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## Facing the Mass Exodus: Reconsidering the Moral Responsibilities for and Obligations Toward Large Numbers of Refugees in an Age of Global Crises

Muhammet Ali Asil

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

FACING THE MASS EXODUS: RECONSIDERING THE MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES  
FOR AND OBLIGATIONS TOWARD LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES IN AN AGE OF  
GLOBAL CRISES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

MUHAMMET ALI ASIL

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2022

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When it took eight years to complete my doctoral education, I realized that I have collected many memories and made many friends along the way, without whose help I could not have succeeded. Not long ago, I used to think that this section of a dissertation was just a formality – solely a show of respect to those who contributed to your work in different ways. Nowadays, however, I believe that writing this part is necessary: human nature seems to push for expressing one’s gratitude when they deeply feel it. Therefore, I will follow suit.

Where shall I begin? The best start would be by revealing that I feel deeply grateful to my Lord, God Almighty, my Sustainer, my Cherisher, who has been creating me for the last thirty-five years. I am thankful to Him for providing me with all kinds of qualities I needed to become what I am today: my existence, the secrets that make me a human being, my emotions, my determination, my patience, my tranquility, and my reading, writing, thinking, and reasoning abilities, to mention a few. Indeed, I cannot make an exhaustive list of these properties here. I also thank Him for bringing me into an environment like Loyola and making my way to cross those of my beloved professors and friends I made here.

Returning to the world of humans: I do not know how to thank my dissertation advisor, Professor Robert Mayer, properly. During my first year at Loyola, I met him in a Political Theory course he taught on international justice. Most probably, he does not know that he was the person who made me love Political Theory. This is what a good professor can do to you: he made me realize that I was hiding a passion inside me toward political philosophy. I was

impressed by his teaching methods, deciphering approaches to complex issues, and constructive commenting style on my written assignments, so I decided to work with him throughout my doctoral studies. He kindly accepted me as a student, and I did not regret my decision for even one second. I hope he feels the same way about me. He guided my dissertation from the start to the end in an excellent manner, by discussing my arguments with me in hours-long sessions, always making himself available whenever I needed (even during holidays), carefully reading what I put on paper within a short period of time, and providing excellent feedback on my work that always carried my research one step forward. Thank you, Professor Mayer. I learned so much from you, and I am deeply indebted to you for your guidance. I am so glad to have met you and had you as my supervisor. These lines will not do justice to my feelings, but I need to stop somewhere.

I want to extend my gratitude to Professor Claudio Katz, another person from whom I learned a lot during my doctoral education. I extensively benefited from the comments he made on my early chapter drafts and, later, my dissertation manuscript as a whole. I learned from Professor Katz that there is always a better, clearer, and more concise way of saying what you have just said. His remarks pushed me toward clarifying my thoughts and making them more understandable for a distant reader. I feel grateful to Professor Katz for all his contributions to my dissertation. I also thank Professor Peter Schraeder for kindly serving in my dissertation committee, Professor Alex Grigorescu for supporting me in many different ways, and our former and current graduate program coordinators, Professors Peter Sanchez and Molly Melin, for taking care of their students personally – so that we could safely reach the finish line.

A couple of close friends are in order. My deepest love and gratitude should extend to the Orhan family. Yunus Emre and Busra are my friends, but this word does not do justice to what

they mean to me. They have been closer to me than a genuine brother and sister. I do not know how much time I spent at their home during the last six years. Busra and Yunus have always been welcoming and hospitable, making their home a comfort zone for me whenever I needed it. They shared my stress, pain, sadness, and happiness. They were always there for me. My relationship with Yunus, which dates back to 2008 (a story that he likes bringing up occasionally), took a new turn when our fates brought us together again in the United States – as colleagues this time. My brother, your genuine friendship is one of the most precious gifts I have, for which I am most thankful to God. I hope we enjoy our sincere brotherhood in eternity.

A special space is reserved for the city of Oxford, Ohio, and for the two lovely families that I hold dear to my heart. I wrote more than half of my dissertation in this small Midwest city. My dear brother and friend Mehmet Emin and his beloved wife Seyma turned their home into a small haven for me. The types of assistance one can receive from Emin are almost countless, which is a gift I believe I utilized extensively. And, who could make a better *simit* than Seyma in the whole Midwest? I thank you both so much for everything. Their little Erva became the niece I never had. The hours I spent playing with her have a special place in my memory. Similarly, dearest Zafer Abi, Emel Abla, Yusuf, and Meryem gave me the warmth of a home that I kept longing for throughout all these years. I lost track of time with these two beautiful families – especially after the pandemic broke out. With all the unforgettable memories I have collected in Oxford, no words of gratitude can express my deepest and warmest feelings toward the lovely members of the Inan and Ozdemir families.

If I have not lost my mind during the solitary years of my doctoral education, that is partly thanks to the companionship and hospitality of Huseyin Abi and Huriye Abla. They hosted me many times. How can I forget Huriye Abla's soup she cooked for me when I was sick and

Huseyin Abi's bringing that soup to me? How can I forget Huseyin Abi's coming to my apartment and driving me to the ER to relieve me from the pain of a kidney stone on the move? How can I forget the lovely chats and discussions we had at your place? How can I forget the time I spent with the kids, Ali and Enes, who grew up in front of my eyes? How can I forget the sacrifices you made for me in the last couple of years of my doctoral education? I honestly do not know how I can thank you enough.

Let me also salute Wolcott Avenue and Warren Park. Every tree and every squirrel there knows who I am. This western part of Rogers Park was particularly memorable because it hosted many beautiful moments I had with the Nisanci family. Although they left me a little earlier than I anticipated, the strong relationship I established with Zubeyir Abi, Neslihan Abla, Rukiye Teyze, Mediha, and Ibrahim at the apartment complex on Wolcott Avenue has continued until today. I know you tried to help me in different ways – so do not feel sorry for me if I could not effectively utilize some of your assistance. That should be my fault. Thank you for everything.

In the summer of 2019, when I was in Turkey to carry out my field research, Sener Boztas helped me a lot by introducing me to the director of the Turkish immigration office in Istanbul, Gokce Ok. He and his assistant Ceren Hanim provided invaluable support in reaching out to Syrian refugees for my interviews. Especially one Syrian refugee I befriended (whose name I cannot mention here because he was one of the participants in my research) spent hours with me and connected me with numerous Syrian refugees in Turkey. Thank you all for your support and assistance.

One last group of friends deserves to be mentioned here, a group that has been meeting every week for years, if virtually, to talk, chat, discuss, and cheer up – a group whose members are spread all over the world: Milwaukee, Chicago, Erie, Baltimore, Charlottesville, Sydney,

London, and Istanbul. Abdurresid Abi, Ismail, Yakup, Ceylan, Yavuz, and Osman: I am always thankful to Lord for making our ways to cross. Every moment we spend together is priceless. I pray for all of us and wish the best to all of you throughout your lives.

Finally, to my family: I think one word would beautifully summarize what we have had between us: longing. These lines in English will not make sense to my parents, so I will thank them here in my native language: *Sevgili annecigim ve babacigim, hakkinizin odenmesi hangi alemde ne kadar mumkun ki? Bana verdiginiz butun emekler ve yaptiginiz fedakarliklar icin cok tesekkur eder, hurmetle ellerinizden operim. Bu doktor unvani benim oldugu kadar sizindir de. Gurbet yazimiz olsa da, sevgimiz bakidir.* Ercument Abi and Neslihan Yenge hosted me many times during my visits to Turkey. They shared my happy and sad times. We had a great time together when they came and stayed with me in Chicago for a couple of months. I know that my brother was a little bit stressed, but things nevertheless turned out to be okay, did they not? Ali Said, with his sole existence, cheered me up. I cannot forget how his brother, my other nephew, Muhammed Yahya, was born the night before my oral proficiency examination. Thank you all for bringing joy to my life. Cahit Abi and my sweet twin brothers Talha and Ubeyd – I love you all. I am grateful to have you as my family. I know that we could not spend much time together, but such is our life. Even though we could not have the chance to share much, I also want to say welcome to the newest member of our family, Fatmanur. I wish you and Talha a long, healthy, faithful, and happy life together. May the Lord embellish your and our paths with all the beauties and gifts.

I want to conclude this section by thanking my desk, armchair, MacBook Air, and coffee machine for not leaving me alone during this challenging journey. Sometimes I wonder about the real author of this dissertation. Was it you or me? Please do not answer.



To loneliness

One grows out of pity when it is useless.

Albert Camus, "The Plague"

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## ABSTRACT

The global refugee crisis has revealed an essential moral question regarding helping the forcibly displaced persons in protracted refugee crises: how do we determine if our community has done “enough” for a particular refugee group? Different answers have been provided to this question. This dissertation takes up this question from a normative standpoint. It develops an ethics-based burden-sharing model, that is, a “meaning-based model,” as a method to determine our political communities’ moral duties toward different refugee groups in various refugee crises. The model challenges the conventional wisdom by claiming that not every community has the same moral obligations toward every refugee group in every refugee case – some communities must do more than others in some cases. By examining communities’ levels of involvement in a given case (i.e., Outcome Responsibility) and their social connections with particular refugee groups, it is plausible to create a formula that distributes ethical duties toward a refugee group among various communities. Without employing such models, we cannot correctly judge the limits of our moral responsibilities toward refugees, and our complaints about being overburdened would lack an ethical basis. The Bosnian, Palestinian, and Syrian cases are examined to demonstrate how the meaning-based model might work in real life. When applied to these cases, the meaning-based model shows which political communities must morally do more for each refugee group and sketches their limits of help in each case.

## INTRODUCTION

In 2012, I was preparing to complete my Masters' thesis on the Kurdish question's impact on Turkey's foreign affairs, which contained an examination of Turkey-Syria relations. Until that point, I had argued in my thesis how the relationship between these two countries had been steadily improving during the past decade. Suddenly, however, things took a dramatic turn. Before I could submit my thesis, the unrest in Syria escalated to a bloody civil war, and Turkey cut all its relations with Syria, turning into Assad's number one opponent. Before submission, I had to add a section to my chapter on Syria, addressing the recent developments between these two countries and suspecting that the following years might completely reverse all the hard-gained improvements. Unfortunately, this forecast turned out to be true.

When I left my country for my doctoral education in the United States in 2014, the Syrian refugees had been pouring into Turkey for the last two years – thousands of them reached our borders every day. When I returned to Turkey to conduct my field study in 2019, their number was over 3.5 million. In such a short period, Turkey had become the country that hosted the largest number of refugees globally. Syrians had spread all around the country, looking for food, shelter, and work – carrying their humanitarian crisis into the everyday lives of Turkish society. However, there was a stark difference between the community I left in 2014 and the one I returned to in 2019. When I was still residing in Turkey, the political discourse and public view on the Syrian refugees were quite positive: they were perceived as guests, emphasizing Turkish hospitality toward their brethren. When I conducted my interviews in 2019, this picture had long

been turned on its head: Syrians were like invaders who had no intention of leaving. Turkey's recently increased political tensions and economic downturn were assessed as a direct outcome of accommodating so many refugees. The Turkish community felt it had done more than they should have, and its burdens in this case had become unacceptable.

Were they right? As a Turkish citizen, this observation led me to question my community's criteria for concluding that they have done more than enough for refugees. What would be a fair share in a crisis like this? Their accusations against Syrians were well-known to migration scholars: changing the demography, harming the economy, putting a higher demand on the already scarce public goods and services, etc. What struck me, however, was a component that such arguments lacked: neither the politicians nor the public considered their country's active involvement in Syria, which has been effectively changing the civil war's course from early on, as a reason for placing extra ethical responsibilities on Turkey's shoulders for taking care of the Syrian refugees. Among the causes of public resentment against refugees, the lack of such discussions within a community on its particular ethical duties toward a given refugee group seems to play a pivotal role. As communities, we do not bother to decide on our specific moral positioning vis-à-vis various refugee groups. In other words, we do not know what they should "mean" to us. We accept that universal humanitarian values should assign the members of the international community a moral duty to help refugees and share the burden in doing so; however, when their numbers keep increasing, this feeling of responsibility seems to disappear rather quickly. We do not think that, in some cases, our community might have an obligation to do more for the refugees compared to other communities and other cases. We have a shortage of models to help us work on making such ethical calculations.



This dissertation aims to build an ethics-based burden-sharing model that attempts to create such a formula – one that could help specific communities identify the extent of their moral duties toward a refugee group in a given case. The founding premise of this model is that the strength of our “feeling of responsibility to help a needy individual” changes according to what we make of that person (and her situation). In other words, we feel more responsible for that individual if she means more to us – or vice versa. For instance, compared to a stranger with whose misery we have no involvement, our feeling of duty to help a friend or relative in whose suffering we have a share would be much more substantial. The reason is that the latter means more to us than the former. In this respect, this dissertation has dubbed this ethics-based burden-sharing model the “meaning-based model” (MBM).

Why conduct such a study? The answer is revealed in the first chapter by an investigation of the literature on refugees. The chapter categorizes the scholarship in this field into two major groups, namely, “grand theories” and “burden-sharing models.” A detailed examination shows that each group focuses solely on one aspect of this issue. Grand theories investigate and establish the moral bases on which societies could legitimately include or exclude refugees. The extent of inclusion or exclusion allowed by the approach varies according to where it stands on the statist-cosmopolitan spectrum. In this respect, this type of scholarship provides valuable insight into the world of ethics. Still, these theories fail to develop solution models that could guide communities to understand their particular shares of duties in a given case. On the other hand, the burden-sharing models explicitly focus on creating practical solutions for how different countries must share the burden of helping refugees. They assume that burden-sharing is a collective-action problem, and if they could build a distribution model that is “fair” for everyone, states would automatically adopt it. In doing so, however, they reduce the problem to the

inefficiency of our current calculations. They miss the point that their distribution proposals have no ethical base at all – a base to convince communities, not states. Even if the calculation is fair, why would communities accept these extra burdens in the first place? By addressing these problems in the literature, the first chapter concludes by emphasizing the need for a distribution model that bases itself on a particular ethical understanding.

The second chapter undertakes the task of constructing this ethics-based burden-sharing model, i.e., the MBM. The model primarily focuses on what is known as the protracted refugee situations, where the internationally displaced persons have no chance of returning to their country in the foreseeable future. This problem results from our non-ideal world conditions, where the causal agent producing the refugees cannot be stopped or punished. In such cases, the responsibility to shelter refugees falls on the international community's shoulders. Since the crisis is prolonged, what these refugees need is long-term accommodation. However, with such immense numbers of displaced people and the lack of an ethical model to identify communities' specific duties, the international community fails to honor its responsibility for refugees. The MBM steps in here to claim that, in such protracted crises, not every community has the same duties toward refugees. Some must assume more burdens. To identify which communities these are and what their duties should be in a given crisis, the MBM operates with three ethical principles:

- (i) communities that are in any way involved in a particular refugee group's misery, regardless of their intentions, should always assume more duties toward them compared to other communities;
- (ii) these communities should assume even more duties if their intention is less than good (interest- or benefit-oriented), even if not bad, and if their involvement in the given crisis has deteriorated the situation (i.e., contributed to the increase in the number of refugees),

(iii) the type (or substance) of these duties should be determined according to their social connections with the particular refugees produced by this crisis.

The outcome is not a mathematical calculation model. The MBM is a model that shows which communities have the moral obligation to do more than other communities for the displaced persons in a given protracted refugee situation. It is also a model that sketches the limits of these duties. By these means, it aims to offer communities a way to understand whether they are, from a normative standpoint, over-burdened or under-burdened in a given case, i.e., whether they morally have the right to complain about their share of burden or should acknowledge that they have done less than they should have. Without doing this ethical assessment, dealing with the problem of public resentment against refugees will always be missing a crucial moral component.

One shortcoming in refugee studies is that the scholars who focus on the moral side of the issue do not go beyond providing principles. In other words, they do not apply their theoretical conclusions to actual cases and discuss what their arguments would demand from specific communities in a given crisis. In an attempt to redress this gap in the literature, this dissertation applies its theoretical conclusions to real-life refugee cases to illustrate how we should reason about international burden-sharing. After the second chapter builds the model, the following three chapters apply it to the Bosnian, Palestinian, and Syrian refugee cases. Each case study answers four essential questions. Which communities should do more than others in this case? Why? What should be the limits of their obligations for that particular refugee group? And where do they stand regarding their ethical duties, that is, have they done enough, are they overburdened, or should they do more? In each case, these same questions produce different answers. This fact underlines the significance of acknowledging the distinctiveness of each

refugee case, which should require their separate examination to identify and distribute responsibilities and obligations among different communities.

This dissertation claims that protracted refugee crises require special care because they create most of the current global refugee population. According to the UNHCR, there are 48 million internationally displaced people today. They have been displaced mainly by conflicts exacerbated (or even deadlocked) by various international actors' inadequate or inefficient intervention in civil conflicts. Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan, which have produced around 20 million refugees alone, are the best-known examples. The conventional wisdom that views such refugees as the responsibility of the international community as a whole has not taken us very far in helping them. This dissertation's main contribution to the existing scholarship on the ethics of forced displacement is the development of a moral formula that shows:

- (i) why some communities must morally accept more burdens than other members of the international community in various protracted refugee situations and how these communities could be identified;
- (ii) why and how it could be plausible to rank these communities' responsibilities for specific cases;
- (iii) how different types of help could be assigned to different actors according to their levels of responsibility and social connections to particular refugees;
- (iv) how this model could be applied to real-life cases.

In this respect, this dissertation calls for irreversibly connecting foreign involvement in a crisis to assuming more responsibility for the refugees regardless of the actor's intentions, that is, *even if* the intent behind the intervention is purely good. The "absolute deprivation" argument in the

second chapter is dedicated to justifying this standpoint. However, we should not leave it there. States do not intervene in such crises with pure ethical concerns or because they had no other choice; therefore, their communities should accept even more responsibility if their involvements worsen the situation for refugees (which has been the trend so far). And their specific social connections to those displaced people should determine the type of help they must offer.

Finally, the reader should note that this dissertation aims to address political communities rather than states. It seeks to ignite public discussions in each community regarding their particular responsibilities toward specific refugee groups. It is the communities' perceptions and experiences that make life easier or harder for refugees. One outcome of the case studies is that most countries that suffer from refugee influxes must, from a normative standpoint, actually assume more duties in those cases. In the long term, ethical discussions around why such extra burdens might be fair could change public perceptions and even force governments to be more careful in intervening in such crises for the sake of regional or global interests – or assume greater responsibility for the outcomes their involvements produce. The prospects of reaching that goal might look dim right now. Still, the increase in global refugee numbers and the prolongation of their situations call for alternative thinking in theory and practice. This study aims to serve this purpose.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE REFUGEE QUESTION IN THE LITERATURE**

Refugees have been one of the biggest issues in the last century. Global state practices, dictators, natural disasters, civil conflicts, and regional wars have taken the production of refugees to unprecedented levels in our age. Consequently, “What do we owe to refugees?” and “How can we help them?” have become urgent moral and practical questions. This chapter looks at the answers to these questions and outlines the central debates in the literature on refugees. The first section starts with different definitions of “refugee” and specifies the focus group of this study. The second and third sections present the literature under two categories, namely, grand migration theories and burden-sharing models, respectively. In the final analysis, this chapter contends that grand migration theories are useful in providing general moral principles on how we should treat refugees but fail in offering practical solution models to identify and distribute communities’ specific obligations toward different refugee groups. In contrast, burden-sharing models provide such solution methods but lack moral foundations that speak to the question of why communities should agree to accept the burdens assigned to them by these models in the first place. The conclusion summarizes the discussion and points to the need for an ethics-based burden-sharing model.

#### **Definitions: Who Are Refugees?**

According to the latest UN statistics, there are more than 80 million forcibly displaced people in the world today. These people are grouped in two categories. One is the internally

displaced people, or IDPs, who are forced to leave their homes but remain within the borders of their state. The other group is called “refugees,” the people who flee their homes by crossing an international border. It is estimated that refugees constitute more than half of the displaced persons. Scholars identify five main reasons for such flights: persecution, war, violence, economic problems, and natural calamities. Among all the displaced, who should be recognized as refugees is a highly debated question in moral political philosophy.

For practical reasons, the UN’s definition of “refugee” is widely used in the international arena. According to the 1951 Geneva Convention, which was updated by the 1967 Protocol to include non-European deserters, a refugee is a 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. (UNHCR, Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, p. 14)

However, it is not possible to talk about a consensus in academia regarding the moral foundations of refugee status. In this respect, there are as many definitions as authors. The only point on which all theorists agree is that refugees deserve a special place in any kind of political theory that focuses on the issue of migration. Refugees owe this special status to one characteristic: escaping *from their states* for their lives. In a global system of states, such a flight means leaving oneself to the mercy of other communities. Refugees are people who need social and political membership. As Walzer straightforwardly puts it, refugees are “one group of needy outsiders whose claims cannot be met by yielding territory or exporting wealth; they can be met only by taking people in” (1983, p. 49).

Walzer's definition presupposes that societies create their own social goods, and the community itself is such a good. One cannot export community, so the only way to distribute this good is by allowing others to participate in it. Refugees' need for membership in a community is what makes their situation unique among those of other needy people. Miller shares Walzer's view in this sense by looking at the refugee issue from a human rights perspective. According to his definition, refugees are those "whose human rights cannot be protected except by moving across a border whether the reason is state persecution, state incapacity, or prolonged natural disasters" (2016, p. 83). The emphasis here is again on the fact that refugees need to switch countries to remain alive.

Crossing international borders is one criterion in deciding who should be called a refugee; however, it does not help much in identifying which reasons behind this departure should qualify someone as a refugee. Migration theorists have spent a great deal of effort on this question. "A well-founded fear of persecution" cannot be measured objectively, which in turn invites human judgment into the subject of deciding what persecution is and who legitimately has such a fear or not. In this respect, scholars disagree about the inclusiveness of the UN's definition of "refugee." Some contend that it has an exclusionary structure and call for an expansive reading of the Convention (Carens 2015). One argument in this vein claims that along with persecution based on race, ethnicity, religion, and political preference, social contexts that deprive people of constructing a meaningful personal identity should also be included in the list of what turns a person into a refugee (Gibney 2015).

The question of whether persecution should be the main criterion in a refugee definition is a significant point of disagreement. Against the standpoint of the Convention, Shacknove famously argued that to become a refugee, "persecution is sufficient but not necessary" (1985, p.



279). The fundamental element in refugee situations is not the type of threat but lack of state protection. If there is no state protection, it does not matter whether the threat to life comes from persecution, economic problems, or natural disasters. Shacknove presents the definition of “refugee” adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as “the only salient challenge to the proposition that persecution is an essential criterion of refugeehood” (p. 275). The OAU’s definition states that

the term ‘refugee’ shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of nationality. (OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, 1969, p. 3)

In a similar vein, Gibney has argued that the definition of “refugee” must be extended “beyond those subjected to persecution to include harms of action or omission by states that seriously jeopardize personal security or subsistence needs” (2015, p. 448). What separates these two scholars, though, is an essential prerequisite in Shacknove’s refugee definition, that is, the access of international assistance to the victims. One can be called a refugee if he is “so situated that international assistance is possible” (p. 278). This amounts to say that the refugee-producing state should be either willing to allow international assistance within the country or at least unable to prevent such help from coming in. In its own terms, this prerequisite is controversial enough in that it opens the door to legitimizing state interventions. Gibney avoided this controversy in his definition by getting rid of that condition.

In addition to the debates around whether persecution should be enough for defining refugees, another controversy is about what persecution itself should mean. The Convention limits persecution to situations where state authorities threaten individuals’ lives because of their

religious beliefs, ethnic or social identities, races, or political ideas and affiliations. This definition does not cover every aspect of persecution. In this sense, scholars like Kowalik reason that people who flee “economic persecution should be considered refugees under international law” (2017, p. 68). Similarly, Cherem (2016) maintains that the definition of “refugee” should depend on persecution and nothing else, but he counts economic migration as part of persecution. Tuculet (2017) similarly argues that, in the contemporary global system, the distinction between economic immigrants and refugees does not make any sense. In short, this line of argument claims that refugeehood should not depend only on persecution, or, even if it does, the concept should also include severe economic hardships.

However, political theorists are generally reluctant to include economic hardships among the causes of refugee status. The fear is that this inclusion would produce an extremely large group and, in turn, make being a refugee meaningless. Opponents of including the economic dimension assert that refugees’ unique need for survival by becoming a member of a new community should not be blurred among the less vital needs of those who cross borders for financial reasons. Although some thinkers like Pogge (2008) claim that there are millions of people who live under worse conditions than refugees due to poverty-related issues, the general tendency in the literature is on acknowledging the moral uniqueness of being a refugee. These people lack a sense of home, and they cannot be helped where they are. This does not mean that economic migrants do not need assistance. Acknowledging the special place of refugees is not to say that others will not be helped. Therefore, eminent thinkers like Gibney (2004) and Miller (2016) make a definitional distinction between refugees and economic migrants. Recently, scholars have also started looking for formulas such as “refugee taxation systems” that aim to

find plausible ways for separating refugees from economic migrants in a practical sense (Bubb et al. 2011).

In the final analysis, the call for expanding the definition of “refugee” does not seem to have received a positive response. Morally speaking, this debate has its own merits in terms of identifying who is a refugee. However, expanding or restricting the definition of “refugee” per se is not helpful in terms of deciding how we can help millions of people living in limbo today. Lister makes a crucial point in that sense: “who is a refugee cannot be thought in isolation from what we owe to them” (2013, p. 648). Thinking of the definition of “refugee” without studying how we can help them leaves the question imbalanced – the outcome of such a discussion might go anywhere. From this perspective, this study concentrates on the subject of what other communities morally owe to refugees rather than offer a discussion on the definition of refugee. In this project, the term “refugee” refers to the millions of people recognized by the UN as stuck in “protracted refugee situations,” i.e., people who live in camps or urban ghettos under impoverished conditions and cannot return to their homes, waiting for a chance to get a new life somewhere else. This work aims to create a morally informed theoretical model to decide what this “new life” should look like and where this “somewhere” should be. This discussion requires scrutinizing the literature on migration; hence I will start by presenting what scholars have argued so far regarding what is owed to refugees and how they should be helped and what kinds of problems their arguments raise.

### **Who Decides Who Gets in: Grand Migration Theories**

The fundamental moral problem that makes its mark in all migration theories is essentially a “rights vs. rights” issue (Teitelbaum 1980). On the one hand, we have the global state system, which runs on the rights of communities to create their own ways of governance

and societal order and also to decide how to preserve them, including who is to be a member of their societies. On the other hand, we have individuals who, qua human beings, should have a set of human rights that should be protected by their states but are not. The inevitable clash occurs when they knock on our doors and seek help with a demand for inclusion: now the question is whose right should trump – the communal right to self-determination or the individual's right to life and liberty?

The two leading schools in grand migration theories radically diverge in their answers to this question. Statist approaches do not deny the importance of individual human rights of others but, in the end, conclude that the right to make the final decision on inclusion and exclusion remains in the hands of communities or states. They maintain that

- (i) societies are free to decide with whom they are willing to associate or dissociate,
- (ii) community and territory are two social goods that are created by societies themselves and hence their protection should be left to their members, and
- (iii) one's moral duties toward compatriots are morally more important than those toward strangers because it is the community that provides the context for a meaningful life in the first place.

Cosmopolitan approaches defend the opposite view. They claim that the existence of states is an unavoidable reality. Still, in the face of serious human rights violations, borders should not matter morally as much as they do today. Scholars in this school contend that

- (i) inalienable human rights such as the right to life, liberty, security, and free movement should require states to open their borders for refugees,
- (ii) humans own the world collectively; therefore, no community should have a right to exclude strangers in such a way that will seriously harm them,

(iii) individuals are members of a world society whose constituents are highly interconnected, which makes exclusion based on community morally meaningless, and

(iv) the global political and economic systems affluent societies create and maintain are the leading cause that creates needy people; hence exclusion means a refusal to share the burden of their part of justice.

Their debate boils down to the question of whose rights should be taken as more critical, communities' or individuals', and on what grounds.

### **Main Arguments of the Statist/Particularist School**

As a self-defined particularist, Walzer bases his arguments around migration on his theory of social goods (1983). Social goods are created by societies in specific contexts and conceived by them in particular ways. According to Walzer, it is the meaning attached to the good by the society that determines its movement and distribution (p. 8). In this respect, community is a social good itself. The political community is “a world of common meanings” constituted by a group of people who share the same language, history, and culture, in which the distribution of other social goods takes place (p. 28). Therefore, communities should have the right to decide on their size and character. This conclusion inevitably includes the distribution of membership. Membership is a unique social good because it is not distributed among the members of the community since they already possess the good but given to outsiders by taking them in (p. 32). In other words, membership is a non-exportable good. From this perspective, the “mutual aid principle” does not work here; that is, the moral obligation to deliver help to those in urgent need (where they are) when the risks and costs are low for the helper fails to be an effective method to aid the people who need political membership. Refugees fit in here.

Obviously, refugees have a special place in Walzer's theory in that sense, but how special is that place exactly?

Walzer believes that in the world as we know it, any theory of justice must accommodate states because territory is another social good in a double sense. It is both a natural resource where we get our subsistence materials from and a social context that provides us with a secure living space (pp. 44-45). In this sense, territory is constructed and protected by communities. Ideological affinity is vital in forming the community within a given territory, which requires mutual recognition. Therefore, "there is a lot of room [...] for political choice – and thus, [...] exclusion as well as admission" are in the hands of communities (p. 50). Although acknowledging the unusual situation of the refugee, it seems that Walzer cannot reduce the power of communities' right to self-determination in the face of the needs of refugees. Hence he boldly states that his argument "does not reach to the desperation of the refugee. [...] On the one hand, everyone must have a place to live, and a place where a reasonably secure life is possible. On the other hand, this is not a right that can be enforced against particular host states" (p. 50). This dilemma is a cruel one, according to Walzer, and he believes that the practice of asylum is partly mitigating its cruelty. However, its reach is too limited, and it works only with small numbers of refugees. Walzer accepts that his formula does not speak to dealing with high numbers of refugees produced by contemporary politics. In the final analysis, "to take in large numbers of refugees is often morally necessary; but the right to restrain the flow remains a feature of communal self-determination" (p. 51).

The "communal vs. individual rights" dilemma is also observed in the writings of other statist thinkers. Miller (2007) claims that compatriots have more importance than would-be

immigrants.<sup>1</sup> He builds his arguments on the national responsibility principle. Communities are responsible for what their states do on their behalf. As a result, they should be granted the authority to determine how to design their political structures, which includes the construction of the society. Miller's theory is based on four premises. First, the international system is composed of states. Second, these states contain nations/societies/communities that have a right to self-determination, which refers to the right to articulate a collective identity and embrace a particular belief (and act accordingly) about how a specific issue would influence the future of one's community. Third, the right to self-determination gives the community the right to favor its compatriots at the expense of outsiders. Fourth, it is essential to note that this associative permission comes with a crucial caveat: unless it is a case in which basic human rights are threatened. That is to say, when the applicants' basic human rights are at stake, then their right to be saved should trump the society's right to self-determination (2016, p. 26).

However, one should not misunderstand this standpoint and quickly jump to the conclusion that the moral right of communities simply disappears in the face of individuals who suffer from human rights violations. Taking in refugees does not mean that they must be granted political membership. Miller develops a further distinction between "human rights proper" and "societal rights, or rights of citizenship" (p. 31). Human rights are the ones that are needed for meeting the basic needs, whereas societal rights consider the conditions that affect a person's participation in the social, political, and economic life. Miller allows societies to be selective in terms of providing societal rights, that is, states should have the discretion on who should

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<sup>1</sup> In a later work, Miller identifies himself as a "weak cosmopolitan" (2016, p. 153). However, according to my way of categorizing the literature he falls under the statist camp because he surrenders the moral right to determine admissions ultimately in the hands of the state.

become a part of their nations and observe their interests when assessing immigration applications. Although communities should admit refugees, this “does not automatically transform into the right to migrate” (2007, p. 225). This conclusion does not imply that no refugee should be given political membership at all. Still, “states should be given considerable autonomy on deciding” who the new members will be (p. 226). Returning to the “rights vs. rights” dilemma, Miller surrenders the final judgment to the members of the state and confesses that this approach will make “tragic cases possible,” and that in the final analysis, refugees have morally “a very strong, but not absolute, right to be admitted” (p. 227).

A different approach to Miller’s national responsibility argument is advocated by Gibney (2004). Relying on the global structural debates, Gibney assigns the primary responsibility for maintaining a global political system that continuously produces refugees to Western states.<sup>2</sup> He argues that state responsibility should be understood as the “causal reach of the state,” that is, “the scope of its ability to do harm to individuals” (p. 50). In this respect, Western states utilize many ways to increase the number of global refugees: direct interventions, international arms rules, unjust structural or monetary systems, and harmful economic constructions (pp. 51-54). To compensate for these harms, insofar as refugees are concerned, Gibney defends a “humanitarian” standpoint that offers an “acceptable ideal”: states should restrict entry “only in order to protect the institutions and values of the liberal democratic state” and help refugees so long as the costs of doing so are low (that is, so far as the institutions and values are preserved) (p. 83). For this criterion of exclusion to be met, it appears that the refugee inflow should have the qualities of an

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<sup>2</sup> Gibney’s argument could be labeled as cosmopolitan in this sense. In fact, his arguments are closer to cosmopolitanism than statism in character. However, since the non-ideal part of his theory leaves the final decision to the state, I include him in the statist school in the final analysis.



invasion. By this statement, it seems Gibney tries to reduce the state's decision-making right in the face of human rights to such a low level that is almost nonexistent.

However, things change when he moves from this "acceptable ideal" to non-ideal theory. There he mentions three crucial constraints intrinsic to the nature of states that prevent them from responding inclusively toward refugees. The first one is structural or institutional, i.e., states are designed to protect their citizens' interests. The second is political, i.e., authorities have to behave in such a way to avoid backlash. The third is ethical, i.e., inclusive approaches to refugees can create unintended consequences: it is not ethical to expect states to act without considering future outcomes (pp. 197-222). These three qualities of the state lead Gibney to revisit his humanitarianism idea in practical terms. Who will decide that the institutions and values of the host state are on the brink of collapse? From a practical standpoint, the answer seems clear: "in the absence of objective standards, the best way of determining integrative abilities is, I think, to look to the judgments state themselves make of their own capabilities" (p. 242).

The discussion so far has shown that statist approaches are quite unwilling to deprive states or communities of their right to self-determination vis-à-vis the outsider's human rights. How far are they willing to go? The extreme point of statism presents itself in Wellman's writings (2008). In theory, Wellman claims, his reasoning leads him to the conclusion that "every legitimate state has the right to close its doors to all potential immigrants, even refugees desperately seeking asylum from incompetent or corrupt political regimes" (p. 109). He bases this conclusion on the "freedom of association" principle.<sup>3</sup> Like clubs and families, communities

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<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to observe that some cosmopolitan thinkers utilize the same principle to support an opposite view to Wellman.

should also have the right to decide with whom they want to associate or dissociate.

Theoretically speaking, there is no moral constraint to prevent states from using this right to take extreme measures. In this respect, “a state’s freedom of association entitles it to exclude all foreigners from its political community” (p. 111). It is important to note that Wellman himself is not a fan of this idea, but his arguments reveal the utmost theoretical borders of the statist approach.

### **Main Arguments of the Cosmopolitan/Universalist School**

As opposed to statist approaches, cosmopolitans defend the idea that the state’s authority should be limited by individuals’ fundamental human rights when they are threatened.

Cosmopolitanism bases its arguments mainly on the importance of universal human rights, humanity’s collective ownership of the world, and the unfair means of current global political and economic systems that continuously produce injustice.

The essence of cosmopolitanism is the commonalities of humanity. “We see no borders on the globe from space,” cosmopolitans say. Humans, qua human beings, should enjoy the same set of basic human rights such as life, liberty, security, and freedom regardless of the context they live in. In this sense, everyone should be equal. This criterion being satisfied, it is plausible to expect other inequalities in life standards across populations according to how they design their communities. In other words, the benefits we extract from the ways we construct our social and political structures should be seen as acceptable only if they do not deprive other people of their basic human rights. This understanding of cosmopolitanism has led thinkers to assign powerful duties to affluent societies in terms of helping the needy. Peter Singer has famously drawn the ethical borders of helping in this school: “if it is in our power to prevent something

very bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything else morally significant, we ought, morally, to do it” (2016, pp. 13-14).

This moral obligation to help has informed many other cosmopolitan theories that concentrate on the global poor. Singer’s “strong version of the duty” necessitated members of affluent societies to give away portions of their wealth to the poor, rather than spend it on their “unnecessary” needs, to such a point where giving more would put the donors themselves in a miserable situation. This idea has been welcomed by some cosmopolitans who work on refugees and resulted in proposals that offered “helping to the limit” (Young 2007) or “open borders” (Carens 2015). Other thinkers looked at this obligation through the other end of the telescope: helping the needy should be a negative as well as a positive duty; that is, what is more important than giving is clearing the path from obstacles for the needy to reach what they need (Pogge 2008). This line of argumentation implies that the global political and economic systems effectively produce the poor by blocking their access to necessary resources. Therefore, affluent societies should see it as a negative moral duty to opt for global reform. This structural approach is also used by cosmopolitan thinkers who study refugees (Young 2007; Carens 2015; Parekh 2017).

Risse (2012) stands out as a cosmopolitan theorist who bases his arguments on the idea of humanity’s collective ownership of the world. The resources of the world are commonly owned by all people. Living on a territory that happens to have a valuable resource under it does not necessarily make it exclusively belong to the people who encircled the region with a political border beforehand. In this respect, Risse invites thinking out of the box by questioning the moral plausibility of the state system in which we all have been growing up. According to him, the state system is justifiable only as “permissible, even if not as obligatory” (2012, p. 78). In other

words, it is permissible so long as everyone is living a dignified life or so long as states serve this purpose globally. Otherwise, a state system is not obligatory; that is, if it is causing injustice that deprives many people of their human rights, or, if it is not providing also for the people who need subsistence materials, we morally should abandon that system. From Risse's standpoint, it follows that "immigration constraints require moral scrutiny" because, in a world that is commonly owned by everyone but ruined by the state system, we ought to have certain duties toward the global poor, some of which can be met by allowing migration (p. 145). Immigration constraints limit free movement, and it seems absurd to constrain human movement while everything else moves freely across borders. From this perspective, Risse concludes that "discretionary immigration is an awkward question especially for liberal states" (p. 147).

Benhabib (2004) offers another version of the "common ownership of the world." She takes up this idea in political terms and claims that every individual is a member of the world society. When it comes to obligations across borders, "world society" is the correct vantage point of looking at the issue (p. 37). The interdependence of peoples is creating a world society, and everyone is a member of it. In this sense, migration cannot be understood as a distributive justice claim; instead, it should be viewed as a human rights issue. "Right to membership ought to be considered a human right, in the moral sense of the term" (p. 73). Inspired by Arendt's (2004) criticism of states as *the* source of fundamental human rights, Benhabib contends that human rights should be perceived as an intrinsic part of being human, regardless of whether one is a member of a given community or not. In this respect, states should function as protectors of these rights globally for all human beings. If an individual's human rights are violated somewhere, it should be any decent state's duty to provide her with these rights. The current state-based human rights understanding leaves people without a right in the whole world if they lose their

connections with their states for some reason. According to Benhabib's formulation, then, by definition, the power of the state's conceived rights morally vanishes in the face of individual human rights that are being violated. As a result of this perspective, which Benhabib calls the principle of "just membership in the world society," refugees have a moral claim to first admittance. Besides, since "permanent alienage is not compatible with human rights," this right should subsequently evolve into a right to political membership (pp. 3-4).

This line of argumentation becomes more sophisticated in cosmopolitan migration theories that take a structuralist stance by explaining global injustices through the global systems constructed and maintained by the affluent societies. Pogge (2008) has shown how this model works in the context of global poverty, and Young (2007) has offered a "social connection model of responsibility" that claims "all agents who contribute by their actions to the structural processes that produce injustice have responsibilities to work to remedy these injustices" (pp. 159-160). This model makes a categorical distinction between the harms inflicted by individual agents and by global systems without excluding the former from its analysis. Other thinkers have effectively applied this approach in their migration theories.

Parekh has explicitly stated that the current refugee regime is a result of structural injustices (2017, p. 6). Many refugees who are produced in different corners of the world have to live in camps because of the global state system – the moment they leave their home states, they automatically fall into limbo if no other state accepts them. The result is encampment, which theoretically should be a temporary stage for refugees. The increasing number of refugees, however, has turned encampment practice into a type of "warehousing." What is ethically problematic here is that the world is now perceiving encampment as a fourth legitimate way to respond to refugee crises, along with voluntary repatriation, granting asylum, and resettlement in

a third country. Emphasizing the structural aspect of this problem, Parekh claims that Western states are responsible for enforcing encampment by funding the UNHCR, encouraging the containment of refugee flows close to countries of origin for the sake of future repatriation, and externalizing their borders (p. 37). Therefore, they should also be responsible for changing the refugee regime into one that protects the human rights of encamped refugees. In this respect, her work is an excellent example of how the current protracted refugee situations are explained by the global political system maintained by affluent societies. However, recall that the central debate in refugee studies is a “rights vs. rights” issue: from a cosmopolitan standpoint, states have the moral obligation to function as a protector of human rights everywhere, including those people without states. In this case, individual rights trump states’ rights and oblige the latter to provide decent standards also for those living in limbo.

Another argument that informs the cosmopolitan thought is the universalization of liberal values such as life, liberty, security, and free movement. This is not to say that statist thinkers simply ignore these values in their theories or claim that they are exclusive to the West. However, the place of liberal values is so strong in cosmopolitan formulas, that that they ultimately overwhelm every sort of obstacle that stands between the individual and human rights. Cosmopolitanism is much less hesitant in doing so compared to statism. Thinkers like Boswell, for instance, take this standpoint even further to denounce the “notion of a dichotomy or trade-off” between national interests and refugee rights as “descriptively simplistic” (2005, p. 8). Boswell believes that it is wrong to perceive interests as independent of ethical values. If the national identities of Western states are defined by the liberal values they protect, why should it be against national interests to provide these values also for strangers? Conceptions of ethical duty can shape national interests if they form the national identity. With nations whose identities

are shaped by a liberal commitment to universal human rights, it will become possible to secure human rights policies globally (p.149).

The discussion so far has shown that cosmopolitan approaches defend reducing the moral power of communities' right to self-determination or state borders in the face of human rights violations. Concerning refugees, this amounts to saying that states are morally obliged to offer protection to those people who need security. But how far can this idea go? Cosmopolitan thinking reaches its theoretical extremes in Carens' writings. Devoting his book to the two central questions in migration theories, that is, "who belongs?" and "who should get in?" Carens develops a "theory of social membership" in a world with "open borders" (2015). The theory of social membership, as an answer to the question of who should belong to a given community, assumes that everyone who manages to make it to a given state and spend some time within its borders should eventually put on the path to citizenship. As for the question of who should get in, Carens ideally argues for an open borders system. In a close-to-ideal world where everyone has a decent life, open borders will bring only prosperity. Carens bases these conclusions on three cosmopolitan assumptions:

- (i) there is no natural social order,
- (ii) all human beings are of equal moral worth, and therefore
- (iii) restriction on the freedom of human beings requires a moral justification (p. 226).

According to Carens, the affluence of Western states requires them to take care of those in need of security, shelter, and membership. In this respect, justifying restrictions on freedom of movement can be provided by a state only if it reaches its limits in terms of admissions.

However, for the affluent societies of the world, as we know them, this is not a real limit at all.

To the question of when this limit could be reached, Carens answers "almost never" (p. 219).

## Problems with Grand Migration Theories

The two schools of thought presented in the previous section are representatives of “grand migration theories.” These theories are different in character from the “burden-sharing models” that try to develop practical solutions to the problems produced by the current refugee crises (see below). Grand theories offer ethical bases for inclusionary or exclusionary arguments on migration and generate sets of general moral principles accordingly, but they fall short of providing practical proposals for applying these principles. For instance, based on the community’s right to self-determination, a statist grand theory can argue for the general principle that communities should decide on their social characters. Alternatively, based on the inalienable human right to free movement, a cosmopolitan grand theory can argue for the general principle that decent states should always open their borders for refugees. Neither can provide much guidance in how these general moral principles will be put into practice in specific contexts. There seems to be a trade-off here: focusing on the moral foundations of migration comes at the expense of efforts to determine how we can accurately respond to the real and immediate needs of millions of refugees living in limbo today. As a result of this weakness, while the general moral principles offered by cosmopolitanism necessitate a close-to-ideal world,<sup>4</sup> those provided by statism are generally stuck in a deadlock.

The need for an ideal world in cosmopolitan thinking is announced explicitly by some scholars. Risse’s common ownership of the world argument assumes an ideal world where “everybody has a minimum of provisions to live a decent life” (p. 147). In such a world, he argues, constraining immigration sounds quite awkward for liberal states. To the contrary, states

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<sup>4</sup> In the rest of the chapter, I refer to this approach by using the term “utopianism,” which means “theories that are impossible to realize now.”



should utilize a “proportionate use” principle, that is, there must be a balance between the size of the population and the amount of resources (p. 151). If resources are underused, people should be taken in until a balance is reached. This ideal world, obviously, would be one in which we would have many fewer refugees. Let alone minimum substance, people cannot provide even minimum security for themselves and their families today. This condition accounts for why the number of refugees is so large. Consequently, it is not hard to see why the proportionate use principle that might work in an ideal world where cross-border movement would be much smaller in size cannot develop a response to the problems created by mass influxes.

Like Risse, Carens also develops his theory by explicitly presuming “a just world” where there is only an acceptable inequality among peoples (2015, Ch. 12). In this world, states should apply the “open borders” principle, because this would benefit everyone. Clearly, he is not offering to open borders in our world since there are too many waiting to flow in. Still, a rather implicit extension of his utopianism is traceable in his proposal for dealing with large numbers of refugees: the importance attached to the Western values. Carens believes that liberal values are powerfully embraced by Western societies so that they should do everything to make more people enjoy the same values. The equation seems simple: if I appreciate the value of freedom, I will also support you to become free. Similarly, if I enjoy security and a wealthy life, I will try to help you to get the same for yourself if it is in my power to do so. In this respect, Carens claims that the values embraced in the West would necessitate Western societies to take care of refugees to the best of their abilities. On this assumption, he builds a solution with two principles: i) resettlement should be declared as a strict duty, and ii) the link between where one requests asylum and where one receives it should be broken (p. 213). This solution proposal expects prospective host communities to accept resettlement as a moral duty and be open to including as

many refugees as they can. However, what if Western societies are not attaching the exact kind of importance to their values that Carens imagines they do? Large influxes do not seem to be manageable with the help of welcoming liberal values. Neither is this doable with humanitarian arguments. The size of the incomers changes the dynamics of society and causes fear and hatred. The 2015 crisis in Europe and Brexit have shown that Western values do not work as Carens assumes in the face of large numbers of refugees.

