
Veronika	11.07.2017	Settlement worker for government sponsored refugees.	London, ON
Rachael	14.07.2017	Sponsorship coordinator and settlement worker for privately sponsored refugees.	Toronto

The names of all research participants have been changed to protect their identities.

3.2 Positionality

Throughout the course of the research, particularly while conducting interviews, I remained aware of my own positionality as a white, middle-class Canadian. While I made efforts to remain impartial during the interviews, my own experiences of being Canadian and my own perspectives on hospitality may have come through in the research, particularly towards the end of interviews as they transitioned into more informal discussions. As I used my own connections to find participants initially, the interview respondents tended to come from similar backgrounds to me. While 4 out of the 12 sponsors were born in a country other than Canada (see Table 1 for Country of Origin information), making them newcomers themselves, all but one of the research participants was white. It was clear from the small sample size that identity markers, such as a being a newcomer and one's skin colour, could have a significant impact on the sponsorship experience. It is also important to note that the sample included in this research is in no way indicative of the backgrounds and experiences of all private sponsors in Canada. The limitations of the research will be discussed in further detail below. My positionality also had a profound impact on my ability to safely and effectively interview newcomers to Canada about their experiences being sponsored. Given that I shared several identity markers with many sponsors, including skin colour, socio-economic status, and citizenship, it was relatively easy to create a relationship of trust and honesty with sponsors.

It became clear over the course of the research process that sponsorship is very often characterized by a power imbalance that would have made it unethical, and harmful, to conduct interviews with newcomers about their experience of being sponsored. This was of particular

concern among the newcomers that were still in their initial year of sponsorship as they were receiving ongoing assistance from their sponsors. The ethical concerns raised by interviewing newcomers will be discussed in further detail below. However, to make one final point about reflexivity and positionality, it is critical to note that identities and knowledges are constructed and remain fluid throughout the research process. While I felt it was necessary to reflect on my own positionality throughout the course of researching and writing this dissertation, I can never be entirely certain of the extent to which my varied position within each interview has impacted my research. It is equally important to acknowledge the gaps, uncertainties, and potential for multiple interpretations within my own research (Rose, 1997).

3.3 Ethical Considerations

In the initial stages of this research project, the intention was to explore the process and experience of engagement between sponsors and newcomers as well as the ways that hospitality is received by those who are sponsored to come to Canada. However, in the effort to include newcomer voices, several ethical concerns emerged. In order to adhere to the principles of harm reduction and adult safeguarding, I felt that it would be a disservice, and potentially harmful, to the newcomer voice to include their stories using the means available. As discussed above, my positionality as someone with similar identity markers to many of the sponsors interviewed could have prevented newcomers from being forthcoming about their experiences and may have provoked feelings of discomfort. As many of the newcomers were still in the process of learning English, translators would have been required to conduct interviews. In recognition that the process of moving to a new country, particularly given the element of force in refugee situations, can be traumatic, I felt that it would be wrong to put newcomers in a position where they needed to discuss their experiences of relocation. While I was uncomfortable conducting a research project that reflected only one side of the experience of sponsorship, I felt it would be worse to expose interviewees to potential harm. As such, this work is created with the recognition that vastly different results may have emerged had there been other perspectives included. One newcomer, who had been privately sponsored, was interviewed as a key informant. However, there were fewer ethical concerns as he did not require the use of a translator and he had been privately sponsored by relatives, rather than members of the general public. Nevertheless, all efforts were made to ensure that he, along with all other participants, felt comfortable and aware that they could revoke consent to participate at any point or decline to answer. All interviewees were asked to sign a form giving

consent for their answers to be used in this research project and confirming that all information provided would remain anonymous (see Appendix 3).

3.4 Data Analysis

As the research showed, each sponsorship experience was different, both between and within sponsorship groups. However, several common themes, challenges, and highlights emerged. Both sets of data, taken from archival research and interview transcripts, were carefully read, coded and analysed to reveal commonalities between experiences, as well as between experiences and the official discourse. When analysing the archival material, it was important to keep in mind several key aspects about the texts, such as who the material was produced by, the intended audience, the intended use, and what might have been omitted (Craggs, 2016). While there is no definitive, linear process for analyzing qualitative research material, the methods of coding in this research project were informed by a number of works by other researchers (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003; Jackson, 2001). Each transcript was transcribed and read several times for general comprehension. The transcripts were assembled into one document and elements that seemed relevant to the research concerns of the project were highlighted. From the highlighted text, repeating ideas were assembled into themes, and then each theme was further categorized into broader themes, represented in the empirical sections below. There are several subthemes that appear in more than one empirical section as their meaning changed depending on the way it appeared within the text. The themes and the way they were organized changed several times over the course of the coding process as each reading revealed different ways of categorizing the material. Given the constraints of this particular research project, interesting material that was not necessarily relevant to the research concerns of the project was omitted. It is also important to note that several other readings of the material could have emerged with the use of other methods of analysis and the perspectives of other researchers.

