

Franziska Böhm, Ingrid Jerve Ramsøy, Brigitte Suter

Norms and Values in Refugee Resettlement

A Literature Review of Resettlement to the EU

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FRANZISKA BÖHM, INGRID JERVE RAMSØY, BRIGITTE SUTER

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Abstract

As a result of the refugee reception crisis in 2015 the advocacy for increasing resettlement numbers in the overall refugee protection framework has gained momentum, as has research on resettlement to the EU. While the UNHCR purports resettlement as a durable solution for the international protection of refugees, resettlement programmes to the European Union are seen as a pillar of the external dimension of the EU's asylum and migration policies and management. This paper presents and discusses the literature regarding the value transmissions taking place within these programmes. It reviews literature on the European resettlement process – ranging from the selection of refugees to be resettled, the information and training they receive prior to travelling to their new country of residence, their reception upon arrival, their placement and dispersal in the receiving state, as well as programs of private and community sponsorship. The literature shows that even if resettlement can be considered an external dimension of European migration policy, this process does not end at the border. Rather, resettlement entails particular forms of reception, placement and dispersal as well as integration practices that refugees are confronted with once they arrive in their resettlement country. These practices should thus be understood in the context of the resettlement regime as a whole.

In this paper we map out where and how values (here understood as ideas about how something should be) and norms (expectations or rules that are socially enforced) are transmitted within this regime. 'Value transmission' is here understood in a broad sense, taking into account the values that are directly transmitted through information and education programmes, as well as those informing practices and actors' decisions. Identifying how norms and values figure in the resettlement regime aid us in further understanding decision making processes, policy making, and the on-the-ground work of practitioners that influence refugees' lives. An important finding in this literature review is that vulnerability is a central notion in international refugee protection, and even more so in resettlement. Ideas and practices regarding vulnerability are, throughout the resettlement regime, in continuous tension with those of security, integration, and of refugees' own agency. The literature review and our discussion serve as a point of departure for developing further investigations into the external dimension of value transmission, which in turn can add insights into the role of norms and values in the making and un-making of (external) boundaries/borders.

The material for this paper has been collected and reviewed as part of the Horizon 2020 project NOVAMIGRA - Norms and Values in the European Migration and Refugee Crisis¹. The initial version of this paper (Deliverable 3.4, a confidential document for internal use within the project only) was the first of a two-part deliverable on the external dimension of European norms and values. The initial version contained contributions from our project partners at the Centre for Migration Studies (CeBaM), Adam

¹ Information about the project and further publications available here: <https://novamigra.eu/>

Mickiewicz University in Poland, Elżbieta M. Goździak, Izabella Main, Izabela Kujawa in the form of fieldwork material. This fieldwork material, together with our own from various countries, will be part of our analysis in the second part of this deliverable – a forthcoming (2021) report on best practices of value transmission in resettlement (Deliverable 3.5).

Key Words

Norms and values, Resettlement, European Union, vulnerability, regime, migration, policy, refugee protection, borders, boundaries, integration

Biographical Notes

Franziska Böhm has worked as Research Assistant in the NOVAMIGRA project between 2019 and 2021 and is based at the Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare at Malmö University. She holds a Master of political science and global studies from Lund University. Her research focuses on questions of values and norms in integration, migration, and gender equality, as well as the analysis of international policy regimes and ethnographic fieldwork.

Ingrid Jerve Ramsøy, PhD in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER), is a researcher at Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare (MIM) at Malmö University. Her PhD thesis (2019) investigated the exchange of values and care in the global care work market between Bolivia and Spain from an ethnographic perspective. She has worked in the NOVAMIGRA project between 2019 and 2021, investigating the role of norms and values in the Swedish resettlement system and integration field, and is co-founder of the IMISCOE supported network ‘Norms and Values in Migration and Integration’ (Novami).