Carens is not the only cosmopolitan who puts so much trust in liberal values. Boswell (2000; 2005) is another example. As mentioned above, she argues that a distinction between national interests and refugee rights is not necessary: duty overlaps with interests when national identity is shaped accordingly. From this perspective, she develops a critical stance toward the change in the European Union policies from a liberal refugee regime to a more restrictive, quota-based system that tries to “contain refugee flows” (2000, p. 538). Boswell questions how far these measures are compatible with Europe’s self-identity as the staunch defender of liberal human rights values. She observes two discourses on restriction: one is the liberal welfare-based argument of the center-left, and the other is the ethnocentric argument of the far right. She believes that the first discourse violates European values, and the second is unsustainable because “the ethnocentric conception of membership is likely to be progressively marginalized as Europe recognizes the fact of cultural pluralism in most of its member states” (p. 553). What is left for Europe, then, is developing a “more generous universalist approach” (p. 552). With right-wing and nationalist parties on the rise and Brexit in Europe, Boswell’s expectations seems to have turned out to be an unfulfilled prophecy. By putting too much importance on values, she forgets the public’s actual discontent about large inflows, which subsequently shapes government policies. In this respect, her theory does not provide a reason for accommodating

large numbers of refugees. “Duty overlaps with interests when identity is shaped accordingly” is an idea that is an implicit extension of the utopian thought in her approach.

Another cosmopolitan approach that borders on utopianism is the unrestrained movement argument. As it is traceable in Carens’ thoughts, Benhabib also follows the idea that free movement of peoples, goods, and services are highly beneficial for communities in general (2004, p. 88). This is not the place to test this idea; however, the utopian side of this argument is that it assumes these movements will always be at a regular and acceptable pace. This expectation, again, implies the existence of an ideal world. Benhabib thinks that immigrants are not a threat to political or social culture (pp. 116-117). She even criticizes Walzer and Rawls for their emphasis on the importance of cultural integration. Benhabib believes that these two writers think of cultural solidarity as a stable matter, which is wrong. Western societies have come to this point of cultural solidarity after a process of evolution, and there is no reason to believe that they will not be able to keep progressing. However, Benhabib omits that her argument only accommodates regular movements and has no place for sudden large influxes. Under such circumstances, ignoring cultural solidarity issues by merely arguing that societies will evolve toward improvement sounds naive. Not surprisingly, her standpoint takes Benhabib to the “porous borders” principle: borders should be open for refugees, and once the admission occurs, path to membership ought not to be blocked, though it is up to the state to decide how to proceed. What Benhabib ignores is that it is not as plausible as it seems for a society to evolve toward acceptance, especially when the meeting point of two peoples is marked by fear, hatred, and disgust. These emotions are mostly the initial effects of large influxes on host communities. History is full of examples that present the hardships in mending such broken fences between two groups of people within a single community that are divided by hatred and disgust.

Finally, general moral principles offered by cosmopolitans who bring structural explanations to refugee issues also suffer from a chronic weakness: they cannot pinpoint where the responsibility should lie exactly. These approaches do not ignore the fact that certain actions of specific agents cause some injustices, but at the same time, they contend that most crimes are inevitable results of the current global systems. Parekh, for instance, claims that we “ought to understand that some of the injustices in the global refugee regime as forms of structural injustice” (2017, p. 105). That is to say that refugees piled up in camps might not be the result of intentional actions by particular Western states; however, the global political system that these states maintain for their own interests is one of the main reasons that block refugees’ access to a decent human life. In this respect, Parekh outlines two principles in helping those people living in limbo: (i) the global refugee regime should be modified in such a way that respects encamped refugees’ human rights, and (ii) the perception of responsibility in this sense should be primarily forward and not backward-looking (p. 115). What is a point of interest for this study is her second principle, which claims that, since the injustice is structural, there is no sense in trying to pinpoint individual responsibility in refugee crises. Instead, we should concentrate on how we can respond to refugees’ needs according to our capabilities. In other words, our focus ought to shift from who caused the harm to who should remedy it (p. 105). Young follows a very similar line of argumentation (2007). She distinguishes structural injustice from the “wrongful action of an individual agent” and claims that “structural injustice occurs as a consequence of many individuals and institutions acting in pursuit of their particular goals” (p.170). Like Parekh, she also concludes that responsibility in this sense should be forward-looking.

However, the structural arguments presented by Parekh and Young do not study the dividing line between structural and individual injustices carefully enough. Especially in refugee

cases, this line is less blurred than these two thinkers conceive of it. By studying the differences across refugee cases, it is possible to single out various individual agents that are more responsible than others regardless of the global system. In the structural approach, two problems appear at once. First, focusing only on the forward-looking responsibility does not establish an ethically plausible basis for why societies should accept this remedial obligation in the first place. Second, putting the whole burden on the West or affluent countries in general is not helpful at all in practical terms. On the contrary, one could argue that it is even less effective than trying to identify some responsible agents. In this sense, Parekh and Boswell provide further examples for why such general moral principles cannot turn into implementable policies.

Lister (2013) rightfully criticizes cosmopolitan thinkers for failing to acknowledge the unique situation of refugees among other needy people. This failure is partly due to the abovementioned inability of structural approaches in identifying the dividing line between structural and individual injustices. He also claims that due to this failure, cosmopolitans also cannot offer practical policy recommendations for dealing with refugee problems. I agree with Lister on this point, but I also argue that this is not an issue exclusive to cosmopolitan ideas but to grand theories in general. Statist grand theories that offer general moral principles on how we should treat refugees fare no better in terms of crafting applicable models.

As we have seen, statist thinkers justify a restrictive approach to refugees on the basis of the communal right to self-determination and freedom of association. Here, the main point will be to show how these principles lead statist theories to a dead end. Let us start with the extreme statist position. Wellman claimed that, morally speaking, the freedom of association principle should give people the right to exclude everyone from their communities. It appears at once why this approach is practically unworkable. If Wellman were to deny the moral duty to help the

needy, then his theory could have been internally consistent. But he does not. Instead, he claims that affluent societies are duty-bound to the poor, although they “need not open their borders” (2008, p. 127). They can help them by means of intervention or sending money. As Pogge (2008) has clearly shown, these two ways of helping do not work in aiding the poor so long as the structures that produce them are maintained, let alone solving more complex refugee problems. Therefore, Wellman’s approach simply turns a blind eye to the needs of refugees.

Walzer tries to make a more plausible argument. He argues that, in his theory, a special place is reserved for refugees as people who cannot be helped otherwise than to be taken in. He creates an even more exceptional space for two kinds of refugees: those “whom we turned into refugees” and those who are persecuted “because they are like us” (1983, p. 49). This statement speaks to a more refined understanding of responsibility toward refugees; however, it is not the end of the story. Since in Walzer’s formulation first admission should lead to second admission, i.e., naturalization, the problem is: what if the numbers are too high? When the number goes up to millions, the naturalization principle causes policymakers to block the first admission, which deprives refugees also of their essential needs. There is no solution to this issue in Walzer’s theory. In his words, the “mutual aid [principle] can only modify and not transform admission policies rooted in a particular community’s understanding of itself” (p. 51). In other words, causal responsibility does not override a community’s perception of its internal structure.

Societies do not have to shoulder more burden than what *they think* they can, even in cases where they have a responsibility for causing the harm. From this perspective, Walzer himself is aware that his theory cannot be a remedy for the desperation of refugees. Although admission of large numbers is often morally necessary, he claims, the right to restrain the flows is in the hands of the community. His argument thus reaches a dead end, and it cannot take us further.

Miller suffers from a similar shortcoming. He makes two crucial distinctions. One is between “economic migrants” and “refugees.” The other is between “particularity claimants” and others (2016, p. 77). For a state, particularity claimants are the people whose calamity was caused by a wrong inflicted by that very state, such as military intervention. Miller gives priority to take care of these people compared to others. Nevertheless, being a particularity claimant does not hold a prerequisite of being an economic migrant or a refugee. Regardless of that, particularity claimants should be prioritized. On the other hand, refugees always have a priority over economic migrants (p. 78). The question of what is owed to refugees, then, does not receive a clear answer in Miller’s theory. His primary question is whether the refugees should have inviolable rights against the states where they seek refuge. Since their fundamental human rights are threatened, they do have rights against host states, but these cannot be permanent because states have the right to accept or reject asylum applications with due concern for the well-being of their societies. Like Walzer, this puzzle remains unresolved in Miller. He has two main columns to build his solution on, in the absence of which his whole formula will collapse: sharing the cost fairly and passing on the refugees. On the one hand, a state should not be given more burden than it could bear to take care of the refugees; other countries should also do what they can, and the cost should be fairly distributed among the states that have the capacity to help (p. 78). On the other hand, while a state should admit refugees to save their lives as an immediate response, it has the right to pass them on to other countries where their fundamental human rights will not be violated (due to the non-refoulement principle<sup>5</sup>) (p. 86).

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<sup>5</sup> The “non-refoulement principle” is an internationally accepted norm that instructs states not to return refugees to a place where their lives will be in danger.

The problem in Miller shows itself again as a grand theory problem that provides general moral principles: what it means in real life to “share the costs fairly” and “bear no burden more than one could” is the point where states cannot come into terms. Gibney (2015) offers a similar discussion on sharing the burdens fairly. He argues for a “humanitarianism” that, under ideal conditions, should oblige states to assist refugees when the cost of doing so is low, i.e., so long as the societal institutions and values remain intact (2004, p. 83). As we move to the non-ideal world, however, Gibney is on the same page with Walzer and Miller in assigning the right to decide on the limits of inclusion to states themselves (p. 242). Every country should determine its own integrative capacity. Still, Gibney does not leave this principle at this point and takes it one step further by reasoning that this capacity should be somehow calculated by the size of the population, the GDP of the state, and the size and character of the existing refugee population (i.e., history of integration) (2015, pp. 448-450). However, again, this proposal cannot go beyond being a general principle for refugee distribution. On the question of how to realize such principles in the real world, a number of scholars have been working for creating practical burden-sharing models, which constitute the second category in the literature on refugees. The next part of this chapter will examine these models.

Put simply, the problems in cosmopolitan and statist grand theories could be summarized as bordering on utopianism and reaching a dead end, respectively. I would like to conclude this part by underlining another common weakness of grand migration theories: their uniform approach to refugees. Through the holistic lens of a grand theory, the refugee is a single type of person produced by specific circumstances, which makes refugees a homogeneous mass of needy people. The duty toward refugees ultimately means granting them citizenship and a package of rights. Moreover, these are principles that should be valid for every community. This



indiscriminate approach to refugees that distributes general and uniform duties to all communities fails at the moment that it faces the real world of refugees. Practices based on this approach suffer from impracticality: “in theory, refugee law creates an absolutely uniform distribution of responsibility” that leads to nothing but confusion and rejection of such responsibilities (Betts and Collier 2017, p. 208). What is needed are theoretical models that acknowledge the differences across refugee situations and distribute the responsibilities among different communities accordingly. To the best of my knowledge, grand theories have not yet provided such a refined model for the distribution of responsibilities and obligations toward refugees.

### **Dealing with Large Numbers in Limbo: Burden-Sharing Models**

Refugees are easily accommodated by migration theories when their numbers are small. So long as they remain exceptions, they create no issues. They become a problem, and a big one, when they try to enter societies in large numbers, as it has been the global trend in the last decades. Scholars have repeatedly mentioned that the current international refugee regime is designed for a world that does not exist anymore: a world politically defined by bipolarity where the Iron Curtain did not allow people to escape and where the West proudly took care of those who could successfully run away from it. We now live in a world where global politics, local dictators, civil conflicts, and regional wars produce millions of refugees.

The increasing numbers of refugees started to become a point of concern for migration scholars in the late 1970s. It was 1980 when Teitelbaum anxiously warned that “there is a clear risk that growing opposition to immigration and refugee flows that are widely perceived to be excessively large, insufficiently plural, and heavily illegal may overwhelm existing domestic support for a truly humane and generous set of policies” (p. 44). More recent analyses show that

Teitelbaum was right in his concerns. Trauner has argued that high numbers of refugees “have exposed the deficiencies of the EU’s asylum policy” (2016, p. 312). Since Europe was unprepared for the magnitude of contemporary refugee inflows, its response has been in the form of interdiction. Overall, “blockage mainly dominated the two fields [of foreign policy and migration] in the EU” (Falkner 2016, p. 231). The same attitude has been followed toward refugees also by the Western world outside Europe. It is the developing countries that accommodate the overwhelming majority of refugees (Betts and Collier 2017, p. 10).

The unprecedented growth of the refugee population in the world has also revealed that humanitarian approaches cannot offer a solution to this global crisis. Pogge (2008) argued that one of the reasons why members of affluent societies are not interested in the situations of the poor is that there is no physical proximity between the two. The negative and exclusionary responses of prosperous communities to recent refugee influxes have falsified this assumption. The Australian media is just one example of how the refugee problem “is seen not as a humanitarian disaster that requires a compassionate public response, but rather as a potential threat that sets in place mechanisms of security and border control” (Bleiker et al. 2013, p. 399). Presenting this issue as a humanitarian crisis and opting for inclusionary policies in this regard by relying on the mercy of the public does not work. On the contrary, it results in a backlash, as the rising anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe and largest host communities like Turkey have shown. Even though it is true that refugee crises are, in essence, humanitarian ones, large numbers simply overwhelm the emotional factors in this equation. As the protagonist in Camus’ novel *The Plague*, a doctor trying to help a whole city of sick people moaning with pain almost by himself, bluntly puts it: “One grows out of pity when it is useless” (1991, p. 91).

What should be done with large numbers of refugees, then? Encampment is a first response to fulfill their basic needs, but every migration theory acknowledges that camps are not suitable for a decent human life. There must be a permanent solution. Some scholars contend that, since refugee-producing countries threaten international peace and other states, a right to intervene emerges against them (Dowty and Loescher 1996). However, this is an outdated argument as the merits of intervention for the sake of humanitarian ends has been increasingly questioned in both practical and moral terms. Safe haven proposals (Arulanantham 2000) are also not very attractive in that they are costly to maintain and not a permanent solution. As a result, encamped refugees should either be granted asylum or resettled somewhere else. These are the two morally plausible solutions policymakers are left with when repatriation is not a viable option. In such a context, it is not hard to guess the next question: how can we preserve human dignity during the encampment process and subsequently distribute refugees among different communities? To answer this question, scholars have developed what is known as “burden-sharing models.”

It is not a surprise that burden-sharing models are developed within the statist school; that is, they start by acknowledging the importance of states in our contemporary world for any kind of practical solution model. Even cosmopolitans like Carens (1992) accept that this should be the case when it comes to solutions. Most recent studies show that even in the EU, the traditional rationale of market integration has shifted toward an increasing integration of core state powers, which include military force and border control (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018). In other words, for any burden-sharing model to work, states must be convinced that they should shoulder the burdens assigned to them by such models. After presenting the proposals of these models, I

will argue that this is what they exactly fail to do: they do not have a convincing power because they are built exclusively on material capacity and leave aside the question of ethics entirely.

One of the most well-received burden-sharing models belongs to Hathaway and Neve (1997). Their idea is to create a framework of “common but differentiated responsibility among states” toward refugees (p. 132). This framework aims to establish a middle point between leaving the refugee question to completely particularized solution attempts on the one hand and projecting global structural changes on the other. They offer the creation of regional “interest-convergence groups” or ICGs to strike a balance between “meeting the responsibility to grant asylum and shouldering the burden of financing protection” (p. 145). Regional ICGs should consist of three groups of states: members of the inner core, the outer core, and situation-specific members (p. 190). The inner core states are those that are most affected by a given refugee crisis; the outer core contains countries that are materially capable of contributing to the efforts of the inner core to avoid long-term global problems; and situation-specific members are those that involved themselves in producing refugees. By these means, they create regional groups with the common aim of burden-sharing for a given case. Still, there will be different duties for states in different cores.

Hathaway and Neve expect that their way of designing the group will implant a built-in incentive for states to join. What could be more reasonable for states than to participate in a regional group that aims to alleviate a heavy burden that they face? In this respect, they assume that most influenced states can come together around a common interest and share the burden of providing security for refugees by considering functional compatibility, cultural harmony, and geographical proximity. The ultimate target of Hathaway and Neve, however, is repatriation. They offer this burden-sharing model as a solution-oriented *temporary* protection for refugees. In

this respect, they think that their model should be applied more efficiently as opposed to those that distribute refugees among communities permanently. An inner core defined as “the most affected states” by a given refugee case obviously would not create a built-in incentive for those very states to accept the same refugees for the long-term. However, it is also not clear why being highly affected would create an incentive to take care of refugees temporarily when closing borders and waiting calmly is a preferable option for many states, especially if they are not involved in creating the situation. It seems that Hathaway and Neve have followed an overly optimistic view of states in this sense.

Schuck (1997) presented an alternative burden-sharing model, which has influenced his colleagues in many ways. Implying that any proposal should work with states, Schuck introduced the idea of refugee quotas that are tradable between countries. His model has five requirements:

- (i) Agreement by states in a region on a strong norm that all ought to bear a share of temporary protection and permanent resettlement needs proportionate to their burden-sharing capacity,
- (ii) A process for determining the number of those who need such protection,
- (iii) A set of criteria for allocating this burden among states in the form of quotas,
- (iv) A market in which states can purchase and sell quota compliance obligations,
- (v) An international authority to administer the quota system and regulate this market. (p. 271)

Schuck reasons that the creation of such a group of states could be possible by making the “sharing norm” more robust. However, similar to Hathaway and Neve, he thinks that this norm could be strengthened by the way the group is designed. Participation in these groups will be voluntary. Ideally, since trading quotas will result in a proportionate burden-sharing mechanism, he believes that such a model will encourage broad participation: it will be preferable for states to opt for a working system rather than get lost in an ocean of refugee problems. Wealthy nations

will voluntarily join this group to help refugees so that the world can resolve the issues with refugees – just because the offer is workable. He is only partly right in this sense.

Schuck's proposal for determining the number of refugees and creating quotas for states along with a market where they can trade these quotas for money attracted the attention of many scholars in the field, which subsequently also had some impact on the EU's asylum policies. Schuck envisioned the existence of a trade market, but his main idea was that such interactions would occur on a strictly bilateral basis, that is, two states would negotiate on how to trade quotas. Bubb, Kremer, and Levine (2011) offered a model that would support this proposal with a screening tool to separate refugees from economic migrants. However, the bilateral nature of these proposals was perceived as a limitation for effective trade. In order to redress this inefficiency, later efforts focused on extending Schuck's idea to establish a *market system* where a more complex quota trade could take place. In this respect, Moraga and Rapoport developed a model that proposed an EU-wide market for Tradable Immigration Quotas (TIQs) on both refugees and asylum-seekers along with a "matching mechanism linking countries' and migrants' preferences" (2014, p. 13).

These practical proposals have also raised some ethical concerns. To some thinkers, trading refugees in a market for money sounds quite controversial. Gibney (2007), for instance, argued that such a practice contradicts human dignity. Conceiving of refugees as tradable commodities will have deeply negative impacts on their personal identities and create in them long-lasting sentiments of humiliation. The three objections against the quota market model can be summarized as follows: i) the preferences of refugees are not taken into account, ii) being traded in a market sounds slavish, and iii) such a market system will result in exploitation. However, not everyone is morally convinced by these arguments. Some have argued that such

claims are not powerful enough to prove that this scheme is “inherently morally problematic” (Kuosmanen 2012). It is interesting to observe here that the burden-sharing literature, which is more practice-oriented, is quite reluctant to accept the ethical objections raised by grand theories that offer general moral principles.

The intellectual efforts on burden-sharing have partially affected asylum policies. They contributed to the development of the term “refugee distribution key” in the EU, which refers to a formula for determining the number of asylum applications that each state in the Union is obliged to process. In 2015, as a response to rising burden-sharing debates in the Union, the European Commission proposed a distribution key that computed every state’s quota based on GDP (40% weight), the size of the population (40% weight), a corrective factor based on the average number of asylum applications (10% weight), and a corrective factor based on unemployment (10% weight) (Grech 2017; Baubock 2018). Trading these quotas for money, however, is an idea that has yet to be ethically approved. It was perceived by some as a scandal when the media released the details of a deal between the EU and Turkey to keep refugees away from Europe in return for some money and privileges. Other scholars, on the other hand, still question whether this deal between the EU and Turkey or deals of such sort should be seen as ethically problematic (Turculet 2017).

The most recent point the burden-sharing literature has reached is presented in a brilliant work by Betts and Collier (2017). Calling for augmenting the efforts on exploring how the moral duties toward refugees can be most effectively fulfilled, they develop a practical political economy perspective. They reject the cosmopolitan emphasis on structural interconnectedness of all injustice and approach to the problems of refugees as locally manageable. In this respect, they claim that “refuge must be understood as not only a humanitarian issue but also one of

development” (p. 10). The existence of refugees could be an opportunity for host states in terms of development if they know how to make use of it. They offer the creation of development areas where refugees will be employed, and both the host states and investors (national and foreign) will increase their revenues. In other words, it can be a win-win situation. Through the institutions that work, their model requires restoring the autonomy of refugees and incubating their recovery in such development areas. Rather than mandate the refugee field, the UNHCR should broker the interactions between investors and host states to make such investments possible and ensure that human rights are not violated at any stage.

Betts and Collier’s analysis of the problems in refuge reveals an omitted side of assisting refugees. The most significant work they do is presenting the concept of helping as a matter of political determination rather than capacity. Even if the host state lacks material capacity, it does not mean that it cannot find that capacity forever. As the pilot endeavors in Jordan and Uganda’s current successful refugee policies have shown, what is crucial in helping large numbers of people is to possess the necessary political will. Once this determination exists, it is not so hard to solve their problems through creating development areas. This idea of Betts and Collier seems to have received widespread support in the literature. Luecke and Schneiderheinze have called on G20 countries to give more financial support to host countries to create employment and entrepreneurship areas for refugees: “with sufficient external financing, the hosting of refugees can create an opportunity for economic development” (2017, p. 4). What is essential in their model is that the funds must be sufficient and the development efforts predictable. Along similar lines, Khasru et al. reason that such a duty could be shouldered only by G20 countries. Their expectation is that if the most influential economies like the US, Germany, Japan, Australia, China, and Russia “take the first steps in announcing their pledges, others in the group will



follow suit and be encouraged to announce their pledge commensurate to their economic capabilities” (2018, p. 9). These arguments boil down to say that, for the host state, material capacity is not *the* fundamental instrument in helping because it can be created so long as there is political will to work for this end.

The solution methods offered by Hathaway and Neve, Schuck, and scholars who followed their lead reveal that they conceive of the issues in refugee distribution as a version of the collective action problem in Olson’s (1971) terms. The collective action problem refers to the difficulties in preventing free-riding in benefiting from public goods. Public goods are, by definition, non-excludable (i.e., if it is provided everyone enjoys it) and non-rival (i.e., if one agent has it, this means everyone has it). Therefore, the fear of free-riding leads agents capable of delivering the public good to noncompliance, which at the end prevents the creation of the good. The recent presentation of refugee protection as a pure or impure public good is an example of how this idea is applied to the international arena in the case of refugees (Roper and Barria 2010; Thielemann 2018). If refugee problems are solved, then the whole world will benefit from it; and states can contribute to international collective goods by taking proactive and reactive measures. However, developed countries fear that other states will free-ride on the outcome and may exploit it by supporting domestic policies that will produce more refugees. The opposite is also likely: as Thielemann and Dewan (2006) have indicated, it is also possible that developed countries could exploit less developed ones as the latter accommodates more significant numbers of refugees mostly due to geographical reasons. Their analysis shows that smaller countries bear more burden in terms of accommodation, while larger ones put more money and effort into peacekeeping (p. 366). Consequently, it is not crystal clear who is

exploiting whom, but the existence of the collective action problem seems to have shaped the ways scholars developed their solution models.

Since the reluctance of states in establishing a just refugee regime is seen as a collective action problem, the burden-sharing literature has come up with international cooperation models that would attract state participation because of the way the offer is designed. In other words, scholars maintained that they could encourage states to participate in solving a collective action problem by creating working groups that promote a fair burden-sharing among countries. In doing so, however, the burden-sharing literature completely ignored the moral side of the question: why should states, or better yet, the members of these states, accept the burden assigned to them by these models in the first place? “Because they suffer from a common problem and would like to eliminate it” is not a sufficient answer, especially so far as states’ individual action capacities are concerned. A country can simply close its doors and sit comfortably behind it rather than shoulder so much of a burden, especially if it has no close connection with refugees. “Because this model works” and “because they are capable of doing this” are not the right answers either. Yes, I can do it, and this is a doable way, but why should I see myself obliged to do it when there are less costly ways of keeping problems away from me? In this respect, burden-sharing models suffer from a lack of moral basis, which in turn weakens them in terms of crafting models that can prevent backlash in domestic politics. Some grand theorists like Boswell and Gibney call upon policymakers to find solutions to this problem by creating a more hospitable social context for refugees through social engineering; however, their offers cannot go further than creating ad hoc policies. We need to target the heart of the issue.

Communities believe that they help refugees because of humanitarian concerns.<sup>6</sup> When faced with large influxes, therefore, they conceive of it as an unfair burden. What is important here is to show a community that it *ought to* assume *this* burden *in this case* because it is their moral responsibility to do so. For this purpose, we need a model that distributes morality-based rather than capacity-based responsibilities. Instead of a capacity-based model, therefore, I will argue in the next chapter for a “meaning-based model” of distribution that will assign states different remedial duties according to their different levels of outcome responsibilities and social connections with refugees in a given case.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter summarized the central debates in the literature on refugees. As it is presented here, the literature consists of two categories, namely, grand migration theories and burden-sharing models. In the first category, statism and cosmopolitanism are the two schools that try to find an answer to the “rights vs. rights” question: whose rights should be deemed more critical, the communal right to self-determination, or the individual’s right to life, liberty, security, and freedom? I argued that grand migration theories provide essential moral principles on how we should treat refugees; however, they develop a uniform approach to refugees and fail to offer practical solutions that capture the nuances across refugee cases. Cosmopolitan ideas border on utopianism, and statist arguments are generally stuck in a deadlock in practical terms. The second category, on the other hand, tries to redress this shortcoming by creating practical burden-

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<sup>6</sup> I clearly observed this attitude in Turkey toward Syrian refugees during my field research. Turkish people think that it is acceptable to help Syrians to a certain point because they are humans in need and also their neighbors. What is important here is that helping Syrians is seen as charity, not duty. This is the way government officials explicitly present this issue. “Now, there are more Syrians than we can help,” they say. It is striking to observe that no one mentions Turkey’s involvement and intervention in Syria as one of the causes of the increase in the number of Syrian refugees. My model will argue that Turkey’s accommodation of Syrians is not charity, but a moral obligation toward these people. Paying for what you have done should generate a different emotion than paying for extra charities you had no intention to make.

sharing models. These models focus on developing ways of international cooperation with the help of practicality and fairness in terms of burden-sharing. I claimed, however, that they lack the moral basis to convince states and their communities why they should accept the burdens assigned to them in the first place. There must be a point where the ethical principles of grand theories and the burden-sharing models can meet: what is missing in the literature is a model that distributes duties toward refugees according to varying moral responsibilities in each case. This study is an attempt to fill this gap by establishing the “meaning-based model.” The next chapter builds this theoretical model and explains the rationale behind its construction.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CONSTRUCTING THE MEANING-BASED MODEL

Political theories that assume an ideal world (or a close-to-ideal world where states function well enough to provide security and fundamental human rights for their subjects) perceive the refugee issues only as exceptions (Rawls 1999; Risse 2012). In such a world, we would not have refugees; or, even if we had, they would be the product of exceptional circumstances, such as a natural disaster or an unlikely case of revolution. Refugee numbers would always be small in this political environment, and refugees could be taken care of by other communities without much hardship. Another feature of an ideal world would be the immediate punishment of the culprits that are directly responsible for producing refugees. If their vicious actions could be stopped in a timely manner, there would be no reason for a “global refugee crisis” to exist.

We do not live in this world. According to the latest UN official numbers, the series of events worldwide have displaced around 48 million people internationally. The realities of our non-ideal world, where we cannot easily eliminate the sources of refugee-producing environments, necessitate other members of the international society to deal with this immense number of displaced people. Unavoidably, in many places where refugees have become concentrated, be it refugee camps or urban slums, they suffer from dire circumstances, low life standards, lack of public services, health problems, and abuse. As if these troubles are not

enough, they also find themselves in a position to deal with the public resentment that the host communities develop against them.

As the previous chapter has shown, grand migration theories have failed to construct a response to the particular needs of refugees. Especially in the ethics of forced displacement, normative theorists usually speak as though we live in a close-to-ideal world and fall short of modifying their theories to guide states as they struggle to respond to immense refugee numbers. Approaches that focus on the current non-ideal circumstances fare no better so far as refugee crises are concerned. Cosmopolitan thinkers find the solution to the refugee problem in adhering to open- or porous-borders approaches, reducing the state's authority to police its borders in the face of the rights of refugees (Carens 2015; Benhabib 2004). Statist thinkers reject this solution because it is either impractical and will not yield the intended results or violates the idea of the communal right to self-determination and freedom of association (Miller 2016; Wellman 2008; Walzer 1983). Yet statist thinkers cannot provide a solution either. The burden-sharing models produced within this school of thought tend to conceive the refugee problem as a "collective action" problem (Hathaway and Neve 1997; Schuck 1997; Roper and Barria 2010; Thielemann 2018). Therefore, they offer international cooperation models that are supposed to attract state participation through their effectiveness and practicality. In doing so, however, they forget to answer a critical ethical question. Why would communities accept their shares of the refugee burden assigned to them by these models in the first place – especially in cases where there are no unique connections between the refugees and host communities? Why should they accept such distribution proposals when it is another viable option to simply turn a blind eye to refugees?

The apparent problem in the global refugee crisis is the high number of refugees.

Refugees do not present a great issue if their cases are only exceptions, and their numbers so small as our major political theories are ready to accept. In short, the high numbers force us to modify our theoretical thinking. Incorporating high numbers of people (especially when they are different in age, culture, religion, socio-economic status, etc.) in a community within a short period raises significant domestic policy challenges. Their inclusion results in changes in age profile, population size, skill distribution in the labor force, demands on education, health care, other social services, and cultural makeup of communities. These are legitimate concerns, at least from the statist perspective, caused by the sheer size of the population who desperately need resettlement. However, can burden-sharing be reduced to distribution calculations that are based solely on communities' material capacities? Should we not have some ethical criteria to help us understand whether the burden our community takes in a given case is fair or not? Could it not be the case that our community must morally assume more duties toward a particular refugee group than other members of the international community? Would we have the moral right to complain about our burden?

Protracted refugee crises are fundamentally different from other global problems because what needs distribution is the *people* themselves. Conventional helping methods utilized in tackling other global issues like poverty, such as transferring goods or money, do not work in these refugee situations. Refugees need security and political membership, which are not distributable. The idea that refugees could be helped where they are, either by establishing safe zones or assembling them in refugee camps until the problem is solved, becomes increasingly ineffective when the political crises or civil wars remain unresolved. Refugee camps are supposed to be temporary sanctuaries, yet the average time spent in the camps today, which is

around 17 years, belies standard definitions of “temporary” (Parekh 2017). The world’s oldest camps are over 70 years of age, and there are people born into these camps who never set foot outside. Given the horrendous living conditions and massive human rights violations in the camps, it is evident that they are not a morally acceptable solution for refugee crises. Yet, they have become the *de facto* solution in the absence of a way to distribute refugees among other communities that could, or should, offer help. In short, distribution should take place, but how is it going to be done? Is it going to be done arbitrarily and haphazardly, as is the case today when people try to escape from where they are and “illegally” and hazardously try to reach affluent societies’ borders? Or could there be a way that could be planned and organized, and at the same time considered as just and fair?<sup>1</sup> Could we develop a model that identifies which communities should do more than others in such refugee cases and sketches the limits of their obligations?

The rest of this chapter discusses the plausibility of an alternative theoretical model, the meaning-based model, as a way to identify and distribute the duties toward refugees among different communities. This model will show the importance of examining refugee cases separately and deciding what a particular refugee group “means” to distinct prospective helping communities before allocating duties among them. In other words, a host community should determine its obligations toward a specific group of refugees according to what those refugees mean to it. This model aims to develop an ethics-based distribution idea that will help communities identify their particular duties in a given refugee crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, I do not take up the moral definition of justice. This question would require a whole separate work. And we have many examples of such works in the literature. When I say, “a just and fair distribution,” I refer to the idea that there will not be strong reasons for the communities to believe that the share assigned to them by the meaning-based model is unfair. This does not mean that they will willingly agree to comply with it. But it does mean that they will not be able to refuse it as being unfair. It is like a criminal sentenced to imprisonment: he would not like the verdict, but he also has nothing to say against it because he knows he is guilty. So long as the punishment is fair, he cannot morally refuse to serve it.



### The Meaning-Based Model in the Context of Domestic Analogy

The model's organizing principle is based on a domestic analogy. The domestic analogy, as a method, derives its power from how we perceive our relations with other agents in our domestic lives and tries to apply these moral principles to the international level. The current international system, however, contains a crucial hardship in applying a domestic analogy. Every case we consider in terms of domestic relations, be it family, neighborhood, marriage, or club, presumes the existence of an overarching authority (state) to which these establishments are subject. Yet this is not the case for relations between nation-states. Therefore, a domestic analogy has a chronic weakness that falls short in applying what we have concluded by it "exactly" to the international level. Still, this method is the most plausible one we have in formulating the moral principles in our relations to people outside our political community.

The meaning-based model's main claim is that not every refugee *means* the same to every political community. If the meanings vary, so should the duties. In other words, if our sense of responsibility toward someone changes according to what this person means to us, then the same principle should also work concerning refugees. The more a refugee means to a certain community, the more this community owes to that refugee. For clarification, the phrase "what someone means to others" requires more elaboration.

The following analogy will work with some hypothetical domestic cases from our everyday lives. In this example, there are two actors: the rich person (RP), who is financially able to help someone else, and the poor person (PP), who is financially in need of help.<sup>2</sup> Now, let

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<sup>2</sup> The rich person and the poor person in this example symbolize the person who possesses a specific asset needed by someone else and the person who needs that particular asset, respectively. Since the required element in this example is money, the actors are the rich person and the poor person. What is important here is *not* that the persons have or don't have the money per se, but that the former has in possession what the latter lacks and needs. When it

us consider six different knock-on-the-door scenarios in which these two people face each other. That is, PP knocks on RP's door and demands help, which is the moment we encounter these two people and try to determine whether and how RP should help PP. Here are some possibilities:

*Scenario 1:* RP and PP do not know each other at all. However, PP has a powerful reason to demand help from RP: loan sharks are closing in on her, and her life is in danger. She is fond of gambling, and she recently lost a great deal of money in a game, becoming indebted to dangerous people. Now, they threaten her life, and she desperately asks RP to take her in and cover her debt.

*Scenario 2:* PP is the niece of RP. She gambled, lost all her money, became indebted to the loan sharks, and they are chasing her. PP goes to her uncle, explains the situation, and asks him to take her in and cover her debt.

*Scenario 3:* RP and PP do not know each other at all. However, PP desperately needs help because thieves robbed her of her belongings. She is penniless and homeless. So, she asks RP to support her financially and find her a place to stay.

*Scenario 4:* PP is the niece of RP. Thieves robbed her, and she lost everything she had. Now she is at the door of her uncle RP and asks for financial help to find a place to stay and settle down for herself.

*Scenario 5:* RP and PP do not know each other at all. They met in a bar last night, and after some drinking, RP took PP to a gambling place and encouraged her to play, although she had no intention to do so. She lost all her money, became indebted to dangerous people, and now they chase her. She knocks on RP's door and asks him to take her in and cover her debt.

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comes to displaced people in protracted refugee situations, this asset is political and social membership. This example should not lead the reader to the conclusion that helping refugees prerequisites a certain level of wealth.

*Scenario 6:* PP is the niece of RP. She was taken to a place of gambling by her uncle and encouraged to play games, although she had no intention to do so. She lost all her money, became indebted to dangerous people, and now they chase her. She knocks on RP's door and asks him to cover her debt.

In all of these scenarios, the demand for help starts at the same moment: when the poor person knocks on the door, and the rich person opens it. At this moment, the rich person who can help and the poor person who needs help are in the same situation in every scenario: RP has money at his disposal, and PP has nothing and is in desperate need. However, it is not so hard to imagine that, in each case, we would feel RP should have a different degree of responsibility toward PP. In other words, the moral strength we attach to PP's demand for help from RP is different in each scenario. Why? Because in every scenario, PP *means something different* to RP.

Intuitively, it seems plausible to claim that PP means more to RP in some scenarios than in others. We can thus rank these levels of responsibilities. To start with the extremes, take scenarios 1 and 6. In scenario 1, RP faces a person who has no connection to himself, in whose misery he has no share, and who has gotten herself into trouble because of her own mistakes. In contrast, in scenario 6, RP faces a person who is a close family member and for whose misery he is in large part responsible. PP means more to, and therefore has a greater claim on, RP in scenario 6 than in scenario 1. Therefore, RP should assume more responsibility to help PP in the former than in the latter. Similar arguments apply to other scenarios. Because RP does not know PP, for instance, one could claim that PP's getting herself involved in gambling should generate less responsibility for RP to take care of her than PP's being robbed by some thieves (the difference between scenarios 1 and 3). One could claim that RP should have more responsibility toward his robbed *niece* than the case where the robbed PP is not a relative of RP (the difference

between scenarios 4 and 3). If RP is involved in PP's misery, PP's kinship to RP increases RP's level of responsibility toward PP compared to the case where they do not have such a relationship (the difference between scenarios 5 and 6). Overall, the responsibility of RP toward PP increases as we move from scenario 1 to scenario 6. The changes in three variables explain this increase.

The first variable is whether PP has some responsibility for what happened to herself. In the domestic analogy, the difference between "gambling" and "falling victim to a robbery" captures this distinction. *Ceteris paribus*, PP's need for money means less to RP if she gambled and lost all her money, compared to her need for money when thieves robbed her. In the former, she bears responsibility for her misery that the latter case lacks, decreasing what PP's demand means to RP compared to the case where thieves robbed her. Applying this variable to refugee cases, however, raises a crucial, and controversial, question. We normally conceive of refugees as people wholly lacking agency. They are usually portrayed as victims, attacked by some brutal dictator, or driven out of their countries because of a bloody civil war, which puts them in a situation where they had no power to change their fates. When it comes to helping them, asking whether they had any responsibility for their predicament (which corresponds to gambling in the example) appears callous, tantamount to blaming the victim. This variable, therefore, requires a separate normative discussion on the plausibility of self-responsibility in refugee situations, for which this study is not the proper place.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Although I believe that looking for self-responsibility in refugee cases is plausible to a certain extent (discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation), I leave this discussion to another project, and here I proceed in agreement with the conventional claim that refugees' responsibility for their fate should not change other communities' obligations toward them.

The second variable that changes RP's level of responsibility toward PP is how they are connected. In the scenarios, connection involved whether PP was RP's niece. *Ceteris paribus*, if RP is the uncle of PP, this family relationship requires *him, among other helpers*, to assume more responsibility toward her because now they are bound by a special bond that PP does not have to any other person. When applied to refugee cases, these special bonds take the form of social identities, which include similarities in terms of ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, and ideology. Other things being equal, if a refugee is connected to a community by one or more of these bonds, this community should assume more responsibility toward that refugee than another community with no parallel connections.

The third variable that changes RP's level of responsibility toward PP is whether he has any involvement in the circumstances that put PP in need of money. In the analogy, RP bears responsibility because he encouraged PP to gamble. This situation is different from a case where RP would rob PP of her belongings because, in the example of gambling, RP's intention might not be leaving PP penniless (although the result is the same). RP might honestly be willing to take PP somewhere where she can have some fun, but things might get out of control as the night continues. Although RP might have no bad intentions, his involvement in PP's misery requires him to assume more responsibility toward her than in the cases where he did not encourage her to gamble. When applied to refugee cases, this point requires us to clarify who contributes to the increase in the number of refugees. Intentionally producing refugees is already a crime. Any other type of direct or indirect involvement, such as backing one of the sides in a civil war or stepping in to topple a dictator, should put more responsibility on the actors toward people turned into refugees by these events.

This domestic analogy, demonstrating changes in what PP means to RP in various circumstances, can be applied to refugee situations. The three variables that govern the analogy between the simulated scenarios and real-life refugee situations are: whether the refugees have responsibilities toward themselves, whether they have social connections to host communities, and whether host communities have any involvement in what has turned these people into refugees. Next, we need to show how these categories could be described in detail and turned into a theoretical model. This study currently leaves the first variable aside. But the other two variables are more than enough to sustain the claim that there must be some variation in what different refugees mean to different host communities and what they could expect from them.

### **The Meaning-Based Model**

#### **A Note of Conceptual Clarification**

In the ethics of forced displacement, scholars use the terms “duty,” “obligation,” and “responsibility” almost interchangeably. This usage is confusing. What do we mean by asking, “Who should be held responsible for these Syrian refugees?” Two answers appear at once. Either we mean to ask who caused these Syrians to be displaced, or we mean to ask who should take care of them. Maybe we mean both. And what do we mean by asking, “What are our responsibilities toward Syrian refugees?” The answer is something like “providing them with shelter.” While in the first instance, responsibility refers to either a causal relationship or people who can help, in the second instance, it relates to the things that refugees could receive. The term “responsibility” contains all three meanings.

A conceptual differentiation between “responsibility” and “obligation” (or duty) might help us resolve this confusion. This study uses responsibility with either of the two adjectives, “outcome” or “remedial,” which is an idea borrowed from David Miller (2007). “Outcome

responsibility” refers to the agents that contribute to the increase in the number of refugees.

“Remedial responsibility” refers to the actors and communities that should take care of refugees.

On the other hand, the term “obligation” or “duty” refers to the types (or substance) of help refugees have the right to demand from other communities in a given case. What follows is the explanation of the rationale behind these conceptual distinctions.

### **Two Different Types of Responsibility in Refugee Cases**

Drawing our attention to the ambiguity in the usage of the concept of responsibility, especially in global justice issues such as helping the global poor, Miller distinguishes two types of responsibility. One is “outcome responsibility,” which seeks to identify the actors that have contributed to the outcome. The other is “remedial responsibility,” which looks for actors who can help those in need. If outcome responsibility is about identifying the ones who created the mess, remedial responsibility is about identifying who should clean it up. This distinction is instrumental in refugee studies because it is not always possible to assign responsibility-based duties in refugee crises as in many global justice issues. That is to say, actors that intentionally produce refugees could not be assumed to shoulder the burden of taking care of them: one would not have expected Hitler to help the Jews in Germany during the Holocaust. Remedial responsibility steps in to show us how to find those who can or should help the victims in such circumstances.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Though a good point at which to start a discussion on responsibility, Miller’s distinction needs some further work. I make some modifications and improvements to his distinction in order to turn it into the meaning-based model. Although his discussion on outcome responsibility is quite clear, Miller’s shift to remedial responsibility is somewhat vague. When he makes this distinction, one expects him to draw a powerful connection between outcome and remedial responsibilities. However, he includes other categories in his formula that only confuse the reader. His rationale is understandable: he tries to keep remedial responsibility as broad as possible so that the actors that could be identified as helpers increase. By doing that, however, he weakens the analytical power of the distinction he has just made. First, he claims that there are two fundamental types of responsibility, namely, outcome and remedial. Then, he contends that to find remedially responsible ones, we need to consider five other categories *along with* outcome responsibility: moral responsibility, causal responsibility, benefit, capacity, and ties of community. This he

Building on this distinction, the meaning-based model claims that: i) outcome responsibility should bear a morally central position; ii) it should be made even more potent by also including moral, causal, and benefit-based responsibilities in it; iii) communal ties should be detailed and brought together under a broader category of social connections; and iv) material capacity should be dropped from the ethical analysis. These steps will lead to a clearer picture of responsibility: outcome responsibility, together with social connections, will identify those who should be remedially responsible in a refugee case. In other words, it will help us identify which refugees mean the most (and the least) to prospective host communities for a particular refugee group. This analysis will complete the first part of the meaning-based model, finding the ones who caused the mess and the ones who should clean it up.

*The Importance of Outcome Responsibility:* Outcome responsibility is a crucial concept because of the importance it attaches to human agency. The idea of human agency makes it easier to point one's finger at responsible parties. It includes many human qualities such as planning, calculation, prediction, target-oriented action, intention, premeditation, precaution, etc. If we are to talk about global crises like that of refugees, we must single out human agency as the most critical way to find who is behind the mess. From this perspective, in identifying remedial responsibilities, outcome responsibility should be the most fundamental category to start with, not just any other category.

*The Components of Outcome Responsibility:* Miller draws distinctions between moral, causal, and outcome responsibilities. Moral responsibility refers to wronging another person,

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calls his "connection theory": if the needy have a connection to the helper in one or more of these ways, then the helper has remedial responsibility toward them. But if that is so, if outcome responsibility is just one category among others, why single it out in the first place? I believe how he proceeds does not perfectly serve his purpose in this sense. However, one should also not forget that he is making this analysis on the individual level. What would be problematic is to use it to understand international matters without making necessary adjustments.



such as not fulfilling an agreement or not honoring a promise. Causal responsibility refers to why something happened: it is different from outcome responsibility in that not all causes of an outcome necessarily have agency. For instance, a drunk driver and a punctured tire could have the same candidacy for being causally responsible for a car accident. This distinction concludes that one could be causally responsible for some damage but not morally or outcome responsible. For instance, if you drop a figurine you were holding because you heard a loud gunshot behind you, you are causally responsible for the damage, but it was a pure accident. Genuine accidents relieve the actor from moral or outcome responsibility. Outcome responsibility includes intentional human action. Yet, it is not limited to deliberate actions. If you start a fire in your backyard and it spreads to your neighbor's garden, you have outcome responsibility for the damage, even though it was not your intention to set your neighbor's yard on fire.

When applied to the state level, especially the case of protracted refugee situations, Miller's distinctions should be handled carefully. First, refugees are, by definition, forcibly displaced people, which means that they are morally wronged. Second, to be entirely free of moral responsibility for refugees, we should have absolutely no social, political, or economic connections with them. This argument is implausible, given the current interconnectedness of the states in the global international system. Even if we had absolutely no links to refugees, our humanity as a common ground would put some moral responsibility on our shoulders. In short, it does not help to consider moral responsibility as a separate category from outcome responsibility in refugee situations.

Similarly, causal responsibility does not play a separate role in prolonged refugee crises. For one, we cannot talk about agent-free situations that produce refugees who cannot return to

their homes. There is always some actor, typically political, whose acts result in such refugees.<sup>5</sup>

Second, it is also not possible to talk about genuine accidents in protracted refugee crises.

Miller's causal responsibility relieves the actor from the moral burden if the incident is an actual accident. This situation does not apply to refugees. Political or social processes produce refugees, none of which could be reduced to genuine accidents. For instance, civil wars do not start accidentally, or actors do not mistakenly support a particular side in a civil war. States do not accidentally stand with a group of people in a conflict; they do not accidentally intervene in another country or meddle with its domestic affairs. All these actions that contribute to refugee production require agency and cannot be genuine accidents. Therefore, considering causal responsibility and moral responsibility as separate categories in refugee crises is not analytically useful.