3.5 Limitations

Despite the wealth of resources analysed during the course of this research, this dissertation cannot claim to be comprehensive or representative of the experiences and views of all private sponsors and newcomers resettled to Canada. As the research has been restricted to urban contexts within Ontario, sponsorship and resettlement in rural communities and in the

rest of Canada, particularly the vastly different programs in Quebec, have been excluded. As discussed above, the perspectives of newcomers were not captured in this research due to ethical concerns. The research is also limited by the small sample size. While private sponsorship operates on a number of different scales, this research has been limited to the individual and national scales, largely excluding the perspectives of settlement agencies, community groups, and cultural and faith organizations. This research has been further restricted to the experiences of sponsorship among sponsors of Syrian refugees. However, as the program has existed for several decades, the countries of origin for sponsored refugees vary widely and analysis of different resettlement initiatives would likely produce somewhat different results. With the recognition that there are multiple truths possible, the material presented below is a version of the truth from the perspectives of several Canadians who have sponsored Syrian refugees (Mohammad, 2001).

4. Empirical Findings

The chapters below highlight the findings of research conducted on the national discourses of private refugee sponsorship and the way that private sponsorship is experienced by individuals who sponsored Syrian refugees to resettle in Canada from early 2016 to the present day. The research findings have been divided into two chapters, each with three subsections. The first chapter examines the thresholds, openings, and gestures of hospitality that can appear throughout the process of PSR. These thresholds, characterised as physical borders, national discourse, and private sponsors indicate the possibility for hospitality to be extended, yet often illustrate the ways in which they fall short of fulfilling that potential. The second chapter explores spaces of hospitality and the way that hospitality, ethics, and power are manifested and negotiated within PSR.

4.1 Thresholds of Hospitality

4.1.1 Physical Borders

The resettlement of refugees to Canada, including through private refugee sponsorship, involves the crossing of several physical and imaginary borders. Yet, there are questions, conditions, and requirements imposed upon the applicants before they are granted permission

to cross these borders. The objectives of the 'discretionary' resettlement program are to continue Canada's humanitarian tradition, meet Canada's international obligations, and offer a durable solution to refugees (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009: 8). The initial threshold of Canadian hospitality occurs in the visa-office abroad. However, persons are often deemed worthy, eligible, or desirable as future Canadians prior to even applying as they must, in most cases, be referred by an agency, such as the UNHCR, or a Canadian resident. Once the initial referral is made, visa officers are responsible for determining the eligibility of applicants by assessing their credibility, ensuring that the applicant has no other durable solution, reviewing their eligibility as a Convention refugee or country of asylum class refugee, and determining whether the applicants are able to establish themselves in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). An imbalance of power occurs in the encounter at the opening of hospitality as the applicants must use the language of the host (in this case the visa officer) to prove their credibility. While interpreters are used, language here refers to the 'grids of intelligibility,' or that which can be conceived of as possible, that are used to assess the application (Hyndman, 2004: 201). In Stronks' accounts of the Dutch asylum procedure in the case of Salah Sheekh, the authorities replaced 'his-story' with 'our-story,' or an account born from their own perceptions of the truth (2012). Visa officers are instructed to give each applicant the benefit of the doubt, avoid over-vigilance, and avoid relying on demeanour as a measure of credibility, yet are ultimately given the power to reject an applicant based on a lack of credibility (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). While it is beyond the scope of this research to assess the policies and practices of Canadian visa officers abroad, assessments of refugee credibility will always include the possibility of harm and the risk of the closure of hospitality.