Brigitte Suter is Associate Professor in International Migration and Ethnic Relations at the Department of Global Political Studies at Malmö University. Her latest research projects include the mobility of highly skilled migrants in the global economy and the role of norms and rights in the field of migration and integration. She has worked in the NOVAMIGRA project between 2018 and 2021 and is co-founder of the IMISCOE supported network ‘Norms and Values in Migration and Integration’ (Novami).

Contact

franziskamboehm@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

With the growing number of people displaced due to conflict and war across the world and increasing pressure on countries of first asylum (usually in the Global South), the attention on complementary humanitarian solutions for the protection of refugees is increasing. Resettlement is one of the three durable solutions that the United Nations Refugee Agency (henceforth the UNHCR) purports for the international protection of refugees. While the other two solutions – repatriation and local integration – are grounded in international law, resettlement is different as it is ‘no legal obligation’ (Hashimoto 2018). Research on resettlement has increased significantly over the past years, owing to the increased application of this protection measure at the EU level; and to the repeatedly proclaimed gap between resettlement needs and the places supplied by different states across the world. Moreover, while resettlement is arguably a practice of ‘durable humanitarian governance’ (Garnier et al. 2018), it also constitutes a policy instrument for managing migration in the form of an orderly movement of clearly identified categories of people and through the active cooperation between states and non-state actors (Geiger & Pecoud 2010; Hashimoto 2018).

The advocacy for increasing resettlement numbers in the overall refugee protection framework has gained momentum in the wake of the 2015 refugee reception crisis.² Increasingly, different national, supranational, and international, governmental, and non-governmental actors are demanding the establishment of and access to more legal pathways for refugees, such as humanitarian visas, resettlement, and family reunification, to provide protection to people fleeing conflicts and war. The call for increasing the resettlement option as an instrument for refugee protection has been echoed in the Global Compact on Refugees, as well as regionally in most European policy making on asylum and migration since the 2000s.

Compared to other immigration regions, such as North America, Australia, and New Zealand, the European Union is a latecomer to resettlement. Some countries, such as Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and the Netherlands have had a regular resettlement program for a significant amount of time, while other countries have just recently joined the ranks of resettlement countries (see Krasniqi and Suter 2015:8). In the recent decade, the numbers of refugees have been rising and, among these, protracted situations of extended exile have become more the norm than the exception. And yet, resettlement opportunities remain limited. Among the 79.5 million displaced people by the end of 2020, 26 million of them fall under UNHCR’s mandate. Of them almost 64,000 persons were able to start their life anew in a third country through UNHCR’s resettlement

² The terminology ‘refugee reception crisis’ is a conscious choice to emphasize the understanding that the ‘crisis’ is not a crisis brought about by refugees seeking protection but rather implies a crisis consisting of the difficulty that states faced to facilitate the reception and protection of a great influx of people at the same time due to various gaps of infrastructure and political foresight (see further e.g. Rea et al. 2019)

programs in 2019 (UNHCR 2020a).³ For 2021, the number of people in need of resettlement places increased to 1,445,383 in comparison to 1,440,408 individuals in 2020 (UNHCR 2020b). For context, only 4.5 percent of global resettlement needs were met in 2019 (ibid.), meaning that priorities must continuously be made within the resettlement system, both when it comes to selection and to allocation of resources. Durable protection through resettlement is thus only afforded to a fraction of all forcibly displaced people.

While resettlement is called for more than ever before as a durable solution to protracted refugee situations, it is important not to overlook that it is a form of humanitarian governance in which inequalities are deeply enshrined. While resettlement is ‘driven by a humanitarian ethos of helping the most vulnerable’ it is also a process that involves practices of ‘ruling the lives of the most vulnerable without providing them with a means of recourse to hold the humanitarians accountable for their actions’ (Garnier et al. 2018:2). Haddad points out that the ‘refugee as a figure’ exposes the intrinsic tension between the ‘state prerogative to exclude and the human rights imperative to include’ (2003:1). The resettlement system is a case in point. For refugees, every step on the path towards resettlement implies someone making decisions on your behalf, while for the other actors it means negotiating such decisions through complex relations of power.