The argument here is that moral and causal responsibilities should come together under the category of outcome responsibility. This category must also include the actors that benefit from a refugee-producing situation. This attempt will clarify what to look for in refugee crises and strengthen the conceptual power of outcome responsibility, turning it into a more useful tool in finding the actors that could be credited or debited in a given refugee case. In this proposed usage of the term, any involvement by any actor in any kind of refugee-producing environment creates outcome responsibility for these particular refugees. These actors could be persons, political or military officials, armies, states, governments, ethnic or ideological groups, international organizations, domestic companies, multinational corporations, etc. Involvement

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<sup>5</sup> The only context in which this argument would not work is a natural disaster that hits a country by surprise, which is not worth considering for my purpose here because a) this would be an exception among other refugee cases, and b) such damages caused by natural disasters are ideally much easier to redress than those caused by political disasters. Refugees created by climate change do not directly fit in this category because its impacts are disastrous either due to wrong policies or lack of necessary precautions – which, again, speaks to human agency.

might include intervention, war, financial, political, or military support, overtly siding with a particular group, covertly meddling with domestic issues (such as orchestrating a coup through secret services), etc. With this theoretical framework in mind, it would be possible to trace the events that produce refugees back to their actors and identify their outcome responsibility. And it would also be possible to rank their levels of outcome responsibility according to their levels of involvement in a given case, which will also help determine their places on the remedial responsibility scale (see below).

With or without the intention of producing refugees, all kinds of involvement in such environments are directly connected to remedial responsibility in refugee cases. This argument is straight forwardly related to the type of harm inflicted upon refugees. In every migration theory, refugees occupy a special place. Even Wellman (2008), who theoretically argues for the moral plausibility of excluding everyone from one's political community, provides an additional explanation as to why this principle should also apply to refugees. Refugees are a special category because they lack access to irreplaceable goods. Their lives are at risk, and they have lost their right to become part of a political community. In Walzer's words, "they cannot be helped by any other means than taking them in" (1983, p. 48). This condition is what I call "absolute deprivation."<sup>6</sup> In situations that result in a person's absolute deprivation, the actors who got themselves involved in them, regardless of their intentions, should be added to the outcome, and hence, remedial responsibility list.

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<sup>6</sup> By "absolute deprivation," I mean the lack of communal and political membership, which is the essence of being a displaced person living in a protracted refugee situation, i.e., living in limbo. In our global political system, the only way to live a decent life necessitates communal and political membership. Therefore, refugees who cannot return to their homelands are in a state of absolute deprivation since they have lost such a membership. Absolute deprivation in refugee cases means not to say that refugees lose everything, such as their material wealth (although this is the case most of the time for the majority of the displaced).

To get help from another domestic analogy: assume that you are walking on a street when suddenly you realize that a bicycle is coming at you. As a reflex, you jump aside to avoid the bike. But you hit the person next to you, which causes her to drop her bread into the mud. This case is a genuine accident. You might apologize to this person and walk away without feeling a strong responsibility to replace the muddy loaf with a new one. However, this sentiment changes when you realize that this was a homeless person, telling you that she had bought that bread with her last penny. This case is now one of absolute deprivation because she lacks the means to get her another loaf of bread. In this situation, although you did not intend to deprive that homeless person of her bread, the responsibility to help her obtain a new one falls upon your shoulders *above everyone else* walking on that street. This is an example of how you could have more duties than others in a situation of absolute deprivation. To take this example further, consider the case where your intentions are “less than good,” though not “bad.” For instance, you try to help a homeless person to get across the street so that you can earn the town’s best citizen money prize. Here, you are taking an action with the hope of benefiting from the outcome. Compared to the previous scenario, you should morally assume more duties toward the homeless person if you cause her to drop her loaf of bread into the mud in the process of “helping” her.

It is possible to think of refugees the same way. Since they are in a situation of absolute deprivation in terms of political membership (i.e., since they will lose their lives or lose their chances to pursue a dignified life if not taken in), any involvement in creating their situation creates remedial responsibility toward these people. Neither good intention nor lack of bad intention behind one’s acts saves the actor in this sense from assuming some responsibility.

*Identifying Social Connections:* The second component of the meaning-based model to identify remedially responsible actors in refugee cases is the social connections between

particular host communities and specific refugees. According to the domestic analogy presented at the very beginning of this chapter, *ceteris paribus*, the rich person should assume more responsibility toward the poor person if he has a bond of kinship. Generally speaking, the moral force behind this principle is self-evident at the individual level. The question is: to what extent is it plausible to assume the same for communities? Should communities shoulder more remedial responsibility toward refugees connected to them through some social bonds?

This argument is plausible in two respects. One is concerned with the nature of the problem. As discussed above, the case of refugees is one of absolute deprivation. These people must be taken in by some communities. As a result, we need to think of some criteria for their distribution. Why not consider social bonds? The second aspect that makes this argument plausible is more practical: if these people are going to be taken in by some communities, would not their integration be much easier if the two groups of people have things in common, like their worldviews, the way they organize their societies, their cultures, the things they believe in, and their ideologies? Walzer (1983) reasons that we should have more responsibilities toward those who suffer from persecution because they are like us. The Hungarians fleeing the Communist regime provide a case in point. During the Cold War, Western European communities were proudly admitting refugees who ran away from the Iron Curtain. Why not turn this into a general principle, and claim that societies in which refugees can most easily integrate must welcome them? However, this conclusion carries an important caveat. Social connections do not by themselves determine the remedial responsibilities toward refugees. In the meaning-based model, outcome responsibility always has more weight in identifying remedially responsible actors. This judgment is a matter of justice: the more one's part in increasing the damage, the more one

should be burdened with remedying it. Social bonds play a crucial role only after specifying outcome responsibility levels.

This conclusion also has some complications. The first problem with “the more outcome responsibility, the more remedial responsibility” argument is that actors with the highest outcome responsibility cannot be assigned remedial duties in refugee cases. Recall the example of the Jews facing the cruelty of Hitler. Similarly, we cannot expect the Assad regime to take care of Syrian refugees or the Israeli government to give asylum rights to Palestinian refugees. The “direct cause”s of creating refugees (i.e., actors that intentionally produce refugees) are enemies of the targeted people; therefore, it is not practical to put them on the remedial responsibility scale. They will not assume that type of responsibility. But this does not mean that they will get away with what they have done. Although the remedial responsibility scale will mark them as absent, they will be included in the obligation scale (see below). We will either ask for compensation for the damage they have done or, if they refuse, we will apply sanctions to make them comply with the demands. The next section on the obligations will elaborate more on this idea.

The second problem with “the more outcome responsibility, the more remedial responsibility” argument concerns what we should do if some actors have high outcome responsibility for producing refugees but limited or no social connections with these refugees. Although it morally makes sense to assign actors with outcome responsibility a more significant burden in welcoming refugees, it does not practically make any sense if the host community and refugees cannot get along. This issue becomes more problematic in countries that identify themselves by a particular ideology, nationality, or religion and feel their communities disrupted

or “contaminated” by massive inflows of strangers who do not have much in common with them.

The clearest example is the Islamophobic sentiment currently prevalent in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

How to deal with cases in which actors with outcome responsibility have little or no social connections with refugees? For instance, to what extent should Iran, a Shiite Muslim community, be assigned remedial responsibilities toward Sunni Muslim Syrian refugees, given that Iran is deeply responsible for Syria’s crisis? Actors with outcome responsibility should not be required to accept refugees but be obligated to provide substantial financial support for the states that admit them. If state agents are not trusted, neutral third-parties could deliver this support through international organizations that take care of refugees, such as the UN agencies. In the example above, Iran should not be expected to admit Sunni Muslims but must provide financial support for countries like Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon that accommodate many of them. It is implausible to force communities to take in refugees who are difficult to integrate into the new environment. If these two groups have sharp distinctions, this could spark further conflicts in the host communities. But it is necessary to make the actors with outcome responsibility pay for the damage they have contributed to bringing about. If they refuse to comply, sanctions should apply against them. If they still resist, international organizations like the UN should issue at least a condemnation of their non-compliance. At worst, international

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<sup>7</sup> The Hungarian journalist who kicked a Muslim refugee on the ground was emblematic of this sentiment. An eye-opening analysis concerning why Hungarians have shown such open hostility to Syrian refugees crossing their borders is presented in a recent book by Betts and Collier (2017). A fundamental part of the Hungarian national identity was built on the historical moment of heroism when they prevented the advance of infidels (the Ottoman Empire) into the heart of Europe. It was no surprise, then, that they felt their national identity threatened by thousands of Muslims (against whom they have been protecting their lands) who were entering their country. Social connections do matter when matching refugees and host communities. The individual experiences of refugees provide further support. One Syrian refugee I interviewed in Turkey told me that he wanted to return to Turkey after living for a couple of years in Austria, although its government had granted him asylum. He did not feel safe there; the way Austrians looked at him changed after they saw that his wife, who joined him later on, was wearing a headscarf. He was very concerned that he could not live the spiritual life he wants to live in Austria, so he chose to return to Turkey, knowing that he would not be given the same opportunities available in Austria.

condemnation would have a symbolic significance. At best, it could encourage countries to behave more carefully or even make them do some parts of what is required to avoid the blame.

The next question is how to identify social connections. What are they, or how can they be categorized? I am sympathetic to the argument that the most vital social relations between two peoples are ideological and cultural similarities, ways of life, worldviews, religious similarities, and finally, ethnic or national kinship. These categories are not precisely calculable or organizable. It is up to our intuition how to rank these categories, but at the same time, this is not entirely arbitrary. We will not send an Alawite Syrian, a Sunni Syrian, and a Christian Syrian to the same place unless it is an immigrant country such as the United States. In short, morally speaking, it makes sense to take social connections seriously when deciding which community should take care of which refugees.

*Dropping capacity from the analysis:* At first glance, it might seem odd to claim that a theoretical model that aims to identify and distribute the responsibilities toward refugees should not bother with communities' material capacities to help. However, there are two reasons to doubt the virtue of utilizing this criterion in the ethics of forced displacement. First, "material capacity" seems to have no explanatory power about the actual helping in the world today. Scholars usually refer to GDP per capita, population density, availability of jobs, and integration history of a host community when they try to explain what capacity means (Miller 2007; Gibney 2004; Carens 2015). However, the facts defy the plausibility of this approach. Among the top ten host countries that accommodate more than 10 million refugees, there is only one developed country: Germany. Betts and Collier state that "paradoxically, many of the most generous host countries in the world are not even full signatories [to the Geneva Convention]: Jordan, Lebanon, Thailand, Nepal, and Turkey, for instance" (2017, p. 42). If material capacity is such an



ineffective term in explaining how people receive help today, why include it in an ethics-based model in the first place?

More importantly, the second reason for dismissing capacity in the meaning-based model is that helping refugees is not a matter of possessing the material capacity but having political determination to help. Recent studies that focus on policy issues indicate that lack of political will on national and international levels is the most significant explanatory factor that accounts for the failure in taking care of large numbers of refugees. Betts and Collier provide an excellent example of how criteria like GDP per capita or population density remain irrelevant to helping refugees when there is political determination to help them. One example is Jordan, which is not an affluent community but accommodates more than 2 million refugees, while the nation's population is around 6 million. These refugees are hardly living in excellent conditions, but this is not what we are seeking. Jordanians themselves are not living in perfect conditions. And many of the refugees remain still in refugee camps, which, as already mentioned, is not a humane way of living. However, Jordan is a country that has shown the political determination to create a business and trade area within its boundaries where refugees are primarily employed. Jordan's was a pilot endeavor to open up workspaces for refugees and integrate them into the Jordanian community, which other affluent societies financially supported through international organizations. Most importantly, though it might not be perfect, it was a good start and has worked. There is no reason why the number of such endeavors could not increase. In short, if material capacity were to be the main parameter to assign responsibility, the example of Jordan could have been simply impossible. But if there is political determination, this example shows, states can raise funds to help refugees in different ways.

This discussion completes the first part of the meaning-based model. The theoretical formula established so far determines which actors should be remedially responsible for refugees in a given case. It also provides the ranking of their responsibility levels. The model starts with focusing on a single case. It primarily examines the events in that particular case, tracing them back to all actors that involved themselves in the refugee-producing environment in any way. This examination gives us the outcome responsibility scale, on which we rank actors with outcome responsibility from high to low. This criterion is the most decisive one in determining what a refugee *means* to a community. The more outcome responsibility, the more refugees mean to that society. But this is not the end of the story. The second step is to look for social connections between actors with outcome responsibility and refugees. This examination will help us determine what sorts of help refugees could demand from actors with outcome responsibility. Among actors with the same levels of outcome responsibility, the strength of social connections will lead to understanding which refugee means more to which community. This discussion is incomplete without considering the things that refugees could demand, i.e., the types of help societies could offer. This point requires a discussion of obligations, which the next section covers. Table 1 below summarizes the first part of the meaning-based model.

### **Remedial Responsibility and Obligation**

This section discusses the types of help communities can provide for refugees. The argument here relies on the distinction between remedial responsibility and obligation. The former shows to which community the refugees mean more in a given case: *who above else* should take care of these particular refugees in this situation? However, a discussion on the meaning of “taking care” remains. The concept of “obligation” will serve this purpose by

specifying *what* refugees should demand from the most, medium, and least remedially responsible actors in a given case.

Table 1. Finding Remedially Responsible Actors

| <b>Outcome Responsibility</b>   | <b>+ Social Connections</b>   | <b>= Remedial Responsibility</b>   |
|---|---|--|
| Any type of actor that has any type of involvement in, or benefits from, an environment that produces refugees: persons, government or army officials, states, armed groups, ethnic or religious communities, international organizations, companies, multinational corporations; ranked according to their levels of involvement in the issue. | Any type of social connection between host communities and refugees: ideological similarity, lifestyle and worldview commonalities, religious similarity, ethnic or national kinship; ranked according to their effectiveness in making integration easier. | Ranked according to outcome responsibility (OR); if actors have similar OR levels, then according to the strength of the social connections between them and the refugees that they contributed to their creation. Gives the scale of to which community the refugee means the most and the least, according to which what sort of help should be expected from that community will be determined. |

So far as the obligations toward refugees are concerned, the ethics of forced displacement suffers from three problems. First, there is a lack of theoretical models that distribute specific duties among particular societies, which is a gap the meaning-based model aims to address. The second problem is the idea that once a refugee reaches one's borders, she justly deserves the same package of help (life, security, extensive rights, political membership) from every community in the long run if she were to be taken in. Against this approach, the first part of the meaning-based model has claimed that not every refugee means the same to every community. Therefore, there should be some differences between what different communities should offer to different groups of refugees. Failure in acknowledging this fact leads to the third problem that reveals itself in real life: the panic expressed by societies that face large numbers of refugees

asking for access to their communities. These are serious shortcomings that boil down to the question: is it impossible to assign different duties to different communities toward different refugee groups?

The meaning-based model envisions a world in which this allocation of duties could materialize. This model's main aim is to provide criteria to make a division of labor in every protracted refugee case, determine which community should do what for which refugees, and then direct refugees according to this distribution. In this model, not every society will have to admit refugees, nor will every community promise the same rights and opportunities to every refugee. Would it not be much easier for refugees to decide whether and where to move if they knew what they would be entitled to in a state they plan to reach? Would it not be much easier for the communities to share the burden if they knew what they morally owed to a particular group of refugees in a given case? The answer to these questions is a conditional "yes," because it requires first that these distributions are justly made among prospective host communities while at the same time observing the needs of refugees.

My standpoint challenges the idea that once a community takes in a refugee, it should grant her a full package of rights in the long term; and if the community plans not to give her this package in the long term, she should not be admitted today. Whether societies should provide the full package should be determined according to their position on the obligation scale. Suppose the meaning-based model requires a community to give less than a full package to a particular refugee. In that case, it cannot be just for that refugee to demand more from that community because if the model is working, there will be another community that owes her what she is demanding. She should be heading there. If she insists that this is the country she wants to live in, then she should be content with the type of help that country is assigned to provide her by the

model. Many thinkers believe that once a community grants access to someone, the path to citizenship should be open for her (Walzer 1983; Benhabib 2004; Carens 2015). In other words, the first admission requires the second admission (naturalization). The rationale behind this claim is that otherwise would lead to second-class citizenship, which is not acceptable in liberal-democratic theory. This conclusion seems humane, but paradoxically, it directly creates inhumane outcomes because this very principle encourages communities to be much more careful and selective in making their first admissions. In many cases, the refusal of the first admission results in disastrous outcomes, as in refugee cases. Two questions appear here. Is it better for refugees to suffer in camps or die trying to breach the barriers than have so-called second-class citizenship in other countries? And more importantly, does “not giving the same package to everyone” necessarily mean second-class citizenship?

About the first question, there is not much to say. Refusing to admit refugees on the ground that in a liberal democracy everyone should have the same rights package does not have more than rhetorical value. Such arguments conceal the primary motivation behind the refusal. Practically speaking, it seems that liberal democracies are quite comfortable in accommodating *de facto* second-class citizens. A country like the United States, for instance, contains more than 10 million illegal immigrants, who precisely fit in the definition of second-class citizen: they do not have political membership, cannot vote, cannot (legally) work, cannot reveal themselves to authorities, etc. But doubtlessly, these second-class citizens live a better life than a Somali refugee does in the Dadaab camp in Kenya. In this respect, a Somali refugee should not have a hard time choosing between Dadaab and Chicago. So, it seems that the main reason behind refusal is not the democratic-liberal concern with the implausibility of second-class citizenship but other political, socio-economic, and cultural ones. However, here is not the place to offer a

detailed discussion on this topic. In a nutshell, although we view second-class citizenship as morally implausible, we should acknowledge that it is not the host communities' principal concern behind refusal either.

As for the second question, an interesting answer comes from a cosmopolitan thinker. Cosmopolitans usually argue in favor of diminishing the power of state borders and the communal right to self-determination in deciding who to include and exclude – especially in the face of refugees. Carens (2015), for instance, contends that affluent democratic states should do much more in terms of admitting refugees because the values they embrace prioritize protecting human rights. His “theory of social membership” teaches that being present and spending time somewhere are the two only criteria needed for a person to be considered a community member. This theory presumes that she should have the same package of rights as every member of that community. As a result, he concludes that liberal democratic states should admit much larger numbers of refugees and provide them with the same rights as their citizens, which is also known as the “open borders approach.” Therefore, it is surprising to observe that another cosmopolitan thinker, Benhabib (2004), argues that democratic-liberal values do not necessarily require that everyone living in the same place should be entitled to the same rights package. Giving someone the right to work somewhere, for instance, does not necessarily require providing her also with the right to vote, which is an idea that is hardly acceptable even according to statist like Michael Walzer (1983). Benhabib, however, brings forward the example of the European Union. In the member countries, she argues, the rights are unpacked, and not everyone residing in the same country, be it for education or work, has the same rights as the citizens of that country. We do not take it as a human rights violation or a case of second-class citizenship when a French student or a German guest worker cannot vote or become a Belgian citizen. How many years she

spends in this country does not matter in this sense. This example unravels the moral plausibility of unpacking rights and giving different sets of rights to different groups of people under different circumstances.<sup>8</sup> The principal concern here is that the process should not lead to human rights violations or exploitation.<sup>9</sup>

The meaning-based model proposes following this lead and creating different sets of obligations for different communities toward different refugee groups. If we can identify and rank outcome responsibilities, social connections, and remedial responsibilities, we can also identify and rank obligations, i.e., various types of help that communities could provide for refugees. What kinds of aid could these be? Helping refugees involves a range of possibilities: offering safe passage through a country to reach another one that could accommodate them; providing a temporary sanctuary where they can have access to fundamental human rights such as protection of life, shelter, basic freedoms, and healthcare; securing basic social rights such as education and work; granting citizenship; providing citizenship and, additionally, some resources to help them establish a new life. To provide safe passage is the least a community can do for particular refugees, whereas providing them with citizenship rights and some extra resources is the most. This scale of obligations makes it possible to assign these different duties to different actors on our remedial responsibility scale for every given case. The higher an actor scores on the remedial responsibility scale, the most extensive commitment it gets on the obligation scale.

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<sup>8</sup> One can object to this argument, of course, by reasoning that all citizens in this example are members of the Union; that is, they have all sorts of rights as being members of the umbrella organization and as being nationals of some other European country. Yet this fact does not harm my argument: ideally, the meaning-based model works as if such a supra-structure exists; that is, every refugee in a given case has a place to go where she can enjoy the extensive rights of social and political membership.

<sup>9</sup> Although utterly crucial, I cannot take up this matter here in detail. This could be another project on its own.

The more a refugee means to a helping community, the more help she receives from that community. Table 2 demonstrates the whole formulation.

This theoretical formula can apply to any given refugee case to determine what the refugees produced in that particular case mean to other communities that could help. The remedial responsibility (RR) column numbers show refugees' importance level to the aid giver. As the importance decreases, so do the obligations. The following observations explain what to make of this table.

(i) RR is inapplicable to the actors that hold the highest position on the outcome responsibility (OR) scale (those that are the direct cause, that is, intentionally creating refugees) because they are the victimized group's enemies, directly creating refugees. It is unlikely that they will assume any obligations or accept their share. However, they still have a place on the obligation scale because they should be forced to pay compensation for the damage and sanctioned if refused or made subject to international condemnation.

(ii) The duty to admit refugees is given only to communities with strong social connections (SC) with refugees. These are numbers 1, 3, 5, and 7. Number 8, which has weak SC, is free to decide whether to admit refugees according to its socio-economic structure and refugees' identity. Others with weak SC are exempt from this obligation because it is impractical. An actor with a high OR and strong SC in a refugee case (#1) is required to take in a substantial number of refugees and provide them with citizenship rights and material resources to help them build a new life. An actor with medium OR and strong SC (#3) must take in a medium number of refugees and give them citizenship rights, even though it might be acceptable that it does not provide extra resources. An actor with low OR and strong SC (#5) is required to take in a modest or minimum number of refugees but will only be assigned to give them some basic social rights



and not be expected to promise membership in the long term. An actor with no OR and strong SC (#7) might make modest discretionary admission of refugees or make modest financial contributions to the communities that admit refugees.

(iii) Communities with weak SC to refugees are not required to accept them, but they must pay for the damage according to their OR level.<sup>10</sup> An actor with a high OR and weak SC (#2) should

Table 2. The Meaning-Based Model

| <b>Outcome Responsibility</b> | <b>+ Social Connections</b> | <b>= Remedial Responsibility</b> | <b>→ Obligations (Duties)</b>   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Direct cause                  | Enemy of the displaced      | Inapplicable                     | Compensation & Sanction & Condemnation  |
| High                          | Strong                      | #1                               | Citizenship rights + resources  |
| High                          | Weak                        | #2                               | Substantial financial contribution to the countries that take in refugees or IOs & Refugee camps & Safe passage |
| Medium                        | Strong                      | #3                               | Citizenship rights  |
| Medium                        | Weak                        | #4                               | Medium financial contribution & Refugee camps & Safe passage  |
| Low                           | Strong                      | #5                               | Social rights (education & work)  |
| Low                           | Weak                        | #6                               | Minimal financial contribution & Refugee Camps & Safe passage   |
| None                          | Strong                      | #7                               | Modest discretionary admission or financial support   |
| None                          | Weak                        | #8                               | Discretionary admission or financial support  |

<sup>10</sup> These actors are morally responsible for finding the funds necessary to do so. How this could be done, however, is not the central issue in this dissertation, as explained in the previous chapter. The principal concern here is to identify whose moral responsibility it should be to do so.

make substantial financial contributions to states that accommodate refugees or to international organizations that take care of refugees in those countries. It is also fair to expect them to provide temporary sanctuary or safe passage for refugees and help transport them if necessary. An actor with a medium OR and weak SC (#4) should make a medium financial contribution to refugee admitting states or IOs or provide refugees with a temporary sanctuary and basic human rights, ready to transport them to a country with higher obligations. An actor with low OR and weak SC (#6) should do even less: providing a minimal financial contribution or temporary sanctuary or safe passage for the refugees who have a place to go. Still, if a community is willing to admit some refugees, such as an actor with no OR and weak SC (#8), it could be left to its discretion to determine how this admission should take place.

(iv) Actors with no outcome responsibility (#7 and #8) are also included in the obligation scale. There could be different rationales behind this inclusion. One reason is related to humanitarian concerns, claiming that it should be a duty to help the needy because we are all humans.

However, the meaning-based model does not hold on to this stance. Still, it is reasonable to claim that if communities with no OR are capable of helping, they should appear in the obligation scale. Some cosmopolitan arguments with strong moral force justify this point. Theorists like Pogge (2008) and Carens (2015) underline the importance of acknowledging how affluent societies have established the current international system to serve their benefits. Therefore, the argument goes, the damage this system creates should require affluent Western communities to shoulder the burden to help. The whole responsibility should not, however, fall on Western shoulders. The system is working across the entire globe, but refugee situations differ enormously. In other words, we can acknowledge the role of the global system in deteriorating refugees' conditions, but we cannot assign the whole responsibility to the system's maintainers.

The meaning-based model follows this understanding and assigns duties following outcome responsibility. Still, at the same time, it includes affluent communities with no OR in a given case's obligation scale because they have a share in maintaining the global system as it is.

In the final analysis, this model aims to identify those communities that morally must do more for the refugees in a given case and sketch the limits of their help. It does not view refugee camps as a permanent solution because they are just a first response to refugees' needs. Since the meaning-based model has already identified those who should take in refugees, they should quickly leave the camps after necessary arrangements. The model's ultimate target is to clarify the burden every community should bear for the refugees in a given crisis. Since every case contains different actors with outcome responsibility and refugees from different backgrounds, it should be clear that they will mean differently to various communities in every case. This meaning is what we need to know before distributing refugees.

### **Responding to Possible Criticisms**

This section tries to foresee and address some criticisms that might target some aspects of the meaning-based model. Four possible arguments challenge the plausibility of using such a model to distribute duties toward refugees.

#### **Problems with the Domestic Analogy**

There might be some doubts regarding the plausibility of the domestic analogy itself, which was the starting point of this model. Using different hypothetical scenarios, I tried to show that our feeling of responsibility toward someone changes according to three variables:

- (i) the needy person's role in bringing the disaster upon herself,
- (ii) the type of connection we have to that person, and
- (iii) whether we have any sort of involvement in her misery.

Some might argue that this analogy does not have to work as I imagined. One could say that if the needy person is in danger of being killed by loan sharks (if I fail to cover her debt), her responsibility for bringing about her misery should make little difference for me in deciding to help her or not. Saving her life, if I can, should be my priority without making any further calculations. This argument has some moral force; however, it only presents part of the picture. Let it suffice here to say that real-life refugee situations do not *exactly* correspond to the scenarios in this analogy in two respects. First, different things could be given to refugees, whereas the analogy only includes one type of helping (money). The real-life question is not about stopping to help someone but changing the type of help if she bears responsibility for her plight, which is a point that the analogy does not cover. Second, the analogy has only one helper. In real life, there are many actors among which we try to allocate obligations. The analogy does not capture these two nuances for the sake of simplicity. Its main aim is to show that it is morally plausible to think of a change in duties according to the needy person's varying circumstances.

A second argument against this analogy might question the effectiveness of the unique connections drawn between the helper and the needy. One could ask: how precisely can we judge these connections? How can we be sure that the poor person's uncle will be willing to cover her debt because she is his niece? What do we do if he refuses the responsibility? These are crucial questions. Indeed, unique connections do not guarantee willingness to help: it is quite likely that some relatives might refuse to shoulder the burden. However, this possibility does not seem strong enough to invalidate the whole idea of looking for close connections when distributing duties because willingness is not the main point of concern here. We try to find a way to determine whose responsibility it should be to help in cases where *someone has to help*, regardless of whether helpers will do it willingly or not. As an example, take a small child whose

parents die in an accident. We usually look for some close relatives, *above anyone else*, to take care of her in the long run. This procedure looks similar to the argument advanced here. If there is a humanitarian crisis and if there are people who must be taken in, other things being equal, we should assume more responsibility if we have special connections to these people.

### **Question of Practicality**

An inevitable criticism that this model faces is the question of practicality. This model is a normative one that claims to be applicable to real-life cases, but to what extent is it possible to realize it? Who is going to impose it upon other communities? What can be done if states do not comply with the model's way of distributing obligations? These are indeed significant questions. Yet, they are at the same time policy questions, which are outside the scope of this dissertation. Still, they require a small discussion on why leaving these questions unanswered here will not harm this dissertation's central claim.

Non-compliance of states is a crucial problem, and it seems at first glance that if it is not solved, the whole model will be useless. This presumption is correct. However, it is not the meaning-based model per se that creates this problem. It is already there. "How can we make states comply?" is an entirely different question than "Whose moral responsibility is it to take in these refugees?" If the possibility of non-compliance of states would be a reason for ruling out solution proposals to our global problems, then no theoretical effort that challenges state authority in any way would be valued. And we know that this is not the case; we keep working on such models hoping that we could find some way to make states comply if the model is reasonable enough. The present work falls under this category.

Another aspect of this practical question speaks to the target audience. To whom is this model addressed? A quick answer is "states." However, as the concluding chapter will explain,

communities rather than states are the real target of this model. It does not aim to produce policy recommendations on how states can realize the model's suggestions. Instead, it pursues the goal of strengthening communities' sense of moral duties toward refugees. It is a call on communities to reconsider whether they have the moral right to complain about strangers' existence in their midst as they usually do. Is it morally acceptable that we refuse the burden for reasons like it being unfair? Or should we reconstruct our understanding of what is fair?

### **Is the Model Counterproductive?**

The model might lead someone to ask whether the obligations it will create are going to be counterproductive. In identifying actors with outcome responsibility, the model includes every actor with any type of involvement in a refugee-producing environment, regardless of the actors' intentions. This chapter explained why this should be the case in refugee situations by highlighting the concept of absolute deprivation. This holistic inclusion leads to a critical question. If the actors will be assigned outcome responsibility even if they got themselves involved with good intentions (like humanitarian intervention), is this not going to make states more reluctant to intervene in humanitarian crises that might require immediate action? Will the fear of being blamed and assigned remedial responsibility in the future (especially if things go wrong) not prevent them from taking necessary measures? This question is serious, but it does not offer a proper criterion to judge the model.

For states, the concept of humanitarian intervention is problematic in itself. Theoretically, we can understand what it means, but practically, we do not have a single example of a "pure" humanitarian intervention.<sup>11</sup> In other words, states do not intervene with purely humanitarian

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<sup>11</sup> As a scholar who studied a host of intervention cases in world history, Walzer (2015) concludes that he could not find a good example of what could be a genuine humanitarian intervention. There are always mixed motivations

concerns. They do not interfere in humanitarian crises if they do not have any interest in doing so. Besides, there is no shortage of examples in our recent history presenting further-complicated and deadlocked situations thanks to international interventions. In this respect, sticking to the non-intervention principle might give better results, serving this model's very purpose. However, the model is principally not against intervention. Some cases do require international intervention. The model's central concern is to ensure that the intervening actors also shoulder the responsibility if things go wrong, the same way as they would harvest the fruits if things go right. On the one hand, if the model reduces intervention, that might lessen the number of messy crises. On the other hand, if states somehow have to intervene, they will accept the duties that will arise. Either way might give a better outcome. Therefore, it is not plausible to blame this model for being counterproductive.

### **Is the Model Self-Contradictory?**

The previous chapter stated that the meaning-based model remains within the statist school of thought because it takes the authority of states over their territories more seriously than the cosmopolitans are willing to for the sake of applicability. This argument implies that the model acknowledges state authorities' ultimate right to make the final admission decisions. This conclusion seems to be at odds with the model's core claim since it tries to determine what each state *has to* do for a given refugee group – which means that it is not up to states to decide what their shares are. Is the meaning-based model contradicting itself?

This apparent contradiction, however, is caused by conflating two different questions. The first question is, “Who should have the moral authority to decide who to include and

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behind every intervention in another state: either protecting endangered interests or extracting benefits from the turmoil and post-conflict sociopolitical constructions.

exclude?” The second question is, “How should the moral responsibilities of this state be defined in this case?” These two questions require separate considerations. If not, falling into the “practicality fallacy” discussed above would be inevitable. Saying that the states have the authority over admission is not on par with remaining silent on how this admission should take place – we cannot leave everything to states without providing moral guidance on what is plausible in admitting refugees. This model attempts to offer guidance and not question states’ moral authority in deciding admission policies. Therefore, the criticism of this model being self-contradictory is invalid.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has developed the “meaning-based model” as a possible way to determine different communities’ moral obligations toward different groups of refugees in various refugee cases. In a nutshell, it has claimed that some communities must have more duties toward refugees than other communities in protracted crises. The identification of these communities and the limits of their duties should be determined by the communities’ levels of involvement in a given case and their social connections with the created refugees in that case. A final remark is that this model aims to offer a solution to what is known as protracted refugee situations (refugees who cannot return to their homes), which seems to be the trend in contemporary refugee crises. Its ultimate target is to invite political communities to seriously study their ethical positions vis-à-vis particular refugees and understand if they must do more than other communities in a given case. Ideally, temporary solutions such as refugee camps rely on the hope of a quick resolution to the problem at home and that refugees will return to their countries. If that happens to be the case, then there is no need for this model. But if it does not, as is usually



the case, then the meaning-based model should step in to identify the communities' moral duties toward refugees.

The previous chapter indicated that one crucial gap in the current literature on refugees is the lack of attempts in applying moral theories to real cases, which created a rupture between theoretical thinking and real life. This dissertation aims to address this shortcoming. The next three chapters will apply the meaning-based model to the Bosnian, Palestinian, and Syrian cases to demonstrate how this model envisions the fair distribution of different communities' obligations toward each refugee group in each context.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE BOSNIAN CASE

“When the Berlin Wall came down, it fell on Bosnia-Herzegovina.”

Haris Silajdzic, former Vice-President of *Republika Srpska*

#### Introduction

What happened in Bosnia<sup>1</sup> between 1992 and 1995 is a harrowing tale. Imagine people in an environment where their neighbors, with whom they have been holding a cordial relationship for many years, suddenly turn against them – chase, rob, rape, and murder them. This shock was what many Bosnians experienced during the first half of the 1990s, which was felt even in greater magnitude when the international community promised but failed to protect innocent civilians from armed aggressors. Hatidja was 39 years old when the war started in Bosnia.<sup>2</sup> After miraculously surviving the war conditions in Srebrenica for four years, she lost her whole family in one day, when the Serbs carried out their infamous massacre. She lost her husband, sons, brothers, nephews, cousins – every single male relative she had. She waited fifteen years for her husband’s and son’s remains to be found before she could put them to rest at a memorial

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the political entities and nations in Bosnia-Herzegovina might become confusing. In this chapter, “Bosnia” and “Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH)” refer to the lands of contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina. “Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina” refers to the autonomous entity of Croats and Bosniaks within BiH; “Republika Srpska” or “Serb Republic” refers to the autonomous entity of Serbs within BiH. “Bosnian republic” refers to the Bosnian state under the Yugoslav Federation. “Bosnian Muslims” or “Bosniaks” refers to the Muslims of Bosnia. “Bosnian Serbs” and “Bosnian Croats” refer to the Serbs and Croats of Bosnia, respectively. “Serbs” and “Croats” refer to the respective nations of Serbia and Croatia. Additionally, to avoid confusion, I refer to the European community as the “EU” throughout the chapter.

<sup>2</sup> <https://srebrenica.org.uk/survivor-stories/hatidza-mehmedovic-a-mothers-legacy>

complex. Even then, not all of them had reached her. Despite all her sufferings, Hatidja returned to her homeland after the war because of her strong connections with the land. However, not everyone followed the same path. Almir, for instance, fled Bosnia at a very young age after suffering from years of heavy siege warfare in Sarajevo and found refuge in the United States.<sup>3</sup> He had no intention of returning to his war-torn homeland after the peace settlement. He strived to become a good American, distancing himself from his past as much as he could. His daughter was raised as a stranger to the Bosnian identity until she developed a particular interest in her background. What should we make of such different stories that derived from the same crisis?

The 1992-5 Bosnian war claimed over 130,000 lives and removed about 2.2 million people from their homes. Half a million Bosnian Serbs, half a million Bosnian Croats, and 1.2 million Bosnian Muslims were forcibly displaced. Of these displaced people, 1.2 million fled to other countries in this period. Most Serbs and Croats who left the country relocated to *Republika Srpska*, Serbia, and Croatia. About 600,000 refugees dispersed among the European Union countries. Around 50,000 Bosnians fled to the United States. Of the European countries that accepted Bosnian refugees during the war, Germany (340,000), Austria (88,000), Denmark (22,000), Netherlands (25,000), Sweden (61,000), and France (15,000) accommodated the majority. Thirty thousand refugees found refuge in Belgium, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Only 400,000 internationally displaced Bosnians returned to their pre-war homes after the war. The majority of international returns resulted from Germany's repatriation policies. Although Germany accommodated many Bosnian refugees during the war, it did not grant them permanent residency. While Denmark, Austria, Netherlands,

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/3/1/war-stories-a-bosnian-american-retraces-her-fathers-footsteps>

and Sweden gave asylum status and permanent residency to the Bosnians in the long term, Germany repatriated most of the Bosnian refugees after the war was over. This fact indicates that, had it not been for the German policy, only a minimal number of Bosnians would have returned to Bosnia. In other words, Hatidja was an exception among Bosnian refugees, whereas Almir's course represented the majority's wishes. Where does this conclusion lead us?

Today, we do not speak of a "Bosnian crisis" or a "Bosnian refugee problem." However, the fact that the civil war ended does not mean that all problems were resolved. On the contrary, this case reveals crucial moral questions that we must investigate. First, we must ask what the "right to repatriation" should mean in crises like Bosnia. In refugee cases, the best solution is thought to be quickly resolving the crisis and sending back the refugees to their homes. However, should we say that the refugees *must return* when the crisis is over? How should communities treat those refugees who do not wish to return to a place that has been torn apart by a civil war? What if they do not feel it is safe to return? Who decides that the crisis is resolved in the first place? Although the conflict stopped within a relatively shorter period in Bosnia compared to other civil wars, only one-third of the internationally displaced people returned to their pre-war homes. The majority of these returnees were in a way "forced" to return because Germany did not give them permanent residency. However, we do not usually perceive forced repatriation as an ethically acceptable practice. What should have been the communities' duties toward those Bosnians who did not wish to return? Did the German community have the moral right to deny residency to Bosnians? If it did, whose responsibility was it to take care of those Bosnians?

In essence, the Bosnians who feared returning to their pre-war homes were stuck in a protracted refugee situation. Although the war was seemingly over, it was not finished for them:

they were afraid to return. It becomes morally important to ask how our duties toward these particular refugees should be determined and distributed in such cases. Who should take care of the refugees who refuse to return home even though the cause of their displacement has been eliminated? The meaning-based model (MBM) argues that, even though the refugees by definition are the international community's responsibility, some communities must accept more duties toward particular refugees. Its two parameters are the communities' levels of involvement in a crisis and the strength of their social connections with the refugees. This approach could also apply to refugee crises that have been resolved (or ended) but also produced people who do not wish to be repatriated. The examination of our moral duties in such cases is essential because we have many ongoing civil wars that keep producing refugees. It seems evident that, even if those crises will be resolved (or end), many refugees will not want to return to those lands. Will we force them to return? Will we consider them as a burden to us because they refuse to return although the problem has been eliminated? Or will we need a model that identifies and distributes the moral duties toward people in such circumstances?

Insofar as the Bosnian case is concerned, many observers single out Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs as the main culprits whose actions produced the Bosnian refugee problem. Therefore, they should be held responsible for redressing the effects of their injustices. This conclusion seems indisputable, but it should not mean that every community other than Serbia has the same (non)responsibility for taking care of Bosnian refugees. Some communities must do more for Bosnians. How do we identify such communities? This chapter shows that some actors were involved in the Bosnians' fate more than others and shared the responsibility for creating refugees. Drawing on its "absolute deprivation" argument (Chapter 2), the MBM contends that such actors should shoulder more duties toward Bosnian refugees than other members of the

international community. If they had less than good intentions behind their involvements, their duties should become even greater. The following discussion explains why these communities must be morally obliged to provide more for the Bosnians. It also discusses the extent of their moral duties.<sup>4</sup>

### **Serbia and Bosnian Serbs**

Historians agree on the point that Serb aggression destabilized Bosnian lands. After the 1850s, the Serbs' fostered ethnic consciousness, their fight against Austro-Hungarian domination, and their hostile approach to other ethnicities awakened national awareness across Bosnia. During World War II, all ethnic groups in Bosnia fought against each other. Tito's iron fist ruled over Yugoslavia ruthlessly during the Cold War, tracing and executing all anti-Partisans under the banner of his "brotherhood and unity" policy. After Tito was gone in 1980, nationalist ideas and politicians resurfaced in Yugoslavia, this time in extreme forms. This period witnessed the rise of well-known political figures like Slobodan Milosevic and Franco Tadjman in their respective countries, Serbia and Croatia. What followed was the destruction of Bosnia.

As the 1980s drew to a close, Milosevic strengthened his hand in Yugoslavia by promoting his compatriots to significant political and military positions throughout the Yugoslav Federation. In 1990, Milosevic had control over half of the federal government's eight votes: Serbia, Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro. He sought to establish power over Macedonia to

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<sup>4</sup> The regular paradox we experience in refugee cases appears in Bosnia in a modified sense. The paradox is that, in crises that produce refugees, the perpetrators do not assume the moral responsibility for the mess they have caused because they are the enemy of those people they displaced. However, in Bosnia, we have multiple culprits and multiple groups of victims. The Serbs are responsible for the Croats' and Bosniaks' displacement; the Croats are responsible for the Serbs' and Bosniaks' displacement; the Bosniaks are responsible for Croats' and Serbs' displacement. In other words, all nationalities in Bosnia both displaced other nations and became displaced by other nations. Therefore, our discussion on moral duties will be slightly different from other cases. Serbia, for instance, will be labeled as the enemy of the displaced non-Serbs, but will not be able to refuse responsibility for the whole of Bosnia because it will be responsible for taking care of its brethren displaced in Bosnia (if not of other nations). The same will apply to other nations that fought in this war.

gain the upper hand within the Yugoslav Federation. He would then be free to rewrite the federal constitution to assert Serbia's dominance (Malcolm 1994, pp. 211-3). This situation was not acceptable for Slovenia and Croatia. As Slovenia and Croatia moved toward independence, Milosevic lost hope of keeping the whole Federation in his grasp. He turned to plan B: creating a greater Serbia under his control, carving out a territory that would be his alone, covering almost half of Yugoslavia (Lovrenovic 2001, p. 193).

Milosevic planned to destroy Bosnia, and the Bosnian Serbs, provoked by Milosevic, chose to remain on his side. Milosevic had been continuously manipulating the Bosnian Serbs to join the Serbian cause. From 1989 on, fake news started to appear in Serbian newspapers, strictly controlled by Milosevic, which covered Bosnian Serbs' stories of fleeing from Muslims' and Croats' atrocities in Bosnia. Such news was effective in scaring Bosnian Serbs and moving them closer to Serbia. Meanwhile, the Yugoslav Federation Army (JNA) armed the local Bosnian Serbs and paramilitary forces loyal to Serbia. In May 1990, the JNA General Staff ordered the confiscation of all Territorial Defense (TO, local defense forces established by Tito) armaments and their storage in JNA depots (Hoare 2007, p. 350). By these means, the JNA under Serb control took possession of heavy artillery that belonged to the Bosnian republic (Hoare 2004, pp. 23-37). Simultaneously, the Social Democratic Party (SDS) mobilized the local Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia to create autonomous Serb regions (SAOs) wherever Serbs lived. These SAOs declared their autonomy and constituted their national assemblies, acting as a state within a state. Against Serbia's aggressive policies, the Republic of Croatia declared independence in June 1991, and a full-fledged war broke out between Serbia and Croatia. The war with Croatia was a disaster for Serbs. They suffered a severe defeat, but international intervention stopped Croatia's advancement and compelled the JNA to withdraw from Croatian lands. Now gathered in Bosnia,

the JNA and the Serb paramilitaries were ready to put their plans for Bosnia into practice (Lovrenovic 2001, p. 194).

In November 1991, the SDS in Bosnia held a referendum exclusive to the Bosnian Serbs to decide whether to remain a part of Yugoslavia or Bosnia. The referendum process was kept undisclosed, but the SDS leadership later announced that the Serbs chose to remain a part of Yugoslavia. In January 1992, they officially proclaimed the Serb Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Hoare 2007, p. 354). Later in September, it was to be renamed simply as *Republika Srpska* (The Serb Republic). In other words, the SDS was establishing Serb authority by a policy of “secession and conquest.” These “conquered” lands subjected to ethnic cleansing, murder, mass rape, and destruction of non-Serbian cultural heritage. These atrocities were mostly committed by the newly established Army of the Serb Republic (VRS). The VRS consisted of the Serb paramilitaries, including Arkan’s Tigers, whose leader was an international criminal wanted by the Interpol; Seselj’s *Chetniks*; Jovic’s White Eagles; and Karadzic’s and Mladic’s militias (Lovrenovic 2001, p. 195). In other words, while the JNA and other Belgrade-controlled forces spearheaded the occupation of large parts of Bosnia, the SDS-controlled authorities abetted this process by practically removing the non-Serb population. Belgrade directed the ethnic cleansing, but its success relied on the effectiveness of the VRS (Hoare 2007, p. 356).

The events of 1990-1992 forced Izetbegovic and the Bosnian leadership reluctantly to move toward independence. Slovenia’s and Croatia’s independence and their successful repulsion of the Serbian army in late 1991 left the Bosnian government with a hard choice. In the face of a Yugoslavia controlled by Milosevic, who explicitly advocated creating pure Serb areas, remaining part of the Federation (now without Slovenia and Croatia) meant for Izetbegovic that



he would be signing his nation's death warrant. It was equivalent to paving the way for a massacre: the JNA had already confiscated Bosnian TO's weaponry. Moreover, the international community was applying an arms embargo to the whole of Yugoslavia. Yet the sides in this battle were by no means equal: civilians faced heavily armed groups. To seek international protection and establish its armed forces, Izetbegovic decided to hold a referendum in Bosnia on 29 February 1992. On 3 March 1992, Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence. The Serbs' attack against the newly independent Bosnian state started on 1 April, only five days before the international community recognized its independence (Hoare 2007, pp. 363-4).

The Serb forces advanced with lightning speed in Bosnia because they fought against a state without a real army. On 1 April, Arkan's Tigers, who finished their cleansing and terror in Vukovar, occupied Bijeljina. Two days later, Serb militias seized Banja Luka. On 8 April, Arkan's Tigers, Seselj's *Chetniks*, and JNA's *Uzice Corps* attacked and captured Zvornik. The same day, Mladic occupied Kupres in Bosanska Krajina. Most of east Bosnia fell during April, and Brcko, Derventa, and Doboj in early May. Serbs quickly managed to establish a corridor that linked Serb-held territories in eastern and western Bosnia-Herzegovina. In October, they also secured the northern passage by capturing Bosanski Brod and Jajce. In a short period, many Bosnian towns with large Muslim populations suffered from mass murder, rape, and terror by Arkan's Tigers, Jovic's White Eagles, and Seselj's *Chetniks*. They established concentration camps at Omarska and Keraterm near Prijedor, Ljubija, Kuka in Brcko, and other places. They kept people in inhumane conditions, tortured and summarily executed them, and mass raped women and sexually harassed men. The level of coordination among the Serb forces and the speed with which they committed these atrocities showed that this war and ethnic cleansing had not been spontaneous but resulted from long-term planning. The federal army and its

paramilitary adjuncts “carved out within the first five to six weeks an area of conquest covering more than 60 percent of the entire Bosnian territory” (Malcolm 1994, p. 237). The conquest’s main force was the JNA, controlled by Belgrade, with its planes bombarding Kupres, Doboje, and Tuzla. In short, this war was mainly “an invasion of Bosnia, planned and directed from Serbian soil,” under the guise of “peacekeeping” (Malcolm 1994, p. 238).