Visa officers are also required to determine the ability of applicants to establish themselves in Canada. One of the legislative objectives of Canada's refugee and humanitarian resettlement program is to demonstrate a shift away from the ability to establish towards protection (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). Cases deemed urgent and vulnerable are exempt from the requirement of ability to establish, yet all other cases are assessed based on their ability to provide for themselves and their dependents and their prospects of living without social assistance within 3-5 years after resettlement (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009: 66). In both cases, applicants for resettlement to Canada face conditions to the prospect of welcome and hospitality through proof of vulnerability or the ability to establish. Vulnerability, as a condition for hospitality, was a contentious element of the government's initial proposal to welcome Syrian refugees. Shortly after the attacks in Paris in the fall of 2015,

Prime Minister Trudeau announced that Canada would exclude young, single men for resettlement, much to the dismay of the international community and Canadians alike (*The Guardian,* 24th November 2015). There is a wealth of literature on the problematic erasure of young male vulnerability, particularly within refugee and conflict situations (Dennis, 2008; Jones, 2010; Lewis, 2014; Russell, 2007; Turner, 2000). Imposing vulnerability and worth as a condition of resettlement complicates the threshold of hospitality in problematic ways.

In addition to the application and interview, medical and security checks are required for all applicants. The entire process of approval can take between several months and several years. Expediency, in terms of staffing and logistics, serve as another mechanism of inclusion and exclusion. When the Syrian resettlement initiative began in late 2015, more than 500 visa officers were posted to offices around the Middle East in order to process the influx of applications and ensure that Canada could meet its target for resettlement (*The Globe and Mail,* 25th November 2015). However, with very little notice, the government pulled many of its overseas staff and imposed a deadline for new applications for sponsorship in March 2016. Sponsors and refugee advocates across Canada were outraged by the government's response, particularly in the face of continued commitments from private sponsors (*The Globe and Mail,* 24th March 2016; *CBC,* 27th April 2017). As of the summer of 2017, sponsors across Canada were still waiting for thousands of applications to be processed and newcomers to arrive. Stephen estimated that approximately 5,000 sponsorship groups were still waiting for newcomer families to arrive as of early July 2017 (Interview on 6th July 2017). While the visa office and application is often the first threshold applicants must face, there are a number of other openings and closures that can occur simultaneously and at various stages. Through the process of selecting a family to sponsor through a G5, Rebekah and Haiping spent several months waiting for a family that never arrived. They were matched with a Kurdish family of five living in Turkey but waited months before they were informed that the family's application had been rejected. The G5 groups even sent a Kurdish acquaintance to check on them and 'did all these things to intervene because we were really feeling for these people' (Interview with Rebekah, 18th July 2017). While the potential newcomers had not yet crossed the threshold of the theoretical, taken here to mean application approval, and physical Canadian border, the threshold of individual welcome had already opened up to them.

4.1.2 National Discourse

Beyond, or rather, other than, the openings made possible at the physical borders of the Canadian nation state, the national discourse of welcome and inclusion provides for the possibility of hospitality. At all levels of government and across civil society, there was a public rhetoric of Canada as a welcoming, hospitable, and inclusive country. This sentiment was shared by prominent world leaders such as Antonio Guterres, previously the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and now serving as the Secretary General of the United Nations. He wrote an article shortly before the Syrian resettlement initiative began calling on Canada to continue its 'proud record of opening their arms to those seeking a new beginning' (*The Globe and Mail,* 25th September 2015). Appeals to Canada's identity as a country of welcome also came from the Ontario premier, Kathleen Wynne, and the previous Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, John McCallum (*The Globe and Mail,* 10th December 2015). An image of Canada as a welcoming and inclusive place was projected both globally and within Canada, which served as a rhetoric of unconditional hospitality with which to greet all newcomers. A similar message of Canadian national hospitality was articulated by many of the sponsors interviewed. Skylar expressed that as an American and a new Canadian citizen she felt 'like Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, like you've got the Golden Ticket [because] Canada is truly remarkable and welcoming' (Interview on 28th June 2017). However, all sponsors were quick to point out that they could see no reason why private sponsorship couldn't work in other countries and contexts. For them, it seemed to have very little to do with nationality and more about the ways that individuals could develop relationships and extend welcome to one another.