As this paper will show, this ethos and these practices are detectable in several ways throughout the different steps of the resettlement process. International organizations, such as the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), together with the EU and, above all, receiving states are the ones to define who, how many, and under which circumstances selected refugees are resettled, while refugees themselves have little power over their place within this process (de Boer & Zieck 2020). The decision-making process and facilitation of resettlement as such are imbued with norms and values, which are often reflected in state level discourses on immigration and integration. Resettlement as an international protection tool cannot be seen independently of these state discourses since the practices of selection, reception, placement, and integration are inherently national and policies are heavily influenced by norms and values.

Norms and values often overlap and intertwine, but we can understand values as ideas about how something should be, while norms constitute expectations or rules that are enforced socially. Values serve many purposes in the EU and besides originating from common core principles, the understanding of those principles are subject to context and result in a multitude of interpretations within the various member states (NOVAMIGRA

³ The number for 2020 fell to almost 18,000 people, mostly because of the global pandemic.

Deliverables 1.3⁴ and 2.1⁵). Previous research on the actors of value transmission identifies the role of value agents. Value agents can be identified on local, national, and global levels of governance in states, as well as in civil society. For example, research on integration work shows that how values are interpreted and practiced in everyday encounters is subject to context and the social position of actors.

Values are regarded here as general guideposts for actions and judgements, particularly in situations of conflict and decision making (Rokeach 1973). They are ‘culturally approved, internalized wishes that motivate our actions’ (Jaspers 2016). As such, they constitute incentives for action. Moreover, individuals do not necessarily act according to their own values – this is dependent on how their actions might be sanctioned if they do so. Contrarily, norms are conceived of as ‘rules or expectations that are socially enforced’ (Horne 2018). Considering that values and norms impact all aspects of social interaction, they arguably also influence processes of resettlement. Looking at the European resettlement regime from a norms and value perspective thus entails identifying when and how norms and values are made to matter in the resettlement process. Here we therefore aim to present, first, what the different stages of the European resettlement program are and who are the actors involved; second, how values are a part of the processes taking place within these stages; and third, which are the values that are made to matter in this program.

The aim of this paper is thus to provide a literature review of studies regarding *value transmissions* taking place within what has been seen as a pillar of the *external dimension* of EU’s asylum and migration policies and management, namely the European resettlement program.⁶ ‘Value transmission’ is understood in a broad sense, and as such not only focusing on the values that are directly transmitted through informative and education programmes but also considering the values that inform practices and actors’ decisions. Research on gender equality and integration practices provided the groundwork for the relevance of including a multitude of ideas, practices, and actors in order to fully comprehend value transmission processes.⁷ The ‘external dimension’ is often understood as referring to the parts of asylum and migration policies and management that regard and take place beyond the EU’s geographical territory.

⁴ Facchi, A., Parolari, P., & Riva, N. (2019). Values in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights – A Legal-Philosophical Analysis with a Focus on Migrants’ Rights, Torino: G. Giappichelli Editore., available at: https://novamigra.eu/index.php?s=file_download&id=54.

⁵ Dimitriadi, A., Malamidis, H. (2019): ‘Talking of Values: Understanding the Normative Discourse of EU Migration Policy’, NOVAMIGRA Deliverable D2.1, <https://doi.org/10.17185/dupublico/49360>.

⁶ This paper has been prepared as a deliverable (D3.4) for the NOVAMIGRA project, investigating the external dimension of European value transmission.

⁷ Suter, B., Jerve Ramsøy, I. & Böhm, F. (2020). Valuing Gender Equality: Ideas, Practices and Actors in Everyday Integration Work - Integration and the Value of Gender Equality in Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Sweden, NoVaMigra Deliverable D3.3c, Briefing Paper, <https://doi.org/10.17185/dupublico/72831>.