In May 1993, Britain, France, Russia, and the USA decided to gather Bosnia’s two million Muslims in several “safe areas” protected by the UN. At this time, three armies (Bosniaks’ ARBiH, Bosnian Croats’ HVO, and Bosnian Serbs’ VRS) were fighting against each other, and an additional UN protection force (UNPROFOR) made the situation more complicated. However, events took a turn for the better in 1994 when the United States decided to bring the Croatian and Bosnian sides together and broker a peace agreement. Both parties signed the Washington Agreement on 18 March 1994 to stop the hostilities against each other and focus on their common enemy, i.e., the Serbs (Lovrenovic 2001, p. 204). After this truce, the Serbs redoubled their atrocities, especially in three areas: Bihac, Zepa and Srebrenica, and Gorazde. Sarajevo had been under siege for two years and now was completely besieged and systematically strangled. Throughout 1994 and 1995, Serb atrocities intensified, and the civilian suffering became insurmountable. However, the peak point came in the summer of 1995. “The army of Karadzic and Mladic, before the very eyes of the world and with UNPROFOR soldiers observing passively, carried out the systematic massacre of many of the people of Srebrenica and refugees in Srebrenica from other parts of Bosnia so that the town was at last in Serbian hands” (Lovrenovic 2001, p. 206).

This massacre finally moved some international actors. NATO airplanes began bombing the Serbs’ military posts. The Serbs quickly lost morale. Croats and Bosnians started to recapture

chunks of territory from them. When the Serb forces were on the brink of total collapse, the international community intervened to impose the Dayton Peace Accord on the warring parties. The fighting stopped in November 1995. Under the US's supervision, Tudjman, Milosevic, and Izetbegovic signed the Dayton Accord, which established two entities in Bosnia-Herzegovina: *Republika Srpska* of Serbs and the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina of Croats and Muslims, which divided 49% and 51% of Bosnian lands, respectively.

### **Serbia's Moral Obligations toward Bosnians**

Milosevic and Bosnian Serbs' organic relationship demonstrates that they had the same responsibility for producing the refugees in Bosnia. Milosevic's Serbian army and Bosnian Serbs' paramilitary forces mobilized the regular Serbs, armed them, destroyed the Yugoslav Federation, violated Croatia's and Bosnia's sovereignty, and committed human rights violations, ethnic cleansing, and genocide in Bosnia. As the leading actor behind these crimes, Serbia was the enemy of the displaced Croats and Bosniaks in Bosnia.

Aggression, especially bloody aggression that aims at ethnic cleansing, has no justification. Serbia should pay for the damage it has done. Its leaders should be tried for war crimes, and it should compensate refugees for their losses and their resettlement in other countries. However, like other enemies of the displaced, Serbia does not accept any responsibility for the Croat and Bosniak refugees. Who should take care of those Croats and Bosniaks who are afraid to return to Bosnia? By definition, the answer is the international community. Still, the following discussion will show the moral plausibility of expecting extra duties from some members of the international community toward Croats and Bosniaks.

Serbia does bear responsibility for resettling another displaced group in Bosnia. The war that began with Serbia's aggression also resulted in the displacement of around half a million

Serbs. In this respect, Serbia has high OR for the displaced Bosnian Serbs. As they share the same ethnicity and, in most instances, cooperated throughout the war, it is plausible to assume strong social connections (SC) between the Serbian community and Bosnian Serbs.

Consequently, the Serbian community must offer citizenship to those Bosnian Serb refugees who refuse to return to Bosnia and financially help them if need be. As Serbia's OR level is high, this number should be substantial. However, the number of internationally displaced Bosnian Serbs was already low – the lowest among the three ethnicities. Of the 500,000 Serbs who were displaced in Bosnia, almost a half fled to Serbia. The other half mostly moved to safer places in Republika Srpska or other European countries. In 2001, only 150,000 of the displaced Serbs remained in Serbia (Lukic and Nikitovic 2004, p. 94). As a result, Serbia seems to have been a safe haven for the uprooted Serbs. The number of Serbs who sought refuge in Serbia kept decreasing as years passed. As these people mostly returned to Republika Srpska, no serious refugee problem seems to exist insofar as the Bosnian Serbs are concerned. Nevertheless, if they wished to remain outside of Bosnia, the responsibility to shelter them would have been on the Serbian community's shoulders.

### **The UN, EU, England, and France**

From the beginning of the violent conflicts in Bosnia, the UN and the EU viewed the issue as one of “warring ethnic groups” rather than “aggression against civilians.” The international arms embargo showed that they focused on the war's symptoms instead of its cause: both believed that the problem would disappear if the fighting decreased. The UN and the EU's ignorance about Bosnia's main problem led them to enforce the embargo, even after Bosnia declared independence from Yugoslavia and the UN admitted it as a separate member

state on 22 May 1992. This arms embargo, which continued until the end of the war, had a devastating effect on Bosnia, while it barely affected the Serbs' military capacity.

The JNA was under Serb control before the war began. The federal army had managed to confiscate much of the weaponry and heavy artillery that had been in the hands of Bosnian local defense forces. It possessed a large armaments industry. Besides, the JNA had purchased an extra 14,000 tons of weaponry from the Middle East just before the embargo started in 1991. The Serbs were confident that, with their current supplies, they could fight continuously for at least six to seven years. On the other hand, the Bosnian Muslims did not have an army until late May 1992. They were only equipped with small numbers of light weaponry. In this respect, they were easy prey for the heavily armed Serb forces. The arms embargo played a crucial role in deciding the fate of the Bosnians. Some scholars have argued that the war might have ended within a couple of months if the West had armed the Bosnians. However, this did not happen because politicians like Britain's Douglas Hurd strictly opposed the delivery of arms to the Bosnian government with the idea that this would "only prolong the fighting" (Malcolm 1994, p. 244).

On paper, the UN was taking care of the issue. In practice, however, Britain and France dominated the debates on using force because they provided the UN with the largest troop deployments (Friedmann 2004, pp. 46, 113). In this respect, these two countries found it implausible to accept the US version of the story – that is, the Serbs were aggressors, and the international community should stop them. Britain and France feared what could happen to their soldiers in Bosnia if they took a stricter stance against the Serbs. This fear was not baseless. After the Serbs' siege of Sarajevo began, the protection force (UNPROFOR) that the UN sent to Bosnia for peacekeeping further strengthened the Serbian aggressors. The UN forces were lightly armed and strictly ordered not to engage with Serb militias unless they, not civilians, were

directly under attack. The Serb fighters heavily taxed the humanitarian aid materials as they passed across the Serbian soil. The UN soldiers served as hostages to Serbian forces and discouraged international intervention (Malcolm 1994, p. 247). In this respect, the UNPROFOR became a part of the siege and war apparatus of the Serbs. The UN could have changed the UNPROFOR's rules of engagement and strengthened its forces with weapons necessary to protect civilians, but the Security Council chose not to.

Moreover, the UN high officials showed an incomprehensible sympathy for the Serbs in the face of great Bosnian sufferings. When the Serbs shelled a marketplace in Sarajevo and killed twenty-two people, the Canadian UN commander Lewis MacKenzie tried to forestall public sympathy for the Bosnians by claiming that the Bosnian government shelled its own people to provoke them against the Serbs. Meanwhile, it was revealed that the soldiers under his command frequently visited a Serb rape camp on the outskirts of Sarajevo, which held Muslim women prisoners. A sharp increase in prostitution and corruption was recorded in Sarajevo during the UN peacekeepers' presence (Carmichael 2015, p. 148). The media coverage of the Serbs' rape and concentration camps angered Western politicians like Douglas Herd, a staunch defender of the arms embargo. He accused the reporters in September 1993 of excessively focusing on Bosnia and neglecting other similar cases, thereby creating a public outcry in favor of intervention. After stepping down as foreign minister in 1995, Herd retained his close personal and economic relations with Milosevic. The UN Secretary-General Boutros Ghali outraged Sarajevo's citizens by telling them in December 1992 that there were worse places than Bosnia in the world. He was explicitly interested in minimizing the UN's duties toward the Bosnians. In March 1994, Britain's Lord Owen and his wife enjoyed a long lunch with Milosevic's family. Both sides made positive statements about each other and joyfully revealed how they had the

same stance toward how the war in Bosnia should end. Later in the Hague, Owen spoke favorably of Milosevic as a contributor to peace and refused to testify against him (Hoare 2007, pp. 378-9).

Beyond these individual actions in favor of the Serbs, one of the most significant moves of the UN and EU against the Bosnian population was the so-called “Vance-Owen Peace Plan.” This plan was produced in October 1992 by the EU and UN negotiators Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance for a political settlement in Bosnia. It distributed the Bosnian lands to ten cantons with significant authority and proposed only a weak central government. Most harmful in this plan was that its January 1993 version defined the cantons ethnically and gave Bosnia’s warring parties the impression that the drawing of cantons’ borders was not yet complete. The UN and EU’s apparent assignment of ethnically cleansed lands to the perpetrators renewed the conflict in Bosnia, especially where populations were highly mixed. Most importantly, it added a new dimension to the war: “it stimulated the development of a genuine Bosnian civil war, and in so doing, it broke down the Croat-Muslim alliance which had been the only effective barrier to the Serbs” (Malcolm 1994, p. 248).

In April 1993, the UN Security Council declared the besieged Bosnian city of Srebrenica as a “safe area,” which it later extended to include Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihac, Zepa, and Gorazde. However, the word “UN-protection” should be read without the dash: it was equivalent to “unprotection” for these cities’ inhabitants and those refugees who escaped from ethnic cleansing to those so-called safe areas. As part of safe area measures, the UN disarmed the Bosnian defenders in Srebrenica and other cities (Carmichael 2015, p. 165). However, it did not protect the disarmed civilians when the Serbs attacked to capture these east Bosnian enclaves. The Dutch soldiers responsible for protection were low in morale due to the prolonged war and the

feeling of abandonment amidst an insoluble conflict. When they requested airstrikes against the Serbs to protect the cities, the UN's French commander refused. He was encouraged by the UN special envoy Yasushi Akashi, who strictly opposed military action against the Serbs and conducted collaborative operations that violated the UN's rules. Akashi blocked NATO airstrikes in Gorazde in April 1994, and the next month, he permitted the VRS to move its tanks through the UN's demilitarized zone around Sarajevo (Hoare 2007, pp. 393-4).

Some evidence suggests that religious hostility could also explain the UN's pro-Serb and anti-Muslim attitude. The British UN commander General Rose was particularly hostile to Muslims. He believed that Izetbegovic's movement was nothing but the furtherance of Islam. When the Bosnian forces captured the city of Igman, Rose threatened the Bosnian army with airstrikes, and subsequently, the French UN troops drove them out forcefully and destroyed their bunkers. In November 1994, NATO decided to carry out an airstrike against the Serbs in Bihac, the effect of which was almost nullified by the request of French UN commander Lapresle to strike only the runways and not to touch the Serb jets. General Rose effectively blocked another NATO raid in the same month. Following his orders, the British ground troops did not illuminate the targets for NATO jets, resulting in the abortion of the mission. By these means, the UN's high command effectively blocked the efforts to protect the safe areas from Serb aggression. Meanwhile, the UNHCR was "supplying large quantities of petrol to the Serb Republic, helping to overcome its critical petrol shortage" (Hoare 2007, p. 394). In addition to these UN actions favoring the Serbs, the UN soldiers who were supposed to protect Srebrenica and its Muslim civilians left misogynistic and anti-Islamic graffiti behind, the revelation of which shamed them many years after the incident (Carmichael 2015, p. 152).



Finally, the UN did not open safe areas for some refugees running away from Serb atrocities due to capacity restrictions. Spreading to the villages around these safe areas, these people were surrounded by Serb forces and killed in 1995. Feeling abandoned and overwhelmed, poorly armed, and being refused support, UN soldiers' unwillingness to risk their lives by standing up against the VRS was effectively exploited by Mladic. On 11 July, the VRS moved to Srebrenica. The next day, buses arrived to transport more than 20,000 women from the city, never to be reunited with their male relatives. While the UN soldiers witnessed the events, men were moved into nearby buildings and summarily executed. People who managed to run to the hills were pounded with artillery. Those captured were taken to warehouses, schools, or deserted buildings and killed by grenades or mass shootings. As the UN forces watched, more than 8,000 men and boys died in Srebrenica, which the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague later declared to be genocide (Carmichael 2015, pp. 153-6).

### **Britain's and France's Moral Obligations toward Bosnians**

The United Nations and European Union's involvement in Bosnia and the part played by Britain and France in these institutions require a careful examination. The decisions made by the UN, EU, Britain, and France were organically connected. The "sphere of interest" argument has some explanatory power here. The EU defined the Bosnian incident as a "European problem" and demanded that it be solved according to its understanding. The UN played along mainly because two of its Security Council's permanent members, Britain and France, were highly involved in this case. They were the two countries that had deployed the largest number of troops on the ground. Consequently, their decisions mattered – and they followed the EU version of the story. This version claimed that what was happening in Bosnia was a civil war and not

aggression and ethnic cleansing by another state. Was this reading a genuine mistake or a deliberate misperception?

In theory, we accept that international institutions such as the EU and UN intervene in crises to save human lives and protect people. In practice, however, they face many complicated problems. Many actions they take can be easily assessed as inappropriate, wrong, mistimed, too late, and insufficient. We should undertake our moral assessment to see whether the wrongs done were honest mistakes or not. But first, the MBM's "absolute deprivation" approach claims that if their actions worsened the situation, these actors should assume more responsibility for the result regardless of their intentions. Therefore, for the mess their actions created in Bosnia, the UN and EU must assume at least medium OR for the Bosnian refugees. As their decisions were made primarily by Britain and France, the British and French communities must inherit this responsibility. Still, we have to return to the question above: can we conclude that the British and French misinterpretation of Bosnia as a civil war was an honest mistake? If not, should this increase their OR level?

It is implausible to evaluate the UN and EU's approach to Bosnia as a mistake, misunderstanding, miscalculation, or ignorance. As early as 1991, the Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic had sabotaged the Bosnian assembly's work and made explicit statements about "Serbicizing" the land. The connection between Karadzic and Milosevic was more than evident. Another well-known fact was that the JNA belonged to Serbia, and it supported the Serb militias in Bosnia against the non-Serbs. Milosevic's ambition for achieving a greater Serbia was no secret either. When Bosnia moved toward independence in 1992, Serbia and Serb militias used this as a pretext to carve out Bosnian territories by military operations. On 29 May 1992, the International Society for Human Rights issued a report that identified numerous Serbian

massacres targeting Muslim civilians. In August 1992, journalists started publishing photographs and videos of atrocities in the Serbian detention camps (Malcolm pp. 228-245). In other words, these facts were not unknown to the UN, EU, and Western governments. However, European leaders ignored such explicit declarations of war aims and Serbs' aggression against Muslim civilians. Especially Britain and France feared that the Serbs would harm the British and French soldiers in Bosnia if they acted too decisively against the Serbs. Instead of expanding the UN's mandate, they chose to collude with Serbia and Bosnian Serbs. In such a context, the British and French conclusion that it was a proper civil war and not an attack against civilians cannot be explained by the mere "misinterpretation" of the case. Their responsibility for the Bosnian refugees must be more than other communities.

In addition, the plan they offered to solve the Bosnian crisis must be evaluated from the same perspective. We cannot consider the Vance-Owen Plan's insistent application, whose results had been disastrous for Bosnia, as an honest resolution attempt that unfortunately failed. The plan's very content invited the warring parties to increase their atrocities and occupy and cleanse as much land as possible. Croats and Muslims had had their disagreements before but somehow managed to act together against the Serbian aggression. The Vance-Owen Plan's announcement started a new war between the two sides. According to one report, what was happening between Muslims and Croats was "freelance ethnic cleansing." It took a long time, prolonged war, forced displacements, and increased death toll for the proponents of the plan to see what even "a blind man" could see: "that the Vance-Owen Plan is never going to be fulfilled" (Malcolm 1994, p. 249). Following a so-called peace plan for two years that resulted in numerous massacres from the first day cannot be explained by ignorance or "mistaken belief." The UN and EU should assume responsibility for the turmoil that this careless plan created. As

the decision-makers and the plan's staunch defenders, Britain and France must accept more duties toward Bosnian refugees.

Like the Vance-Owen Plan, the international arms embargo applied on Yugoslavia further weakened the military resistance to Serbs in Bosnia and increased ethnic cleansing and casualties. This embargo was another result of the European misreading of the Bosnian case: a civil war. If the warring parties were out of bullets, the fighting would stop. However, the Bosniaks had no bullets because the Serbs had collected all of them. It is not plausible to accept a narrative that presents defenseless Bosniaks vis-à-vis the heavily armed Serbs as a genuine civil war. Moreover, the other version of the story, that is, that the Serbs were occupying and ethnically cleansing the lands of Bosnia, was in constant circulation in the international arena. While the American and German governments showed a brief interest in lifting the embargo, Britain's Douglas Hurd effectively changed their minds: the British government was so enthusiastic about their plan's prospects that it would not allow anything to jeopardize it. The result was ethnic cleansing and genocide. Consequently, we should label Britain's and France's intentions behind their misinterpretation of the Bosnian crisis and their decisions to apply the arms embargo and Vance-Owen Plan as unjustifiable and less than good. We must hence increase their earlier medium OR to high OR. Their actions must morally bring these communities additional duties toward the Bosnian refugees they helped to produce.

The MBM assumes strong SC between liberal democracies open to immigration and many communities of the world. In this respect, Britain and France must offer citizenship rights and financial help to Bosnian refugees. Since their OR level is high, this number should be substantial. However, these two countries accepted only around 20,000 Bosnians in total. Although the MBM does not work with specific numbers, considering the total refugee

population, we should conclude that Britain and France must accept many more Bosnian refugees who do not wish to return to Bosnia. As Bosnian Serbs do not constitute a refugee problem, these two communities could focus on accommodating Bosnian Croats and Muslims. Still, as being the most significant part of the refugee population (650,000), Bosniaks will need more help. We should establish that this much burden is the French and British communities' moral duty toward the Bosnian refugees. If their governments were to implement such admission policies, they have no moral right to complain or oppose them.

### **The UN's and EU's Moral Obligations toward Bosnians**

We should also underline the extra duties that the UN and EU must assume toward the Bosnian refugees. In the Palestinian case, the MBM will argue that the UN's moral duty is only implementing its regular functions, such as facilitating the resettlement of refugees. The reason is that the UN did not interfere in Palestine in such a way as to worsen the crisis. Its role in Bosnia was different. Its misinterpretation and wrong-headed policies produced refugees and worsened their situation. In this respect, the UN must assume a greater burden for Bosnians than being merely the facilitator of resettlement. As they moved together, the EU must do the same. They should assume the responsibility for raising the funds among their members to resettle a substantial number of Bosnian refugees in suitable countries. The member communities of these institutions should see this burden as their moral duty resulting from their involvement in the Bosnians' catastrophe. These communities must resettle a large number of Bosnian refugees among themselves.

To a certain extent, this was what happened in Europe as many countries opened their doors to Bosnians during the war: Germany (350,000), Austria (80,000), Sweden (61,500), Switzerland (26,700), Slovenia (33,400), the Netherlands (23,500), Denmark (23,000), and

Norway (12,000). From this perspective, it seems that Europe has fulfilled its moral duty toward Bosnian refugees. However, the Bosnians' long-term fate in these countries was mixed. Some European countries such as Denmark, Austria, Netherlands, and Sweden offered citizenship and residency to refugees. However, other countries refrained from doing the same. Germany is one outstanding example. In 1999, only 50,000 Bosnians were left in Germany. Most of the others were repatriated to Bosnia. The MBM claims that although the German community did not have the moral duty to accept 350,000 Bosnians, their "forced" repatriation was also unacceptable. If these Bosnians did not wish to return to Bosnia, then other communities, mainly the British and French, should have stepped in to accept them to fulfill their moral duties toward Bosnian refugees. We must establish this conclusion because, of the 400,000 refugees who returned to Bosnia after the war, around 300,000 came from Germany. These numbers tell us that the "right to repatriation" does not function as we assume in refugee cases. If those refugees were afraid to return, we must know which communities had more moral duties toward them. The Bosnian case seems to have been an example of "unjust repatriation" for those who had to leave Germany.

### **Croatia and Bosnian Croats**

Like their Serbian counterparts in relation to Serbia, Bosnian Croats had a direct relation with Croatia. The HDZ leadership organized the Bosnian Croats in line with Croatia's interests in Bosnia. The HDZ continued to be loyal to Tudjman throughout the Bosnian war (Lovrenovic 2001, p. 199). This loyalty was ensured by Tudjman in January 1992, when he replaced the more moderate HDZ leader Kljuic with a nationalist hardliner from Hercegovina, Mate Boban.

The Croat Defense Council (HVO) was founded in April 1992 as a legitimate constituent of the Bosnian republic (Malcolm 1994, p. 240). Later on, however, the HVO refused to fully integrate into the Bosnian army and eventually became the Croatian counterpart of the VRS – a

straightforward anti-Bosnian separatist force (Carmichael 2015, p. 166). It obstructed the ARBiH's movements in many places and confiscated arms factories and weapons that belonged to the Bosnian republic's army. On 6 May 1992, the SDS and HDZ leaders held a meeting at Graz in Austria to discuss how Serbs and Croats should partition Bosnia (Kumar 1997, p. 55). Two days later, the HVO general staff declared itself the only legal armed force on the territory controlled by the HDZ (Hoare 2007, p. 371).

In the absence of Serb participation in Bosnian socio-political life, the Croats felt the Muslim dominance overwhelmingly. The influx of Muslim refugees fleeing from Serb atrocities and ethnic cleansing into the Croat-Muslim side of Bosnia further disturbed the balance between the two nations in favor of the latter. The Croats increasingly felt that the Muslims in the shared state were swamping them. In late October 1992, a cruel war between Croats and Muslims began, as the former drove out the Bosnian army and the Muslim population from Prozor in Herzegovina (Lovrenovic 2001, pp. 199-204). Simultaneously, the Vance-Owen Plan's announcement further fueled the conflict and turned it into a full-scale war. Having suppressed the moderate elements within the HDZ and HVO, Boban proceeded with his sectarian and anti-Muslim policies. "The HDZ and HVO established concentration camps for Muslims; massacred Muslim civilians, most notoriously at Ahmici on 16 April 1993 and at Stupni Do on 23 October 1993; and destroyed mosques and other parts of the Bosnian cultural heritage" (Hoare 2007, pp. 372-3).

The HDZ had its eyes on the city of Mostar as the Bosnian Croat capital. Mostar was an intermixed city; Muslims inhabited the center, and Croats mainly occupied the western part. In June 1992, after repelling the Serbs from Mostar with the Bosnian army's help, the HVO had also tried to rid the city of its Muslims, but the latter had proved to be a formidable opponent. In

shelling the town during 1993, the Croats destroyed the historic bridge of Mostar, which was a symbolic architecture that connected the Croat and Muslim sides of the city (Friedmann 2004, p. 44). Faced with worldwide condemnation, Tudjman gave up the desire for Mostar and responded by dismissing Boban as the Bosnian Croat forces' leader. When the Croat forces carried out Operation Storm in 1995, the Serbs retreating from Croat cities evacuated the entire Serb population to take them into the Serb Republic. The Tudjman regime cemented this population exchange by commencing a reign of terror in the newly captured parts of Croatia, where "hundreds of Serb civilians were killed and Serb homes burned to deter the return of the refugees. Some of the emptied Serb homes were then settled with Bosnian Croat refugees" (Hoare, pp. 373-96).

The Bosnian Croats and Croatia effectively contributed to the increase in the number of refugees in Bosnia. They brutally expelled the Muslims from Capljina, Stolac, and the whole region; imprisoned them in the concentration camps in Gabela, Dretelj, and other places; destroyed mosques and other architectural monuments, including the Mostar bridge; used the same rhetoric and method of propaganda as Serbs in mobilizing the Bosnian Croats. However, in terms of numbers and the level of atrocities, they committed less than half the Serbs' crimes. Most importantly, they did not embrace ethnic cleansing as a policy.

### **Croatia's Moral Obligations toward Bosnians**

Throughout the war, the Bosnian Croats effectively cooperated with the Croatian government. When Milosevic's Yugoslavia demanded their weaponry, they refused. They established their own army under Croatia's sponsorship. These forces contributed to the expulsion of non-Serbs in the predominantly Croat areas. In this respect, Croatia was the enemy of those displaced Serbs and Muslims in Bosnia. Consequently, Croatia's position vis-à-vis the



Bosniak and Serb refugees was similar to Serbia. It will not accept the moral duty of compensating for their losses.

However, there is one crucial difference. It is important to note that the Croat forces in Bosnia were in a defensive position against an aggressor. In this respect, it is plausible to argue that they fought a just war. In such a war, helping its victimized brethren in Bosnia should bring much lower responsibility to Croatia than it should bring to Serbia. The MBM would assign Croatia only low OR because it was involved in the Bosnian crisis for a just reason. Still, ends do not justify the means. Since the Croat forces' means of fighting were not totally justifiable, Croatia should accept more duties toward refugees. Although the fighting in Bosnia resulted in atrocities and expulsions committed by all actors, the Croat forces' damage was less than the harm the Serbs inflicted. As mentioned above, in terms of numbers and the level of atrocities, they committed less than half the Serbs' crimes. They did not embrace genocide and ethnic cleansing as a policy. Therefore, the MBM assigns Croatia medium OR for the displaced Croats during the war.

It is safe to assume strong SC between Bosnian Croats and the Croat community. Therefore, Croatia must offer citizenship rights to those Bosnian Croats who do not wish to return to Bosnia. As Croatia's OR level is medium, this number should also be medium. During the war, around 290,000 Bosnians fled to Croatia. Almost all of them were Croats. In this respect, the Croat community seems to have fulfilled its duty to accommodate a fair number of refugees. However, in the long term, not all of these refugees were given citizenship. Only a couple of tens of thousands of them returned to Bosnia. Almost half of them found asylum in other European countries. In this respect, as with the Serbs, it was not possible to talk about a

Croat refugee crisis. Still, if this were the case, we should establish here that it was the Croat community's moral duty to accept those Croats who were afraid to return to Bosnia.

### **Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks)**

After the HDZ chose to follow a separatist path similar to its Serbian counterpart SDS, Muslims' only choice was to form a party-state, where only their compatriots have a say on matters. Creating a separate Muslim state was not beneficial for Izetbegovic: he needed to abandon chunks of Bosnian lands to claim a legitimate, purely Muslim state. In this respect, he made a great effort to keep the Bosnian republic united. He arranged meetings with Milosevic and Tudjman; created a multinational government after the 1990 elections (to avoid the alienation of the Serbs); remained neutral in the war between Serbia and Croatia; complied with the orders of the Yugoslav Federation until the last minute (in order not to attract Serb criticism and hence not to justify their separatist claims); and continuously appealed to the UN and EU to protect the unity of the Bosnian republic. However, after Croatia and Slovenia declared independence in 1991, Bosnia-Herzegovina had to do the same to avoid being crushed under the Serb dominance in Yugoslavia. When the initial alliance with the Croats also collapsed in late 1992, the Bosniak leadership had no alternative left except to create a Muslim entity within Bosnia, a party-state of the SDA.

During 1993, the Bosnian army, now predominantly Muslim, gained strength in Bosnia, partly thanks to creating a national army and partly to the fighters who joined the military from other Muslim countries (Lovrenovic 2001, p. 204). Nevertheless, the period of Muslim separatism also corresponds to the worst Bosnian army atrocities of the war. Since the Bosnian army was relatively decentralized, the levels of atrocities varied throughout the region. In 1992 and 1993, Bosnian forces in Konjic, Visoko, and Srebrenica committed significant war crimes

against Serb civilians, burned villages, drove out their inhabitants, and persecuted civilians in prison camps. The rogue elements within the Bosnian army mostly carried out these acts, which were suppressed by the central authority on 26 October 1993 by Operation Trebevic. However, the Bosnian leadership was responsible for these atrocities as these units operated under its control. Besides these rogue units' acts, the Bosnian army directed a series of atrocities against the Croat population of Bosnia and northern Herzegovina in late 1993: it massacred Croat civilians at Grabovica on 7-8 September and Uzdol on 14 September. According to the HDZ, "the Bosnian army had expelled the entire Croat population from Kojnic, Jablanica, Kakanj, Fojnica, and Bugojno, destroyed 187 Croat villages, and imprisoned about 4,500 Croats in concentration camps" (Hoare 2007, pp. 382-3).

In short, stuck between hostile nations with separatist aims and beleaguered by Serbs, the Bosnian army's process of becoming a purely Muslim force resulted in war crimes, including murder and attacks on civilians (Lovrenovic 2001, p. 204). Still, the Bosnian army and the SDA leadership did not embrace ethnic cleansing as a policy, and their atrocities were quite limited compared to those of Serbs and Croats. In this respect, we should assign the Bosniak community low OR for Bosnian refugees. Their obligation is to compensate for the losses of the Bosnian Serbs and Croats they displaced and facilitate the resettlement of a small portion of them in other countries. However, Serbs and Croats owe more to Bosniaks than vice versa. Consequently, it should suffice here to slightly reduce the extent of Serbs' and Croats' duties toward the Bosniaks.

### **The United States and Russia**

From the beginning of the war, the United States found itself in an ambiguous stance toward Bosnia. On the one hand, the Soviet Union had collapsed; it was not wise for the US to

interfere in Bosnia due to Cold War concerns. On the other hand, Bosnia was the back door of Europe, with which the US had strong relations: a war that destabilized Europe was the last thing the US wanted. Besides, Europe had declared the Bosnian war as a European problem.

Therefore, the US kept its distance from Bosnia throughout the war, and only became directly involved in it during the last year of fighting. This intentional distance was mainly due to the US' disagreement with Britain and France regarding what was happening in Bosnia. While the former believed that it was a war of aggression, the latter insisted that a civil war was taking place. Each view required a different way of dealing with the issue.

The US's direct involvement in the war in late 1994 and 1995 did not increase refugees and casualties. On the contrary, its leadership in moving NATO into the game, unilaterally overriding the arms embargo to funnel weaponry to the Bosniaks, and destruction of Serbian morale brought an end to the war. However, the US's earlier acts, though from a distance, also shaped Bosnia's fate. An important decision by Britain, France, Russia, and the US in Washington on 22 May 1993 canceled all plans to use airstrikes to repel the Serbs, along with the idea of enforcing the Vance-Owen Plan. This decision paved the way for the Serbs to go as far as they could in Bosnia. Another critical decision in this meeting was to assemble the refugees, mostly Muslims, in several so-called safe areas under the UN's protection (Malcolm 1994, p. 250). This resolution was compatible with the European view of the Bosnian war: refugees were seen as a result of civil war, not as a target of ethnic cleansing. They assumed that refugees could be secure under UN protection until the war was over and afterward returned to their homes. The Serbs showed that they did not think the same way by raiding those safe areas and massacring the civilians.

Russia was another participant in the Washington meeting. Russia's stance toward the Bosnian war was as ambivalent as the US. The Soviet Union had collapsed. Russians and Serbs had been close, but Russia was not in a position to worsen its relations with the West for the latter's sake. At the same time, however, it was also unwilling to quickly surrender its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe. The US believed that Russia could influence the Serbs to end the conflict. However, it refused to do so, on the one hand, and strictly opposed external military intervention on the other, which only served to prolong Bosnia's crisis. Russia's participation in the Washington meeting indicated this approach. After the link between Bosnian Serbs and Milosevic broke, Russia explicitly stood by Milosevic's side, supporting his actions and promoting him as a man of peace (Friedman 2004, p. 56). Although Russia backed the UN's diplomatic and military efforts by deploying Russian troops in Bosnia, it protected the Serbs from losing much of what they gained.

### **The US's and Russia's Moral Obligations toward Bosnians**

The Americans' and Russians' positions in Bosnia were ambivalent. It seemed as though they did not know what to make of this crisis. The Cold War was just over. Russia was not in a position to meddle with Eastern Europe's affairs as it used to do. Without the USSR, the US also did not have any reason for direct involvement in Bosnia. Additionally, the EU had framed the issue as a "European problem." There seemed to be nothing much to do for these two states. Still, this did not mean that they were disinterested in the crisis. Russia did not want to give up its influence over Eastern Europe so quickly. On the other hand, the US saw a refugee crisis on Europe's backdoor as a threat to its allies' stability. In this respect, these two actors remained partly in the game.

The US held a different view on the Bosnian crisis than the European leaders. The Americans insistently framed this issue as Serbian aggression and called for intervention against Serbia. However, as discussed above, Europe was quite confident that it was a civil war. The US could not act against the UN and EU that shared the same position. Still, one crucial point where these two states affected the Bosnians' fate was the signing of the Washington Agreement in May 1993 along with Britain and France. As this agreement called off airstrikes against the Serbs and introduced the plan to assemble Bosnians in safe areas, its disastrous outcomes should bring to the US and Russia at least medium OR for Bosnians. Russia deserved this level of OR also by supporting Milosevic internationally.

However, the US took a different course of action toward the end of the war that requires separate consideration. It brokered a peace agreement between the Croats and Bosniaks against the Serbs and militarily supported the latter despite the arms embargo. As they started to advance at the expense of the Serbs, the US spearheaded a NATO mission in Bosnia to end the conflict. Finally, it brought the fighting parties together in Ohio to make them sign the Dayton Peace Agreement. How should we assess these actions?

The Americans' direct involvement in Bosnia presents a rare case where foreign intervention served to stop the fighting and facilitate a resolution. The US was bold enough to use the necessary force to complete its intervention successfully. In this respect, Bosnia was different from Palestine and Syria, where foreign interventions to "save the people" only deteriorated their situation. We would have assigned the American community more duties toward Bosnian refugees if this US involvement had created more refugees by leaving its actions incomplete. However, this intervention effectively stopped the fighting and created an agreement because it was not opposed internationally, and it was a multilateral intervention carried out by

an international force. On paper, it resulted in a political entity that could welcome the returnees. This is why the MBM calls for avoiding intervention in civil crises if there is no international consensus or if the intervener cannot take its intervention further to reduce suffering. From this perspective, Bosnia presents a case where a foreign intervention got as good as it could get. Since the US carried out an operation against an aggressor and was determined enough to complete it successfully, we should decrease its earlier medium OR to low OR for Bosnian refugees. Again, its responsibility cannot go down to zero because of its earlier involvements' outcomes in Bosnia.

The MBM assumes strong SC with immigration countries and many communities of the world. Therefore, the US must offer accommodation to a small number of refugees and grant them at least social and economic rights. In the American experience, offering this rights package usually amounts to giving citizenship in the long term. In 1997, there were around 50,000 Bosnian refugees in the US. This number kept increasing for a few more years. Considering that these people were granted citizenship in the long term, we can conclude that the American community has fulfilled its moral duties toward the Bosnian refugees.

As for Russia, it has not been a preferred destination of the Croats and Bosniaks. It is safe to assume weak SC with these peoples and the Russian community. Therefore, it should have financed and facilitated the resettlement of a medium number of Bosnian refugees in plausible countries. It is not possible to conclude that Russia has fulfilled this duty. As far as Serbs are concerned, strong SC between the two communities is more plausible. Still, as there was no serious Serbian refugee problem, going to Russia did not appear as an option. However, we must establish here that if the Serbs needed a safe place for resettlement and did not wish to return to

Bosnia, the Russian community would have had the moral duty to offer citizenship to a medium number of Bosnian Serbs. This much burden would have been their fair share.

### **Considering Responsibility in Post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina**

The post-Dayton situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina necessitates a brief discussion on the future of the peace process in this country. In many respects, the Dayton Peace Accord (DPA) started a complicated process in Bosnia. After twenty-five years, the international community's (which physically assumed patronage of Bosnia) and Bosnian communities' failure to create a peacefully integrated country raises the question: in case fighting reoccurs in Bosnia, who will be responsible for facing the consequences?

The developments following the Dayton agreement seemed to have a positive impact on the reintegration of Bosnia. In 1996, Karadzic was forced to resign as the President of *Republika Srpska*, replaced by the more moderate Plavsic. One of Plavsic's first actions was the dismissal of Mladic as the VRS commander (Hoare 2007, p. 407). In 1997, Tony Blair's Labor government replaced the pro-Milosevic and anti-Muslim British conservative government, which completely reversed Britain's stance toward Bosnia. In 1999, Milosevic's Serbia faced NATO intervention in Kosovo; simultaneously, the ICTY indicted him for war crimes – signaling the end of the Western collaboration with his regime. The same year witnessed the death of Tudjman, who was replaced by a moderate candidate, who stopped supporting Bosnian Croat irredentism and backed Bosnian unity. In 2000, Milosevic's regime collapsed, which resulted in Serbia's reintegration into the international community. In 11 September 2001, the terrorist strike against the US, focused Western eyes on providing security within their own borders, accompanied by increased intolerance for conflicts that likely attract terrorists. All these events were likely to foster a suitable environment for creating a peaceful and integrated Bosnian state.



However, it did not play out as planned. Although the DPA effectively stopped fighting in Bosnia, it did not develop a solution to ethnic problems.

Dayton was a post-cold war peacebuilding attempt at bringing democracy to Bosnia, which required granting the international community a kind of over-access to Bosnia's domestic affairs. In December 1995, a Peace Implementation Council (PIC) was established in London, which consisted of fifty-two countries and twenty-one NGOs. The council aimed to prevent conflict, consolidate peace, and establish integration by implementing democracy in Bosnia. At the end of the same month, an Implementation Force (IFOR) succeeded UNPROFOR to provide security; however, with its 50,000 heavily armed troops, they looked more like an occupying army (Friedman 2004, pp. 65-9). The PIC created the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to oversee the peace process. However, with IFOR under its control, this office functioned as an organ to impose what is "necessary" on Bosnia. Since integration did not find a base among the warring nations in Bosnia, the DPA policies were enforced upon Bosnians by an international authority. The Bosnian government's reluctance to collaborate with the OHR led to a gradual expansion of the latter's regulatory powers. In post-Dayton Bosnia, the OHR shortly became a *de facto* government, symbolizing Western intervention to forcefully impose integration on peoples who view this method as an insult to their sovereignty (Friedman 2004, p. 73).

The forced integration process backfired. Nationalist politics stood its ground in Bosnia and gained even more power. Without exception, all elections in Bosnia were won by nationalist parties, which fed on ethnic hatreds and zero-sum politics. Any action in favor of integration was labeled an act of treason (Friedman 2004, pp. 84-5). Two mistakes appear here. First, it was exceedingly unwise to proceed with the same nationalist political leaders who started and participated in the war after the transition to a peacebuilding process. All leaders of Croatia,

Serbia, and Bosnia continued to remain in power and shape post-Dayton politics according to their interests – and the integration of Bosnia’s nations was the one thing that challenged these interests (Mahmutcehajic 2000, p. 123). Second, under these circumstances, the US and the West insisted on quickly holding elections to accelerate democratization. Bose calls this approach the “electoralist fallacy” (Bose 2002, p. 90). This insistence was a fatal mistake because it brought the same nationalist leaders into power, dragging the whole country to political deadlock (Kumar 1997, p. 2). Accompanied by the financial and political community’s corruption and fraud, Bosnia has turned into a black hole that has been swallowing all efforts and billions of dollars without any visible progress. “Instead of Bosnia becoming an increasingly viable nation-state, the international community has been forced to continue, and even increase, its involvement in the domestic governance of the country” (Friedman 2004, p. 87).

Contrary to its primary aim, the Western involvement in Bosnia through the DPA has become irreversible. The later attempts to retreat from Bosnia by gradually reducing the international presence have thus failed. As a state, Bosnia remains in the same position where it was in 1995. Paralysis defines its situation. On the one hand, it will not be able to learn how to stand on its feet so long as the West remains there, and on the other, it does not have a state functioning well enough to bid farewell to Western involvement. Bennett nicely summarizes why the Dayton Accord was doomed to fail:

Power was concentrated in the hands of individuals with a vested interest in maintaining the ethnonational divisions institutionalized in the war, since they themselves had created them and were the principal beneficiaries. If the accord were implemented to the letter, if refugees and the displaced were able to return to their homes, if war-crimes suspects were brought to trial, and if Bosnia were to become a functioning democracy governed by the rule of law, their power bases would evaporate. (Bennett 2016, p. 10)

The chronic obsession with exclusionary nationalism in Bosnia also has a psychological dimension. Bosnians cannot support pro-integration parties because they cannot be sure that the others will do the same – because if they do not, supporting alternative parties would only weaken one’s nationalist party. This doubt seems to lead to an insoluble deadlock, primarily because it serves nationalist parties’ interests. Moreover, the failure to create a peacefully integrated Bosnia in a quarter-century resulted in the “renewed conflict” talks resurfaced. No one seems to be happy. The Serbs and Croats feel the pressure to integrate and hence stick to nationalist approaches. The Bosniaks believe there is an unfinished war – because, in 1995, the international community saved the Serbs from Bosnian total victory by an intervention. In this respect, “the absence of war is not peace” in Bosnia (Bennett 2016, p. 266).

Returning to the question at the beginning of this section, the international community’s mismanagement of the Bosnian peace process puts a great responsibility on its shoulders. The peace process was unsuccessful in encouraging refugee returns – on the contrary, emigration has become a severe problem of Bosnia – and a renewed conflict would produce refugees in much higher numbers. In such a case, assigning obligations would be a more sophisticated process because the OR actors are now more diverse and more involved in the issue. If such a war breaks out, instead of a handful of actors, all states and international organizations contributing to the so-called peace process will become obligated to care for the prospective refugees. To avoid this outcome, the current ambiguous international policy in Bosnia requires serious revision. “A division of Bosnia-Herzegovina into three entities would have marked its effective partition; the inclusion of the Serbs within the Federation [of BiH] would have marked the country’s effective reunification; the two-entity policy seemed to do neither” (Hoare 2007, p. 400).

However, the Bosnians will also share at least an equal responsibility in such a conflict scenario. They have missed all chances to rid their country of corrupt leaders who feed on nationalist hostilities and establish social cohesion to end Western involvement in Bosnia. This failure raises the question of self-responsibility: will Bosnians not be responsible for their own catastrophe if another conflict occurs? Should this fact not reduce other communities' moral duties toward Bosnians? One might argue that the Bosnians' responsibility for such a catastrophe will be equal to the West or, possibly even higher. The concluding chapter of this dissertation will offer a short discussion on the importance of asking these questions in refugee cases.

### **Conclusion: After the Meaning-Based Model**

Why is it important to study the Bosnian case from the MBM's perspective? As the post-Dayton analysis above has shown, the absence of civil war in refugee cases does not necessarily mean the establishment of a peaceful country in which the returnees can prosper. Therefore, the "right to repatriation" should not be read too expansively. We should acknowledge the moral right of refugees to refuse to return to their pre-war homes. In Bosnia, only one-third of refugees returned to Bosnia – and the majority did so because Germany did not offer them residency. The question the MBM asked was, "whose responsibility should it be to accept the refugees who do not wish to return to their pre-war homes even if the cause of their displacement has been eliminated?" We must study this question because, as the Bosnian case has shown, we will always have many refugees who fled wars wishing to be resettled somewhere else, even if the fighting in their country ended. Therefore, we need to have the formula to determine communities' moral duties toward such refugees. The MBM aims to work toward accomplishing this task.

How does the Bosnian case look after the MBM has been applied? Below is a chart that demonstrates this chapter's conclusions regarding different communities' moral duties toward the Bosnian refugees.

The MBM calls for avoiding intervention in civil crises unless there is international consensus or otherwise assuming the ethical consequences of involvement in other nations' fates. If intervention is made with less than good intentions and if it deteriorates the situation, the interveners must assume more duties toward the resulting refugees than other communities. The Bosnian case contained two examples of intervention. The British and French involvement in Bosnia deteriorated the situation because they misinterpreted the case and left their intervention incomplete. The American involvement was bold enough to apply the necessary force and take the intervention all the way to the end to finish the war. In this respect, while all these communities must assume more duties toward Bosnians to compensate for the harm their actions inflicted, the British and French communities should accept more burden than the American community. The Americans have fulfilled their duties toward Bosnians, but the French and British did much less than they should have done.

Serbia and Croatia were direct causes of the non-Serbs' and non-Croats' displacement, respectively. Serbia would not accept responsibility for non-Serbs, and Croatia would not assume any for non-Croats. From this perspective, those they displaced remained the international community's responsibility. However, these two communities accepted the majority of their displaced brethren during the Bosnian war. Consequently, we did not speak of a Croat or Serbian refugee problem as we did of Bosniaks. Bosnian Muslims had no state of their brethren that would support them militarily, politically, and financially. They had faced the worst cases of displacement in Bosnia. Therefore, they also remained the international community's

responsibility, but, unlike Croats and Serbs, without a sponsor state to take care of them. In this respect, those communities that should have more responsibilities must have accepted those Bosniaks who did not wish to return to Bosnia.

Table 3. Moral Duties toward Bosnian Refugees

| <b>RR Rank</b> | <b>Actor</b>                           | <b>OR Level</b>                         | <b>Social Connections</b>                                     | <b>Remedial Responsibility (RR) &amp; Obligations</b>   |
|----------------|--|---|---|---|
| <b>1</b>       | Serbia                                 | Enemy of non-Serbs & High for Serbs     | Direct cause of non-Serbs' displacement & Strong with Serbs   | Compensating for the losses of Croat and Bosniak refugees & Granting citizenship to a substantial number of Bosnian Serbs |
| <b>2</b>       | England & France                       | High                                    | Strong  | Granting citizenship rights and additional resources to a substantial number of Bosnian refugees                          |
| <b>3</b>       | UN & EU                                | High                                    | N/A   | Funding and organizing the resettlement of a substantial number of Bosnian refugees                                       |
| <b>4</b>       | Croatia                                | Enemy of non-Croats & Medium for Croats | Direct cause of non-Croats' displacement & Strong with Croats | Compensating for the losses of Serb and Bosniak refugees & Granting citizenship to a medium number of Bosnian Croats      |
| <b>5</b>       | USA                                    | Low                                     | Strong  | Granting citizenship to a small number of Bosnian refugees  |
| <b>6</b>       | Russia                                 | Low                                     | Weak  | Funding the resettlement of a small number of refugees  |
| <b>7</b>       | Other European & Immigration Countries | None                                    | Strong  | Modest discretionary admission or financial support   |

Approximately half of the displaced Bosniaks found long-term residency in around 20 European countries. This case was a relatively better example of how the communities in the

same region might take care of a distressed population. Bosnia, therefore, has been a rare case where the international community has somewhat fulfilled its duties toward refugees. None of these host communities could have claimed that they were overburdened. One exception could have been the German community, which accommodated around 360,000 Bosnian refugees when the war ended. According to the MBM, this number was much more than the German community must have welcomed. Germany did not grant the majority of these refugees citizenship. In this situation, the British and French communities should have opened their doors for the majority of those Bosnians in Germany who did not wish to be repatriated. Although it was unjust to expect Germany to accept all these refugees, it was equally unjust to force them to repatriate when some communities should have done more for them.