Once applicants for resettlement had crossed the threshold of the visa office and were deemed eligible to cross the physical Canadian border as permanent residents, they arrived at the imaginary threshold of Canadian identity. The practice of fixing and defining a national identity is inherently problematic in the recognition that identity is relational and fluid. While Canadian identity opened up the possibility of hospitality and welcome, it simultaneously served to delineate and define identity to exclude and prevent hospitality. On the 10th of December 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met the first plane carrying Syrian refugees to Canada at Toronto Pearson International Airport. Upon their arrival, he declared to an airport full of Canadians and newcomers that, 'this is something we are able to do in this country because we define a Canadian not by a skin colour or a language or a religion or a background but by a shared set of values, aspirations, hopes and dreams that not just Canadians but people

around the world share' (quoted in *The Global and Mail*, 11 December 2015). While the message was meant as one of welcome, Trudeau placed conditions upon the essence of what it means to be Canadian in the form of 'universal' values. Values, as a 'technology of regulation', serve to welcome some, while excluding others (Brown, 2008). There is also an implicit message that people will be required to change if they don't adhere to Canadian values, a message echoed by some sponsors as shown in the sections below.

Private sponsorship also has the ability and power to unsettle the constitutive elements of Canadian identity through hospitality. Ian Brown, in an article for *The Globe and Mail*, described private sponsorship and resettlement in Canada as a civic project that asks: 'Who can be Canadian? Should people not qualify? How much do refugees have to behave like other Canadians? And what does being Canadian mean any more, anyway?' (*The Globe and Mail,* 24th May 2017). The promise of hospitality rests in the possibility of engagement, mutual transformation and the creation of a space where host could become guest and guest could become host (Dikeç, 2002). Sponsorship could provide a means of questioning and changing identities to overcome difference. The Canadian playwright, Michael Healey, spoke about his own sponsorship experience and the Canadian imperative to overcome difference; 'The only thing that overcomes the fear of the other is the thing beyond tolerance – a degree of intimacy. Once you get to know someone that fear subsides. And what's the project of Canada if not that? This is a stolen land taken over by immigrants who are only here through increased immigration. And so you'd better get right with the other, because that includes you' (quoted in *The Globe and Mail,* 24th May 2017).

4.1.3 Private Sponsors

The very foundation of private sponsorship is the act of welcoming a person or family from elsewhere to one's own home, neighbourhood, community, city and country. Before groups were formed, donations collected, forms signed, and families matched, each sponsor indicated an opening and a gesture of hospitality to an unnamed, unknown stranger. The desire and impetus to provide that opening was articulated in a number of different ways by sponsors. Many people expressed the idea that sponsoring provided a framework for action often motivated by powerful expressions of their own identities. A number of sponsors who had worked with immigrant communities as part of their professional careers in social work or service provision identified the desire to help as an intrinsic part of who they were (Interview with Marcie, 6th July 2017; Interview with Theresa, 7th July 2017). Sheila, who sponsored with

a group of people from her synagogue, said, 'being Jewish I've been raised listening about the Holocaust and wishing I could have done something but I couldn't, so this is an opportunity to pay it forward' (Interview on 27th June 2017). From the interviews, there was a sense of initial unconditionality expressed by the sponsors and the idea of a sponsorship group as '18-20 people who would do absolutely anything for them' (Interview with Birgitte, 11th July 2017). However, when it came time to embark on the logistical process of extending welcome and hospitality, the imposition of conditions became more apparent. As soon as groups formed to sponsor refugees, the most immediate concern that arose was the issue of raising the required funds. As a G5, groups were required to raise the funds among themselves without the expectation of any tax receipt or similar benefit. However, many groups felt the need to partner with a SAH as a CG in order to be able to issue tax receipts to their donors. Some groups did all of their fundraising internally, while others opened it up to the wider community and organized fundraising events. Each sponsor interviewed expressed that raising money had been the easiest part of the entire sponsorship experience as they found that people were incredibly generous and willing to support the resettlement of unknown and unnamed strangers to their cities and communities. However, the requirement for tax receipts is illustrative of the imposition of conditionality to the welcome and support of others. Yet, beyond financial support, unconditional support 'without any benefit to themselves' was offered by a great deal of sponsors (Interview with Adnan, 4th July 2017). Conditions were also imposed through the process of selecting and naming refugees for resettlement. While there was a prominent initiative in Toronto focusing on matching named refugees (typically referred by family in Canada) with potential sponsorship groups, some sponsors felt that more attention should be given to 'the huddled masses' rather than those who might be better off by virtue of their family connections (Interview with Rebekah, 18th July 2017). Each sponsorship group, depending on the nature of sponsorship, was able to make decisions about who they were able and willing to sponsor to a certain extent. Groups of Five were sent a list by Citizenship and Immigration Canada of potential families and individuals eligible for sponsorship and were able to choose based on the characteristics the group had decided upon. Rebekah outlined the decision-making process in her G5; 'We felt we could manage a family with a maximum of three kids and ultimately we decided that if it was going to be three kids, at least some of them should be younger. You know we were thinking about what we could really cope with in a reasonable way' (Interview with Rebekah, 18th July 2017). Other groups who operated as CGs through a SAH were able to request a particular size of family but the remainder of the matching process was left to the SAH. The imperative for unconditionality and the desire to extend hospitality