However, as we will show, the European resettlement program is a duly interconnected system in which processes of internalization and externalization work in parallel through the practices of different actors. In other words, we understand the external dimension of value transmissions in sociocultural terms to be about how boundaries are produced and reproduced within the resettlement program, and these interconnected processes take place in the different encounters that happen as part of the same program, be that beyond the EU's borders, or after resettled refugees have arrived in Europe.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we will introduce the international and the European framework in which resettlement is embedded and organised. We then proceed to present the various stages of the process of refugee resettlement together with the analytical and empirical insights of some of the available literature in the field⁸. We conclude with a discussion that, on the one hand, points out the existing challenges in the field of resettlement and, on the other hand, discusses gaps in the literature regarding the role of norms and values in the resettlement process. The literature review and our discussion serve as a point of departure to develop a research question on the external dimension of value transmission which may inspire further ethnographic research to add new insights into the role of norms and values in the making and un-making of (external) boundaries.

⁸ The literature review aims in no way to present an exhaustive overview of all academic scholarship on resettlement but rather maps out various perspectives of research that deal with the regime of resettlement to introduce an informed discussion and highlight gaps, such as studies on value transmission within resettlement.

BACKGROUND: LARGE ARRIVAL OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN 2015 AND THE RENEWED DEMAND FOR LEGAL PATHWAYS TO PROTECTION

As pointed out above, refugee resettlement is one of the three durable solutions of international refugee protection as spelled out by the UNHCR. It is also a form of humanitarian governance that involves a deep gap in equality and accountability between the actors of the international refugee regime on the one hand, and the people over whose lives they rule – the refugees – on the other. Like other forms of humanitarian intervention, resettlement – from selection in the camps to integration in municipalities in the resettlement countries – is a process of both *care and control* (Garnier et al. 2018). Importantly, this understanding of humanitarian intervention does not preclude agency from the refugees themselves. Rather, it recognizes the stark inequality between the refugees on the one hand and the ‘humanitarian’ actors on the other hand, and deliberately places its focus on the latter.

‘We argue that [resettlement] is an instrument of durable humanitarian governance because refugee resettlement is constituted by practitioners, and especially UNHCR, not as a rapid response to an acute crisis but as a durable solution implying a long-term concern for particularly vulnerable individuals, from their selection in refugee camps to their integration in resettling states.’⁹

Following this understanding of resettlement as a regime of both ‘care and control’ (ibid.), it is adamant to pay closer attention to the practices that shape the resettlement process (such as selection, pre-departure orientation, reception, placement, etc.). This is to understand how power relations play out and influence the resettlement regime, and, in turn, how this regime and its practices shape refugees’ lives. Norms and values are intrinsic to these practices in that they shape decision making processes on different levels in the resettlement process, and thus shape the power relations at hand.¹⁰ In the main part of this paper we therefore review the available literature regarding these practices. To prepare the reader adequately for this, in this background section, we will briefly present key developments regarding the call to increase resettlement places in EU countries, as well as the EU’s role in politics of resettlement, with particular attention to Sweden and Germany.

⁹ Garnier, Sandvik and Jubilut (2018:5).

¹⁰ This is in line with the critical approach spelled out by Garnier, Sandvik and Jubilut (2018).

The International Refugee Protection Regime: The UNHCR, the EU and member states

The international refugee protection regime consists of a number of powerful international governmental and non-governmental organisations. While not the only actor among international organizations, the UNHCR is by far the most important actor.¹¹ According to UNHCR resettlement fulfils three main functions. It is (1) a tool for international protection of individuals whose fundamental rights are at risk, (2) a durable solution for groups of refugees, and (3) a tangible expression of international solidarity and responsibility sharing of refugee protection (Piper et al. 2013).