As a final note, it is essential to underline that the absence of war does not mean the existence of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. After a quarter-century, the Bosnian peoples still allow nationalist politicians to govern their relations among themselves. This blocks their path to a peaceful and unified Bosnia. If the situation deteriorates in Bosnia again, all communities within it will share significant responsibility for what will happen in their country.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PALESTINIAN CASE

“Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.”<sup>1</sup>

Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, *Les Guêpes*

#### Introduction

In 1947, Salwa was a six-year-old girl living in Jaffa’s Ajami neighborhood.<sup>2</sup> She was not aware of the escalating unrest in her country until one morning an explosion shattered the windows of her first-grade classroom. The conflict between Arabs and Jews in Palestine had now come to her town. After that day, her father took his family on a journey that was never going to end. They fled to Syria, where they experienced a life of permanent temporariness without the rights and opportunities that Syrian citizens enjoyed. Still, like all other Palestinian refugees scattered around in the Middle East, she could not return to her home and found a way to survive in Syria’s harsh conditions. After five decades, she might have gotten used to her new normal. Yet, more was to come. She became a refugee for the second time as she had to escape the war-torn city of Damascus in 2012. She left for Lebanon and ended up in the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut. At the age of 80, she uneasily awaits the next troubles of her life in a squalid camp in a country full of ethnoreligious tensions.

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<sup>1</sup> The more it changes, the more it’s the same thing.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/5/19/nakba-survivors-share-their-stories-of-loss-and-hope>



Salwa was among those Palestinians who were *turned into* refugees. Today, however, the majority of Palestinians, like Salwa's children and grandchildren, are *born* as refugees – as the descendants of many *Naqba* survivors. They are born into a world with few rights, opportunities, and resources. Most communities are disturbed by their presence in their midst. How far is this fair? How can we ethically assess such disturbances? If the international community has failed these generations in helping them, is it not the right time to look for which political communities should do more for them?

Totaling an astonishing number of over 6 million, the Palestinian refugees are the most visible face of the catastrophe in Palestine. Over half of these refugees remain in the countries neighboring Palestine, i.e., Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, where they have struggled to survive under extremely harsh conditions – deprived of many rights and resources to live a dignified life. The United Nations established a separate organization that focuses solely on Palestinians (UNRWA), with over 5.7 million registered refugees. Around 1.5 million people live in the UNRWA's camps. As the Palestinian crisis remains unresolved, these numbers will be multiplied as generations pass. No ethical argument can justify the normalization of the hardships that the *Naqba* survivors and their children experience. Consequently, a normative standpoint must ask whose responsibility it is to take care of these refugees.

The conventional wisdom claims that when the problem that produces refugees cannot be eliminated, those who fled their countries become the international community's responsibility. The meaning-based model (MBM) accepts this moral conclusion. However, as our recent history has shown, this approach usually means that they are the responsibility of no one – especially when their numbers are immense. The MBM contends that, in protracted refugee situations, some communities should morally have more duties toward refugees than other members of the

international community. A country's level of involvement in the refugee-producing environment and its community's social connections with the produced refugees should determine the size and type of help that we could fairly demand from it. When we conduct this analysis, we find out why some communities must ethically shoulder more obligations toward some refugees than other communities.

Insofar as the Palestinian case is concerned, many observers single out Israel as the main culprit whose actions produced the Palestinian refugee problem. Therefore, it should also be held responsible for redressing the effects of its injustices. This conclusion seems indisputable. But does it mean that, in our non-ideal world where Israel is not accepting its moral duty, every other community in the world has the same (non)responsibility for taking care of Palestinian refugees? Or should some communities do more for Palestinians? If so, how do we identify such communities? In refugee cases, the burden is always distributed unevenly – typically, geographically proximate countries are flooded with refugees. Consequently, such communities complain about the unfair burdens they have to bear. To what extent do these communities have the right to make such complaints? What could be the criteria to evaluate the moral limits of helping refugees, that is, whether a society has done enough for them or failed to fulfill its moral duties toward them? This chapter offers an ethics-based discussion on these questions regarding the Palestinian refugee crisis.

A closer examination of Palestine will show that several other actors besides Israel must also share the responsibility for creating refugees and aggravating their torment. The MBM will then claim that, from a normative standpoint, these communities must accept more duties toward Palestinians. It will also discuss the extent of these duties for each society.

## Great Britain

Egypt's occupation that began in 1831 triggered a rapid modernization process in Palestine. The Egyptians opened the local economy to the Europeans, which resulted in an increased Western presence in Palestine (Pappe 2004, p. 22). Jewish immigration to Palestine accompanied these changes. Privatizing land and opening to the world market allowed buying and selling lands, which paved the way for land speculation and rising prices – widely utilized by the first Zionists arriving in Palestine. The Jewish Colonization Association, established in 1891, focused its attention on establishing colonies in Palestine by buying land (Masalha 2012, p. 42). Arab restlessness took a more nationalist tone in this period, and the first violent clashes between Arabs and Jews occurred (Morris 2008, pp. 7-8). The outbreak of World War I gave a new push to Jewish consolidation in Palestine. The British occupation cut the land's connection to the Ottoman Empire, and the Jews found the “great power” to support their ultimate goal in Palestine. During the war years, the Zionists in Palestine managed to earn Britain's trust by offering them intelligence service, which in turn irreversibly tied the two entities' fates for the coming three decades (Pappe 2004, pp. 63-4).

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, Jews (c. 43,000) comprised around eight percent of the Palestinian population. In the mid-1930s, they constituted one-third of the population with around 300,000 members. With Hitler's rise, their number increased dramatically, and in 1947, it reached 630,000 (still one-third of the total population) (Morris 2008, p. 14). Palestinians' clashes with the British forces and several labor strikes made their mark in this period (K&M 2003, p. 106). In 1936, the newly established Arab Higher Committee initiated a general strike against the British. The latter started a full-fledged war against the Arabs after the murder of a British high officer. The Peel Commission dispatched to the area in 1937 recommended a

reversal of the Balfour Declaration and partition of Palestine between the Jews and Arabs. In 1939, Britain issued another White Paper, altogether abandoning the Balfour Declaration and partition of Palestine, promising a government in which Arabs would have the upper hand (Morris 2008, pp. 18-20). However, Jerusalem's mufti Haj Amin somehow managed to lead his colleagues to reject the Paper. The revolt died down, leaving 5,000 killed, 10,000 wounded, 5,000 detained, and an unknown number exiled or forced to flee Palestine (Khalidi 2006, p. 108).

The Great Arab Revolt of 1936-9 produced opposite outcomes for the Jews and Arabs. The Jews came out of this revolt more potent than ever. They took crucial steps toward a self-sufficient Jewish economy. They strengthened their armed forces significantly so that Britain partly relied on them toward the end of the revolt to suppress Arab fighters (K&M 2003, pp. 128-9). The number of armed groups (*Irgun* (IZL), the Stern Gang (LHI), and *Palmah* among them) rapidly increased, and so did their military experience. The Arabs, on the other hand, were utterly exhausted when the revolt ended. In a context where the Arabs were trying to refresh their faith in the British after the 1939 White Paper, the Jews saw an approaching existential catastrophe. Targeting the British now, the Jews in Palestine started an effective guerrilla war in 1944. Britain failed to maintain order. When the Jewish attacks carried the issue to insurmountable levels for the British, they referred the Palestine problem to the United Nations (Khalidi 2006, p. 127).

On 29 November 1947, the UN General Assembly voted and passed Resolution 181 (K&M 2003, p. 147). The day after the resolution passed, intercommunal conflict began (K&M 2003, p. 150). On 30 November 1947, the Arabs ambushed a couple of Jewish buses in Lydda, killing seven and wounding others, while Arab snipers started shooting at Jewish neighborhoods

in Tel Aviv (Morris 2008, p. 76). The effects of these first clashes rapidly snowballed into an all-out civil war.

### **Britain's Moral Obligations toward Palestinians**

Assessing Britain's role in the production of Palestinian refugees requires extra caution. In many respects, Britain's colonial policies were the main factor that rendered the stage suitable for the Jews' ethnic cleansing. The British facilitated Jewish immigration to Palestine and granted the Jews political, economic, and military autonomy while hindering Arabs' political and military power. From this perspective, British policies were among the main reasons behind the Palestinian crisis. Still, it is not plausible to situate Britain in the same moral position vis-à-vis the Palestinian refugees as Israel (see below). Although Britain prepared the ground for establishing a Jewish state in Palestine, the creation of the Palestinian refugees per se and their prolonged desperation throughout decades contain various other actors that directly changed the course of this community's history. The extent of Palestinian sufferings cannot be directly and solely connected to the British Mandate and policies, for the events could have evolved differently despite the Mandate.

Accusing Britain of colonialist practices is a different venture from accusing it of creating Palestinian refugees, even though the latter is connected to the former in many respects. Pro-Palestinian accounts usually emphasize that Britain deliberately ignored the will of Palestine's Arab population. On the one hand, this British policy indeed resulted in the Arabs' failure to create a Palestinian state. On the other hand, however, imperial powers seldom took notice of the preferences of the peoples they colonized. One could criticize British colonialism but cannot (by definition) take it further and put the entire moral responsibility for creating Palestinian refugees and their subsequent agony on Britain's shoulders. Britain's connection to the emergence of the

refugee problem is more indirect than that of Israel and the Arab states. This conclusion is based on four reasons.

First, British officers did not implement a displacement policy against the Palestinian Arabs during their mandate. Despite all the fighting, atrocities, and revolts during the Mandate period, there was no refugee problem until the very last days of the British presence in Palestine. When the civil war and first expulsions started, the British were *de facto* not in control in Palestine. Officially, it had already referred the problem to the United Nations and was in the process of packing up. In short, expulsion was not a British policy.

Second, Britain did not favor the Jews over the Arabs after the hostilities started. If the British had deliberately left their evacuated military posts to the Jewish armed groups while they had denied doing the same for the Arabs, then we might have had a reason for accusing Britain of directly contributing to the expulsions. However, this was not the case. On the contrary, some accounts describe Britain's efforts to be impartial in leaving the posts to those groups that represented the majority living in evacuated areas (Morris 2008, p. 80). Moreover, Britain had no reason to favor the Jews in 1947: for the preceding five years, they had been open enemies in Palestine. The Jews' war against the British cost the latter dearly. Consequently, Britain did not support the Jews' expulsion practices after the civil conflict broke out.

Third, connecting the creation of Palestinian refugees to British colonial practices is a stretch of moral responsibility. It is true that the Palestinian Arabs could not establish their political, economic, and military institutions under the British Mandate. Britain's policies played a significant role in this outcome. However, Britain applied colonial practices everywhere it occupied. Khalidi (2006) has argued that the crucial point is to compare the Palestinian Arabs to other colonized peoples rather than to the Jews in Palestine. He shows that the direction of

causality is unclear: did the Palestinians fail because of the British rule per se, or did the British manage to establish such firm control over Palestinians because they just failed to get organized (and kept close connections with the British)? There are examples of various political establishments under British authority in other colonies. If even the connection between the British rule and Palestinian failure is so vague, it would be almost impossible to connect the results of this failure directly to the British. If we were to make such a connection, then we would have had to refer every Palestinian problem in the last seven decades to Britain. This effort would be morally implausible.

Fourth, the Palestinian Arabs and British were not true enemies. On the contrary, the British had easily found collaborators among the Arabs to establish its authority over the Arab population in Palestine. Throughout the Mandate period, the Arab population had kept their faith in the British to solve the problems created by Jewish immigration and never completely detached themselves from the British. As a result, unlike Israel, it is not possible to conclude that Britain was the enemy of the displaced people in Palestine.

Still, we cannot simply ignore the harm the British inflicted on Palestinian Arabs. Saying that its connection to refugee creation was indirect does not mean that it should be off the moral hook. Besides, we can hold Britain accountable for the atrocities that occurred during the last five months of the Mandate. The British were still officially in charge when the hostilities started and the Arab exodus began. We could thus argue that it was their responsibility to protect the civilians under their control. Yet, we cannot assign it the same level of responsibility as Israel and the Arab states. Therefore, it seems fair to assign the British community medium OR for the Palestinian refugees.

As for the type of Britain's duty for Palestinian refugees, the MBM claims that Western democracies open to immigration have strong SC with many peoples of the world unless there is open hostility between two given communities that makes sharing a common space impossible. In this respect, Britain must offer Palestinian refugees citizenship rights. Since its OR level is medium, this number should also be medium. Although we cannot provide exact numbers, it is safe to say that the British community has not fulfilled its moral duties toward Palestinian refugees as it only accepted less than a hundred thousand people out of 6 million refugees. We should establish here that Britain must aim at taking in many more Palestinian refugees, and the British community has no moral right to complain about (or oppose) such a policy. This much is what this society owes to Palestinians.

### **Israel**

The refugees flowed out from Palestine in two waves. The first wave covered November 1947 to June 1949, an interval which witnessed a civil war and an interstate war. In this period, 800,000 Palestinians left their homeland. The second wave followed Israel's preemptive strike against the Arab states in 1967 and its subsequent occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. In this period, the number of refugees reached 1.5 million. Israel is mainly guilty of the forced displacement of Arabs in large numbers, which involved indiscriminate killing, expulsion, rape, destruction of livelihoods, anti-repatriation policies, illegal confiscation of private property, annexation by war, politicicide, and cultural memoricide (see below).

#### **First Wave of Refugees: The Civil War and 1948 War (November 1947-June 1949)**

The civil war between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine started in November 1947. It expanded to an international conflict by the Israeli state's establishment on 15 May 1948 and the immediate military operation of the surrounding Arab states against it. The civil war roughly



consisted of two phases. Until March 1948, Jews were mostly on defense, aiming to protect their settlements from Arab capture. As of March 1948, Jews turned toward a more offensive strategy, securing strategic positions and roads by seizing villages and expelling their inhabitants. The Jews wiped out 58 Arab villages in this period, displacing around 150,000 people in total, including those removed from the urban areas in the first phase of the civil war (Pappe 2004, p. 137).

In the first weeks of fighting, Arabs seemed to have the upper hand with successful bombings, road captures, and effectively cutting Jerusalem off from Jewish reinforcements and supplies (K&M 2003, pp. 151-4). However, the Jews pulled themselves together very quickly. First, they focused on protecting their settlements and the convoys that supplied them, with only occasional retaliatory attacks against Arab bases (Morris 2008, p. 118). By early 1948, the Zionist leadership had managed to mobilize an army of fifteen thousand full-time soldiers (to reach 35,000 in May) against the scattered, disunited, and uncoordinated Arab guerrilla teams (K&M 2003, p. 155). As of March 1948, the Jews decided to go onto the offensive, putting into force what is known as the Plan D (*Tochnit Dalet*). Plan D was a military blueprint produced by the *Haganah*, which had two clear objectives: the systematic seizure of the evacuated British posts and “cleans[ing] the future Jewish state of as many Palestinians as possible”<sup>3</sup> (Pappe 2004, p. 130). This blueprint was the first concrete reflection of the solution to the so-called “Arab problem” that haunted the Zionists for a long time. With so many Arabs in their midst, and with their goal of creating a purely Jewish state, Zionist leaders had been discussing a particular

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<sup>3</sup> There is a hot debate between Israeli and Palestinian historians (and also among Israeli historians) regarding the Israelis’ intention behind Plan D. The former claims that ethnic cleansing had never been Israel’s aim, whereas the latter believes the opposite. As the words in the document were carefully selected, their meaning mostly depended on the interpreter. Evidence is mixed on this matter. However, ethnic cleansing did take place after the civil war started, which makes Israel directly responsible for this outcome.

solution as of the early 1930s that they euphemistically dubbed “the transfer solution” (Masalha 2012, p. 62; Fischbach 2003, p. 4; Morris 2008, p. 18).

After the activation of Plan D, the Jewish forces captured major Arab-populated cities on the coast; Haifa and Jaffa fell to Israeli hands on 22 April and 13 May (K&M 2003, p. 158). Military units raided the neighborhoods, collecting arms and punishing irregulars, handling civilians roughly, evicting families from their homes, arresting and beating young males, cutting the cities’ basic electricity and water services, and systematically looting shops and facilities to confiscate cars and food stocks (Morris 2008, p. 147). Along with Haifa and Jaffa, Acre, Tiberias, Beisan, and numerous other cities, towns, and villages also fell (Khalidi 2006, p. 132). The Arab exodus had begun.

In the first phase of the civil war, when the clashes occurred mainly in the urban areas, the fight scared off the middle-class Arabs. In the second phase, when Jews moved to the offensive and started to capture and empty Arab villages for security reasons, the peasants ran away or were expelled. In this period, around 100,000 middle-class and 50,000 peasant Arabs left their homes for other parts of Palestine or other states (Morris 2008, p. 95; Fischbach 2003, p. 2). Bloody examples like the infamous Deir Yassin massacre on 9 April 1948, when the Jewish forces killed more than a hundred civilians, mutilated them, and raped women after their capture of the village, show that the Arabs had good reasons for flight (Masalha 2012, p. 81; K&M 2003, pp. 161-2; Khalidi 2006, pp. 132-3; Morris 2008, pp. 127-32).

After Plan D became effective and Jewish forces started to capture Arab villages, Zionist officials immediately created several bodies to take control and facilitate the usage of the so-called “abandoned lands” (*adamot netushot*). In March 1948, *Haganah* established the Commission for Arab Property in Villages, soon becoming the Department of Arab Affairs. In

April and May, the Supervisor of Arab Property in the Northern District and the Supervisor of Abandoned Property were established to control captured urban property in Haifa, Tiberias, Safad, and Jaffa (Fischbach 2003, p. 15). The confiscation of Arab lands and property would contribute significantly to Israel's war efforts and later settlement projects, which were legalized by the enacted laws right after the Israeli state's proclamation (Fischbach 2003, pp. 21-27).

The Israeli state was proclaimed on 14 May 1948. A coalition of surrounding Arab states declared war against it the following day. After the start of the conventional war, seizing lands and forcibly (and in many cases bloodily) expelling their inhabitants became Israel's overarching war strategy. On 23 May, *Haganah's* Alexandroni brigade shot 200 men in Tantura after capturing the village (Pappe 2004, p. 137). In October, the Israeli army seized al-Dawayma without a fight, a large village of 3,500 unarmed people, and massacred about a hundred villagers (Masalha 2012, p. 83). The Galilee and Negev's capture followed the same strategy (Pappe 2004, p. 137). In an extensive military campaign known as Operation Hiram, the Israeli army undertook many massacres to intimidate the inhabitants into fleeing (Masalha 2012, p. 84), which was complemented by Operation Yiftah that completed the occupation of Eastern Galilee (Morris 2008, p. 157). In Operation Nahshon, Israeli forces captured and destroyed numerous Arab villages (Morris 2008, p. 138). Israeli military historian Arie Yitzhaki, who also served as the director of the Israeli army's archives, recorded about ten large-size and a hundred small-size massacres committed by the Jewish forces in 1948-1949 (Masalha 2012, p. 78). In the end, their strategy worked: no option was left for the Arabs but flight.

After one month of fighting, the first truce between Israel and the Arab coalition came on 10 June 1948. The result was an Israeli victory and success in expelling the Arabs, which gave Israel a solid incentive to take bolder steps. When the fighting resumed on 9 July, Israel had

decided to intensify terror and expulsion to accelerate the “evacuation process” hampered by some Arabs who resisted leaving their homes (Masalha 2012, p. 81). Between 9 and 18 July, Israel launched a major offensive on all three fronts (Jordan, Egypt, and Syria), hoping for a decisive victory to end the war. The UN imposed another truce on 15 July that was put into force on 18 July (Morris 2008, p. 273).

During this “Ten Days War,” Israeli soldiers received explicit orders from their supervisors for expulsion. The most well-known example is the evacuation of the Arab towns of Lydda and Ramla. On 10 July, Ben-Gurion authorized Commander Allon to expel the inhabitants of these two towns. The orders were to “allow the speedy flight from Ramla of women, old people, and children” while taking “all army-age males prisoners” and quickly expel the inhabitants of Lydda “without attention to age” (Morris 2008, pp. 286-90). Within two days after receiving the orders, *Yiftah* and *Kiryati* troops expelled 50,000 people. Meanwhile, Israel renewed the battle in the Galilee and Jordan valley to expand the coastal strip of Jewish-held Western Galilee eastward into Nazareth. The orders for this city were to “completely root out the enemy from the villages around Nazareth,” which was tantamount to expulsion, given that the Arab population had now been considered as a “fifth column” by Israeli leaders (Morris 2008, p. 278). In line with this strategy, after the Arab towns along the road between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem were cleansed, new orders instructed the prevention of “the return of the Arab inhabitants to their towns and villages” conquered by Israel, granting permission to use “live fire” (Morris 2008, p. 294). In addition, during these operations, the rape of Arab women was deliberately used by Israeli soldiers as an instrument to intimidate the population and force them into fleeing (Masalha 2012, p. 82; Morris 2008, p. 405). When the second truce came into force,

an additional 100,000 Palestinians had been forced to leave for territories held by Arab armies (K&M 2003, pp. 162-3).

In July 1948, almost all Palestine was under Israeli control, except for the West Bank and other minor territories held by Arab armies. The Jews were now closer than ever to establishing their state on an “acceptable” part of the Palestinian territory. One big problem for them was the Arabs, who hoped to return to these lands once the fighting was over. The Zionists, however, wanted to take advantage of their control of Arab-free lands and make the temporary situation permanent. For this purpose, Yosef Weitz (head of the JNF Lands Department), Elias Sasson (head of the Foreign Ministry’s Middle East Affairs Department), and Ezra Danin (intelligence service worker) established an official, but initially secret, “Transfer Committee,” implementing an idea that had been on the Zionist agenda since the early 1930s (Morris 2008, p. 300). Their three-page “Solution of the Arab Question in the State of Israel” submitted to the Israeli cabinet explicitly suggested the destruction of Arab villages, settling Jewish immigrants on Arab property, and by these means, prevention of Arab refugees from returning to their homes (Masalha 2012, pp. 73-4).

The Israeli state carried out the proposed anti-repatriation policy, legalized it in 1950 (Pappe 2004, p. 146), and has never reversed it since then. This process contained injustice within injustice. If expelling Arabs from their homes was unjust, so was deliberately preventing their return (Fischbach 2003, p. 9, K&M 2003, p. 165). Harvesting their crops and collecting their bounties were also unjust. Even before the war was over, the Jewish farmers began harvesting crops left by the Palestinians and obtained the titles to those lands from their state officials (Fischbach 2003, p. 13). Looting and destroying their homes, villages, and towns was another injustice. In the spring of 1948, the Jewish forces were already systematically destroying

villages after capture (Morris 2008, p. 303). Settling in their homes or building new settlements on their debris was yet another one. As of the fall of 1948, Israel started formally distributing Arab lands and houses to the Jews flowing into Israel (Fischbach 2003, pp. 10, 72-3). Confiscation of financial assets and instruments of both Arab individuals and charity organizations (*Waqfs*) should be added to this list (Fischbach 2003, pp. 29-39). Moreover, this anti-repatriation policy was accompanied by a widespread “renaming” of captured lands, a practice called “cultural memoricide,” which had begun even earlier than the creation of the Transfer Committee (Pappe 2004, p. 139; Masalha 2012, p. 89). These unjust policies were already in full force even before the 1948 war ended and have not changed afterward, except for Israel’s acknowledgment of its frequently repeated but never realized obligation to “compensate refugees” for their losses (see below).

The second truce ended to the Arabs’ fears and against their wishes, and the fighting resumed on 15 October 1948. In Operation Yoav (15-22 October), Israel defeated the Egyptian army and captured Beersheba, followed by a massacre and expulsion of its inhabitants to Gaza and Egypt (Morris 2008, p. 328). Israel was now threatening to enter Sinai, i.e., Egypt proper (Pappe 2004, p. 136). Operation Hiram on the Syrian-Lebanese front followed shortly. The Israeli army overran northern Galilee and got a hold of southern Lebanon. During this campaign and in its aftermath, another series of atrocities took place. In Hule, the *Golani*, *Seventh*, *Carmeli* Brigades, and auxiliary units murdered two hundred civilians and POWs. In Saliha, Jish, and Safsaf, the Seventh Brigade killed a hundred and fifty civilians and POWs. The massacres at Eilabun and al-Mawasi followed. In this operation, the Arab Liberation Army was also destroyed (Morris 2008, pp. 345-8). At the end of October, Israel had consolidated its grasp on a large portion of Palestine, starting from southern Lebanon and southwestern Syria on the north and

ending at northern Egypt on the south, connected through a broad coastal strip secured by the Israeli army.

In December 1948, Israel was determined to clean the “land of Palestine” from all Egyptian troops. On 22 December, a final offensive, Operation Horev, started with air and artillery strikes along the Mediterranean coast and inside Gaza. The fighting ended on 12 January when Egyptian and Israeli sides met in Rhodes to start UN-mediated armistice talks (Morris 2008, p. 369). These negotiations also marked the *de facto* end of the 1948 war. After Israel and Egypt signed an armistice agreement on 24 February 1949, other Arab states quickly followed. Separate agreements were signed with Lebanon on 23 March, Jordan on 3 April, and Syria on 20 July, while Iraq refused to start negotiations (Morris 2008, pp. 374-6). Although these agreements indicated Israel’s recognition by its neighbors, it would take three decades for the Israeli state to make its first fully official peace agreement with an Arab state (i.e., Egypt). Nevertheless, the fighting was over, and Palestine was going to enter a two-decade-long period of stability.

The 1948 war created three entities in Palestine. The first was the Israeli state that stretched over 78% of Palestine, with its 660,000-strong Jewish community and 150,000 Arabs who remained within its borders. The creation of Israel uprooted around 800,000 Arabs, who fled to Jordan and Jordanian-controlled West Bank, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, other Gulf states, and the United States (K&M 2003, p. 216). The second entity was the West Bank, which Jordan seized at the very beginning of the war. The third was the Gaza Strip under Egyptian military control. This particular year of destruction, displacement, and dispersal was carved in stone forever in the Palestinians’ minds, which they immediately named “the *Naqba*,” that is, the catastrophe (Pappe 2004, p. 141).

## **Second Wave of Refugees: The 1967 Arab-Israeli War**

The twenty-year stability after 1949 in Palestine shattered with the outbreak of the second Arab-Israeli war in 1967. In the face of a threatening “Arab unity” crafted by Egypt’s Nasser and Syria’s Assad and the Egyptian army’s increased activity along the Sinai border, Israel decided to undertake a pre-emptive strike against these two states. In a military campaign known as the Six-Day War (5-10 June 1967), the Israeli army once again demonstrated its superiority by destroying Egyptian and Syrian air forces and capturing the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria in a matter of days (Pappe 2004, pp. 186-8). The whole territory of historic Palestine was now under Israeli control. This occupation resulted in another wave of refugees, both by the war itself and the subsequent expulsion policies, although the size was not as large as the 1948 displacement. Along with the growth by reproduction, this new exodus increased the number of international refugees to 1.5 million in the early 1970s and 2 million in the early 1980s. Another result of the Six-Day War was the increase of the Arab population under Israeli control. Already troubled with its several hundred thousand Arabs within Israel proper, about 550,000 Arabs in the West Bank and 350,000 Arabs in Gaza were now subject to Israeli rule (Pappe 2004, p. 196). This occupation, which is still ongoing, would change the nature of the conflict in Palestine (K&M 2003, p. 241).

### **Israel’s Moral Obligations toward Palestinians**

The outbreak of civil war in Palestine corresponds to the emergence of the Palestinian refugee problem. In this still unresolved, and in many respects deadlocked, process, millions of people have been uprooted from their homeland without a chance of return. Israel is mainly guilty of the forced displacement of Arabs in large numbers, which involved indiscriminate killing, expulsion, rape, destruction of livelihoods, anti-repatriation policies, illegal confiscation



of private property, annexation by war, politicide, and cultural memoricide. Of the 78% of Palestine, where Israel established itself at the end of the 1948 war, 71% was acquired illegally (the Jews had purchased 7% of Palestine). And the remaining 22% has been kept under occupation by Israel as of 1967. In this respect, Israel is directly responsible for all Arabs displaced after November 1947 and their losses. Therefore, the MBM labels Israel as the enemy of the displaced people in Palestine.

Justice requires that Israel pays for what it has done. This is not the place to discuss a just resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict; however, as the direct cause of the displacements, Israel must compensate for the losses of refugees and finance their resettlement in other countries. Israel is morally obliged to pay for all Palestinian property confiscated from 1948 and for all kinds of public or private benefits it extracted from those properties. This amount is currently measured as hundreds of billions of US dollars. The United Nations have decades-long experience in this matter. Its archives are full of various studies and examinations that tried to calculate the value of Palestinian refugees' lost property (Fischbach 2003). In this respect, Israel must allow the UN to finish what it started right after the 1948 war.

Like other enemies of displaced people, Israel did not accept its responsibility for Palestinians. In moral terms, Israel had pursued a "politics of denial" from the first day on: denying any wrongdoing, ethnic cleansing, and guilt for creating refugees. Therefore, compensating refugees remained for Israel only as a Good Samaritan project (making up for the refugees who suffered from a "just war") and not a moral obligation that derived from their direct role in the disastrous outcome. More importantly, compensation was perceived as a bribe to be distributed among the surrounding Arab states to facilitate an encompassing peace agreement with them. From the Israeli standpoint, reparation has never been its moral

responsibility toward the displaced *individuals* but was a certain amount of money to be paid to Arab *states* for resettlement. Israel's insistence on refusing its moral responsibility vis-à-vis the refugees as individuals has kept the property question unresolved throughout the following decades.

It is important to note that Israel has never *officially* denied its obligation to pay compensation for refugee property. Yet, its conditions for honoring this obligation are not justifiable. First, it refuses repatriation and restitution, which is morally unacceptable. However, because this fact seems irreversible, Israel is obliged to make payments to Palestinian *individuals* for their losses. The Israeli government has been refusing this option throughout, which is the second injustice it has committed. Third, Israel wanted to replace paying individuals with paying Arab governments or international organizations to help refugees resettle. The latter is necessary for those refugees who wish to relocate; however, it is at the same time a separate obligation of Israel, in addition to paying Palestinian individuals, not in place of it.

Israel refuses to do what is morally necessary at this stage, and the Palestinian refugees remain the international community's responsibility. Following the MBM's "absolute deprivation" argument (as discussed in Chapter 2), we should claim that the actors involved in the Palestinian crisis must share the responsibility and assume more duties toward Palestinian refugees than other members of the international community – regardless of (the goodness of) the intentions behind their involvement. If their intentions were less than good (i.e., benefit- or interest-oriented), they should accept even more duties. Therefore, the MBM asks again, "is there any community that should have the duty to accept Palestinians *more than everyone else*?" That is to say, "is there any community that got itself involved in the Palestinian case, especially in such a way as to worsen the situation and increase the number and suffering of refugees?"

## Jordan

Jordan significantly contributed to the creation of Palestinian refugees as the most potent member of the league that started the 1948 war, supposedly on behalf of the Palestinian nation, despite being materially incapable of fighting it properly. In addition to its contributions to the war effort, Jordan's ambition to annex Palestinian territories drastically increased Palestinians' agony. Jordan's involvement in Palestine was in no respect an act of helping a distressed population. On the contrary, it deliberately hampered the Palestinian national movement and identity for the sake of its political interests. Jordan annexed the West Bank, sabotaged Arab unity against Israel, and attempted to suppress the Palestinian identity.

King Abdullah ruled Transjordan, but his eyes were always fixed westward to obtain a beachhead like northern Palestine to secure access to the Mediterranean Sea and further expand toward north and south. In 1918, the Hashemite family had struck a deal with the Zionists and promised to support their colonization activities in Palestine if the settlers, in turn, backed Hashemite ambitions in the region. Although Abdullah dreamed of establishing his authority over all of Palestine, in which the Jews had a completely autonomous zone (or "a republic"), the Jews were quite clear about their goal of establishing a sovereign state in the 1940s. In August 1946, King Abdullah and the Jewish Agency emissary Sasson agreed on a partition in principle in two secret meetings. In November 1947, just a couple of weeks before the passage of the UN Resolution 181, Abdullah and Golda Meir reaffirmed this agreement in another secret meeting, where the former promised to accept a Jewish state in Palestine and refrain from attacking it, while the latter agreed to Jordan's annexation of the West Bank (Morris 2008, pp. 190-1).

The King of Jordan firmly rejected the establishment of a separate Palestinian state and collective identity, claimed itself the only legitimate inheritor of Arab Palestine, and engaged in

secret diplomacy with Britain, the Jewish Agency, the United States, and the Soviet Union to prevent the realization of the UN's two-state solution to the Palestinian problem (K&M 2003, p. 152, 166, 219; Khalidi 2006, p. 129). Moreover, just before the war, defying the agreements in the earlier Arab summits, Jordan declared that it would radically reduce its war aim from eliminating Israel and saving Palestinians to securing territory for itself in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as per the tacit agreement between Israel and Jordan<sup>4</sup> (Morris 2008, p. 183). This backdown by one of the chief contributors compelled other Arab states to downgrade their war objectives and effectively neutralized the Arab Legion (Morris 2008, p. 194; Pappé 2004, p. 139). The Arab states' unwillingness to and unpreparedness for waging such a war and their divergent interests in Palestine also explain why they could not establish a coalition with clear objectives, unified leadership, and effective command chain before and during the 1948 war.

When the first truce was declared on 10 June 1948, Jordan mainly had received what it wanted (Pappé 2004, p. 134). It had annexed the West Bank, from Jericho to Lydda-Ramla in the west, Nablus and Jenin in the north, and East Jerusalem. It had not touched lands allocated for Jews and refrained from seriously confronting the Israeli army on the battlefield. Almost entirely out of ammunition under the UN's strict arms embargo, the rest of the war for Jordan was going to be about defense (Morris 2008, p. 231). Now officially laying claim over the Palestinian Arab lands and its inhabitants' representation, Jordan effectively carried out its de-Palestinization policies in the West Bank until its ejection in the 1967 war, which was in essence not so different

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<sup>4</sup> In fact, the secret Jordan-Israel agreement required that the former did not touch Jerusalem. However, the cry for help was so loud in eastern Jerusalem that Abdullah could not resist the public pressure for moving into the city. Yet this was not his sole motivation. Losing the sacred city would severely harm Arab morale and war success on the one hand, and turn the Arabs and Arab states against Jordan on the other. On the contrary, controlling Jerusalem could turn Jordan into a central actor in the region. An additional personal motivation of Abdullah was not leaving his father's and brother's graves to Jewish hands (Morris 2008, p. 212).

from Israel's approach to Palestinians (Shlaim 1988; 1998; 2009). Jordan did not recognize a "Palestinian people" or a distinct Palestinian identity, used the fragmentation among the population to cripple their identity via Jordanization and annexationist policies, occupied and attempted to colonize part of Jerusalem, imposed a strict surveillance system on Palestinians, and utilized its *Mukhabarat* (intelligence service) to torture, silence, and eliminate dissidents and independent voices (Masalha 2012, p. 194). Abdullah declared Jordan the only legitimate inheritor of Arab Palestine, which included even the prohibition of using the word "Palestinian," though not in a fully hard-core authoritarian sense (K&M 2003, pp. 219-20).

Nasser's revolution and his takeover of the Egyptian government in 1952 brought significant changes. Nasser promoted broader Arab unity in the Middle East, which Palestinians quickly embraced. They strictly believed that Arab disunity was the main reason for their current predicament and its prolongment. Only pan-Arabism could reverse their fate (K&M 2003, p. 225). Jordan could not resist the pressure to join in the call for Arab unity for very long. In 1967, King Hussein flew to Cairo to sign a defense pact with Egypt, returning to Jordan with an Egyptian army crew to organize a joint military command (Quandt 2005, p. 37). The subsequent Arab-Israeli war left Jordan on the defeated side and cost it the whole West Bank. Its participation in the Khartoum Summit the next year, in which the Arab League declared its "three no's" to Israel (no negotiation, no recognition, no peace), further strained relations with Israel and decreased hopes for holding on to its West Bank project (K&M 2003, pp. 253-4).

The early 1980s brought economic problems to Jordan. The West Bank's loss, additional hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees pouring into Jordan proper, and the international crisis created by the Iran-Iraq war overwhelmed its absorptive capacity (K&M 2003, p. 296). The mid-1980s witnessed increased contacts between Israel and Jordan. On 31 July 1988, King

Hussein officially relinquished all connections to the West Bank and dropped his claim over Arab Palestine (Quandt 2005, p. 277), which was crowned by the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty in 1995. These events marked the end of Palestinian political presence in Jordan: this country would never serve as a base of any kind for Palestinians again. With its ambitions for Arab Palestine, the annexation of the West Bank, exploitation of refugees, suppression of Palestinian communal identity, effective hindrance of the Palestinian national movement, and assimilationist policies, Jordan significantly contributed to the Palestinians' demise.

### **Jordan's Moral Obligations toward Palestinians**

Jordan was among the main actors in the Palestinian crisis that effectively contributed to the deterioration of the situation in Palestine and the creation of refugees. Jordan had long had territorial ambitions over Palestine. It participated in the 1948 war that directly produced refugees and annexed the West Bank. It hindered the Palestinian national movement and suppressed Palestinian communal identity by its assimilationist "Jordanization" policies. It economically exploited Palestinians in the West Bank and within Jordan to expand its wealth. From this perspective, Jordan contributed greatly to creating Palestinian refugees and their prolonged plight.

What does the MBM make of Jordan's involvement in Palestine? Let us start by asking whether Jordan has any plausible excuses for intervening in Palestine that might reduce its level of responsibility. How would Jordanians try to justify their involvement in Palestine? First, they could claim that the Palestinians who fled Israel's atrocities were flowing into Jordan: military action was the only option to stop the flow. Second, they could argue that witnessing the results of Jewish advance, the public pressure on the government to "save Palestine" was irresistible.

Third, they could contend that Israel was the aggressor in this crisis; what they did was to fight a just war against an aggressor on behalf of a victimized people.

None of these arguments would save the Jordanian community from assuming the additional moral duties their involvement in Palestine must bring. Jordan had no right to use the Palestinian inflow as an excuse for its military involvement in the crisis because, when the 1948 war started, only 150,000 Palestinians had been displaced. Not all of these displaced had left Palestine (but ran to safer places), and not all of those who left Palestine had gone to Jordan. In this respect, the claim that Jordan was “swamped” by refugees so that it had to make war to stop the cause of displacement becomes morally unacceptable. Similarly, the “public pressure to salvage Palestine” argument cannot save Jordan. On the contrary, if we assume that the Jordanian public put some real pressure on its government to attack Israel, this would only increase the responsibility of the Jordanian community for the war’s results. The government cannot hide behind this “public pressure” pretext. It was aware that its military power was not on a par with Israel’s. However, since the king’s authority was not yet consolidated over Jordan, he was afraid to defy the public sentiment by announcing that Jordan had no power to stand against Israel. Instead, he tried to occupy parts of Palestine by not seriously confronting Israel on the battlefield. The king’s fear of losing authority cannot be an excuse for entering a war and avoiding the responsibility resulting from losing it. On the contrary, participating in a war without having the capacity to fight it and creating refugees by losing it should put more responsibility on Jordan’s shoulders. In this respect, these two arguments will not help Jordan reduce its obligations toward Palestinians.

The third claim seems to have more moral force. Israel was the aggressor in Palestine. It was forcibly expelling Palestinians without having the right to do it. Should there not be credit

for a state for fighting against such an aggressor on behalf of the victimized nation? If this were the case, then we could have considered morally reducing the Jordanian community's responsibility. However, recall the intervention's curse: states do not intervene with purely humanitarian or ethical concerns, and they interfere not because they have no other choice. This is why the MBM claims they should accept more responsibility for the displaced. Jordan's intention was not to help the distressed people of Palestine. It intended to expand its territories by annexing as much land as it could in Palestine. The king had made his partition agreements with the Zionists as early as 1946. One day before the war began, he announced that his aim was not eliminating Israel. During the war, his army did not pass into the lands "allotted" to the Jews and avoided confronting Israel's army on the ground. Moreover, Jordan's ambitions over Palestine disturbed other regional powers and pulled them into the conflict. This fact further complicated the conflict and deteriorated the situation. These actions could not be explained by fighting for a nation's freedom.

Besides, the Jordanian government clearly showed that it did not care about Palestinians' freedom and national identity throughout the interwar period. Apparently, "saving Palestine" was a different objective for Jordan than "saving Palestinians." Jordan feared Palestinians' power under its control and prohibited anything that was "Palestinian." It used the internal fault lines to divide the national movement. It favored Nashashibis and crushed Husseinis. It offered citizenship to those who agreed to give up their Palestinian identity. It economically exploited the West Bankers without returning any socio-political benefits to them. Obviously, Jordan's intention behind participating in the war against Israel was less than good – it was even bad because it aimed to possess Palestinians' lands by force and establish authority over the



inhabitants rather than helping them against an aggressor. Consequently, it seems fair to assign Jordanian community high OR for Palestinian refugees.

What should be the type of duty to be demanded from Jordan? As Jordanians and Palestinians are mostly Sunni Arabs, we can conclude that these two communities have strong SC. Therefore, Jordan should offer Palestinians citizenship rights and additional resources for those in need. Since its level of OR is high, this number must be substantial. The Jordanian community is hosting over 2 million Palestinians today. Most of them have been granted citizenship. In this respect, Jordan is a country that provided Palestinians with the most political rights among other host communities in the region. Still, the de-Palestinization and Jordanization policies (which Jordan has long used to hamper Palestinian national identity) are morally unacceptable.

Considering that it is hosting around one-third of the total internationally displaced population, it is fair to assume that the Jordanian community is overburdened in this case. Practically speaking, so long as other actors with OR do not offer taking in more Palestinians, it will be implausible to expect the Jordanian community to do more. However, morally speaking, we should establish that it is unacceptable that most Palestinians in Jordan live below the poverty line. Jordan's moral obligation is also to help those in need financially. If other communities assume their share and the numbers in Jordan are reduced to an acceptable level, then Jordan must apply the necessary policies to improve its Palestinians' economic well-being.

### **Egypt and Syria**

On 15 May 1948, Egypt entered the war scene with its 10,000 troops crossing the border between the Sinai and Negev, rushing to the coastline, attacking Jewish settlements on its way, and bombing Tel-Aviv from the air (Pappe 2004, p. 133). Yet, the fear of Jordanian domination

in Palestine deeply haunted the Egyptians for geopolitical reasons. They decided to split their forces and dispatch one brigade to occupy as much West Bank territory as possible, mainly to prevent a complete Jordanian takeover (Morris 2008, p. 234). In this respect, Egypt was as responsible as Jordan for the defeat in this war, as the disputes within the coalition prevented them from effectively fighting against Israel, which resulted in the displacement of high numbers of Palestinians. Moreover, similar to other Arab states, Egypt was not prepared and qualified enough to fight an international war, especially to seal another population's fate. The Egyptian army had neither the experience and training nor the necessary equipment and ammunition for external warfare. Nor did Egyptians do the necessary intelligence work and planning to realistically assess the enemy's strength and chances for success in such a war (Morris 2008, pp. 183-6).

After the 1948 war, Egypt used the Palestinians under its control as leverage against Jordanian domination in Palestine, accompanied by its ill-treatment of refugees. In response to Jordan's increased presence in Palestine and control over Palestinians through promoting the Nashashibis, Egypt strongly pressured the Arab League to establish an "All Palestine Government" in Gaza, including eminent members of the Husseini family. It installed a military rule over Gaza and never allowed any Palestinian political activity to jeopardize its armistice agreement with Israel (Khalidi 2006, p. 136). The Gazans were also helpless in economic terms. Unlike the West Bank, the strip that remained in Egyptian hands did not contain vast agricultural lands. Many refugees who fled to Gaza remained unemployed and encamped around urban areas. Fearing the impacts of a Palestinian influx on Egyptian economic and political stability, the government simply sealed its borders, granting only exceptional passage to few Palestinians.

Millions had been trapped on a small piece of land, with no access to jobs, social activities, political opportunities, and the outside world.

In the interwar period, Palestinians were nothing more than a card to play wisely for Egypt, for both domestic and international purposes, especially in the face of frequent coups that kept changing Arab governments in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The constant “no war, no peace” situation with Israel rendered Palestinians the primary tool of political superiority games among the Arab states (Pappe 2004, p. 165). Nasser was no exception. He had risen with his pan-Arabism and secured Palestinians’ nationwide support for some time. To maintain this support, he labored hard to establish a Palestinian organization under his control, which he finally managed in the first Arab summit in Cairo in 1964: the Palestine Liberation Organization was created. The PLO was initially not an independent entity. It was constituted as a puppet organization and presided over by a person who was closer to Arab states rather than the Palestinians. The intention was to curb the rise of “dangerous” groups like *Fatah* that had been recruiting members for its cause among the destitute Palestinians (K&M 2003, p. 248). In a way, the Arab states tried to establish a safety valve for themselves. The PLO would present the Arab countries as if they cared about the Palestinians but operate under their strict control at the same time.

All these plans failed with the outbreak of the 1967 war. Egypt was the leading actor that led its Arab allies to this military confrontation. Nasser’s increasingly war-prone tone that signaled hostile intentions toward Israel, his political unity with Syria, and military alliance with Jordan, accompanied by his troops’ mobilization along the Israeli borders, invited the destructive Israeli strike in 1967. The fighting resulted in a decisive Arab defeat and the second wave of refugees. From then on, Nasser’s main target became to regain Egypt’s lands lost to Israel.

Palestinians were again a perfect tool. A more radical Arafat had taken over the PLO. Nasser realized the new PLO's potential use as leverage to force Israel's hand to return the Egyptian lands it occupied in 1967. He began to encourage the PLO explicitly for engaging in direct resistance to Israel (K&M 2003, p. 258). He aided *Fatah* militarily and allotted a radio station to it in Cairo.

The breaking point in Israel-Egypt relations came in 1973 when Sadat orchestrated a surprise attack against Israel. For the first time since 1948, Israel's invincibility became questionable in the Yom Kippur War. Egypt and Israel began a peace process followed by Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem in 1977 and the signing of the peace treaty two years later in Camp David (Khalidi 2006, p. 212). Palestinians in this period continued to be a tool for Egypt to reach its goal. However, Egypt was also concerned about its image in the Arab world when it signed the peace treaty with Israel. To avoid being perceived as a traitor and becoming isolated within the Arab world, Sadat tried to link his peace agreement to the provision for Palestinians of some basic rights and recognition by Israel, but no avail (Quandt 2005, p. 211). Egypt agreed to a separate peace with Israel without securing anything concrete for the Palestinians. It was out of the picture now.

Syria's motivations for entering the 1948 war, contributions to the war efforts, and conduct toward Palestinians were the same as Egypt's. In many instances, these two countries cooperated effectively. Syria was also essentially driven by its fear of Jordan's more assertive presence in the region. On 15 May 1948, its troops moved into Palestine along with the other Arab armies. Syria vaguely put its war aim as "saving Palestine." However, no one knew what that exactly meant, especially in a context where Jordan departed from the Arab coalition's early goals. Syrians might have intended to occupy the northern coastline of Palestine, isolate the

Jewish settlements there from the Israeli center, prevent further Jordanian expansion, and present this achievement as a victory (Morris 2008, p. 251). Yet similar to other Arab states, Syria suffered a decisive defeat in the 1948 war. Its army was not prepared and suitably equipped for this war, and it failed to assess the enemy's strength before they started fighting.