was met with the equal imperative for naming and identifying in order to make hospitality effective. However, the process of identification had the potential to impose exclusionary and harmful conditions, such as proving worth and vulnerability.

4.2 Spaces of Hospitality

4.2.1 Engagement and Connection

The space of private sponsorship exists as an embodied, grounded, and lived place that disrupts the binaries of local and global (Massey, 2004). Sponsorship provides space for connection and engagement between sponsors and newcomers but also with the wider community and nation. It also provides a space where Canadian residents and citizens can engage on a deeper and more personal level with the lives of people around the world. One sponsor referred to the process of extending engagement beyond the sponsorship group as the 'ripple effect' (Interview with Theresa 7th July 2017). The spaces of engagement were lived at the dining room table, the ice rink, the cottages in northern Ontario, ski chalets, and in the homes of sponsors and newcomers alike. When the family that Skylar sponsored arrived in Toronto, they lived in her basement apartment for several weeks before they were able to find an apartment of their own. On the family's first night in Toronto, Skylar and her husband made them a meal and showed them around their new home. As she said goodnight, she handed them a set of keys and offered them the possibility of locking the basement apartment off from the rest of the house. 'He looked at the key and he handed it back to me. […] He had no English to say, why would I want to lock the door. This is your home, right?' (Interview with Skylar, 28th June 2017). The moment between Skylar and the newcomer reveals the way that hospitality involves negotiations around sovereignty over a space. In order to extend hospitality, the host must have mastery over their own home (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000). Yet, hospitality can unsettle this control and provide openings towards a relationship where the guest becomes host and the host becomes guest (Dikeç, 2002). The process of undoing and reworking control within hospitality is further illustrated by the way Skylar spoke about sharing meals with the newcomer family. On one of the first mornings Skylar hosted a big 'Canadian' breakfast for the newcomers and the rest of the sponsorship group. Several days later the family invited her and her parents, who were visiting from the US, down to the basement for a traditional Syrian breakfast. 'We just shared an amazingly healthy beautiful meal, laughing, speaking no language in common and we shared a meal […] They felt a

connection that my family was important and they wanted to share, to feed us' (Interview with Skylar, 28th June 2017). Over the course of their shared meals, Skylar and the newcomer family took on different roles in relation to each other in a process of engagement and negotiation that has continued throughout the period of sponsorship.

Engagement can happen beyond the day-to-day encounters between sponsor and newcomer. Some of the sponsors expressed that they felt more tuned in to what was happening in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, depending on the journey of the sponsored newcomers, and of the experiences of other newcomers in Canada because of the personal connections they had made (Interview with Stephen 6th July 2017; Interview with Theresa 7th July 2017). Tuning in, paying attention, and engaging was demonstrated by other members of the communities in Toronto. In every single interview, sponsors spoke about the way that the act of sponsoring had or was continuing to impact the level of engagement of those around them. It was about the conversations with grandsons, neighbours, colleagues, and friends. It was about the willingness on the part of communities and other families to donate time, money, clothing, and furniture. Engagement also extended to people still in the Middle East. Several sponsorship groups faced the possibility of embarking on another year of sponsorship with members of the newcomers' families. Some felt that they didn't have the resources or capacity to sponsor again while others jumped on board to do the whole process all over. Theresa and her group chose to sponsor the newcomer husband's brother, which involved a lengthy application to refer him as a named refugee and a great deal of further fundraising. During the application process, she began to envision ways to begin the process of sponsoring before they arrived by starting a relationship with the family, finding a buddy for each of the children, organizing Skype calls, and helping them learn English from within a refugee camp in Jordan. However, while she and several other members of the group were prepared to begin the process of welcome from abroad, they soon realized the harm that could cause if the family's application was denied by the government. Hospitality in private sponsorship operates on multiple scales, including the individual sponsors and the Canadian government. When it can be extended by one, there is the threat of exclusion by the other.