Resettlement is also an integral part of the Global Compact on Refugees, henceforth GCR (United Nations 2018). The compact – which is not legally binding but an expression of political will – among others strives for easing pressures on host countries and expanding the access to third country solutions. The compact recognizes resettlement not only as a ‘tool for protection of and solutions for refugees’ but also as ‘a tangible mechanism for burden- and responsibility-sharing and a demonstration of solidarity, allowing States to help share each other’s burdens and reduce the impact of large refugee situations on host countries’ (United Nations 2018:36). The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (United Nations 2016) which forms an integral part of the Global Compact for Refugees spells out the need for more legal pathways in general and urges states to step up resettlement efforts specifically (art 78 – see box 1). Speeches and statements made by many of the participants at the first Global Refugee Forum (held in September 2019 in Geneva as an integral part of the action proposed by the GCR) reiterate the need to increase resettlement capacity and their country’s need to commit to resettlement efforts (both statements by Sweden and Germany express this commitment, see UNHCR 2019).¹²

‘We urge States that have not yet established resettlement programmes to consider doing so at the earliest opportunity. Those which have already done so are encouraged to consider increasing the size of their programmes. It is our aim to provide resettlement places and other legal pathways for admission on a scale that would enable the annual resettlement needs identified by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to be met.’¹³

¹¹ Also, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) or the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) are international organizations that form an active part of the international resettlement process. However, compared to the UNHCR their activities are far more limited, see also Sandvik & Lindskov Jacobsen (2016).

¹² The UNHCR initially tried to include an annual target of the resettlement of 10 percent of all refugees in need of international protection into the New York Declaration (Garnier et al. 2018).

¹³ Point 78 of New York Declaration 2016, Resolution (Res 71/1) adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016. This comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) (A/RES/71/1, Annex I) constitutes an integral part of the GCR.

While the UNHCR plays a key role in resettlement – its ‘power of persuasion and negotiation in the international sphere’ is adamant in both politics and practices – the ultimate power lies with the states (Garnier et al. 2018). Unregulated by international law, resettlement is fully dependent on states’ good-will as well as self-interest (Hashimoto 2018). The UNHCR conducts status determination procedures, advocates for resettlement as a form of refugee protection and encourages states to accept refugees, but the final decision for resettlement places lies with national governments. Further, the UNHCR is heavily dependent on states for funding its activities. Also, while states generally accept the UNHCR’s definition of a refugee and of ‘vulnerability’, they often apply their own selection criteria reflecting national interests, which vary across countries and time (Suhrke & Garnier 2018). This ‘diversity in national eligibility criteria limits the ability of UNHCR to manage the resettlement process according to commonly constructed criteria of fairness and need’ which ‘weakens the regime’s protection function’ (ibid. 247). Undeniably, the tremendous gap between the number of people identified by the UNHCR in need of protection and the limited number of actual resettlement places increases this power imbalance between the states and the UNHCR even more.

The EU and resettlement

For a long time, the USA has been the country to accept the largest number of resettled refugees.¹⁴ However, since the year 2000, the EU has started to recognize resettlement as a feasible and durable solution to refugee protection and began to actively encourage member states to admit refugees through resettlement and to increase the overall resettlement pledges made by its member states. There has been a notable development since then: while in the year 2000 five European countries had a regular resettlement program and pledged around 3000 cases annually, in 2014 – after the introduction of the non-binding Joint European Refugee resettlement program (JEURP) as a result of the EU’s Global Approach on Migration and Mobility (GAMM) – seven more countries introduced national programmes and, altogether, the EU resettled 7,500 individuals (see Krasniqi & Suter 2015). In the years 2017-18 more countries joined the European resettlement efforts (i.e. Bulgaria, Lithuania, Estonia, and Slovenia), and together the EU member states resettled at least 34,000 individuals in 2017-18 (see the SHARE Network 2019).