Syria also shared responsibility for deliberately hampering the Palestinian national movement and crippling their fighting capacities by favoring one group over others for the sake of counterbalancing Jordan's power in Palestine. In the heat of the battle, the Husseinis fighting in Palestine had requested help from the Arab Liberation Army's (ALA) commander Qawuqji. But they were denied any support as per King Abdullah's orders, who championed the Nashashibis over Husseinis for his own ambitions. Syria did the same harm to Palestinians via a different channel. As Qawuqji represented Jordanian interests in Palestine, Syria did not lift a finger in October 1948, when his forces came under the Israeli army's heavy fire and were utterly destroyed in a military campaign known as Operation Hiram (Morris 2008, p. 348). By sacrificing a part of the Palestinian fighters to its broader international interests, Syria directly contributed to the Palestinians' expulsion and disaster.

Like Egypt, the ill-treatment of refugees and the use of Palestinians in its power games were integral parts of Syrian policies in the 1950s and 1960s. Syria was already a poor country, and its population despised the inflow of refugees who increased pressure on the low-paid job market. Unlike Jordan, Syria did not allow refugees to buy arable land or own a house (Pappe 2004, p. 145, 190). It did not offer them any political and social opportunities either. At the same time, however, Syria tried to keep its hand on the Palestinian organizations that might strengthen its position both domestically and in the face of other Arab states. In the early 1950s, the newly emerging *Fatah* developed its military competence by allying itself closely to Syria (Pappe 2004,

p. 165). In the following decades, the Trojan horses that Syria implanted within the PLO operated in the name of its murderous intelligence apparatuses, with their notorious skills of bluster, bluff, compromise, and deceit. In the long term, these puppet fractions controlled by regimes like Syria contributed to both Palestinians' failure to create state structures for themselves and the dysfunctionality of those that were established (Khalidi 2006, p. 175).

Syria effectively cooperated with Egypt on many occasions. They worked together against Jordan in the 1948 war and its aftermath. As a result of Nasser's initiative, they established the United Arab Republic in the 1950s. Syria participated in Nasser's campaign that led to the 1967 war. Even after the union was dissolved, Syria stood with Egypt in the Khartoum Summit and the Rabat Conference. In 1973, Assad aided Sadat in his surprise attack on Israel. Only Egypt's separate peace negotiations with Israel started turning Syria against it (Quandt 2005, pp. 170-1).

In the 1970s, Syria had its own problems with its interventions in Lebanon. The refugee community in Lebanon became an open and defenseless target of every side in this conflict. In 1976, Syrians slaughtered the refugees in the Tel-Zaatari camp with the accusation that the PLO was serving the enemy (Pappe 2004, p. 221). In 1982, Syria used its puppet fractions (such as *Saiqa*) within the PLO to start an internal war against Arafat, who was deported from Damascus earlier. In this "civil war within a civil war," about 400 Palestinians were killed and 2,000 wounded (K&M 2003, pp. 268-9). Yet Arafat managed to maintain its control over the PLO. With its old-time ally Egypt gone, the PLO transferred to Tunis and reorganized under Arafat, and the inception of the first high-level peace negotiations with Israel in the 1991 Madrid Conference, Syria slowly stopped being an influential actor in the Palestinian crisis – although it rhetorically remained Israel's greatest enemy.

### **Egypt's and Syria's Moral Obligations toward Palestinians**

In addition to Jordan, Egypt and Syria were the two other major Arab powers that acted on behalf of Palestinians and participated in the 1948 war. Their contributions to the war efforts, creation of refugees, and Palestinians' prolonged disaster were similar to those of Jordan. However, a fundamental difference was that the territorial annexation of Palestine was not among Egypt's and Syria's war aims. On the contrary, they were motivated mainly by counterbalancing the Hashemite dynasty's expected accumulation of power in the region. This motivation surely did not change the outcome of their Palestine campaign: Israel found the pretext to occupy more lands, which meant more displaced Palestinians. Therefore, they were directly responsible for the Palestinian refugees. Still, we need to examine whether their OR level should be different from Jordan's.

As with Jordan, we should quickly rule out two possible justification attempts by Egyptians and Syrians to participate in the 1948 war: "solving the refugee problem" and "irresistible public pressure" arguments. The answers to these claims are the same as we gave to Jordan. And the third justification, that is, that they undertook a just war on behalf of a victimized nation against an aggressor, is not acceptable either. As Jordan's primary motivation was territorial expansion, Egypt and Syria's main goal was balancing this Hashemite empowerment in the region. These two countries could not stand aside while Jordan expanded. They had to check this growth and hinder it if possible. In this respect, Egypt and Syria cooperated in many cases against Jordan. This distrust caused their failure in creating a unified fighting force with an adequate command chain against Israel – which resulted in more refugees. Parts of Egyptian and Syrian troops were even dispatched to the West Bank to keep the Jordanian forces in check instead of fighting the "real" enemy, i.e., Israel. From this perspective,

it is impossible to conclude that Egypt and Syria participated in this war to rescue a nation under occupation. Besides, the inhumane treatment of Palestinians in Gaza under Egyptian occupation (until 1967) and the impoverished conditions of Palestinians in Syria without any rights make it questionable that they intended to salvage the Palestinians. On the contrary, their policies directly contributed to the refugees' torment. Consequently, they should assume high OR for the displaced people in Palestine.

Could Egypt and Syria claim that they tried to preserve the regional power balance against an expansionist state? This argument could justify their involvement in the 1948 war to confront Jordan, but they cannot avoid the responsibility for Palestinian refugees that resulted from the war. Whether a state moved into Palestine for expansionist purposes or to counterbalance such aims did not make any difference for the Palestinian refugee. Still, one could argue that the counterbalancer's responsibility should be lower compared to being the expansionist. Even if we accept this presumption, we cannot simply reduce Egypt's and Syria's moral duties because their involvement in Palestine did not end with the 1948 war. They continued meddling with the Palestinians' internal affairs and using their fault lines to disunite them. They supported different groups and created alternative political structures to counter Jordan's plans. They implanted their spies within Palestinian institutions to manipulate them. They together organized another military attack against Israel in 1972. This battle was not made on behalf of Palestinians but for these two countries to regain their lost lands. Still, Egypt used its clout over Palestinians as a tool to force Israel's hand to return its lands and make peace with it. Similarly, Syria used its influence over Palestinians to provoke Israel when necessary and make it comply with its demands. It is not possible to ignore how much these strategies impaired the Palestinians. They were simply a tool in these countries' hands. From this perspective, even



if the “counterbalancer” argument would have decreased the Egyptian and Syrian communities’ responsibility, their inhumane and interest-oriented manipulation of Palestinian refugees should increase their responsibility again to high OR level. They must accede to more duties toward Palestinians than other members of the international community.

It is safe to assume that Palestinians and Egyptian and Syrian communities have strong SC. Therefore, they owe Palestinian refugees citizenship rights and extra resources for those in need. Unfortunately, the ongoing civil war in Syria makes it infeasible to realize its duties as Syrians themselves need resettlement. Yet, if the conditions were normal, the Syrian community’s duty would be resettling a substantial number of Palestinians. Considering that Syria accommodated around 500,000 Palestinians, we would be justified in expecting slightly more from it as a community with high OR. The Syrian community should also have provided its Palestinians with full political rights. Now that Syria is out of our hosts’ list, its Palestinians remain the responsibility of other societies with OR and the international community.

As for Egypt, it must also resettle a substantial number of Palestinians. The number of Palestinians in Egypt is around 100,000, which means that the Egyptian community has not yet fulfilled its moral duties toward Palestinians. We should establish that they have the moral obligation to give citizenship to many more Palestinians and support them financially. As Egypt accommodates an established Christian community, Palestine’s Christian Arabs might consider this country a plausible destination. The Egyptian community has no moral right to oppose such policies if their government were to implement them. Shouldering this much burden is their moral duty in this case.

### Lebanon and Iraq

Lebanon had never been enthusiastic about taking part in the invasion of Palestine. Its contribution to the war effort mostly remained at the defensive level and was almost nonexistent. The day before the attack, it even declared its decision not to participate in the war (Morris 2008, p. 189). The sizable and influential Maronite community within Lebanon, feeling surrounded by a sea of “hostile” Muslims, perceived the Jewish state as more friendly and expressed unease about Lebanon’s going to war against it. Similarly, the Shiite community in southern Lebanon had maintained a cordial relationship with the neighboring Jewish settlements. Lebanon ended up, however, entering Palestine along with Syria on 15 May, for two reasons: it could not stand being isolated in the Arab world by remaining indifferent to Palestine’s fate on the one hand, and it could not leave Jordan unchecked in Palestine on the other (Pappe 2004, p. 133).

Although it participated in the 1948 war, Lebanon did not announce ambitious and vague war aims such as “saving Palestine.” The Arab coalition’s faith in this war had already been shattered, and its war objectives were downgraded, by Jordan’s last-minute change of plans. Throughout the war, Lebanon embraced a defensive strategy. Its only capture of Israeli land was a small Jewish garrison at the village of al-Malikiyyah. To save face, however, Lebanon agreed to serve as a base for the ALA forces’ incursions into Israel. Yet this promise was not going to last long either. Lebanon was unhappy with the ALA’s presence within its borders, which was closely connected to Jordan. It did not welcome the idea of an ALA-ruled territory on its southern border either. As did Syria, Lebanon remained unresponsive to Qawuqji’s calls for help against Israeli forces during Operation Hiram, which permanently neutralized the ALA (Morris 2008, p. 348). In this respect, the Lebanese shared the responsibility for contributing to the Arabs’ demise in Palestine. After the war *de facto* ended, the armistice talks between Israel and

Lebanon were the easiest to be concluded. Lebanon was accommodating, implying that, according to the Israeli officials, “they were dragged into the adventure against their will” (Morris 2008, pp. 376-91). Lebanon was quite content with the agreement and did not intend to disturb the crafted “no war, no peace” situation with Israel for decades (Quandt 2005, p. 2).

Like other Arab states, the influx of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon strongly disturbed the government. Riding on a highly fragile ethnoreligious balance, Lebanon feared the disturbance of its demographic constitution. For this reason, among Arab countries, it offered the worst treatment to refugees within its borders. The refugees were sealed off in camps, deprived of all sorts of rights, and not allowed to own property in Lebanon (Pappe 2004, p. 145, 190). In 1975, civil war broke out in Lebanon, one of the bloodiest communal conflicts of the twentieth century that lasted fifteen years with over a hundred thousand fatalities (K&M 2003, pp. 264-8). The PLO’s decision to take sides in the Lebanese civil war proved disastrous as the Palestinian refugees suffered the most. They were stuck between the Lebanese forces, Syria, and the Israeli army. Every decision they made was perceived as treason by one power or another and punished by massacres, while the PLO failed to protect the camps. Between 1976 and 1982, around 6,000 refugees were killed. The Lebanese Phalangist forces carried out the bloodiest camp raids in 1982, when they slaughtered the inhabitants of the Sabra and Shatilla camps in Beirut, adding them thus to the list of places of Palestinian martyrdom along with Dayr Yassin, Kafr Qasim, and Tel-Zataar (K&M 2003, p. 270). Indeed, the dynamics of the Lebanese civil war were quite sophisticated. Still, Lebanon significantly contributed to the Palestinians’ tragedy by attacking defenseless refugees within its borders indiscriminately.

Before the 1948 war, Iraq was rhetorically the most militant member of the Arab League, calling upon the Arab states to move into Palestine even before the British withdrew completely.

What Iraq hoped to get from the war was unclear. Some evidence suggests that it aimed to capture the whole Iraq Petroleum Company pipeline, starting from the lower Jordan, passing through the Jezreel valley, and ending at Haifa's coast. Other evidence indicates that it looked for only a symbolic victory without pursuing any grand design in the region (Morris 2008, p. 189). Regardless, after facing the formidable Israeli army and early defeats against it, Iraq was more than convinced not to leave its comfort zone until the end of the war (Morris 2008, pp. 250-1). Overall, Iraq's contribution to the whole war effort was limited to maintaining law and order in some places practically under Jordanian control (Pappe 2004, p. 133). Apart from this contribution, Iraq's enmity against Israel mostly remained along ideological lines in the following years, such as refusing to sign an armistice agreement after the war or threatening the Iraqi Jews with expulsion if they did not sign a so-called anti-Zionism document (Pappe 2004, p. 177). Like Syria, however, Iraq implanted its own Trojan horse within the PLO, the Arab Liberation Front, to use it for its interests in the power game among Arab states in the 1950s and 1960s, though not as effectively as Syria could (Khalidi 2006, p. 175). Though limited in scope, Iraq was responsible for deliberately harming the Palestinian national movement and contributing to the war effort that produced refugees.

### **Lebanon's Moral Obligations toward Palestinians**

Lebanon fought Israel in 1948, but its participation in the war effort was minimal. It made an easy peace with Israel in 1949, and after that date, it avoided direct confrontation with Israel for a long time. However, Lebanon was one of the countries affected by the results of the Palestinian crisis the most. It currently hosts around 500,000 Palestinians despite their fragile ethnoreligious domestic balance. Could their load be considered morally fair?

Let us begin with the same analysis we did for Jordan, Egypt, and Syria. Lebanon must assume extra duties for Palestinians because it intervened in Palestine by participating in the 1948 war. What was the reason for and the extent of this involvement? Like other Arab countries, we have to rule out the possibility that Lebanon entered the war on purely ethical grounds, that is, to save a victimized nation. Lebanon did not even intend to fight this war in the first place. Just before the war, they explicitly announced their lack of will to participate. Therefore, it is doubtful that they were thinking of saving Palestinians. Still, they ended up joining this war for two reasons. First, in a context where all Arab states encountered Israel, Lebanon did not find it politically prudent to be left isolated. Second, it found an expanded and more powerful Jordan against its interests in the region. Consequently, Lebanon fought in this war that resulted in the Palestinian refugees; therefore, it should accept even more duties toward the displaced people in Palestine.

However, we should also note that the Lebanese interfered in Palestine in a quite limited sense. They mostly remained on the defensive, but they also allowed Arab forces to base their operations on their lands. In this respect, Lebanon should not assume as much responsibility as the other prominent actors of this war. Still, its responsibility was not also too low: during the war, it contributed to the demise of Palestinian groups they politically disliked – and after the war, it offered the worst treatment to Palestinian refugees. They were left in Lebanon in camps without social, political, and economic rights and under destitute conditions. During the 1975-1990 civil war conflicts, thousands of refugees were killed and many more suffered. Here, the Lebanese government might defend itself by claiming that it fought the “rogue” elements that challenged its authority in Lebanon. Still, this could not justify the killing of thousands of civilians and the hardships other refugees experienced. As a result, considering their contribution

to the Palestinian refugees' prolonged plight, it seems fair to assign the Lebanese community at least medium OR in this case.

We can assume strong SC between Palestinians and the Lebanese community. Therefore, they should give citizenship rights to Palestinians. As their OR level is medium, this number should also be medium. However, we should also remark on the sensitive domestic balance between the Christians, Shiites, and Sunnis. The Lebanese have the right to ask that the refugees they accommodate do not disturb the existing balance. This is practically plausible as the Palestinians do not consist of a uniform ethnoreligious background. Almost one-fifth of the Palestinians are Christians. In this respect, Lebanon has the right to accept refugees by respecting its demographic structure. As for the numbers, we could argue that hosting 500,000 refugees should be just about right for Lebanon with its medium OR. Considering the small size of their population, it is also plausible to acknowledge the Lebanese's moral right to claim to be slightly overburdened in this case. They have the right to ask other communities to help relieve their current amount of burden. If the number of refugees is reduced to acceptable levels, the Lebanese society must improve its Palestinians' socio-political and economic conditions. In terms of substance, Lebanon's current accommodation conditions of the Palestinians are morally unacceptable. This much load seems to be the Lebanese community's fair share.

### **Iraq's Moral Obligations toward Palestinians**

Iraq also participated in the 1948 war against Israel, but like Lebanon, its participation in the war effort was minimal. Before the war, Iraq was rhetorically the most militant member of the Arab League. Yet, it fell back into silence as soon as the battle started. After a couple of early defeats, it chose to remain on the sidelines until the war's end. It took a defensive position and only served as a security force in the lands under Jordan's occupation. Although Iraq tried to

utilize its own Trojan horses within the Palestinian movement for its interests after the war, it was not as effective as Syria and Egypt. Standing relatively more distant to the center of the Palestinian crisis, Iraq was among the actors that had the lowest profile in this case. Like other Arab states, its intention behind entering this war cannot be explained by ethical concerns. However, its involvement in the war effort and the fate of Palestinians after the war has been so limited that it is not plausible to assign the Iraqi community more than low OR in this case.

We can assume that Palestinians have strong SC with the Iraqi community, especially with the Sunni population in the northern part of the country. Therefore, Iraq should accept a small number of Palestinians and provide them at least with social and economic rights. Iraq only hosted a few thousand Palestinians, most of whom left the country during the Iraq war. The MBM would demand that Iraqis accept more Palestinians. However, Iraq has not been politically stable during the last decades, so it might be practically implausible to expect this community to shoulder its moral duties toward Palestinians. Still, if its conditions keep improving, the Iraqi community should know that they have not yet fulfilled their moral obligations toward Palestinian refugees.

### **The United States**

The US's contribution to Palestine's refugee crisis was indirect, but it had a powerful impact on shaping its course. The US assumed an active role in Palestine after the British withdrawal, especially in brokering permanent peace treaties between Israel and Arab states and finding a solution to the refugee crisis. The assessment of the US's moral responsibility for refugees boils down to understanding what its support for Israel, acceptance of Israeli red lines, and declaring it as an ally meant for Palestinian refugees. The US's backing effectively helped Israel prolong the refugees' plight.

The United States was one of the first countries that officially recognized Israel on 15 May 1948. This date also marked the official beginning of an enduring alliance between the two states. The Jewish community in the US was strong, flush with resources and good lobbyists, and concentrated in areas that shaped national elections, such as New York and California. After the 1948 war, Israel managed to present itself as a logical US-ally in the region, given that the “untrustworthy” Arab states might choose the Soviet side, as the examples of Egypt and Syria later showed. Israel’s superior military standing in the region, America’s fear of increased Soviet influence, need for stability in the oil-producing areas, and strong domestic support and pressure resulted in the US decision to cooperate with Israel in the Middle East (Quandt 2005, pp. 12-4). This alliance has been shaping the region in many respects ever since, but its impact on the Palestinian refugee question is mainly related to the US’s endorsement of Israel’s red lines in this issue: no repatriation; no restitution of refugee property; and paying only partial compensation, only to an international agency, and only for the aim of resettling refugees in other countries.

These Israeli red lines have been the main reason behind the unresolved refugee question. America’s support in this regard makes it responsible for the protracted agony of the Palestinian refugees. Although the US tried at first with Britain to convince Israel to remain within the UN Resolution 181’s “Green Line” (55% of Palestine), this idea rapidly died in the face of Israeli stubbornness (Pappe 2004, p. 136). In the wake of the 1948 war, the US had already acknowledged Israel’s conditions. The Department of State memorandum delivered to Harry Truman on 9 May 1949 stated that any agreed compensation should be used to resettle the refugees outside Israel, and it was unrealistic to expect the Israeli state to cover all expenses. The US and the international community would have to pay the rest. Repatriation and restitution were not even options to consider. At the end of the same month, a CIA memorandum claimed that



resettling refugees in the surrounding Arab states was the only solution, and it did not even mention “compensation” (Fischbach 2003, p. 88). Another Department of State briefing in August 1949 reiterated the resettlement plan as the only plausible way of dealing with the refugees. This American stance was entirely in line with the Israeli thinking on the refugee question.

In the 1950s, the US made great efforts not to antagonize Israelis by crossing these red lines. In another memorandum of 1957, State Department’s Henry Villard reaffirmed that the compensation the US had been talking about was not only for lost refugee property but also for providing economic aid to Arab states to resettle refugees (Fischbach 2003, p. 240). Israel was cautious about refusing any refugee claim over their properties, and the US played along. When the property custodian idea was debated in the UN General Assembly, the US used its influence to block it in 1961 (Fischbach 2003, p. 244). The UNCCP, which the UN established for finding a solution to the Palestine crisis, and its Refugee Office, were other areas of strong American influence. Therefore, it is not surprising that despite decades of UNCCP operation, no proposal against Israel’s sensitivities regarding the refugee issue could pass through the committee, which eventually stopped working in the early 1980s.

The 1967 war complicated the case further. The Arab states turned their attention toward the US to pressure Israel, as they had seen in the 1957 Suez war that the Israelis only listened to their American friends. The new problem was the occupied territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and other parts of the surrounding Arab countries. Added to this picture were another wave of Palestinian refugees, confiscation of their lands and properties, and Israeli settlements. Israel was determined not to return the occupied lands to Egypt and Syria for nothing less than a full-fledged peace treaty that would permanently settle all its refugee issues: no one was going to

return to Israel, and the Arab states would resettle them by agreeing to the compensation offered by Israel, the US, and the UN. The Arab states, on the other hand, opposed linking the refugee question to their separate peace negotiations with Israel. The United States embraced the Israeli position here as well (Quandt 2005, pp. 5-6). The US presidents Johnson and Nixon supported Israel's refusal of peace if there is no recognition as a state, no solution to refugee issues, no political independence, and no territorial integrity (Quandt 2005, p. 45). This period also witnessed increased American military support to Israel, which remarkably expressed itself in its acceptance of Israel's nuclear presence in the region. In 1969, Israel started to receive American heavy arms and sophisticated Phantom aircraft (Pappe 2004, p. 207). The military aid to Israel further expanded during the Nixon presidency as part of American plans to contain the USSR (Fischbach 2003, pp. 316-7). After Israel faced a severe setback in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the American aid to Israel grew ten-fold within one year (Quandt 2005, p. 103).

The alliance between the US and Israel, and the former's support for the latter, did not exactly work as if Israel had a blank check from the US to behave as it liked. After 1967, the United States was especially opposed to the Israeli settlement enterprise in the occupied territories. Although the US accepted that Israel should not return lands for less than full peace, it also acknowledged that Israel's hold on Palestine's occupied territories was an obstacle to peace efforts (Quandt 2005, p. 5). In this respect, Americans initially criticized Israeli settlements in Palestine. President Carter was bold enough to force Israeli PM Begin to freeze the settlement activities to move toward Camp David talks (Quandt 2005, pp. 194-5). However, this strict opposition did not continue forever. President Reagan eased this stance by claiming that Israeli settlements in occupied territories were not illegal, though they still were impediments to peace (Quandt 2005, p. 287). In practice, the US opposition did not change the facts on the ground in

this matter. The permissive approach starting with Reagan further played to Israel's hand to continue its unjust settlement projects in the occupied territories. That is to say, even on the one point that the Americans were ostensibly opposed to the Israeli view, they could not make Israel fall in line. In all peace talks supervised by the United States, including the Madrid Peace Conference, Oslo talks, and Camp David talks, the American diplomats failed to advance proposals that appeared to cross Israeli red lines (Khalidi 2013, p. 65). This failure had its most significant impact on refugees. Although Israel managed to conclude its peace with some Arab countries, the refugee issue has remained hanging in the balance.

The US-Israel alliance was riveted in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when the US started a global war on terror after 9/11. Israel was quick to present Palestinian extremists like *Hamas* as terrorists and side with the Americans in their fight against terror. In April 2002, President Bush recognized "Israel's right to defend itself from terror" (Quandt 2005, p. 398). In a letter addressed to Sharon two years later, Bush also stressed the "irreversibility of the new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers" and the impossibility of Palestinian refugees to return to Israel proper (Khalidi 2006, p. 211). The acceptance of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories indicated a crucial shift from the traditional American disapproval of land acquisition by war. Besides, the PLO had lost its popularity in the American eyes by siding with Iraq against the US-led military campaign. Now Israel had its blank check. During the first term of the Bush presidency, no successful negotiation attempts were made between Israel and Palestinians, and the violence drastically increased, claiming more than 4,000 lives. Meanwhile, the number of Israeli settlers in the occupied territories climbed up to 245,000 (Quandt 2005, pp. 409-10). The American position has not significantly changed ever since.

## **United States' Moral Obligations toward Palestinians**

The American policies' consequences for refugees have been powerful enough to put the US under the spotlight as an actor in Palestine. Although the United States was not directly involved in creating Palestinian refugees, its acknowledgment of Israeli red lines and its support for observing them in peace talks effectively prolonged the problem and blocked all possible solutions. Consequently, it strongly contributed to the refugees' torment. How should we assess this sponsorship morally?

The US-Israel alliance's impact on the Palestinian refugee question is mainly related to the US's endorsement of Israel's red lines in this issue: no repatriation; no restitution of refugee property; and paying only partial compensation, only to an international agency (i.e., not to individuals), and only for the purpose of resettling refugees in other countries. Throughout decades, the US made sure that no international agreement was made that crossed these red lines – neither when the US's influence in the UNCCP was visible nor when the US brokered the Camp David talks. Moreover, the military agreements between the US and Israel and the former's political and financial support made Israel an intimidating power in the Middle East. It was impossible to force it to accept terms against its existential interests.

What should we make of the results of such an alliance? Obviously, we cannot blame a state for supporting its ally unless it is an illegitimate entity. Although Israel faced some challenges in the early years of its establishment, it secured a place in the UN and was recognized by the majority of the international community along the way. Morally speaking, however, what the Israeli government and the Syrian regime did in the Syrian civil war (see next chapter) are the same: they displaced large numbers of people, blocked their return, and denied them what they are due. This claim has moral force. As discussed in the next chapter, the MBM

holds Russia and Iran responsible for helping a legally legitimate regime that commits human rights violations. Even though they might have a legal right to do it, this cannot save them, from a normative standpoint, from assuming responsibility for their actions' results. The US's support for Israel should be assessed along similar lines. Although Israel is a legally legitimate state, its actions are morally unjustifiable. As the US's support has helped Israel continue these immoral actions, it must assume extra responsibility for what its aid produced on the ground: a protracted refugee crisis.

Still, there is a difference. In the Syrian civil war, Russia and Iran supported a regime that was actively displacing people and militarily contributed to the very process of displacement. On the other hand, in the Palestinian crisis, the US did not directly get involved in the expulsion process but helped prolong a crisis that Israel created. The American involvement can be summarized as "helping a legitimate ally repudiate the results of its unethical actions." In this respect, the US is not in the same moral position vis-à-vis the Palestinian refugees as Israel. Similarly, it is also not in the same moral position as Jordan, Egypt, and Syria. Unlike the US, these countries' actions directly contributed to the displacement. Yet, we should also not downplay the US's harm to Palestinian refugees: their repatriation and chances for restitution or compensation have been withheld from them throughout decades due to the US's particular backing of Israel. Consequently, it seems fair to assign the US medium OR for Palestinian refugees.

The MBM assumes that immigration countries and other communities have strong SC. Therefore, the US should grant citizenship rights to Palestinians. As its OR level is medium, this number should also be medium. It is estimated that Americans have accommodated around 100,000-200,000 Palestinians. We might contend that the US is getting there. Still, insofar as the

size of the internationally displaced Palestinian population is concerned, a medium number that would satisfy the MBM would be slightly more. This much burden should be the American community's moral duty toward Palestinians due to its involvement in Palestine. As they do not have the moral right to complain about the existence of these Palestinians in their midst, they also do not have the moral right to oppose it if the US attempted to accept more Palestinians.

### **Russia**

Russia's involvement in the Palestinian case was also minimal. Although the Cold War context witnessed the US-USSR competition in many places of the world, the US somehow managed to keep the Russians out of the Palestinian issue to a great extent. Russia approved UN Resolution 181 with the US. It refrained from opposing Israel from the early years throughout most of the 1950s and 1960s due to a combination of financial, political, ideological, and humanitarian reasons (Morris 2008, p. 402). Therefore, during the war years and the interwar period, Palestine did not become a hot arena of US-USSR confrontation. After the 1967 war, as the United States skillfully presented itself as the only possible mediator between Arab states and Israel, Russia was effectively kept at bay as far as Palestine was concerned.

However, there were a couple of points where Russia contributed to the war efforts in Palestine. First, its negligence in observing the UN's embargo decision in 1948-9 contributed to the displacement of refugees as the transfer of weapons through Eastern Europe strengthened Israel's hand in the 1948 war. Second, Russia tried to increase its influence across the Arab world in the late 1960s and 1970s by providing military assistance to Egypt and Syria. This support partly played a role in these two armies' challenges against Israel during those years. However, the Russian contribution was short-lived and negligible in size, especially compared to

the US aid to Israel (Pappe 2004, p. 209). As a result, it seems fair to assign Russia only low OR for Palestinian refugees' plight.

Russia has not been a plausible and preferred destination for Muslim communities. In the Palestinian case, Christians are not so different in this sense. Therefore, we can assume weak SC between Palestinians and the Russian society. Considering that Russia has only low OR in this case, the Russian community's moral duty toward Palestinians should be financially supporting the resettlement of a small number of refugees in plausible host communities. However, it is not possible to argue that Russia did even that much. In this respect, we should establish that the Russian community's moral duty is to seek ways to finance and facilitate the resettlement of a small number of Palestinians in other countries.

### **The United Nations**

The United Nations has been one of the most visible actors in Palestine, but it played no part in producing refugees and prolonging their agony. The UN's active political involvement in the Palestinian case only covers the twenty years between 1947 and 1967; thereafter, it turned into a mere relief agency. During these two decades, the UN made critical decisions that shaped the fate of the region. To understand whether the UN should assume OR for refugees, the 1947 Partition Plan, 1948-9 arms embargo, and property questions require closer examination.

The passage of Resolution 181 in the UN General Assembly (November 1947) has been an overly highlighted part of Palestinian history. The justness of the UN's solution itself is a whole separate moral question. It could be deemed unjust in many respects. However, it would be implausible to quickly conclude that the UN bears OR for refugees because its 1947 decision was unjust. First, the resolution's passage was just a trigger, and not a cause, of the civil conflict in Palestine. Second, the Arab states had already made it clear that they would not accept any

UN offer that did not meet their expectations. They explicitly did not take the UN officials seriously and boycotted them in many instances. Therefore, the connection between Resolution 181 and refugees' fate is more distant than Israel's, Britain's, the Arab states', and the United States' links to refugees' plight. The UN has been trying to offer a solution to the problem on the ground that some of these countries created. In this respect, its responsibility for producing the Palestinian refugees and contributing to their plight must be much lower than these states.

The UN's second important act that shaped the 1948 war's fate was the arms embargo imposed on all fighting parties, observed from 29 May 1948 until 11 August 1949. The embargo effectively drained Arab armies' ammunition supplies, whereas Israel drastically increased its firepower under it. As this war directly contributed to the production of refugees, the UN's role might seem significant at first glance. However, the UN treated the warring parties impartially. Indeed, the Arab armies suffered dearly from the embargo, but the Jews operated under the same circumstances.<sup>5</sup> The United States, Britain, and France, the leading suppliers of Arab armies, effectively carried out the blanket embargo. Israelis, on the other hand, purchased their arms not from any state but the international black market. Their expertise in clandestine procurement activities and their effectiveness in smuggling arms into their country gave them the upper hand in this period (Morris 2008, p. 402). Later in the war, the Israelis managed to import large numbers of weapons from Czechoslovakia with the help of the Soviet Union. In this respect, the UN was responsible for being ineffective in terms of applying its embargo decision. Still, if the UN was ineffective, it was so for both Arabs and Jews. The game rules were fair. The Arabs'

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<sup>5</sup> In this respect, the UN's role in Palestine was fundamentally different from its role in Bosnia. First, the UN directly assumed the duty of protecting civilians in Bosnia, which was not the case in Palestine. Second, the arms embargo that the UN imposed on the Balkan states left an almost unarmed Bosniak people alone in the face of heavily armed Serbs. When the 1948-9 embargo was declared, however, the Jewish and Arab military powers were fairly equal.



dependency on specific countries for arms and the Jews' ability to smuggle weapons do not put the guilt for the war's outcome on the United Nations per se.

The UN took great effort to mitigate the severity of the war's outcomes, especially for refugees. The UNCCP, its Refugee Office, and its Technical Committee made numberless attempts to solve the refugees' property problems. After many meetings, value calculations, conferences, missions, and proposals, all efforts came to naught. The main reason for this failure was the Israeli and Arab sides' irreconcilable demands regarding repatriation, restitution, and compensation for lost refugee property. Its only achievement was convincing Israel to reopen frozen Arab bank accounts, which did not attract much attention (Fischbach 2003, pp. 200-6). In 1949, the UN established the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which offered refugees direct relief and work programs. The UN embraced the idea that peace required unconditional repatriation; however, it failed to convince Israel (Pappe 2004, p. 143). In the long term, the unchanging facts on the ground and the prolongment of the refugee crisis turned the UNRWA into a tool for further isolating the refugees. Camp dwellers entirely depended on it, and it became the primary source of work, education, and subsistence materials for the Palestinians (K&M 2003, p. 223). After the war in 1967, the UN started functioning as a mere relief agency (Pappe 2004, p. 189). Yet, it has also provided the Palestinians with a stage for international recognition and kept the case on the world's agenda (Khalidi 2006, pp. 164-5). Insofar as the refugees are concerned, the UN mostly remained on the helping rather than harming side. Therefore, it is not plausible to assign the UN any OR for Palestinians.

Since we cannot assign the UN extra duties toward Palestinians, we should be content with the regular work it must do for refugees. The United Nations should organize the resettlement arrangements of the Palestinian refugees. In this respect, it needs to work as a

facilitator. However, the UNRWA has turned into a small state in itself, with 5.7 million members, for whom it provides basic human needs, education, and work to some extent. This puts a high financial burden on the UN on the one hand and makes millions dependent on the international community's goodwill on the other.<sup>6</sup> If the communities start fulfilling their duties toward Palestinians, the UN should reduce its efforts of patronizing all these refugees and channel its financial resources and human capital to facilitate their resettlement.

### **The Palestinian Movement**

Throughout the decades that followed the 1948 *Naqba*, it was not surprising to watch a laudable Palestinian national movement emerge. What has this movement been doing for Palestinians? How did it change the course of Palestine's history? How did it relieve or exacerbate the Palestinians' plight? A discussion on Palestine will be incomplete without assessing the role of the Palestinian movements in the crisis. Palestinians' divisions along tribal lines and continued disunity in the face of Israeli threats reveal the importance of questioning the part of their organizations in this misery. The later establishments of the PLO, PLFP, *Fatah*, and *Hamas*, their disastrous decisions (e.g., taking sides in the Lebanese civil war), their authoritarian methods, acts of terrorism, and their harmful effects on Palestinian national development require their inclusion in the OR discussion. How does the MBM assess these contributions?

As discussed in Chapter 2, the MBM currently leaves aside this dimension of the question as it requires a different type of research. At present, the MBM tries to find the members of the international community that must assume more moral duties toward

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<sup>6</sup> Another crucial moral question here is whether such help does bad more than good for refugees. Thanks to the UN resources, refugees can live on international help and become in many respects isolated from the outer world. Although it may sound harsh, reducing international help might lead them to look for resettlement opportunities elsewhere, given that such attempts will be politically and financially supported.

Palestinians. Yet, to ask whether Palestinians might have a part in bringing their catastrophe upon themselves refers to the “self-responsibility” question. Did the Palestinian movement harm itself with its actions and have a share in its population’s catastrophe? If so, should this fact reduce other communities’ duties toward them? If yes, how could this reduction be morally formulated? Working on this parameter is currently beyond this study’s scope. The concluding chapter of this dissertation will discuss the importance of including this “self-responsibility” dimension in the moral analyses of refugee cases.

### **Conclusion: After the Meaning-Based Model**

How does the Palestinian crisis look like after the MBM has been applied? Recall that the main problem in protracted refugee situations is that the actor that directly causes people’s displacement cannot be stopped or punished. In such cases, where it is the international community’s responsibility to take care of the displaced people, the MBM defends the moral plausibility of assigning more duties to some members of the international community compared to others. The two parameters that determine which communities should do more for refugees are the communities’ levels of involvement in the crisis and the strength of their social connections with the refugees. The chart below summarizes this chapter’s conclusions about different communities’ moral duties toward Palestinian refugees.

The examination of the Palestinian case reveals that involvement in other nations’ crises should bring more responsibility to the intervener. As the MBM’s domestic analogy showed, the “absolute deprivation” situation should morally make the intervener assume more duties toward the needy *above everyone else*. If the intervener’s intentions are less than good, this should mean even more responsibility. Palestine has been another example to illustrate how states do not intervene with purely humanitarian or ethical concerns. Therefore, the actors that interfered in

the Palestinian crisis must morally assume more duties toward the Palestinians (for whom their actions caused more harm) – more than any other member of the international community. These actors do not have the moral right to complain about or reject their relatively increased burdens compared to other communities.

The picture in Palestine looks as follows. Israel is the rogue actor that directly and unjustly displaced numerous Palestinians. It cannot be stopped and does not accept its moral duties toward refugees. The responsibility for taking care of the displaced Palestinians therefore falls on the international community's shoulders. However, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, the United States, Britain, Lebanon, Iraq, and Russia must assume more duties toward Palestinian refugees compared to other communities of the world. Jordan and Lebanon are the overburdened communities in this case. Although the substance of their help toward Palestinians is not yet at morally acceptable levels, the high numbers they accommodate make it practically implausible for them to apply better policies. Should these numbers be reduced to acceptable levels, they should drastically improve their Palestinians' socio-political and economic conditions. This is more true for Lebanon. How do we envision that their accommodation numbers would decrease? The communities that have not done enough for the Palestinians must accept more refugees from Jordan and Lebanon. The British and Egyptian communities have especially evaded their moral obligations toward Palestinian refugees. They should begin receiving a substantial number of Palestinians. This move will reduce Jordan's and Lebanon's loads. More could also be expected from the US and Iraq, but the latter's political conditions might make our expectations currently unfeasible. Russia should also fulfill its financial duties toward Palestinian refugees. We should establish that these additional duties are assigned to these communities as the ethical consequences of their involvement in the Palestinians' fate.

Table 4. Moral Duties toward Palestinian Refugees

| <b>RR Rank</b> | <b>Actor</b>                                       | <b>OR Level</b> | <b>Social Connections</b>              | <b>Remedial Responsibility (RR) &amp; Moral Obligations</b>   |
|----------------|--|-----------------|--|---|
| 1              | Israel   | Direct cause    | Enemy of the Displaced                 | Compensating for the losses and financing the resettlement of Palestinian refugees  |
| 2              | Jordan & Egypt & Syria                             | High            | Strong (Sunni Arabs, Christian Arabs)  | Granting citizenship rights (and resources for those in need) to a substantial number of Palestinian refugees each & Refugee camps & Safe passage |
| 3              | US   | Medium          | Strong (immigration country)           | Granting citizenship rights to a medium number of Palestinian refugees  |
| 4              | Lebanon  | Medium          | Strong (Sunni Arabs, Christian Arabs)  | Granting citizenship rights to a medium number of Palestinian refugees & Refugee camps & Safe passage   |
| 5              | Britain  | Medium          | Strong (democracy open to immigration) | Granting citizenship rights to a medium number of Palestinian refugees  |
| 6              | Iraq   | Low             | Strong (Sunni Arabs)                   | Accommodating a small number of Palestinian refugees by granting them at least socio-economic rights  |
| 7              | Russia   | Low             | Weak                                   | Minimal financial contribution to resettlement efforts  |
| 8              | UN   | None            | N/A                                    | Facilitating resettlement efforts   |
| 9              | Other Arab & Sunni & European & Immigration States | None            | Strong                                 | Modest discretionary admission or financial support   |

1.2 million Palestinian refugees currently reside collectively in Chile (0.5 m), Saudi Arabia (0.4 m), and Qatar (0.3 m). According to the MBM, these countries did not have to assume additional duties toward Palestinians. However, their accommodation numbers show that these communities present rare cases where communities do more than what is morally necessary. Still, we must make sure that they also provide the refugees with what they are morally owed in terms of substance: political membership and living with dignity. This condition also applies to those Palestinians who sought refuge in other states, such as Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Honduras, Colombia, United Arab Emirates, Brazil, Mexico, and Peru.

As a final note, there are two conditions under which this formulation would prove futile. First, if a sovereign Palestinian state can be established, the refugee question will take a different direction. Yet this does not seem to be achievable in the near future. Second, and more importantly, the MBM will not function if the refugees refuse resettlement in other communities, which has been the case in some countries. This refusal is because Palestinians want to maintain their solidarity and protect their national identity by staying together, which is understandable. But it is not the only path toward their goal, and it paves the way for their exploitation by other states. Palestinians want to keep disturbing the international community by making their protracted destitute situation visible and embarrassing Israel in the international arena as the leading cause. There is no future in that method, neither for them nor for their children. Destitute conditions are useful for nothing but breeding self-destructive inefficient fighters who have no future. Other Arab states will even find this predicament convenient for their policies to curb the Israeli state in the region. Considering these points, building healthy diasporas in other countries might better help the Palestinians' cause in the long term.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE SYRIAN CASE

“Either Assad, or we’ll burn the country.”

*Shabiha Graffiti on Syria’s Walls*

#### Introduction

In March 2021, the Syrian civil war entered its eleventh year. A small group of people in the town of Deraa, who peacefully protested against the government to get their high school-age children released from the *mukhabarat*’s (secret police) hands, unintentionally ignited a conflict that has become the greatest humanitarian crisis of our time. Syria is now devastated.<sup>1</sup> More than 600,000 people died during these ten years, and 200,000 are missing, presumably killed in the regime’s dungeons. Close to 100,000 died of torture. Almost 25,000 children (under 18) have been killed. More than 2 million civilians have suffered injuries or permanent disabilities. Hundreds of thousands of buildings and structures have been damaged or destroyed. The infrastructure of whole cities has collapsed. Around 600 attacks on 350 medical facilities have been carried out, and 1,000 medical personnel have been killed. Much of Syria’s cultural heritage disappeared. Half a million people are trapped in besieged cities. Around 14 million people need humanitarian assistance. Half a million children are chronically malnourished. About half of Syria’s 22 million pre-war population has been displaced. More than 6 million of

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<sup>1</sup> SOHR. <https://www.syriahr.com/en/217360/>

these displaced persons crossed international boundaries to seek shelter and safety. As of April 2021, the number of Syrian refugees registered with the UN is 5.6 million.<sup>2</sup> Refugees are currently spread among the nations of Turkey (3.6 m), Lebanon (0.8 m), Germany (0.7 m), Jordan (0.6 m), Iraq (0.2 m), Egypt (0.1 m), Sweden (0.1 m), and some other European and North African countries. Many unregistered Syrian refugees also live in the surrounding countries' urban or border areas.

What did these refugees find where they ended up? M.R. is one of those millions.<sup>3</sup> He escaped from Aleppo to southeastern Turkey during the early stages of the civil war, when he was 16 years old. For three years, he experienced continuing destitution, multiple displacements, humiliation, discrimination, and injustice (e.g., unpaid labor). Although he was a Turcoman, his Syrian identity, when revealed, provoked hostility. In some places, just to feel safe or not to be discriminated against, he felt forced to present himself as a Turk from a distant Turkish town (to justify his broken Turkish accent). Meeting with M.R., one would wonder why such a bright, intelligent, and hard-working young person should be denied membership in the Turkish community. What is the obstacle?

When the then PM Erdogan announced his intention to grant citizenship to a limited number of Syrian refugees in 2016 (roughly 1% of the refugee population in Turkey), the political opposition campaigned against the proposal.<sup>4</sup> The debate they started also revealed the Turkish public's resentment against the Syrian refugees. Syrians had come as "guests." After so

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<sup>2</sup> UNHCR. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria>

<sup>3</sup> Interviewed in Istanbul, 9 September 2019.

<sup>4</sup> Their main argument was that Erdogan wanted to make this move to increase his votes. They might be right. But should that prevent us from asking whether this was what the Turkish community morally owed to Syrians? It appeared that no such concerns informed the Turkish politicians' arguments about Syrian refugees.



many years, Turks began asking, “Have we not done enough?” Insofar as my observations in the field are concerned, emblematic of this resentment was M.T.’s experience: responding to the official citizenship invitation letter he received, he attempted to enter the immigration office in Istanbul. A security guard simply blocked his entrance by claiming that “he would not make a Turk.”<sup>5</sup> He had to try his luck another day to avoid that guard and enter the building. What was the cause of this resentment? Has the Turkish community done enough for Syrian refugees? Do Turkish people have the right to claim that they are overburdened? What does this question even mean? Do we have a formula for calculating what the Turkish community owes to Syrian refugees?

This last question would not make sense to many people. “Why would we owe anything to Syrians?” they might ask, or “Why would we owe more than any other community does?” To answer this question, the meaning-based model (MBM) developed in earlier chapters argues that some communities have greater moral responsibilities toward Syrians than others. Turkey is only one of them. As this chapter examines the actors with outcome responsibility (OR) in the Syrian case, it becomes apparent why, morally, the Russian, Iranian, Turkish, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, American, Lebanese, Iraqi, and Jordanian communities must accept more burdens for Syrians than other communities. The following analysis will show why intervention imposes more duties on the intervener regardless of its intentions. The conclusion of this chapter is that involvement in refugee-producing crises has ethical consequences that communities cannot escape. The lessons drawn for interveners is fourfold: i) do not intervene if you can avoid it; ii) only intervene if you can solve the crisis or reduce suffering; iii) if you intervene, be ready to go as far

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<sup>5</sup> Interviewed in Istanbul, 29 August 2019.

as it takes to solve the issue or at least reduce suffering (i.e., if you are not ready, do not intervene in the first place); iv) if you intervene (and make things worse), be ready to assume the moral responsibility for the outcome. In what follows, I will use the MBM approach to explain the outcome responsibility and social connections in the Syrian case to identify which communities should have greater duties toward Syrian refugees and what these increased duties mean concretely.

### **Syrian Regime and ISIS**

When the Arab Spring was at its height in the MENA region, Bashar believed that Syria was immune to such revolts. The early calls of anti-Assadists might not have found a proper response, but Syria was nevertheless ripe for rebellion, greatly suffering from inequality, corruption, and, most importantly, oppression. The spark that the revolution needed came in March 2011 from the southern city of Deraa, where the regime arrested fifteen schoolchildren for writing anti-regime graffiti on a school wall (Wedeen 2019, p. 2). Their families demanded the children's release, with several thousand protesting on 15 March. The regime responded with violence, killing a few, and the crowd and casualties grew in the subsequent protests. Before the month was over, protests started in Homs, Lattakia, Banyas, Hama, some suburbs of Damascus, and some Kurdish regions (McHugo 2015, pp. 221-2). Early leaders of the reemerging opposition called for the resignation of Bashar, dismantling the security apparatus, and implementing political and economic reforms (Abboud 2016, p. 57). They also decided to keep the protests peaceful, cross-sectarian, and cross-ethnic, called for protecting Syria's territorial integrity, and rejected foreign military intervention (Ghadbian 2015, p. 111).