Engagement and connection appeared to involve an element of transformation on the part of the sponsors, newcomers, and members of the general community. However, as the research focused on the experience of sponsors, their perceptions of their own transformations will be analysed here. There was a sense of mutual benefit in sponsorship articulated by sponsors as providing cross-cultural experiences and intellectual stimulation, deepening existing and new relationships, increasing a sense of community, and creating a better

understanding of the world. Theresa and her group, in their evaluation for their SAH, expressed that they felt the experience 'had made [them] better people and better Canadians' (Interview with Theresa, 7th July 2017). Sponsorship included a process of self-reflection on one's own preconceptions of the world. It also provided a space to reflect and talk about the journeys that sponsors and their families had made to Canada. Theresa felt that there was potential for private sponsorship to continue in Canada and work in other contexts if 'people approach it with a willingness to learn and be transformed themselves […] and be okay with uncertainty' (7th July 2017). Sponsorship provided the potential to open up spaces of hospitality where sponsors and newcomers could take on the role of guest and host, undergo transformation and engage with each and the wider communities on a deep and meaningful level. However, the process of engagement didn't always lead to positive transformation or meaningful connection. Nearly every sponsor interviewed pointed to moments, interactions and conversations of contestation, discomfort, and anger.

4.2.2 Negotiation and Contestation

Negotiation and contestation could provide spaces where hospitality was extended and transformation was possible. However, there were often instances where the conditions of hospitality imposed by sponsors and newcomers could lead to discomfort, anger, and resentment. Beyond the logistical hurdles of finding accommodation in Toronto, learning English, and managing health and dental issues, each sponsor spoke of challenging moments in their relationships with the newcomers and within the group. Many of the challenges centered around differing ideas about major life decisions, such as finding jobs, learning English, receiving social assistance, finding an apartment and behaving in line with 'Canadian values'. From speaking with sponsors and settlement agencies, there was a clear consensus on the part of Canadians that newcomers should prioritize learning English above all else. However, English classes could often be a point of contention in the relationship between newcomers and sponsors as each person had a different idea of what that might look like and how important it really was. Speaking with Haiping, a relative newcomer herself, she expressed the view that although the parents were attending English classes from 9am to 2pm every day, she, 'thought that they need[ed] to work harder' and continue practising English in the afternoon or get a part-time job (Interview with Haiping, 21st July 2017). Other sponsors felt that they had encountered the 'normal problems' when the husband of their newcomer family didn't want to learn English and instead began looking for a job (Interview with Stephen 6th

July 2017). In the context of this research each moment of contestation and disagreement can only be explored from the perspective of sponsors. However, one sponsor mentioned that in a conversation with the husband of the newcomer family several months after their arrival, he articulated that he felt enormous pressure in the first month to get everything done as quickly as possible in the fear that the sponsorship group wouldn't be there for him in the long run. 'His anxiety to do everything right away and fast was connected to the feeling that these people probably aren't going to stick around' (Interview with Theresa, 7th July 2017). Ontario Works, the social assistance scheme available to all residents in financial need, including newcomers after their initial year of sponsorship, appeared to be the most heated and contentious debate. Some newcomers were adamant that they would be entirely independent by the end of the sponsorship period, despite urgings from sponsors that it was a way for them to continue to learn English or return to education in order to get a job. Other sponsors felt that receiving social assistance was reprehensible and should be avoided at all costs. In the case of one sponsorship group, one of the sponsors left the group and cut off contact with the sponsorship group and newcomers, as she said she disagreed with the group's encouragement of going on social assistance after sponsorship had ended. However, while this particular group member was not interviewed, two sponsors from her group felt that the real reason for leaving the group was a personal conflict with another group member (Interview with Rebekah, 18th July 2017; Interview with Haiping, 21st July 2017). Despite his experience of sponsorship formally beginning a mere two weeks earlier, Bennett expressed concern about the prospect of the newcomer husband receiving social assistance once the year had ended. The newcomers had a cousin who had arrived relatively recently in London who was not working and Bennett worried that 'he would teach him to con the system' (Interview on 11th July 2017).