The resettlement procedures, as well as the rights and entitlements that resettlement constitutes, differ between the countries involved. Apart from the countries with a national resettlement program, some additional countries have resettled on an ad hoc basis (for example, in 2011, Poland resettled several refugees) (see Krasniqi & Suter

¹⁴ For a broader overview over the development of refugee resettlement see Krasniqi and Suter 2015. Also, the Trump administration has brought resettlement to the US to an all-time low: in 2019 only 30,000 refugees were resettled to the US (Refugee Processing Centre 2020).

2015). Both now and in the past, resettlement initiatives in the EU have either been organised on an ad-hoc basis, or as a compilation of national or multilateral programmes.

Key developments

Since 2000, the EU – with the Commission as the driving force – has continuously expressed its political aim to step up its resettlement efforts. Both the European Refugee Fund (ERF 2008-13) and its successor, the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF 2014-20), were used as instruments to increase the EU's overall resettlement places. The European Agenda on Migration, proposed on 13 May 2015 by the European Commission 'aims to put in place a comprehensive and sustainable policy, providing a humane and effective long-term response to the current challenges of irregular migration, developing legal migration pathways, better integrating refugees and other newcomers, and deepening migration partnerships with countries of origin and transit for mutual benefit' (European Commission 2020). It thus reiterates the call to increase resettlement numbers. One of the most recent developments is the Commission's plan for a more permanent and structured EU policy on resettlement, forming part of the reform of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). In connection to this plan, the Commission submitted a proposal for a Union Resettlement Framework on 13 July 2016 for the European Parliament and Council (European Commission 2016)¹⁵. However, with the overall stagnation of the CEAS reform based on disagreements among member states, the proposal has not (yet) made its way through the legislative process. The New Pact on Asylum and Migration (launched by the European Commission on 23 Sept 2020) proposes an additional increase in the number of resettlement places in the EU, to protect 'the most vulnerable refugees' (p. 22). The Pact also includes funding from the EU budget to support member states that aim to introduce community sponsorship for resettlement, in collaboration with civil society, with the long-term objective to attain benefits in integration.¹⁶

Thus, while it is the UNHCR who administers the selection of refugees to be resettled, and the respective member states that make the final decision, the EU, as another supra-national organization, plays an important role in several ways: it reinforces the UNHCR's definition of a refugee and influences the degree to which states

¹⁵ 'The proposal would complement current ad hoc multilateral and national resettlement programmes by providing common EU rules on the admission of third-country nationals, procedures of the resettlement process, types of status to be accorded by the Member States, decision-making procedures [...] and financial support for the Member States' resettlement efforts' (Björk, M. 2020. Legislative Train 12: *Towards a new policy on migration*, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-towards-a-new-policy-on-migration/file-jd-eu-resettlement-framework>, accessed 20 January 2021).

¹⁶ *New Pact on Migration and Asylum*, A fresh start on migration in Europe, https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en.

take aboard the recommendations and priorities spelled out in UNHCR's yearly Global Report. This influence is primarily exercised through the EU's funding and economic support of resettlement to member states through the AMIF (de Boer & Zieck 2020). This funding further strengthens the UNHCR's position since it is only granted to EU member states' resettlement operations that are organized by the UNHCR as opposed to other organizations (Perrin & McNamara 2013:18).

ANALYSIS: NORMS AND VALUES IN THE RESETTLEMENT PROCESS

The following main section consists of a literature review of the European resettlement process – from the selection of refugees to be resettled, the information and training they receive prior to travelling to their new country of residence, their reception upon arrival, their placement and dispersal in the receiving state, as well as programs of private and community sponsorship employed in some receiving countries in order to promote both higher numbers of resettlement and better integration. So, while the resettlement system has been roughly outlined above, below we delve deeper into specific moments that have been described and analysed in the literature in order to gain an understanding of where in the resettlement process values and norms might come to intersect and made to matter, particularly when it comes to different levels and spheres of decision making.