The regime's early response to the unrest was ambivalent. On the one hand, it announced reforms; on the other, it intensified its violent crackdown on protests (Lesch 2012, p. 100). Assad

labeled the events as a “foreign conspiracy” and thereby swept away the remaining hopes for change (YK & S 2018, p. 41). In the following days, he introduced some reforms.<sup>6</sup> Mostly perceived as farce, they only increased public anger. While introducing these reforms, the regime was also violently cracking down on the demonstrators. In late April, two assaults on Deraa and Homs left hundreds of dead behind (YK & S 2018, p. 82; Lesch 2012, p. 97). The army was in the streets, the tanks were in the cities, and the government cut water, electricity, cell phone services, rounded up hundreds of people from their homes, and abducted wounded people in the protesting areas (YK & S 2018, p. 82). As international criticism began to mount, Bashar decided to represent these initially peaceful protests as a bloody sectarian conflict. He let his *shabiha* (ghosts) out onto Syria’s streets to massacre both Alawites and Sunnis and ignited the sectarian fire (Lesch 2012, p. 104; Pinto 2015, p. 159; YK & S 2018, p. 48).

The watershed moment that directed the revolt’s course toward civil war came in early June 2011 in Jisr al-Shughur. After the regime forces opened fire on a funeral’s attendees, the chain of events led to burning the city’s post office, a raid on a police station, and an ambush on a military convoy. Jisr al-Shughur was the beginning of civil war. In the following two months, heads of states, especially Western states and their allies, voiced their alarm at Bashar’s bloodshed and started calling for him to step down (Phillips 2016, pp. 75-6). However, they could not unanimously censure Bashar because Russia and China cast their first veto on a Security Council resolution that condemned the violence in Syria in October (Lesch 2012, p.

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<sup>6</sup> Bashar offered citizenship to Kurds, who had been deprived of all sorts of rights (Mironova et al. 2019, p. 694). To appease the Islamists, he repealed the ban on women teachers veiling in schools (McHugo 2015, pp. 223-4). He increased state employees’ wages up to 30 percent. These attempts were viewed as cynical, just to bribe the public for its loyalty. Most importantly, Bashar declared in April the abolishment of the Emergency Law and the Supreme State Security Court, but new decrees within a few days introduced a new Counter-Terrorism Law and Counter-Terrorism Court, which had the same functions (YK & S 2018, p. 46). Syrians were aware that nothing had changed and called these attempts “too little, too late” (Hinnebusch and Zintl 2015, p. 298).

182). The Arab League (AL) stepped in with the hope of putting an end to the unrest. On 11 November, the AL suspended Syria's membership, and on 27 November, it applied trade and economic sanctions on Syria (Lesch 2012, pp. 187-8). In January 2012, the AL prepared a comprehensive plan that called for Bashar's removal and establishment of a new government. Morocco introduced the peace plan to the UN Security Council on 27 January. The introduction of a plan that proposed toppling Bashar aroused Russia's suspicions that the West and its allies were staging another Libya-style regime change (Phillips 2016, pp. 89-92). On 4 February 2012, Russia and China vetoed the resolution, which was another turning point for Syria. A diplomatic solution was now off the table. From then on, regime violence would escalate further, discord divided the opposition, and a proxy war began. Toward the end of 2013, three conflicts were taking place in Syria at once. At the global level, Russia was standing against the US and the West. Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar were facing off against Iran and Russia at the regional level. The former group was also competing among themselves for influence. Within Syria, Shiite fighters, Sunni fighters, Islamic extremists, Kurds, Hezbollah, and Assad's forces were doing the actual fighting.

One of the regime's war crimes was the indiscriminate killing of civilians by bombing whole cities (where rebels positioned themselves) from the ground and air. Another war crime was the regime's use of paramilitary forces to massacre civilians.<sup>7</sup> Bashar added a new dimension to the conflict and a new crime to his list in 2013 by launching a chemical attack in Ain Tarma and Zamalka, the Damascus suburbs. The attack poisoned and killed around 2,000 people and was "the deadliest use of chemical weapons since the Iran-Iraq war, the greatest

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<sup>7</sup> In May and June 2012, the *shabiha* carried out massacres in two villages of Hama and Homs (Phillips 2016, p. 100). This example was repeated almost everywhere in Syria.

single poisoning of civilians since Saddam Hussain's slaughter of the Kurds in Halabja" (YK & S 2018, p. 105).

The Syrian regime added partial and total sieges to its crime list.<sup>8</sup> Bashar also undermined all UN attempts to bring peace or relief to Syria. The Syrian government consistently violated three UNSC resolutions (2139, 2165, and 2191, which called for the cessation of violence, lifting sieges, and protecting civilians) by deliberately disrupting cross-border aid delivery to the besieged areas (Abboud 2016, p. 149). The situation was not so different in the non-besieged areas. The regime did not guarantee the UN workers' safety, as many have been killed, injured, and kidnapped. UN vehicles and facilities have been frequently attacked (Ferris and Kirisci 2016, pp. 89-90). On top of this, targeting health care workers has become a method to scare them off and deprive the needy of medical care (Devi 2018, pp. 15-6). The Syrian regime also weaponized health care by distributing medicines to its supporters and withholding them from those it labeled as disloyal (Abbara et al. 2020, p. 1369).

A bad situation grew worse when a self-styled Islamic State took shape on the lands of Syria and Iraq. The US's Iraqi occupation, Saudi Arabia's ideological efforts, Turkey's allowing passage to extremist fighters battling against the Kurds, Russia's sending away its jihadists, Qatar's indiscriminate arming of rebel groups, Iran's organizing of sectarianism in Iraq – all contributed to the emergence of ISIS (Phillips 2016, pp. 203-6). In August 2013, ISIS captured Raqqa and in June 2014 Mosul, thereby controlling one-third of Syria and Iraq, including the oil fields. The caliphate's self-declaration in 2014, its cruel treatment of civilians, and novel

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<sup>8</sup> Two infamous examples before 2015 were the sieges of the Yarmouk camp and Eastern Ghouta. In 2015, the UN and Amnesty International estimated that more than half a million people were living in besieged areas by government forces. Countless civilians died either from starvation, or from aerial bombardments, or from lack of medical care (Ferris and Kirisci 2016, pp. 93-4). By 2017, 400,000 people remained trapped in the besieged areas of Damascus suburbs (Devi 2018, pp. 15-6).

propaganda methods soon caught the world's attention as the third influential player in Syria (YK & S 2018, p. 195, Phillips 2016, p. 196). Its bold stand against the West and acquired wealth attracted thousands of Sunni fighters. From 2013, ISIS came into conflict with the Kurds, with both sides making advances at different times. In the battles of October 2014 and June 2015, the US-backed YPG, along with other rebel forces, managed to clear large parts of northern Syria of ISIS fighters (Ferris and Kirisci 2016, pp. 36-7). During this period, ISIS also managed to inflict on the Syrian regime its worst casualties on the battlefield in Tabqa, Hasakah, Raqqa, Homs, and Palmyra (Phillips, pp. 197-201).

ISIS' quick advance and growth alarmed the whole world. All actors in Syria had something to lose as ISIS gained. Therefore, the long reluctant US and its allies openly intervened against it in Syria in September 2014. They also struck other jihadist groups like al-Nusra but did not touch Bashar. By late 2016 and early 2017, ISIS-controlled lands had mainly passed to the SDF. Although its reign was short, ISIS caused a great deal of damage in Syria. Its campaigns against the Kurds, the Syrian regime, and armed opposition groups caused millions of civilians to flee from its brutal rule (Ferris and Kirisci 2016, pp. 23-4).

### **Syrian Regime's and ISIS's Moral Obligations toward Syrian Refugees**

Scholars who study Syria agree on one point: Bashar's uncompromising and violent response to public protests was the leading cause of Syria's descent into civil war. The regime is the main guilty party here. Government forces indiscriminately targeted civilians; committed murder, torture, and sexual violence; grossly violated human rights; interdicted humanitarian aid; and weaponized health care (Ferris and Kirisci 2016, pp. 117-8). As the Syrian regime directly produced refugees, it is the enemy of the displaced people in Syria.

ISIS was a unique structure that made its mark in the Syrian civil war between 2013 and 2015 but mostly disappeared in 2016 and 2017. Unlike other armed groups in Syria, ISIS was a self-declared caliphate, did not respect Syria's unity and integrity, and did not accept the nation-state system (Abboud 2016, pp. 171-2). With its extremist jihadist ideology and cruel treatment of civilians under its control, ISIS was responsible for the deaths and displacement of many Syrians. Together with Bashar, it was an enemy of the displaced.

Justice requires that Bashar's regime be made to pay for what it has done. Morally, he should be stopped and tried. However, this option is practically out of the question because there is no consensus in the UN's Security Council regarding the future of Syria. Morally, again, Bashar's regime must also pay for the damage he has done to refugees. But practically, this is not to be expected either, because he is the one who created the refugees. The result is millions of people who desperately need accommodation. By definition, they are now the international community's responsibility. The MBM's question is, given that we cannot eliminate the source of the problem, does every member of the international community have the same duties toward Syrian refugees? Or, is there a way to show why some communities must shoulder greater burdens in protracted refugee situations? Whose ethical responsibility, then, is it to care for the Syrian refugees that Bashar uprooted and cannot return to their homes?

Similarly, justice requires that a regime like ISIS should be stopped and destroyed. We have seen a more unified international action on this case. Still, whose responsibility is it to take care of the Syrian refugees that ISIS uprooted and cannot return to their homes? Who inherits the burden of ISIS's moral responsibility?

At this stage, we could conclude that, as international law claims and the UN Charter endorses, refugees under such circumstances are the international community's responsibility.

However, we have seen in many cases that if it is everyone's responsibility to clean the mess and there is no particular distribution of duties, the outcome is the worsening of the problem. The MBM claims that such distribution by specific ethical standards is possible. Not every member of the international community has the same duties toward Syrian refugees. In Chapter 2, I argued that, in cases of absolute deprivation, the MBM defends the plausibility of assigning more duties to actors that intentionally or unintentionally get themselves involved in the needy person's situation. The MBM asks here, "is there any community that should have the duty to accept her *more than everyone else*?" That is to say, "is there any community that got itself involved in the Syrian case, especially in such a way as to worsen the situation and increase the number and suffering of refugees?"

### **Turkey**

In the late 2000s, Turkey was one of Bashar's most prominent allies. However, Turkish PM Erdogan had more reasons to turn against him shortly after the unrest started. Erdogan had backed the popular uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. He was reluctant to damage his popularity by standing on the wrong side of history in the Syrian crisis – especially when Bashar was spilling so much blood. Moreover, Erdogan believed that the regime would soon crumble. With his rising popularity in the Arab world, supporting Bashar would damage Turkey's soft power. Furthermore, as Iraq stabilized, Syria had been losing its importance as a regional market for Turkey. Finally, quickly replacing Bashar with a Muslim-democratic regime (Muslim Brotherhood) would help Turkey benefit from this change in the long term by expanding its influence and outshining Iran as a "more suitable" regional hegemon in the Middle East (Phillips 2016, pp. 73-5).



Turkey's early response to the events in Syria was cautious. In April, Erdogan warned Bashar to stop the violence and implement reforms. This careful tone increasingly hardened in the following months as Bashar's repression continued and Turkey's attempts to convince him failed (Lesch 2012, pp. 142-3). Turkey issued its "final word" to Bashar on 15 August and ended its dialogue with Syria on 28 August (Ahmadian and Mohseni 2019, p. 353). Turkey's next step was cutting all relations and contacts with Syria, enforcing an arms embargo, and attempting to organize the Syrian opposition to topple Bashar as quickly as possible (Lesch 2012, pp. 144-5; Abboud 2016, pp. 132-3).

As of September 2011, Turkey's active involvement in the Syrian crisis became apparent, especially in terms of organizing and arming the rebels – first in the form of the Syrian National Council (SNC), then as the Free Syrian Army, and lastly as the Syrian National Coalition (Hinnebusch and Zintl 2015, p. 308). A conference in Istanbul declared the SNC's official establishment in October (Lesch 2012, pp. 167-8). The Muslim Brotherhood (MB), which has an ideological affinity with Erdogan's AK Party, dominated this branch of the Syrian opposition (Phillips 2016, p. 72). An "imprudent" and "ill-planned" Friends of Syria meeting took place in Turkey in February 2012, which promised financial assistance and support for a more militant approach (Lesch 2012, pp. 229-30).

The course of the Syrian war led Turkey to undertake military interventions after 2015. Following the PYD victory over ISIS, the US-Kurdish rapprochement, and strengthening of the Kurdish entity along the border, Turkey began to seek ways to implement its safe zone plan in northern Aleppo in July 2015, which would disrupt a prospective contiguous belt of Kurdish autonomous regions in Syria (YK & S 2018, p. 203). In late 2016, Turkish tanks moved into northern Syria. Along with the Turkish army were some FSA forces and Islamic Front militias.

Operation Euphrates Shield, as the Turks dubbed it, changed the dynamics in northern Syria. After a two-year-long series of operations, Turkey finally managed, with Russian help, to establish a safe zone under its *de facto* control in northwestern Syria (as the US-Turkish ties severed after the US supported the PYD) (Mironova et al. 2019, pp. 698-703). Many casualties and displacements occurred during this period. The Turkey-Russia-Iran deal (Astana talks) that allowed this solution also confirmed Bashar's grasp on much of Syria's lands in exchange for sanctioning Turkish operations and a safe zone.

### **Turkey's Moral Obligations toward Syrian Refugees**

If no country were involved in the Syrian case, then all communities would be in the same moral position vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees. How the duties should be distributed in that case is a question that the refugee literature has already been trying to deal with. The MBM asks a different question. At this stage, we are looking at the members of the international community (which should be morally responsible for taking care of Syrian refugees) and asking whether some of them should morally have more significant duties toward the Syrian refugees.

In a case where even well-intentioned intervention in civil crises would make communities responsible for accommodating refugees, involvement with less-than-good intentions (benefit- or interest-oriented) should morally burden communities with even more duties. As with many foreign involvements in civil crises, Turkey's intervention in Syria was a move determined largely by its own interests as its government interpreted them. Turkey undertook three actions in Syria. First, it condemned Bashar and stood against his regime. Second, it hosted and financially, logistically, politically, and militarily supported the Syrian opposition. Third, it carried out a military operation inside Syria to establish a safe zone.

Turkey's involvement in Syria worsened the situation and increased refugees in the long term. For this reason should it shoulder more duties toward Syrian refugees compared to other countries. Even if we assume that its intention was purely humanitarian (that is, stopping a dictator who murders innocent civilians), the MBM would still assign Turkey at least low OR for the mess its actions (incomplete intervention) created in Syria. But Turkey's actions were not driven by purely humanitarian concerns. Turkey opposed Bashar and supported the opposition because it thought his regime was about to collapse. Turkey decided to take advantage of the situation by speeding up the process and supporting (i.e., picking) the new Syrian rulers. This action was benefit-oriented and cannot be explained by a humanitarian approach. As a result, the Turkish community should assume at least medium OR for Syrian refugees.

However, Turkey did not stop there. In 2016, it took direct military action in Syria to establish a safe zone – thereby assuming control of Syrian lands and more responsibility for what goes wrong on the ground. Consequently, it increased its OR level from medium to high. Still, a couple of questions arise. Could Turkey avoid extra responsibility by claiming that it *had to* intervene in Syria because it was directly affected by the increasing number of refugees? If the answer is affirmative, should that reduce Turkey's OR for Syrian refugees? Theoretically, this reduction in responsibility is morally plausible (though it would not reduce its responsibility to zero). But, in practice, intervention's curse is still there: as states usually intervene not for purely humanitarian ends, they typically intervene although they have other choices. When Turkey started openly supporting and arming the rebels in Syria, it was not yet swamped by Syrian refugees. Its motivation to act was not to solve a refugee problem on its borders but to benefit from a revolution within a neighboring country. Rather than Turkey's early support for the opposition, its military incursion in 2016 might have benefited better from this argument, as

Turkey was then hosting millions of refugees. Still, it is not plausible to argue that Turkey *had to act* because its refugee question was insoluble. It *preferred* to act because it did not want an independent Kurdish political entity along its southern border. The “safe zone for Syrians” argument was just a screen to legitimize this military operation in Syria internationally. In this respect, it is not possible to reduce Turkey’s OR for Syrian refugees by following this line of argument.

It appears fair to assign Turkey high OR for Syrian refugees. This does not mean that, in the face of Syrian refugees, Turkey is in the same moral position as the Syrian regime or ISIS, which carried out massacres and ethnic cleansing. The MBM has classified these actors as the enemies of the displaced. Turkey has high OR among the actors whose responsibility it is to help Syrian refugees (i.e., the international community). Having decided on the OR level, one more step remains before determining the limits of the Turkish community’s moral duties toward Syrian refugees. The MBM should examine the social connections (SC) between the Turkish community and different Syrian refugee groups to identify the former’s *type* of duty toward the latter.

The MBM categorizes the SC between host communities and refugees as strong or weak. Strong SC means that there is no open enmity between the two groups, which makes sharing a communal space impossible. Weak SC refers to the existence of such impossibility. In this respect, the Turkish community could peacefully accommodate almost all constituents of the Syrian nation.<sup>9</sup> With the Sunni Arabs, Kurds, and Turcomans comprising nearly 75-80% of the

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<sup>9</sup> One could rightly ask here: if the Turkish community and Syrians can get along well, why is there a public resentment against refugees – as one of this chapter’s opening stories pointed out? This is the emphasis the MBM is trying to make: under normal circumstances, there is no reason why these two communities could not get along well. If there are problems, then, they should be caused by something else than social integrability. Beyond political, economic, and demographic explanations, the MBM argues that communities’ lack of ethical assessments toward

Syrian nation, the Turkish community shares the same religious or ethnic identity, or both. In addition, the Christian and Alawite communities within Turkey could welcome their brethren from Syria. From this perspective, it is safe to label the SC between the Turkish community and most Syrian refugees as strong. Consequently, the type of help that the Turkish community should offer to Syrian refugees must be resettlement. Given that Turkey has high OR in the Syrian case and strong SC with Syrians, the Turkish community's moral duty toward Syrian refugees should be resettling a large number in Turkey and providing those in need with additional resources to establish a new life.

How large should this number be? Obviously, the MBM cannot determine specific numbers here. Although we cannot currently work with specific numbers, it seems fair to argue that hosting 3.5 out of the 6 million Syrian refugees is beyond Turkey's moral responsibility. In this respect, the Turkish community has the right to claim that it has been overburdened. However, hosting has different faces. Accommodating refugees does not mean that they are given what they are morally due. In terms of substance, Turkish society still cannot claim that it has done enough for Syrians. They must grant citizenship to a substantial number of refugees. Yet, the latest official numbers indicate that only around 110,000 Syrians have been given Turkish citizenship. Considering Turkey's high OR for and strong SC with Syrians, this number is still much lower than it should have been. From the normative standpoint, the Turkish community has no right to oppose the policies that offer citizenship to a larger group of Syrian refugees in Turkey.

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particular refugees is one of the reasons why public hatred consolidates within host societies. We do not know what our community's particular ethical duties toward a specific refugee group in a given case should be.

However, so long as other communities refrain from assuming their share and allow so many refugees to remain within Turkish borders, it will be practically impossible for Turkey to grant citizenship to a substantial number of Syrian refugees and keep hosting 3.5 million people at the same time. One could thus question whether hosting so many refugees should reduce Turkey's duty to provide Syrians citizenship. This conclusion would be only practically plausible – that is, this would be the practical outcome if other communities refuse their duties. Turkey can claim that it has the right to wait until the number of its Syrian refugees is reduced to acceptable levels before it fulfills its particular duties. Morally speaking, however, we cannot assume that Turkey has fulfilled its moral obligations toward Syrians if it keeps hosting 3.5 million people without giving them any social and political rights in the long term. The Syrian refugee deserves more. Therefore, although we should acknowledge that the Turkish community is currently overburdened (a position that is starkly different than Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United States), we should not allow this fact to obscure the extent of Turkey's specific moral duties toward Syrian refugees.

Assume that Turkey has satisfied the MBM's requirements by granting citizenship and helping a substantial number of Syrian refugees. As mentioned above, this number should be lower than 3.5 million. How about the remaining refugees? What does the MBM say about them? Again, the nonideal situation makes Turkey accommodate these extra refugees because other prospective helpers do not do their part. However, the MBM does not aim to find a way to make all helpers comply with its requirements. The MBM seeks to show that Turkey does not have the right to complain until it grants citizenship to a substantial number of Syrian refugees – which is a different moral responsibility compared to many other communities in the world. Once Turkey accepts its moral duty, distributing the remaining refugees will be the same

question as distributing 6 million Syrian refugees among the members of the international community. This question was already there before we started analyzing the Syrian case through the lens of the MBM.

### **Qatar and Saudi Arabia**

As the US was pulling out of Iraq, Qatar and Saudi Arabia decided to make substantial moves to increase their regional influence. Qatar had already been working to improve its image in the Middle East by establishing the influential Al-Jazeera channel and heavily investing in Arab countries. Syria was one country with which Qatar held a cordial and productive relationship (Lesch 2012, pp. 146-7). In line with its image, Qatar supported the public uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya when the Arab Spring began<sup>10</sup> (Phillips 2016, p. 62). As a Sunni autocracy, Qatar's support of Islamists in these uprisings even raised suspicions about its collaboration with Saudi Arabia, whether it saw the Arab Spring as an opportunity to replace old regimes with Wahhabi-style hardline Sunni Islamist governments (Wieland 2015, pp. 246-7; Lesch 2012, p. 147). In this respect, the replacement of an Alawite Bashar supported by Shiite Iran with a Qatar-backed Sunni regime must have appeared beneficial to Qatari eyes. In addition, Qatar's influential role in toppling Libya's Ghaddafi had boosted its self-confidence. Qatar believed that it had some actual regional power and could use it again in Syria, only to be cruelly disappointed (Phillips 2016, p. 135).

Qatar's early response to the Syrian events was cautious. During the early months, it joined together with the Arab League to find a peaceful solution. However, when Bashar did not

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<sup>10</sup> So long as they were away from Qatar. When the uprisings erupted in Bahrain, Qatar endorsed the Gulf Cooperation Council's violent crackdown on the protesters and al-Jazeera provided no coverage of the events. Turkey and the US behaved the same way. Another example of the anti-Assad camp's selective morality.

step back, and Qatar understood that it had no leverage against him, it became the first Arab state to freeze relations with Syria (Phillips 2016, p. 69). The Qatari leadership thought that Bashar had not much time left and wanted to increase its regional power by quickly supporting the political opposition and financing the armed groups (Abboud 2016, pp. 123-4). As early as January 2012, Qatari leader Emir Hamad called for military intervention against Bashar (Phillips 2016, p. 135). After the Arab League's attempt to bring the UN to Syria failed in February 2012, Qatar increased its arms deliveries to rebels inside Syria. Qatar was also among the countries that heavily funded the Syrian opposition and fighters (Hinnebusch and Zintl 2015, p. 308; Phillips 2016, p. 137).

Like Turkey, Qatar miscalculated when dealing with Syria. First, it overestimated its position in the region and Western eyes by assuming that it could easily convince the West to intervene in Syria. Second, it overestimated its understanding of Syria and its ability to change the events on the ground to quicken Bashar's fall. Third, it overestimated its capacity to support the rebels for the long term. It did not take long for Qatar to realize that Syria was not Libya. Libya was Qatar's first and only proxy war experience, and the subsequent civil war showed that even the Libyan campaign was unsuccessful (Phillips 2016, p. 136). With this realization, Qatar's new leader Emir Tamim moved his country toward a more neutral and less direct role in Syria in 2013 (Abboud 2016, pp. 123-4). However, the damage was done: Qatar's miscalculations and active positioning on the side of rebels helped quickly escalate the conflict to prolonged civil war, created disunity among the opposition groups, and dramatically increased the number of refugees in the long term.

Saudi Arabia was also in the anti-Assad camp. Although the Hariri assassination in 2005 had severed Saudi-Syrian relations (as he was close to the Saudi monarchy), a Qatari-brokered



deal on Lebanon had improved their ties after 2008 (Lesch 2012, pp. 145-6). Still, the rivalry with Iran was more important than Syria's friendship. Saudi Arabia had long been trying to pull Syria out of Iran's orbit, and its government saw an opportunity to change the regime completely when the unrest started in 2011. At the cost of contradicting its Arab Spring narrative, Saudi Arabia would not stand on Iran's side, especially when it knew that nothing would hurt Iran more than losing Syria (Ahmadian and Mohseni 2019, p. 353). Moreover, as the Syrian crisis took a more sectarian color, it became harder for the king to defy domestic pressures to protect Sunnis from Alawite Bashar's violence (Phillips 2016, p. 118).

At the beginning of the conflict, Saudi Arabia supported the Arab League's diplomatic efforts. When this did not work, it applied sanctions on Syria (Abboud 2016, pp. 121-3). However, as Bashar continued his violence and many started to think his end was close, King Abdullah focused on the potential benefits and domestic stakes and stood against Bashar. In August 2011, he openly condemned the regime's actions, called on Bashar to "stop the killing machine," and recalled his ambassador from Damascus (Wieland 2015, pp. 246-7; Lesch 2012, p. 146). Like Qatar and Turkey, Saudi Arabia increased its attempts to fund and arm the rebels after the UN's failure in February 2012. By December, Saudi Arabia transferred large numbers of rifles, machine guns, and ammunition to the FSA forces in southern Syria (Phillips 2016, pp. 137-8). Saudi Arabia also participated in the "funding game" within the anti-Assad camp by financially supporting groups close to itself while increasing competition and disarray within the Syrian opposition (Abboud 2016, pp. 91-2, 181).

While Qatar was trying to limit its Syria involvement in 2013, Saudi Arabia increased its competition with Qatar for regional leadership. King Abdullah started a media-based and diplomatic war against Qatar, created its own dependent groups within the Syrian opposition,

and thus further hurt the rebel cause (Phillips 2016, pp. 184-94). This attitude changed after King Abdullah's death in January 2015. The new king Salman immediately adopted a new tone, stopped his brother's hostility to the Muslim Brotherhood, and reconciled with Qatar and Turkey (YK & S 2018, p. 205). This rapprochement helped the anti-Assad camp coordinate efforts to create a more unified and representable rebel army (Phillips 2016, pp. 216-7). However, along with several other Arab countries, Saudi Arabia soon became preoccupied with its intervention in Yemen (YK & S 2018, p. 205). In December 2015, another attempt to unify the Syrian opposition, this time spearheaded by Riyadh, failed again because regional powers disagreed over who the key actors should be (Phillips 2016, pp. 226-7).

### **Qatar's and Saudi Arabia's Moral Obligations toward Syrian Refugees**

Qatar and Saudi Arabia are the two other regional countries that remained in the anti-Assad camp. But they were able to confine their involvement in Syria to funding and arming rebels. Like Turkey, their moral position vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees cannot be equated with that of the Syrian regime and ISIS. Unlike Turkey, however, they quickly limited their interference in Syria in the short term and did not get directly involved in the actual fighting on the ground. Should this reduce their OR level for Syrian refugees compared to Turkey?

The answer is affirmative. If we summarize Turkey's involvement as *unsuccessfully supporting rebels + occupying Syrian lands*, then Qatar and Saudi Arabia's involvement as only *unsuccessfully supporting rebels* seems less intrusive than Turkey's intervention. Turkey continues to increase its potential OR for Syrians by assuming control of Syrian lands. Anything that goes wrong in this process will increase Turkey's moral duties. Qatar and Saudi Arabia refrained from taking the same action. In this respect, since we earlier concluded that Turkey has high OR, Qatar and Saudi Arabia should have medium OR for Syrian refugees.

However, this decrease in their OR level does not mean that their behavior in Syria was ethically more appropriate than Turkey's. Qatar and Saudi Arabia's motivation behind intervening in Syria was not to help distressed people or for the sake of an ethical principle to stand against a murderous dictator. They exhibited examples of their selective morality when they forcefully suppressed the protesters in Bahrain. Their intention in Syria was very similar to Turkey's: to benefit from a new ruling elite that would be under their influence. Their policy was an effort to increase their regional power. Saudi Arabia wanted to curb Iran's ambitions. Qatar wanted to increase the momentum it generated with its active role in Libya. They competed among themselves about who should have the upper hand in the region. Their case provides further evidence for the MBM's central argument that interventions are not motivated by purely humanitarian concerns and should increase the actors' responsibility. Qatar and Saudi Arabia cannot escape their obligations in Syria by claiming that they stood on the people's side against a bloody oppressor.

Qatar and Saudi Arabia's support for the rebels was as unsuccessful as Turkey's. They remained disunited and could not provide enough assistance to create a united and powerful opposition to fight and topple Bashar. Their failure contributed to the deterioration of the situation and the creation of refugees. This fact speaks to another crucial point with regard to intervention: the actor should do what it takes to solve the crisis it meddles with or at least reduce suffering in it. If the actor does not have the power to carry out such a plan, it should not intervene. Unsuccessful interventions create a greater mess and hence should mean more responsibility for the intervener. In such cases, the MBM claims that we should openly discuss communities' *increased* moral obligations compared to non-intervening actors – so that they force their states to reconsider before they carelessly intervene in other states' domestic affairs.

We should be more comfortable in having this discussion, now that we have established that “humanitarian purposes” and “having no other choice” are not real motivations behind states’ interventions. Communities should not run away from the ethical consequences of intervention.

What should be the *type* of help we can morally demand from Qatar and Saudi Arabia?

The Sunni and Arab background of most Syrians makes it plausible to claim that Qatari and Saudi communities have strong SC with most Syrian refugees (except for the Christian, the Druze, and Alawite/Shiite minorities). Therefore, these two communities must grant political membership to Syrian refugees. Considering that they have medium OR, the number of resettlements should also be medium. Again, specific numbers are beyond the normative model’s reach. Roughly, however, each should take in fewer than Turkey should, but many more than other members of the international community. Qatar and Saudi Arabia have accommodated almost no Syrians. With so many refugees waiting for resettlement, they cannot shift their moral duty, as they have been trying to do, to financially contributing to the relief and resettlement efforts elsewhere. The moral obligation of the Qatari and Saudi Arabian communities is to accept a medium number of Syrian refugees. Although they provided significant financial contributions to relief efforts, this does not invalidate, change, or reduce their particular moral obligation toward Syrian refugees.

### **Iran and Russia**

In 2011, Syria was of vital importance to Iran for at least five reasons. First, Iran was territorially connected to Hezbollah through Iraq and Syria. Hezbollah played a crucial role in Iran’s stand against Israel, and the military equipment that supported this group came from Iran through Iraq and Syria without disruption (YK & S 2018, pp. 198-9). Second, Iran perceived a Western-backed regime change in Syria as a challenge to its regional standing. Syria had

maintained its alliance with Iran during the years of international isolation, and Iran now had no intention of watching Syria fall prey to “Western imperialists” (Wieland 2015, pp. 238-9; Ahmadian and Mohseni 2019, p. 353). Third, Iran had invested too much in Syria for its geopolitical importance so that it could not simply give up its influence over Damascus (Abboud 2016, p. 130). Fourth, in the Sunni-Shia rivalry of the region, Iran would not hand over Syria to Sunni leaders’ sphere of influence (Phillips 2016, pp. 152-3). This point gained more prominence after Iran agreed to sign the internationally negotiated nuclear deal in 2015 (Abboud 2016, p. 131). Finally, the presentation of the Syrian conflict as a war by extremist Sunni Islamists’ against Shiite/Alawite Bashar invoked a public demand to protect the Syrian regime (Ahmadian and Mohseni 2019, p. 352).

At the beginning of the uprising, Iran advised Bashar to implement the requested reforms with the hope of quickly restoring order without his removal (Lesch 2012, p. 129). But when the situation got out of control, it promptly took Bashar’s side. Iran helped the Syrian regime in many important respects: it provided weapons, local fighters, and financial, military, and strategic help; it incorporated transnational militias in the war; it successfully drew in Russia and cooperated with it; and it balanced Turkey, the US, and Israel in the post-ISIS Syria (Ahmadian and Mohseni 2019, p. 355). Iran also provided Syria with crucial assistance in its electronic warfare against the protesters (Hinnebusch and Zintl 2015, p. 308).

Although the UN had banned Iran from exporting any arms in 2007, it turned out that it illegally supplied Bashar’s regime with rockets, anti-tank missiles, RPGs, and mortars as of 2012 (Phillips 2016, pp. 149-50). No less important was Iran’s financial support. When the Syrian economy was about to crumble, Iran opened billions of dollars of credit lines, not counting military aid and oil deliveries. The two countries struck a free trade deal in 2012. As other

foreign companies were leaving Syria, Iranian companies filled the void (YK & S 2018, p. 198; Phillips 2016, p. 164). Iran also invested great effort and money to establish the National Defence Forces (NDF) from scratch. This umbrella organization brought all regime forces and paramilitaries like *shabiha* together and created a reliable armed force. The fighters were Syrian, but the Iranian Quds Force and Hezbollah provided their training (Phillips 2016, p. 162). The NDF effectively changed the situation on the battlefield in favor of Bashar. Another Iranian innovation was the deployment of foreign Shia fighters and jihadists in Syria. Protecting religious shrines was one reason. Yet another was (especially for those Afghan refugees and the like in Iran) Iran's promise of salaries, residency documents, and the threat of deportation. Throughout the war, Iran managed to deploy an estimated 15,000 to 25,000 Shia foreign fighters to Syria (Reiff 2020, pp. 991-2). A couple of years into the war, it seemed that Iran achieved total control of the Syrian army, making all critical decisions on the battlefield (Abboud 2016, pp. 131-2).

Syria became even more critical for Iran after it struck the nuclear deal with the West in 2015. It needed to show this was not a capitulation to Western superiority. However, the fighting on the ground was not going well. By then, the Syrian army had lost key positions, and ISIS, Nusra, and rebel groups had made substantial advances in Syria. This was the moment when the Iranian-Russian alliance was forged (Ahmadian and Mohseni 2019, p. 358; Phillips 2016, p. 154). Iran was too crucial for Russia. Besides, Russia had been supporting Bashar against the West from the very beginning, and Syria also harbored its only military base in the region. As interests and stakes merged, so did the military powers (Abboud 2016, pp. 128-9). Iran's militia complemented Russian air bombings. Although the rebels initially showed some ability to resist, they soon lost much of their gains. Meanwhile, Iran removed Sunnis and settled Shia families in

cities like Daraya, lost by the rebels during the campaign (YK & S 2018, pp. 224-6). These practices also raised questions on whether Iran followed a secret agenda of ethnic cleansing in Syria.

If Iran was Bashar's financial resource and military strategist, Russia acted as its superpower sponsor (YK & S 2018, pp. 200-1). In this respect, at least for the first years of the civil war, Russia's position in Syria was similar to the US's position in Israel. The ties between Russia and Syria were close, dating back to the Cold War when the latter was mainly allied with Moscow (Lesch 2012, p. 136). More importantly, Russia had substantial commercial interests in Syria. In 2010, Russian investments in Syria's tourism and energy sectors and infrastructure projects totaled around \$20 billion (Doucet 2018, p. 72). With the sanctions on Iran and the ousting of Ghaddafi, Syria remained among the essential arms buyers from Russia. Moreover, Syria had around \$4 billion unpaid arms contracts (Abboud 2016, pp. 129-30; Phillips 2016, p. 221). Syria's port city of Tartous harbored the last Russian naval base in the Mediterranean. For Russia, Syria was also one of the few open doors to influence in Middle Eastern politics against Western domination (Lesch 2012, pp. 136-9). Russia felt cheated in Libya when the UN resolution for a no-fly zone turned into an intervention that toppled Ghaddafi. With already well-developed suspicions of Western norms and plans and having lost billions of dollars worth of commercial and military contracts to the West in Libya, Russia decided to make sure that the same would not happen in Syria (Hinnebusch and Zintl 2015, p. 308). Finally, as a home to a sizeable Muslim population, Russia was worried about strengthening the jihadist fighters in Syria (Doucet 2018, p. 74). In short, Russia had every reason for taking Bashar's side.

At the beginning of the conflict, Russia joined the international calls for Bashar to make reforms. However, when the world leaders quickly turned against him and called him to step

down, Russia strictly rejected doing the same (Lesch 2012, p. 140). From 2011 on, Russia vetoed all UNSC resolutions it viewed as harmful to Bashar's regime, including condemnation and investigation proposals (Abboud 2016, p. 126; Phillips 2016, p. 68). After the conflict started, Syria received billions of dollars worth of arms and ammunition shipments from Russia (YK & S 2018, p. 201). Although Russia claimed that it was honoring already agreed contracts, it turned out that new agreements were made after the conflict began. Russia countered that it was delivering arms to a legitimate government. To be sure, Syria's government was still legitimate because the Russian vetoes prevented any UN arms boycott. Moreover, as international sanctions on Syria increased, Russia financially helped Iran ensure that Bashar could deal with sanctions, maintain his payroll, and keep the state running (Phillips 2016, pp. 148-9).

In 2015, Russia militarily intervened in Syria to help an ally, protect its assets and interests in Syria, increase its regional and global influence, cripple jihadists before they turned their jihad to Russia, and also demonstrate Russia's new weapons systems to the whole world (Adamsky 2020, p. 108). Russia renovated and reactivated its naval base in Tartous and moved its battleships, fighter planes, and military personnel there in September 2015. A bombardment campaign started in late September.<sup>11</sup> Russia imposed a unilateral *de facto* no-fly zone in Syria, ended Turkey's hopes of establishing a safe haven, and effectively tipped the balance in Bashar's favor again. The bombings intensified during 2016, which included cruise missiles and "bunker-busting" bombs that penetrated the earth and collapsed several residential blocks at once (YK &

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<sup>11</sup> The Russian army claimed that it carried out over 6,000 attacks in the following four months. Although Moscow insisted that it attacked ISIS, the primary target was the rebels and populations that drove out ISIS, as only 20% of the bombs hit ISIS posts (Doucet 2018, p. 73; Phillips 2016, pp. 213-4; YK & S 2018, pp. 223-4). The bombing campaign also disrupted aid operations, destroyed schools and hospitals, and caused countless civilian casualties. Many more became displaced.



S 2018, p. 233). Meanwhile, Russia continued to veto all UNSC resolutions that could change the course of the war in Syria (Devi 2018, pp. 15-6).

### **Iran's and Russia's Moral Obligations toward Syrian Refugees**

If it was difficult to accept that the anti-Assad camp intervened out of humanitarian concerns, doing it for the pro-Assad camp is simply impossible. Therefore, we should start by assigning already-increased OR to the members of this camp. Iran and Russia directly intervened in Syria on Bashar's side. They provided substantial financial assistance, fighters on the ground, and weaponry to keep him in power – while he massacred and forcibly displaced civilians. Iran and Russia also directly contributed to the increase in the death toll and the number of refugees.

Can these two countries ethically abdicate the duties that their intervention raises? How did they try to justify what they did?

Two answers appear at once. First, they claimed that they helped a legitimate government whose authority had been attacked by rebels. They argued that they did not start the events, and because what they saw was an ally in need of help, they did what international allies do. Second, they claimed that other countries had already intervened in Syria to tip the balance so that they had the right to carry out a counter-intervention.

Since we are trying to determine communities' *moral* obligations with the MBM's help, we should not be impressed by the first answer – because, in essence, it is a *legal* assessment of the case. The fact that the Syrian government remains legally legitimate cannot mean that Iran and Russia are not morally culpable of the atrocities they committed in the process of protecting

it.<sup>12</sup> In this respect, Russia and Iran's support for Syria resembles the US's support for Israel (see Chapter 4). They help their legitimate ally with its immoral actions. Therefore, they cannot avoid the moral obligations this intervention brings.

The second answer is more challenging morally. Some scholars have argued that if a foreign intervention tips the balance in a civil war, it should be ethically plausible to counter-intervene to restore the balance – so that it becomes clear which party has more public support to win the fight (Walzer 2015). However, this approach raises serious problems. Maintaining the balance within a civil war means prolonged fighting, more deaths, more suffering, and more refugees. Even if we accept that counter-intervention is morally acceptable, we should not jump to the conclusion that this moral right lets the counter-interveners off the moral hook for those who suffer during the process. In this respect, the MBM's vantage point must still hold: intervention imposes extra duties on those who help cause the suffering toward those who suffer. The reason is simple enough: do the counter-interveners act because they find it morally wrong not to restore the balance in the civil war? Are they neutral, ethical observers in a civil war who have nothing to gain or lose in how the crisis ends? Even if the answer were “yes,” the MBM would still assign some OR to the interveners due to the worsening of the problem. But the answer is “no,” which should increase their communities' share of responsibility even more. They counter-intervene because the first intervention would give a result against their interests. Iran feared losing its land connection to Hezbollah, and Russia was outmaneuvering the United States in the region. Besides, rather than reestablishing the balance, these interventions resulted

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<sup>12</sup> This is the ages-old debate of legality vs. morality. If someone has stolen my phone and hidden it, I have a legal right to get it back. But this does not give me the moral right to torture him to speak. How I get back my phone matters ethically.

in Bashar regaining most of his lost lands. In this respect, the fact that they carried out a counter-intervention (instead of first intervention) cannot save them from assuming extra moral duties toward the Syrian refugees produced during this process.

In the final analysis, either method of justification will not rescue the Iranian and Russian communities from assuming more duties toward Syrians compared to other members of the international community. They also did not take their intervention far enough to finish the fighting in Syria or reduce human suffering. Again, this incomplete intervention intensifies Syrians' misery, which is another reason why intervention should increase the actors' moral responsibility.

One question remains: are Iran and Russia in the same position vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees as the Syrian regime and ISIS? Because they actively supported Bashar's war and directly displaced many people in the process, they are. In their support for the regime, they are to refugees what Bashar is: the enemies of the displaced. Therefore, they are morally responsible for compensating for Syrian refugees' losses and offering substantial financial contributions for their resettlement in other countries. Together, they must assume the financial responsibility for resettling millions of Syrians currently struggling in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. However, this conclusion will not escape the earlier paradox: if they are the enemy of the displaced, they will not accept the moral burden that the MBM assigns them. But the MBM is not concerned with offering mechanisms to make them comply. It aims to show the Iranian and Russian communities that they morally owe to Syrian refugees more than other communities do and indicate the extent of their moral duties. According to the MBM, these two communities do not have the moral right to complain if their governments decide to finance millions of refugees' resettlement on their taxpayers' money.

### Lebanon and Hezbollah

If Russia was influential by means of its air war, Hezbollah was among the powers on the ground. After the replacement of the PM Saad al-Hariri with pro-Hezbollah businessman Najib Mikati in 2011, Hezbollah had gained more power in Lebanon. This government change served Syria well because it led Lebanon to remain silent at the early stages of the Syrian conflict and stand on the Syrian side in the Arab League and UN (Wieland 2015, p. 234). The Lebanese military also remained quiet about Hezbollah's involvement in Syria because it feared the rise of radical Sunnis. Hezbollah presented itself as struggling against a threat to the Shia, i.e., radical Sunni Islamists (Phillips 2016, pp. 158-9). Created with Iran's help during the Lebanese civil war, Hezbollah was not going to leave its sponsor in the lurch in this regional proxy war at the expense of losing its popularity in the Sunni world. Bashar's replacement could bring a Sunni-dominated government that would cut the arms pipeline between Hezbollah and Iran (Abboud 2016, pp. 112-3). Moreover, the sectarian balance in Lebanon was already delicate due to the high number of Palestinians in the country. After the Syrian war started, many Syrian refugees also flooded into Lebanon. This time, Lebanon did not establish camps for Syrians to avoid earlier problems experienced with the encamped Palestinians. Still, everyday life problems between Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians have been increasing in Lebanon. Lebanon and Hezbollah feared that a Sunni victory in Syria could push Lebanon's Sunnis toward active unrest (McHugo 2015, pp. 235-6; Ferris and Kirisci 2016, pp. 39-40; Phillips 2016, pp. 156-7).

Lebanon and Hezbollah helped Bashar's regime in multiple ways. The Arab League's economic sanctions on Syria as of 2011 effectively destroyed Syrian businesses. When the Gulf states and many other Arab countries implemented sanctions, Lebanon (along with Iraq) ignored them and continued its trade relations with Syria. In this respect, it provided one of the few

breathing spaces for Syria that contributed to Bashar's survival (Abboud 2016, pp. 122-3). More significant was Hezbollah's military presence on the ground. Hezbollah was in Syria and openly on Bashar's side from the early months of conflict. It facilitated Iran's establishment of the NDF and provided training for its fighters during 2012. Still, it denied the accusation of direct involvement in the crackdown or fighting.

However, in April 2013, Hezbollah took off its gloves. By then, the regime had failed to repel the rebels, sectarian jihadist forces had gained prominence along the Lebanese border, and Iran had asked for more direct help (Phillips 2016, p. 157). Known as the Arab world's most impressive military force after its defiance against Israel in 2006, Hezbollah's open participation in the civil war changed its course. In May 2013, Hezbollah and the Syrian army recaptured the city of al-Qusayr, whose loss to the rebels had disrupted Hezbollah's communication and distribution networks along the border (Abboud 2016, p. 113). From then on, it openly fought on the regime's side throughout the war, actively helping Bashar stand his ground in the long term, especially in Aleppo, Homs, and Damascus.

### **Lebanon and Hezbollah's Moral Obligations toward Syrian Refugees**

It is not easy to properly gauge the complex relationships between Lebanon, Hezbollah, Iran, and Syria. Hezbollah was created as a result of the Syrian occupation in Lebanon, but it also has direct financial and military connections to Iran. Iran uses Hezbollah in its regional fight against Israel, but it is also impossible to say that Hezbollah is wholly subjugated to Iran's will. Hezbollah operates as a Lebanese armed force, but it apparently enjoys substantial autonomy. Their relationship is complex; still, Lebanon and Hezbollah stayed in the same camp in Syria.

From the normative standpoint, we should situate Hezbollah in the same position as Iran and Russia. Hezbollah trained the regime's fighters, directly intervened in the Syrian war, and

fought on the regime's side against the rebels. In this respect, it directly contributed to the increase of refugees. As with Iran and Russia, its intention behind intervening was neither humanitarian rescue nor was it out of options, which allows us to assign even more OR to this party. Bashar's regime was an essential piece of the chain that connected Hezbollah to Iran, and it was to be protected at all costs. As a result, Hezbollah is the enemy of those displaced Syrians. The MBM would assign it the duty to compensate for the losses and resettlement of Syrian refugees. However, the same problem remains: what to do if they refuse this duty?

In this case, we seem to have an option. As the Lebanese government politically complemented Hezbollah's actions in Syria, it is plausible to increase the Lebanese community's moral duties toward Syrians. Lebanon supported Bashar's regime during the early stages of the conflict. When the Arab League and other states applied sanctions against Syria, Lebanon (along with Iraq) served as a lifeline for Bashar by maintaining its political and economic relations with his government. Since this help represents an indirect and limited involvement in Syria's war, the Lebanese community should assume low OR for Syrian refugees. However, considering the cooperation of the Lebanese government and Hezbollah in Syria, we should be allowed to slightly increase the Lebanese community's moral responsibility for Syrian refugees and assign it medium OR. The facts on the ground support the plausibility of making such a move. The Lebanese community has already accommodated around 800,000 Syrian refugees. Its strong SC with most Syrians has apparently enabled this accommodation. However, what does the MBM say about the extent of the Lebanese community's duties toward Syrian refugees?