Negotiations around how Canadian values should be expressed and interpreted tended to center around the role of women within the newcomer family. According to their sponsors, one newcomer couple was extremely close and virtually inseparable. They rarely went anywhere without each other and the husband almost always spoke on behalf of his wife, which Haiping felt was 'incongruous with Canadian values' as women should be independent (Interview on 21st July 2017). Other sponsors felt that apparent adherence to Canadian values, including gender equality, would be of benefit to newcomer families and allow them to integrate more successfully in their new country (Interview with Skylar, 28th June 2017). Debates about housing, furniture, donations and accepting assistance could become incredibly tense when sponsors and newcomers disagreed. One newcomer family refused to accept donated furniture items, much to the dismay of their sponsorship group. The same newcomers

were extremely selective about the apartment they wanted to live in, which caused frustration among the sponsors over the amount of time and effort they were required to put in to find them a suitable place to live. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the newcomer family was living in a house normally occupied by two of the sponsors. While they were travelling for the majority of the time the newcomers lived there, they had to stay with various friends until the newcomer family found an apartment of their own. These points of contestation were imbued with issues of sovereignty over space and the ability to make choices for oneself. While negotiation and contestation could extend the space of hospitality as compromises were found and the engagement between newcomers and sponsors continued, the expectation of gratitude had the potential to close the door to hospitality.

4.2.3 Power and Gratitude

The individual experiences of sponsorship from the perspective of sponsors allude to a process that can be engaging, enriching, meaningful, and transformative while simultaneously difficult, frustrating, and uncomfortable. Each sponsorship group negotiated these moments in different ways but there were also times when sponsorship and the space of hospitality were closed entirely. Marcie's experience of sponsorship was particularly illustrative of the ways that sponsorship can become harmful and uncomfortable for both sponsors and newcomers (Interview 6th July 2017). The sponsorship group was formed in a community close to the downtown of Toronto with the majority of sponsors joining as a result of a connection to the local school. Local enthusiasm and a surplus of donations meant that the group was able to split into two sponsorships and facilitate the resettlement of two families to the area. As a member of the initial group, Marcie helped sponsor the family that was supposed to arrive first but when the second group came much quicker, she helped set up their apartment and assisted them in a number of different ways. When the first group finally arrived months later, the majority of sponsors were on summer holidays so the initial work of resettlement fell to Marcie and a few others who were still in Toronto. The composition of the family was unusual as they were all adult children, one with a spouse, and their mother. Unbeknownst to the sponsors, the daughter-in-law was pregnant and had family that was already settled in northern Toronto near the church that they belonged to. The newcomers arrived with a number of expectations about the welcome that would be extended to them, including the understanding that they would be provided with a credit card for them to buy a car, formal attire for an upcoming family occasion, and a drive every weekend to their family up north. They also insisted on finding

accommodation near to their family and the local religious community, despite the sponsors' concerns about the safety of the area. It quickly became clear that despite demands on the sponsors time and resources, the newcomers wanted very little to do with them and preferred to begin their lives in Toronto with their extended family's guidance. Marcie expressed that she felt it was unlikely that she would ever see the family again but also felt that this could be a natural consequence of sponsorship. 'It may or may not be an exchange. It may be that those families want to move on and they've got their own group that they've established and it may not be the thank you letter coming in the mail' (Interview on 6th July 2017). In her opinion, the breakdown in sponsorship was caused by feelings on the part of her fellow sponsors that the newcomers should have been grateful for all they had done for the family. 'It's just so devastating because thinking of what they gave up to come here […] It wouldn't have been their choice, you know, it was either that or they die. So, I'm thinking grateful? You need to be grateful for what you have and do everything possible you can to understand what it's like for them' (Interview with Marcie, 6th July 2017). Along with Marcie, other sponsors expressed concerns over the devastation and harm that expectations of gratitude could led to. While the actions of sponsors often stemmed from 'good intentions,' a term used with derision and caution in several interviews, many sponsors acknowledged that feelings or expectations of gratitude could lead newcomers to agree to things they didn't necessarily want or feel comfortable with (Interview with Marcie, 6th July 2017; Interview with Theresa, 7th July 2017; Interview with Rebekah 18th July 2017). In order to allow for a process of engagement and connection between sponsors and newcomers, Theresa recommended that sponsors 'remember whose needs are being met here' and think critically about their own position in creating a space of welcome and hospitality without being too overbearing or demanding (Interview on 7th July 2017). All too easily, the expectation of gratitude can serve as an expression of power and domination that could stifle the conditions necessary for creating a space of hospitality. Each sponsorship group negotiated these dynamics in various ways. Some sponsors were highly aware of how gratitude had the potential for harm and discomfort, while others did not acknowledge it as an aspect of the relationship in any way.

Feelings and expectations of gratitude had significant implications on the way research for this dissertation was conducted. The original intention was to interview both sponsors and newcomers to explore the process of engagement between individuals. However, as the research progressed it became clear that the process of finding newcomer participants and interviewing them was fraught with ethical concerns. Many sponsors felt that being interviewed, particularly within the year of sponsorship, would have put newcomers in a

difficult position. As Theresa said, 'how free can people really feel at this early stage to be critical when they're supposed to be grateful. That whole dynamic around being grateful is so nauseating but it's real' (Interview on 7th July 2017).

Conclusion

Private refugee sponsorship can open up thresholds and spaces of hospitality between newcomers and sponsors in Canada. While hospitality cannot be fixed as a singular experience or relationship, sponsorship provided flashes and moments of hospitality where the double imperative of unconditionality and naming could exist simultaneously. Through federal immigration policies, government initiatives, and national discourse, the Canadian nation state excluded the very possibilities for hospitality it claimed to open up. As the research has shown, experiences of private sponsorship involved processes of engagement, connection, mutual respect and reciprocal hospitality. However, sovereignty and the imbalance of power relations posed a constant threat to the promise of hospitality. Private sponsorship provides an opportunity for individual Canadians to engage with others, rework the meaning of what it means to be Canadian, and extend welcome. However, the possibilities for harm within the space of hospitality demand further attention to regulating, mitigating and controlling the power imbalances within individual relationships. The hospitality of private sponsorship has enormous potential to continue, both within Canada and on a global-scale, yet there must be room for the kind of contestation and negotiation that leads to engagement, rather than closure.

This dissertation provides an opening towards further work on hospitality, Canadian national identity, and the private refugee sponsorship program in Canada. Research could be expanded in a number of different ways to include more rigorous historical analysis of the evolution of PSR and the program's changing relationship with Canadian national identity. Private sponsorship operates on a number of different scales. While this research focused on the individual and the national, further work could explore the roles that settlement agencies, communities, translators, and cultural and faith groups play in extending and limiting hospitality towards newcomers. Hospitality provides a valuable conceptual tool for analyzing national attitudes and actions towards the other, particularly in terms of immigration policies. Building on the framework of this research could enable further work on hospitality in Canadian immigration by comparing Canadian resettlement, including PSR, to the way refugees are treated when they apply for asylum within Canada. This research would be

particularly relevant given the convergence of Syrian resettlement with the recent influx of refugees entering from the United States (*The Guardian,* 25th August 2017). As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, the potential to expand the program of private refugee sponsorship to other countries around the globe demands further interrogation of the individual relationship between sponsors and newcomers. While this dissertation has provided a small window into these relationships, it is necessary to examine them across a wider scale and from the perspective of the newcomers.

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Appendix 1: Interview Schedule for Sponsors

1. Why don't you begin by telling me how you got involved in the private sponsorship program?

2. What have been some of the highlights of your experience?

3. What have been some of the challenges of your experience?

4. What does it mean to you to welcome someone to Canada? What does that look like?

5. Do you think this program could work in other countries?

6. What does hospitality mean to you?

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule for Key Informants

1. Why don't you begin by telling me about your involvement in the private sponsorship program?

2. What do you think has worked well about the program?

3. What do you see are some of the challenges of the program?

4. What does it look like to welcome someone to Canada? What does that mean for you?

5. Do you think this program could work in other countries?

6. Where do you see the program going forward in the future?

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form

UCL DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
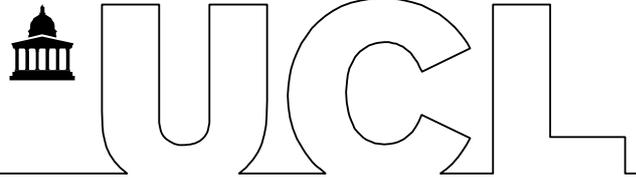
I, _____, give my consent for Anna Hutchinson to use any material I have provided in this interview for a dissertation in partial fulfillment of an MSc in Global Migration at the University College London. All information provided will remain anonymous. I understand that I may revoke my consent and cease participation at any time.

☐ This consent form has been explained to me in a language I understand.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____