Having established that the Lebanese community has medium OR in the Syrian case and strong SC with Syrian refugees, it seems fair to conclude that it should grant citizenship to a medium number of Syrians – roughly around the same number as the Qatari and Saudi Arabian

communities should. This number would probably be lower than the current 800,000 refugees that Lebanon is accommodating. However, because Syrians in Lebanon live without political rights, the Lebanese community has not yet fulfilled its substantive moral duty toward Syrians. That is to say, the Lebanese community has no right to complain about giving citizenship to a large section of the refugees it currently accommodates. This move might be practically impossible if other communities do not shoulder their part, but we should establish that this much is the Lebanese community's moral duty toward Syrians. The fact that Lebanon has currently exceeded its share does not justify keeping all Syrians without social and political rights in the long term. Like Turkey, Lebanon's extra refugees remain the international community's responsibility (as it would have been for all 6 million refugees had it not been for the MBM).

### **The United States**

Insofar as the MBM's approach is concerned, the United States undertook both ethically right and wrong actions in Syria. Against all expectations, it refrained from intervening in Syria during the first three years of the civil war. Then, it got involved in stopping ISIS's advance. How should we assess these two actions? Do they give the American community extra moral duties toward Syrian refugees?

As the MBM claims that states should avoid intervention if they can or assume moral responsibility if they do, we should endorse the US's abstention from directly intervening in Syria despite all calls from the opposition and anti-Assad camp. Many have claimed that the US decision not to intervene militarily after Bashar's chemical attacks changed the direction of the civil war. We should be careful about this conclusion. It seems as if the US's non-intervention worsened the situation in Syria, but there is no evidence that its intervention would have

produced better results. On the contrary, it could have been even worse. The American public was against it, memories of Vietnam and Iraq were still vivid, and Russia and Iran were uneasily watching Syria. In this respect, the US cannot be blamed for not entering into an adventure that would have probably deteriorated the situation. For several years, the US chose the ethically correct action.

However, this single right action cannot save the US from assuming more responsibility for Syria because its military non-intervention did not mean that it was not involved at all: it favored the anti-Assad camp and supported the rebels logistically, financially, and militarily. As we did with regard to Turkey, we should give the US medium OR for Syrian refugees as this incomplete intervention significantly contributed to the creation and misery of refugees in the long term.

Moreover, America's direct military intervention after ISIS's emergence as a threat should change our assessment. We should ask whether fighting a group like ISIS (that harmed, killed, and displaced many people) might reduce the US's responsibility. Under normal circumstances, this would have been plausible. Fighting an extremist jihadist group fit well with Obama's anti-jihadist discourse. Still, the intention was not purely ethical, which allows us, again, to increase the US's already-existing OR (produced by its harmful intervention). What essentially moved the American government was ISIS's advances in northern Iraq, the US's only (partial) success in the Iraq war. That ISIS was a terrorist-jihadist group only served as a pretext to move in. It also served well as a reason to participate in the Syrian zone. Furthermore, even though the damage done to civilians during the campaign against ISIS might have been unintended and indirect, fighting a group like ISIS does not save the US from accepting the moral burden for these harms. As before, the morality of the ends and means should be assessed



separately. The US's bombing campaign killed many civilians, destroyed grain silos and oil fields (that benefited the Syrian public), eliminated fighters who saved Syrian civilians from Bashar, and caused the displacement of many more. Even if we claim that the US had the moral right to fight ISIS, this cannot mean that it will be off the moral hook for those harmed by its actions.

An additional aspect of the US involvement is its usage of the Kurdish fighters to battle ISIS. As the US could not use its own soldiers on the ground, it established an alliance with the fighting Kurds in Syria. In exchange for fighting ISIS and other jihadists in Syria on the US's behalf, the United States turned a blind eye to the Kurds' human rights violations and ethnic cleansing in Syria. Taken together with the damage done to Syrian civilians in its fight against ISIS, this permission should increase America's earlier medium OR to high OR for the Syrian refugees. Still, we should acknowledge that the US's moral position vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees is not the same as the Syrian regime, ISIS, Russia, and Iran. The latter aimed at and organized displacement. The refugees created by the US were a side effect of its war against ISIS. In this respect, the Americans' moral position is more similar to that of the Turkish community's.

What is the type of help that we should demand from American society? The MBM considers immigration countries like the US as having strong SC with many communities of the world. Therefore, it should accept Syrian refugees for resettlement. Given that it has high OR, this number should also be high – roughly around the same number as the MBM has allocated to the Turkish community. Given that the US has accepted only around 70,000 Syrians, we can claim that it has done much less for Syrians than it morally should have. Here, as we did for other communities above, we are establishing the American community's moral obligation toward Syrian refugees – regardless of whether they will accept it or not. They must have more

duties toward Syrian refugees than other members of the international community. Intervention has ethical consequences, and it is reasonable to ask American society to accept a substantial number of Syrian refugees as compensation for the displacement and trouble it helped to cause.

### **Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat (PYD)**

Another main actor in the Syrian civil war was the PYD. Long oppressed by the Syrian regime, Kurds in Syria wanted to take advantage of the turmoil to establish their own rule in northern Syria. However, the Kurds are also disunited. The two main groups in Syria are the PYD and the KNC (Kurdish National Council). The former is an offshoot of the Turkish PKK, an organization labeled as terrorist by the US. The latter is closer to the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq and Turkey (Abboud 2016, pp. 101-2).

As the regime's forces retreated from northern Syria in July 2012, the PYD quickly filled the vacuum. Late in July, it announced that it had liberated Afrin, Jazeera, and Kobane. Although Barzani tried to broker an agreement between the PYD and KNC for shared governance, by February 2013, the PYD controlled 80% of these regions (Phillips 2016, pp. 133-4). In January 2014, the PYD declared that these cities were now democratic autonomous cantons of Rojava (Rojavayê Kurdistanê), or Western Kurdistan (Mironova et al. 2019, p. 695). The Rojava project was hardly secure. Kurds constituted a minority in the Rojava areas. Therefore, the interim government announced that it would have a pluralist character in November 2013. However, it was the PYD that had the arms. Although it was part of the governance on paper, in practice, it exercised ultimate control throughout the cantons, suppressed political opposition, imprisoned and tortured opponents, and implemented compulsory conscription, including children (Abboud 2016, pp. 167-8; YK & S 2018, pp. 73-4). In this period, at least 500,000 people fleeing from these practices found their way to Turkey and Iraq (Mironova et al. 2019, pp. 698-9).

The second crucial problem with the Rojava project was that its cantons were noncontiguous. Yet, the PYD's dream was to establish a coherent Kurdish authority in northern Syria, and it could reach this target only by fighting the Syrian opposition. Still, even if the PYD captured enough lands and territorially connected its cantons, the Kurds would be a minority; building a Kurdish majority would require ethnic cleansing. To a certain extent, this was what happened in northern Syria. As of mid-2012, Syrians started to run away from the PYD's fight against opposition groups, mainly to northern Iraq (Ferris and Kirisci 2016, p. 86). In late 2012, violent clashes occurred between the FSA and PYD in Aleppo. To consolidate and expand Rojava, the PYD also fought with the jihadists (Phillips 2016, p. 134). Until 2015, Human Rights Watch documented PYD's numerous human rights violations, including destroying homes, razing entire villages, and forcibly displacing thousands of civilians, particularly Arab, Assyrian, and Turcoman communities (Ozcelik 2020, p. 691; Mironova et al. 2019, p. 701).

Then came the PYD's cooperation with the US against ISIS. The US brought the PYD's armed forces and some Sunni and Christian fighters together to create the SDF. This move saved the Americans' face against the accusation of supporting a particular ethnic community and an offshoot of a terrorist group in Syria (Phillips 2016, p. 227). However, in practice, the PYD moved on to threaten residents, with the US now providing it cover. The number of violently displaced civilians, human rights violations, and confiscation and demolition of private property by the PYD escalated after 2015, which the US either downplayed or ignored (Mironova et al. 2019, pp. 702-3). In March 2016, the PYD unilaterally declared the Federation of Northern Syria – Rojava, which was only to be undermined by the US's forsaking of the Kurds and Turkey's military incursions into northern Syria (YK & S 2018, p. 231; Ozcelik 2020, pp. 690-1; Mironova et al. 2019, pp. 702-3).

As of 2018, Turkey-backed FSA forces, Russia- and Iran-backed regime forces, and US-backed SDF (Kurds and Arabs) seem to be the main actors on the ground. A resolution to the crisis does not seem likely; however, a “hurting stalemate” that would initiate a peace process among the parties might be close.

### **PYD’s Moral Obligations toward Syrian Refugees**

During the early stages of the Syrian civil war, the PYD proved itself as a formidable opponent of its enemies. After 2014, its alliance with the US turned it into one of the main actors on the field. In the pursuit of its ultimate goal, i.e., establishing an (at least) autonomous Kurdish political entity in northern Syria, the PYD committed gross human rights violations and caused large numbers of displacements. How would the MBM assess this outcome?

The Syrian regime intentionally discriminated against the Kurds in Syria throughout the last five decades. In the 1960s, hundreds of thousands of Kurds were stripped of their Syrian citizenship and left in destitution without fundamental rights. The regime implanted numerous Arab families and tribes along its northern border to leave the Kurdish community scattered and disunited. Having endured such injustices, the Kurds’ moral right to establish their own political community (as any distinct people should have) seems indisputable. The Syrian Kurds found this opportunity in Syria when the regime’s forces retreated to the country’s central parts and lost their control over the borderlands – where most Kurds lived. Next, the PYD started and carried out its Rojava project, which attempted to establish a political entity to protect the Kurds. How does this weigh in the scales of its moral obligations?

If we cannot morally question the Kurds’ right to a state but need to assess this very process from a normative standpoint, we should ask two questions: *who* is undertaking this duty, and *how* is it doing it? The PYD assumed this duty in Syria because it was a powerful actor. It

was powerful because it had guns. The PYD is an offshoot of the PKK, an organization classified as “terrorist” by the international community. Still, one could argue that one’s “terrorist” is someone else’s “freedom fighter.” Therefore, we need to check if the group genuinely represents the whole Kurdish community. The PYD fails this test. Its members consist of an ideologically exclusive group and comprise only part of the Kurds in Syria. Another prominent political group is the KNC, which is closer to the Turkish and Northern Iraqi governments. However, the PYD managed to sideline the KNC practically and establish an authoritarian rule over the Kurdish cantons using brute force. Therefore, we cannot conclude that the PYD legitimately represents the Kurds in Syria.

Besides, even if we accepted the PYD as a legitimate representative, its method of reaching its aim would not have passed the ethical test. The Rojava project’s cantons were not contiguous, and Kurds were a minority in these lands. To connect them and establish a Kurdish majority within required ethnic cleansing. Especially after the PYD secured the US’s support, ethnic cleansing became their policy in northern Syria. After 2014, hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their homes – mostly Arabs and Turcomans, but also many Kurds who do not identify themselves with the PYD. In this respect, the PYD holds the same moral position vis-à-vis the displaced as the Syrian regime, ISIS, Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah. It turned out to be the enemy of the displaced.

Again, we have another actor that intentionally displaced people and most probably will not accept the moral duty to help them. Like other enemies of the displaced, the PYD must compensate the refugees for the harm it caused and for the cost of resettlement. Another difficulty in dealing with the PYD is that, unlike Russia and Iran, it does not represent an established state; and unlike Hezbollah, it is practically not integrated into an existing political

structure. That is to say, if we can at least theoretically expect Russia, Iran, and Lebanon to pay for the refugees, even that much is not possible as far as the PYD is concerned. In other words, the burden on the international community's shoulders is higher. Like those millions displaced by Bashar's regime and pro-Assad camp, those displaced by the PYD remain the international community's responsibility. However, as we have seen throughout this chapter, some members of the international community have more moral duties toward these displaced persons.

### **Iraq**

As the American presence in Iraq dissipated toward the late 2000s, Iran enjoyed more influence in Iraqi politics by installing a Shiite-led government in Baghdad. The Shiite Crescent stretching from Iran to Lebanon resulted in a cordial relationship between Iraq and Syria despite minor disruptions. Syria accommodated over one million Iraqi refugees, enhanced trade relations with Iraq, and Iraq reactivated an oil pipeline that had remained closed since 2003 (Lesch 2012, pp. 132-3). In this respect, it was no surprise that Iraq stood within the pro-Assad camp after the revolt broke out. Iraq did not condemn Bashar's crackdown on protesters, neither in the Arab League nor internationally (Wieland 2015, pp. 247-8). When the Arab League imposed sanctions on Syria, Iraq dismissed them along with Lebanon to provide Bashar a lifeline. Finally, Iraq allowed Iran-backed militia groups such as *Asaib Ahl al-Haq* and *Kataib Hezbollah* to pass through to Syria to fight (Abboud 2016, pp. 115, 122-3). As its involvement was indirect and limited, it seems fair to assign Iraq only low OR for the Syrian refugees.

Considering the social connections between Syrians and Iraqis, northern Iraq seems to be a plausible place for Sunnis and Kurds to resettle – as it has been the practice during the civil war. Given that Iraq has low OR in the Syrian case, this number should also be small. In this respect, Iraq appears to have reached its limits of moral duties toward Syrian refugees as it has

already accommodated around 200,000 people. Yet we must also acknowledge that it is the Iraqi community's moral duty to grant these refugees at least basic social and economic rights. If the number continues to increase, they will have the moral right to complain that they are now overburdened.

### **Israel**

Israel's involvement in Syria was also minimal. The Israeli government was unclear about which outcome they preferred regarding the Syrian regime. If Bashar were gone, Iran would be weakened, and its ties to Hezbollah would be cut. On the other hand, Bashar was "the devil you know," who refrained from trying to retake the Golan Heights or disturb Israel's creeping annexation of the West Bank (Lesch 2012, p. 149; Phillips 2016, pp. 173-4). The prolonged civil war seemed to be the best result for Israel: it kept both Iran and Hezbollah busy. At the beginning of the uprising, Israel chose to remain quiet as Bashar presented the situation as a foreign conspiracy, and Israel was definitely on Bashar's list of conspirators. However, Shimon Peres followed the international condemnation trend by calling Bashar to step down in July 2011. Israel also carefully carried out its military interventions inside Syria. As of 2013, the Israeli army attacked Hezbollah forces and arms delivery convoys, but no significant number of civilian deaths or displacements were reported (YK & S 2018, p. 207). As of 2018, new tensions occurred between Iran and Israel within Syria (Ahmedian and Mohseni 2019, p. 362). Whether these tensions will change the character of Israel's involvement in Syria remains to be seen. Overall, it seems fair to assign Israel only low OR for the Syrian refugees.

It is not plausible to claim a strong SC between the Israeli and Syrian communities. In this respect, the type of help we should demand from Israel must be financial. Given that it has only low OR, the amount of this financial help should also be minimal. The Israeli community's

moral duty toward Syrians cannot be more than financing a small number of refugees' resettlement in other countries.

### **Jordan**

Jordan was another country affected by the Syrian war due to its proximity. Jordan's early response was to condemn Bashar, but it did not directly oppose the Syrian regime. As Jordan thought that Bashar would fall quickly, it opened its doors to Syrian refugees, established camps, and invited the UNHCR to govern them. However, Jordan did not completely cut its relations with the Syrian regime, which allowed the Jordanian government to create an informal safe zone inside Syria (Ferris and Kirisci 2016, pp. 38-9). Although Jordan also provided operational bases for the rebels, its contribution to the rebel cause was minimal in this sense, especially compared to Turkey's. Still, Jordan remained in the US-led coalition that allowed the FSA to govern southern Syria (Phillips 2016, pp. 138, 216). In the final analysis, Jordan never became a staunch anti-Assad party and a central player in the Syrian war. Its relations with Syria have even been getting better as Bashar clings to power. Jordan reopened its border crossing with Syria in 2018 and appointed an official to Syria in 2019 (Sweeney 2019, p. 1105). It seems unlikely that Jordan will move against Bashar at the expense of endangering its domestic security. In this respect, it seems fair to assign Jordan only low OR for Syrian refugees.

Considering the fact that Syrians mostly have strong SC with the Jordanian community, the type of help we should demand from Jordan must be resettlement. Since its OR level is low, the number of resettlements must also be small – roughly around the same number as Iraq should accept. For this much of a burden, Jordan has no right to complain. However, Jordan is currently accommodating over 600,000 Syrian refugees. Application of the MBM shows that this exceeds the Jordanian community's moral duty toward Syrian refugees. Yet, we should also underline



that Jordan's moral duty contains providing the small number of refugees it should accept with at least social and economic rights. As for the remaining refugees, they remain the international community's responsibility – just like the excess refugees in Turkey and Lebanon discussed above.

### **The Syrian Opposition**

The regime's deliberate killings of protesters gave Bashar the exact result he wanted: some opposition groups lost hope for peaceful change and decided to arm themselves. Until the summer of 2011, the protesters remained peaceful because moving to an armed conflict posed a dilemma: on the one hand, the regime was murdering them; on the other, taking up arms would confirm the regime's sectarianism narrative (Lesch 2012, p. 174). The disagreement among the opposition surfaced around this very question. The Local Coordination Committees (LCC) and the National Coordination Body for Democratic Change (NCB) supported nonviolent political strategies. The Free Syrian Army (FSA), established by a small number of regime defectors, and the Syrian National Council (SNC) advocated military confrontation. Another dilemma was whether to call for foreign military intervention. Again, the opposition was divided. The LCC and NCB were against it, but the SNC and FSA staunchly supported it (Abboud 2016, p. 76). There were many other, mostly local, opposition groups that had their own ideas. The amorphous and divided Syrian opposition also made it difficult for outsiders to offer help. Because of the diversity of the anti-Assad groups, which included Hamas and al-Qaeda, no outside helper could calculate where their aid would end up in Syria (Lesch 2012, pp. 199-200). Despite all these divisions and disagreements, the regime's continuous massacres pushed some groups to unite under the banner of the FSA during the summer of 2011 (Abboud 2016, p. 87). Shortly after the protests started, Bashar had also released many political prisoners, who, he knew, would take up

arms against the regime for vengeance, if for nothing else (YK & S 2018, p. 80). Supported by various international actors, groups of Syrian rebel groups continued fighting among themselves and against the regime forces throughout the civil war.

It might seem odd to wait until the end of the analysis to discuss the Syrian opposition's place in the civil war. After all, they were part of the fight from early on. Some would even argue that it was their armed uprising against Bashar that dragged this crisis to a more deadly level. Still, their position in the civil war needs a separate moral assessment from the actors above for a couple of reasons.

First, we should start by asking, "do these opposition groups represent the Syrian public that chose to stand against Bashar?" Politically speaking, "to represent" might be a bit of an ambitious choice of words. Still, one should acknowledge these groups' assumed duty of protecting and governing the Syrian people who chose to remain (or stuck) on their side. To a certain extent, the armed opposition groups and the civilians against Bashar currently share a fate in Syria. Therefore, the MBM considers these people together as "those who stand against an unjust regime in Syria," that is, the oppressed Syrian people.

Second, this conclusion has implications. If these people represent a public movement against an oppressor, we should respect their choice to change the regime in their own country (i.e., by starting a civil war). It is this very fact that requires us to evaluate their moral position vis-à-vis the refugees separately. It is *their* people who have been turned into refugees in part by *their* actions. This dimension speaks to another parameter in the MBM's domestic analogy: the scenario where the needy person is responsible for bringing the catastrophe upon herself (presented by "gambling" in Chapter 2). Should that reduce the helper's duty toward her? By applying this parameter to the Syrian case, can we claim that the Syrian people bear some

responsibility in bringing this war upon themselves? For instance, was it wrong for them to arm themselves? If they did something wrong, should other communities' moral duties toward them decrease? These are indeed crucial ethical questions; however, they require different types of research and analyses. As discussed in Chapter 2, they are beyond the scope of this study. The concluding chapter of this dissertation will discuss the ethical importance of asking these questions as a different research area. The current analysis leaves aside the possible "self-responsibility" of the Syrian people in this crisis and its moral implications.

### **Conclusion: After the Meaning-Based Model**

How does the Syrian crisis look after the MBM has been applied? The chart below offers a summary of this chapter's conclusions about different communities' moral duties toward Syrian refugees.

Let us recall the MBM's main arguments. In protracted refugee situations, we deal with refugees who have lost hope of returning to their homes – that is, they must be resettled somewhere else. Who will help? According to our current moral theories, when the oppressor cannot be stopped, these refugees (by definition) fall under the international community's responsibility. In our world, in practice, this conclusion usually amounts to saying that they are no one's responsibility. The MBM claims that if we study refugee cases one by one, we will see the moral plausibility of assigning more duties to some members of the international community than others in each case. Once a refugee has been created in a protracted refugee situation, not every political community should owe her the same thing. How do we calculate these duties for a given society? The MBM focuses on two parameters: the community's level of involvement in the crisis and the strength of its social connections with the refugees produced by that crisis.

Table 5. Moral Duties toward Syrian Refugees

| <b>RR Rank</b> | <b>Actor</b>                                       | <b>OR Level</b> | <b>Social Connections</b>                   | <b>Remedial Responsibility (RR) &amp; Moral Obligations</b>   |
|----------------|--|-----------------|---|---|
| 1              | Syrian Regime & ISIS & Russia & Iran & PYD         | Direct cause    | Enemy of the Displaced                      | Compensating for the losses and financing the resettlement of Syrian refugees   |
| 2              | Turkey   | High            | Strong (Sunni Arabs, Kurds, Turcomans)      | Granting citizenship rights (and resources for those in need) to a substantial number of Syrian refugees & Refugee camps & Safe passage |
| 3              | US   | High            | Strong (immigration country)                | Granting citizenship rights (and resources for those in need) to a substantial number of Syrian refugees                                |
| 4              | Lebanon  | Medium          | Strong (Sunni and Shiite Arabs, Christians) | Granting citizenship rights to a medium number of Syrian refugees & Refugee camps & Safe passage  |
| 5              | Qatar & Saudi Arabia                               | Medium          | Strong (Sunni Arabs)                        | Granting citizenship rights to a medium number of Syrian refugees each & Refugee camps & Safe passage                                   |
| 6              | Iraq & Jordan                                      | Low             | Strong (Sunni Arabs)                        | Accommodating a small number of Syrian refugees each by granting them social rights   |
| 7              | Israel   | Low             | Weak  | Minimal financial contribution to resettlement efforts & Refugee camps & Safe passage   |
| 8              | Other Arab & Sunni & European & Immigration States | None            | Strong                                      | Modest discretionary admission or financial support   |

One of the MBM's essential guidelines is the following: involvement brings moral responsibility. The equation is simple enough: if a state intervenes in a crisis that produces refugees, it creates additional moral duties for its community toward those refugees. The actor's

intention does not rescue it from assuming these additional duties. The MBM has based this conclusion on its “absolute deprivation” argument. In cases of absolute deprivation, the intervener must take responsibility for the needy even if the intention was purely good (i.e., regardless of the intention). That is to say, states should assume more responsibility even if they intervene in civil wars with purely good intentions. However, the reality is that states always intervene with some less-than-good intention: with the hope of extracting benefits from the turmoil, for instance. Such less-than-good intentions must create even more duties for the intervener.

What is the bottom line of this argument? The MBM simply concludes: do not intervene in such crises if you can avoid them. Only intervene if you will fix the problem or at least reduce the suffering. Once you intervene, make sure you do what it takes to reach this target. If you interfere but worsen things, be ready to shoulder your extra responsibilities for taking care of those your actions harmed. This conclusion should not be read as a moral encouragement for states to intervene in civil crises boldly. It is the very opposite: many states would find it implausible to think they can solve the trouble altogether or reduce human suffering for the long term. Therefore, the MBM says: “You will not (or cannot) go all in, and you will leave your intervention incomplete. You will thus cause more harm – so do not get involved in the first place.” Intervention has consequences, and communities have no moral right to evade them.

There are gross human rights violations in State X. Should we still not intervene? We should encourage ourselves to answer this question negatively. No, we should not interfere (unless, maybe, there is an international consensus – but that also requires a separate moral discussion). The usefulness of foreign intervention in reducing human suffering in civil crises is highly doubtful. The MBM registers a strong note of caution against any humanitarian

intervention. Examining the Syrian case has shown us yet again that all interventions have been undertaken with intentions that were even directly bad or less than good (benefit- or interest-oriented). Interventions almost never produce positive results. They prolong the crises and increase the suffering. Why assume this will change? Instead, let us draw the ethical conclusion that, given that a situation is worsened and prolonged, interventions must create extra moral duties for the intervener. Let us develop formulas that show communities morally how much additional responsibility a single intervention puts on their shoulders. Let us show them that interveners must owe to refugees more than other members of the international community. Let us strive to discuss this approach publicly and fight against the unjust cases of public resentment against refugees.

Overall, the picture in Syria looks as follows. Russia, Iran, the Syrian regime, ISIS, Hezbollah, and PYD are the rogue actors in Syria. They directly created refugees, and they are unlikely to accept any duties toward them. The current international structure has failed to stop this injustice. Now, there are 6 million Syrians who need a new home. By definition, they are the responsibility of the international community. Some might ask: “the rogue get away with their crimes, and we pay for it – how is this fair? Does this mean that if we get rogue enough, we can also escape from moral duties?” Materially, you can. Morally, you cannot. Whether to join the rogue club (to avoid the duties, in other words) is your moral choice. And yes, it is not fair. But the fact that some of us have to do more because others do not must be a different question than how we should now distribute these 6 million refugees who cannot turn back and who only we can take in. If they must be admitted, we must work on an allocation formula among those that can accept them. And this formula must rely on a normative basis. Let us try to be practical in our moral expectations in what is a nonideal situation.

The MBM has claimed that some members of the international community should morally have more duties toward Syrian refugees than others. The Turkish community ought not reject a policy that offers giving citizenship to a substantial number of Syrians. This number should be lower for Lebanon and Jordan. Only after fulfilling these obligations should these communities have the moral right to claim that they are overburdened in this case. However, given that these communities have already accepted more refugees than they should have, one cannot practically expect them to offer what is ideal to their refugees until their numbers are reduced to morally acceptable levels. How to reduce them to these levels? The answer involves the actors that have evaded their moral duties toward Syrians: the United States, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. These communities must know that, ethically, the price of their intervention in the Syrian crisis is the accommodation of large numbers of refugees. They certainly have not done enough for Syrian refugees. Had this scheme been accepted by these communities, a relatively small portion of Syrian refugees (instead of 6 million) would have been the international community's responsibility.

As a final note, the German and Jordanian communities are the heroes of the Syrian case. Despite its non-involvement in the crisis, Germany opened its doors to almost 700,000 Syrian refugees. In this respect, this nation is far ahead of all affluent countries that have the capability of offering such help. Still, even though we must applaud the German community, we cannot condemn all other communities for not doing as much as Germany did. The German example represents a rare case where a community does more than what is morally necessary. Similarly, the Jordanian community also deserves some credit for accepting many Syrians, although it had only minimal and indirect involvement in the Syrian case.

## CONCLUSION

### **The Meaning-Based Model and its Implications**

The central question of this dissertation took its final shape during my field research in Turkey in the summer of 2019. I was surprised to witness how the Turkish public's positive sentiment toward the Syrian refugees in the early years of the Syrian crisis had turned on its head. It had become fashionable among the Turkish citizens I spoke with to complain about the Syrian refugees in their midst. They were quick to criticize the Syrians regarding almost everything they do and connect Turkey's hardships mainly to the immense number of refugees it hosted. After attending an official meeting held by Suleyman Soylu (Turkey's Minister of Interior) with migration scholars in Istanbul, my surprise intensified. What most struck me was how he presented the Turkish state's approach to Syrian refugees as one of charity and generosity. According to this account, Turkey was a victim. Due to its geographical proximity to the center of the crisis, it was swamped by refugees. Still, the Turks had not turned their back to their brethren because this was the right thing to do. But after many years, the burden of generosity had become excessive. It was time to impose some limitations on Turkey's burden. Official discourse largely reflected public opinion.

This presentation challenged my perception of the issue because it never mentioned Turkey's actions in Syria that exacerbated the crisis and contributed to creating refugees. Was not there any responsibility to be recorded on Turkey's side? If there was, then how could Turkey's position vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees be morally assessed as one of pure generosity?



Should there not be a duty, a moral obligation to help the Syrians, that the Turkish public must acknowledge? If this moral acknowledgment is not present in the community's understanding, should we be surprised to witness the enormous public resentment against Syrians?

Before conducting this field research, I had been working on an ethics-based burden-sharing model that aimed to help *states* understand and identify their moral duties toward *global* refugees. The questions mentioned above led me to modify my initial research question in two crucial respects. First, I focused on the need for prioritizing the *protracted* refugee crises, which are a product of a great deal of foreign involvement. One could argue that foreign involvement was one of the main reasons for such crises' prolongation. In this respect, the conventional wisdom of helping refugees (i.e., that refugees are by definition the international community's responsibility) seemed to lack a crucial component for moral assessment. How could we assign every international actor the same moral duties if some have more to do with worsening a given crisis? Consequently, I needed a model that showed:

- (i) *why* some actors must have more moral obligations than others toward some refugees;
- (ii) *which* actors those are that must shoulder extra duties in a given case;
- (iii) *what* those duties must be for every actor in every case.

The second modification to my initial research question concerned the target audience. Whom should this model address? With the shift of my focus to public resentment toward refugees, I realized that an essential component of resentment is the communities' improper moral positioning of themselves vis-à-vis specific refugee groups. Without a model that helps communities make such ethical assessments, they would have no clue about their particular duties in a given case. Do they have the moral right to complain about their burden? Have they done enough or failed to shoulder what they are morally required to do? Therefore, the target

must be *communities* instead of states. The following section of this chapter provides more discussion on this point.

With such concerns in mind, this dissertation has developed the “meaning-based model.” This model is based on a domestic analogy, as discussed in Chapter 2, that indicates that at least three parameters change the helper’s sense of responsibility toward the needy:

- (i) whether the needy person has any responsibility for bringing the disaster upon herself;
- (ii) whether the helper and the needy have any special ties;
- (iii) whether the helper has any involvement in the needy’s experienced disaster.

Chapter 2 argued that these parameters determine what the needy person “means” to the helper. If she means more, the helper’s duties increase. If there are multiple helpers and many needy, this model makes it possible to examine who means more to whom – accordingly, who should do more for whom than others. The next step was to apply this analogy to refugee situations. But this required caution.

First, it was necessary to establish why any involvement in refugee crises must bring extra moral duties to the intervening actor regardless of its intentions. The “absolute deprivation” argument in Chapter 2 has explained this conclusion by another domestic analogy. My involvement in even a *genuine* accident must bring me the extra duty to replace the *penniless* person’s ruined loaf of bread *above everyone else* walking on that street because she is deprived of resources to buy a new one. If my intentions behind my involvement were less than good (e.g., winning the best citizen prize money), this accident should give me even more responsibility. If my intentions were bad (e.g., intentionally aiming at ruining the loaf of bread), I must be punished. Refugees are in a similar situation. They lack the resources required to provide them with political membership. Any involvement in their crises must hence add to the

responsibility of the intervener regardless of its intentions. Second, applying the first parameter (self-responsibility) to refugee cases required extra caution as it seemed like blaming the victim. Since this parameter necessitated a different type of research, the current version of the MBM has downplayed the issue. The last section of this chapter offers more discussion on this point.

This study has produced a model that identified which communities must have extra moral duties toward a given refugee group based on two parameters: a community's level of involvement in a refugee crisis and its social connections with the refugees created in that crisis. As these parameters vary in every case and for every community, all protracted refugee crises must be examined separately. Moreover, since the levels of involvement and types of social connections differ across cases and communities, a separate examination of each case and each refugee group becomes central in identifying the moral obligations toward particular refugees. This fact speaks to another task that this project aimed to accomplish: applying its theoretical conclusions to real-life events. For this purpose, it applied the MBM to the Bosnian, Palestinian, and Syrian refugee cases. Each case discussed why some communities should do more for refugees, which communities these should be, and the extent of their duties.

The conventional understanding views the following method as the most effective way of resolving the refugee problems: eliminating the source of the crisis as quickly as possible and returning the refugees to their homeland. In this respect, it was important to study the Bosnian war, although it was over a long time ago, because it revealed that repatriation might not be a widely preferred path for most refugees even after the source of their problems is eliminated. The war in Bosnia ended within a relatively short period, but only one-third of the refugees returned to their homes. And the majority of those returnees did so because they were not granted long-term residency where they sought refuge during the war. That is to say, even if the crises that are

currently producing refugees would be over, many refugees might not be willing to return to their war-torn homes. Should those who do not wish or are afraid to return to their pre-war homes be forced to repatriate, or should we have a model to identify which communities must do more for them? Chapter 3 aimed to answer this question for Bosnia from the MBM's perspective. It discussed why the Serbian, Croatian, British, French, American, and Russian communities must ethically have more duties toward Bosnian refugees. It examined what these duties should be for each community toward each refugee group, i.e., Bosnian Croats, Serbs, and Muslims. It also argued why the UN and EU must accept more burden for Bosnians compared to some other cases where they have been involved.

Chapters 4 and 5 focused on the Palestinian and Syrian cases as the most significant two crises that have produced around 13 million refugees of the world's 20 million internationally displaced people. In this respect, an essential task of this dissertation was to identify which communities must have more duties toward the refugees created by these two protracted crises. In Chapter 4, the MBM claimed that it was wrong to confine the responsibility for Palestinian refugees only to Israel. It argued that where Israel refuses its duty, and the Palestinians remain the international community's responsibility, not every community has the same duties toward refugees. The MBM concluded that the Jordanian, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, Iraqi, American, British, and Russian communities should accept more responsibilities in this case and discussed which of these have fulfilled their moral duties and which have more to do. Similarly, in Chapter 5, the MBM argued that the Turkish, Russian, Iranian, Saudi Arabian, Qatari, Lebanese, and American communities must have more obligations toward Syrian refugees than other members of the international community. It also examined their specific duties separately.

One conclusion of the MBM has been that states should not intervene in civil crises unless they have international approval or are committed to decreasing civilians' suffering – or be ready to accept more duties toward refugees if they do otherwise. States do not intervene with pure ethical concerns or because they have no other choice. There usually is an intention behind the intervention that is less than good (interest-oriented) or even unethical. According to the MBM, even if their intentions were purely ethical or good, the interveners must still accept more duties toward refugees if the involvement worsens their situation in any respect. However, since morality is not the main motive for acting for many states in such crises, they should accept even more responsibility for the refugees that their involvements produce. One crucial task of the MBM has been to show why communities cannot morally evade and complain about such increased duties resulting from their states' involvement in refugee crises. It also showed a way to understand how the limits of their particular obligations could be determined in such cases, depending on their levels of involvement and strength of social connections with specific refugee groups.

In a nutshell, the MBM is an ethics-based burden-sharing model that identifies which communities should do more in which cases and for which refugees and the extent of their extra duties. That said, an inevitable question regarding the MBM will be: "Let's assume that this model is ethically correct and also plausible. What do we do now?" As with any other theoretical model, the immediate concern will be its implementation. The next part aims to address this question briefly. It will be followed by discussing the importance of considering the "self-responsibility" argument as a further research area that the MBM reveals.

### The “Practicality” Question and Target Audience

As mentioned above, the MBM aims to identify and distribute communities’ moral duties toward refugees in protracted refugee situations. The emphasis in this section will be on the following two words: “communities” and “moral.” In other words, this model’s target audience is not states but communities. In this respect, the MBM does not create policy recommendations for *states*. It does not seem plausible to expect many states that directly or indirectly contribute to the creation of refugees (for the sake of their global or regional power politics) to accept the high burdens that the MBM assigns to them. It would be naive to expect state officials to embrace the MBM and look for ways to implement it. However, communities are different from states. The host communities whose members face the refugees *per se* in their everyday lives are those who make their arrival easy or hard. The MBM thus aims to address communities. We resist when large numbers of foreigners flood into our lands, economies, and cultures, but in which cases, to what extent, against whom, and more importantly, when do we have the right to complain? The MBM develops a morality-based formula for communities to answer all these questions. It aims to encourage discussion in each community that faces similar problems. It seeks to promote communal conversation around a concrete, ethical model to understand our duties in the face of a given crisis. From this perspective, the main actors here should be academics, scholars, community leaders, activists, etc. Communities must discuss their moral duties toward particular groups of refugees based on ethics-based formulas.

In our world, such discussions either do not occur or, if they do, only in small circles and only around universal values such as human rights. Calculating moral duties according to a specific model might change communities’ perceptions. The pressure of ethics might not alter state actions. Still, it can save communities from heading toward excessive resentment and

hostility against refugees (which might in turn change state action). Public resentment and hatred mostly appear when accommodating refugees creates socio-economic hardships for the hosts. Yet, they are also the outcomes of falsely defined duties toward refugees. People only think about the burdens that refugees bring and not about how it might be their responsibility to shoulder them in a given case. The MBM offers to strike a balance here. First, it instructs the communities to situate themselves vis-a-vis a particular refugee group correctly. Then, it draws a line to determine these communities' deserved shares of burden. So long as these two points are not appropriately considered, public resentment will derive only from the hardships of taking care of refugees – a grievance that lacks an ethical basis.

An example might help here. Shortly after the civil war broke out in Syria, millions escaped to other countries. The MBM guides three tasks here. First, it argues that Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, and the United States should accept more Syrian refugees. Russia and Iran should provide substantial financial contributions to their resettlement efforts. The MBM presents this approach as these communities' moral duties toward Syrian refugees. In other words, the MBM invites all these communities to understand why they have these greater burdens compared to other communities of the world. Their states directly contributed to refugee production, and their communities should face the consequences either by resettling refugees or by dearly paying for this process. They have no right to complain about having more burdens than other communities in this respect.

Second, the MBM offers a way for communities to understand whether they have been overburdened in a given case. When and under which circumstances should the Turkish community rightly claim to be overburdened with the Syrian refugees? This question cannot be only about the number of refugees that come in. The MBM shows that, insofar as the Turkish

community is concerned, accommodating 300,000 Rwandan refugees might be above the line, whereas 1.5 million Syrian refugees could still be below. In the Syrian case, 3.5 million refugees could still be below the line if Turkey were the only actor involved in the crisis. However, other actors' involvements in Syria make this number above the line for Turkey. In other words, the number of different actors involved in a crisis, their various involvement levels, and their social connections with the displaced people should determine a community's *morally* being under- or overburdened in that crisis. In the Syrian case, given that Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the US (all actors with high OR and strong SC) did much less than they morally should, the Turkish and Lebanese communities have the right to claim that they are accommodating more refugees than they morally should have been. The MBM calls for a community-level, ethics-based interaction and discussion here, which might create a different result from state-level, interest-based bargaining about sharing the costs of taking care of refugees (which hardly gives positive outcomes).

Third, and maybe most importantly, the MBM invites communities to situate themselves in the ethically correct position vis-à-vis the incoming refugees. The MBM has called this positioning "to understand what they mean to us." Different refugee groups in different cases mean different things to different host communities. The MBM calls on every community to ponder their position in every crisis, as this ethical consideration will determine the type of help they should provide for the refugees. Early in the Syrian crisis, the Turkish state followed an open-borders policy, and the community embraced the "guest" concept to define the Syrian refugees. This conception implied the perception that the crisis would be over soon.<sup>1</sup> However,

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<sup>1</sup> The then PM Erdogan even used the "*ensar-muhacir*" analogy to define the Turkish community's position in the face of Syrian refugees. This analogy refers to a massive migration case in Islamic history, where the Madinah community welcomed refugees from Makkah. Ironically, if Erdogan's usage of this analogy were in the real sense of



the community's feelings toward refugees changed as their stay became longer – from guests to problems. If they were guests, why have they not gone after so many years?

At this point, the MBM calls on the Turkish community to reconsider the Syrian refugees' position inside Turkey. *With Turkey's high OR and their strong SC with Syrians,* should not the “guest” perception have turned into “fellow citizens” perception once it became clear that they could not return to their country? Without an ethical formula, the “guest” perception continued despite the changing circumstances. If the “guest” perception continues, it is not possible to call the community to question its moral position vis-à-vis the refugees. If this positioning remains the same while circumstances change, public resentment, hatred, and anger against refugees become inevitable. The MBM provides a guide to understand when and to what extent such sentiments are morally acceptable for a given community.

To summarize the discussion in this part, it does not serve the MBM's purpose to ask, “How do we realize this distribution you are offering?” The MBM aims to invite communities to reconsider their moral duties toward refugees around an ethical guideline. If communities' perceptions change, many things might change. The communities that raise funds among themselves and resettle refugees in Europe independently of their governments' policies are examples of how this change is possible.

### **The “Self-Responsibility” Argument and Further Research**

Recall again from Chapter 2 the domestic analogy that established the basis of the MBM. In this analogy, three parameters determined and changed what the poor person (needy) meant

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the term, then this would mean that he was ready to accept Syrian refugees for permanent resettlement. In Islamic history, Madinah accepted Makki refugees permanently. However, Erdogan ostensibly used this term in line with his “guest” understanding: Syrians were to stay shortly and go, and Turkey was there to help them in this period.

for the rich person (helper): whether the needy had any role in creating her misery; whether the two had any special connections; whether the helper had any contribution to the poor's plight. As mentioned above, the MBM's current version left aside the first parameter (captured by the difference between the needy's gambling vs. falling victim to robbery) and focused on the last two. The reason for this choice was that the first category required a separate ethical discussion because it could quickly pave the way for the fallacy of "blaming the victim." It sounds unfair to ask refugees whether they have brought their catastrophe upon themselves. On the other hand, an equally important question is whether other communities should pay the price if refugees have wronged themselves (and continue doing so). The case studies in this research have shown that looking for "agency" in refugee groups should be morally plausible (and necessary). The MBM has dubbed this inquiry the "self-responsibility" argument: can we argue that in some cases, refugees might have contributed to their plight, and if they have, should that reduce other communities' moral duties toward them?

The plausibility of asking this question in refugee cases has revealed itself in the process of learning about the details of the crises. One could argue that in retrospective analyses, many mistakes might appear as clear as daylight to the analyst, who has the advantage of looking back from the future. However, not every mistake is of this kind. The analyst could respond that, even though the communities might clearly understand what the error was, they might still continue committing it. In this case, to what extent should the prolonged situation of refugees or the plight of to-be-created refugees be other communities' moral responsibility? Does the analyst not have the right to ask whether the refugees are "really" stuck or they are not moving for the sake of other concerns and calculations?

Examples might help us think about his question. Serbian aggression was the driving force of Bosnia's bloody 1992-1995 war. The subsequent murders, displacements, rapes, and tortures were committed by groups identified along ethnic lines. At the end of the war, it seemed apparent that the Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina were so intermixed that separation within the country was not feasible (although the ethnic cleansing had provided some homogeneity in some areas). Let us assume that solely external factors caused the Bosnian peoples' misery during the war. The fact that the country's politics are still divided along ethnic lines should force us to think further. With the Dayton Peace Accords, under the international community's supervision, Bosnia started a recuperation period. However, instead of working toward unity and solidarity, Bosnian peoples continue to keep old memories alive for the sake of group consciousness. Instead of facilitating cross-ethnic political systems and governments, they continue to support ethnically established parties' domination of the political sphere. They tell their children the stories of an "unfinished war." Politicians indeed use such discourses to influence and manipulate their communities for their own interests. Yet, there is now peace and opportunity: with lessons learned from the war, the Bosnian community is not a passive victim and has space to move and change its circumstances. The actions needed to benefit future generations will not come from the politicians until the community shows the determination to bring change. In this respect, they have continued making the same mistakes for decades. The question here is: kept alive and sharpened along these ethnic lines, what will happen if another war breaks out in Bosnia? What will happen if another wave of refugees starts to seek shelter in other countries? It looks ethically plausible to claim that the moral duties toward them should then not be as strong as they should have been during the 1992-1995 war.

The Palestinian case also contains examples for the plausibility of the “self-responsibility” argument. What do we make of the Palestinians’ selling their lands, on which the Jews established their Zionist movement’s backbone, to the Jewish buyers, although the newspapers loudly and consistently warned the local population about the Jewish cause and its dangers for Palestinians? Let us accept the counter-argument that this mistake only makes sense through a retrospective lens, and most sellers were the elite and not locals. What do we make of the elite rivalry (Husseinis vs. Nashashibis) in the face of Britain and Israel, and, most importantly, Palestinians’ disunity with their consistent support for these tribal leaders? Due to their tribal animosities, different Palestinian groups even collaborated with the Jews and the British for more domestic power in the future. Do we say that the community that allowed this disunity to rule themselves were completely passive victims? What do we make of the Palestinians’ collaboration with the British instead of successfully establishing a national council, as the Indians and Egyptians did? Do we attribute this failure entirely to the colonizer’s iron fist? How to assess the later actions of the Palestinian movements (e.g., the PLO) that divided the Palestinian community and suppressed dissidents for the sake of its power and authority? Palestinians could not have been passive by-standers receivers in all these cases throughout the last seven decades. Ideologically polarizing movements garnered more public support than those calling for unity. If Palestinians’ failure to establish unity contributes to their prolonged misery, does it not make ethically sense to claim that, in these circumstances, other communities’ moral duties toward them should slightly decrease? Self-responsibility seems to be a significant factor to consider here.

Similar problems have been plaguing the Syrian opposition. Some Syrian refugees I interviewed in Turkey argued that the opposition’s greatest mistake was escalating the peaceful

protests to armed conflict. Again, one could counter this argument by stating that Bashar left no option by his continuous murders and that it only appears to be a mistake in a retrospective analysis. Even if we accept that the opposition had no other choice, how do we explain their continued disunity in the face of the ever more brazen Bashar regime? When the opposition understood that the international community would not intervene, they immediately collapsed into countless tiny fractions throughout Syria, competing against each other for external funding and armaments. Many attempts to unify the opposition failed due to three reasons. First, some opposition figures were distant from the Syrian public; they had been in exile for many decades. Second, foreign actors differed in their support of opposition groups, which led to increased disunity. Third, some opposition figures refused to accept others as genuine representatives of the Syrian people. Not all these reasons are external to the Syrian opposition. The groups inside the opposition keep excluding their ideological rivals for fear that they will have to share power with them in future Syria, which exacerbates internal disarray and contributes to the prolongation of this catastrophic situation. In this respect, these mutual exclusions create an endless vicious cycle. After so many years of fighting, if they still continue the same practices, do we not have the right to ask whether the Syrians are doing enough for themselves or have any self-responsibility in prolonging their people's plight? Do other communities not have the right to reconsider their moral duties toward further incoming refugees? This appears to be a crucial question to consider in the ethics of forced displacement.

As mentioned above, the ethical formulation of this self-responsibility argument requires a separate and careful study. Based on some details the case studies have revealed, the discussion above only aimed to mention the moral plausibility of considering this question as a further research area. Still, one more question remains: how would the MBM respond if it turns out that,

in some cases, some refugees might have self-responsibility for their plight? In the domestic analogy, the helper's feeling of responsibility toward the needy weakened when she gambled compared to when she fell victim to a robbery. In this respect, the needy's self-responsibility level might decrease the helper's moral duties toward her. The MBM would speak to this possibility by reducing the extent of help a specific community is morally obliged to provide for a particular refugee group. From this perspective, the self-responsibility argument appears to be integrable to the MBM whenever the analyst can prove its necessity.

This chapter has underlined two important implications of the meaning-based model. The MBM addresses communities, not states, and aims to guide them in identifying their special moral duties toward particular refugee groups based on an ethics-based formula. It calls on communities to understand their ethically correct positioning vis-à-vis specific refugee groups and to what extent, against whom, and when they might have the right to resent in the face of refugees. Applying the MBM to real cases has also revealed the necessity of considering the self-responsibility issue when analyzing refugee cases. This topic seems to have the potential of being a crucial work area in the ethics of forced displacement.

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## **VITA**

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