Selection procedure

Selecting the most vulnerable/the most deserving

Parts of the selection process of the European resettlement system have been briefly discussed in the Background chapter above. As we will discuss here, there are several moments in this process where values can and do intersect with how selection is carried out – both when it comes to UNHCR's role and those of the different states. Important to underscore is that this process has a common starting point in that UNHCR undertakes the selection of individuals to be resettled according to their expanded interpretation of the 1951 Refugee Convention's definition of what a refugee is.

Someone who is outside his/her country of origin and has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion and is unable or unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution.¹⁷

So, while the resettlement selection process has a common starting point, it is not anchored in neutral waters. Selection is centred on who is deemed vulnerable according to this expanded definition and it is needs – not number – driven. At the same time, the

¹⁷ Art 1 of 1951 Refugee Convention

selection process includes taking into account reception states' risk management when it comes to who they choose to accept.

To be deemed vulnerable with particular need for protection is thus arguably a label that increases one's opportunity for protection in the EU asylum and refugee system or of being selected for resettlement to a third country (Bjørkhaug 2017; Sandvik & Lindskov Jacobsen 2016). At the same time, the way such labels are placed upon individuals in the current asylum and resettlement practices, suggests that vulnerability is being produced as equitable to certain group identities, such as women, children, or disabled persons (Fineman 2008).

Projecting and defining resettlement needs

First, UNHCR's selection process commences, in fact, prior to the selection of individuals for resettlement. Muftee (2014:13) explains how UNHCR's yearly report on 'projected global resettlement needs', establishes which groups are currently in need of resettlement and where they are located. The report is based on data from UNHCR field offices and quantifies the number of individuals who are estimated to be needing resettlement in the coming year.

The estimates are carried out according to UNHCR's assessment of conflicts and other forms of protracted vulnerabilities across the globe. As such, selection of individuals arguably begins already in the choices the UNHCR makes regarding raising awareness about certain processes of vulnerabilisation in particular places. For instance, in their report on *Global Trends* from 2019 (UNHCR 2020c), the increasing displacement of Venezuelans, especially in neighbouring countries, is discussed; and in their report on *Projected Needs* (UNHCR 2020b) this situation is also highlighted as dire when it comes to the American continent. The organization's decision-making power on this matter is expressed, amongst others, through the report's listing of the yearly 'key priorities', outlining which resettlement needs and situations are the most dire and urgent, and this guides the further selection process of individual refugees.

Identifying individuals

The first step of the individual resettlement process is assessing whether resettlement would be the appropriate durable solution for that person and whether they are eligible according to the UNHCR's definition of the 1951 Refugee Convention and UNHCR's expanded interpretation of the latter (see above). Furthermore, each individual case is assessed according to seven distinct submission categories:

- legal and/or physical protection needs;
- survivors of torture and/or violence;
- medical needs;
- women and girls at risk;
- family reunification;

- children and adolescents at risk; and
- lack of foreseeable alternative durable solutions

Once they have assessed an individual refugee's case, it is UNHCR who chooses the receiving country. This country, on their part, can thereafter either accept or decline each particular case based on their national criteria. Refugees themselves can also accept or decline the offer of resettlement in a particular country based on their individual preferences. However, they cannot choose a different country in which to be resettled and their rejection of one resettlement offer can influence their chances of being offered another chance at resettlement at all (de Boer & Zieck 2020). Furthermore, recent analysis of the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook and European resettlement policies, shows that there is little possibility for refugees themselves to apply for resettlement on their own initiative, and they hold very few rights when it comes to influencing the steps made throughout the selection procedure.¹⁸ Moreover, appealing one's rejection for resettlement is not possible (ibid.). Refugees' lack of agency is thus intrinsic to the UNHCR's understanding of vulnerability, since the UNHCR '[allocates] resettlement spots according to an assessment of which refugees are least able to exercise agency in their states of refuge and which refugees are least likely to be able to exercise agency in the future' (2020:735). As such, on refugees who are chosen for resettlement there seemingly lies an intrinsic expectation of compliance.

Thus, the notion that 'resettlement selection allows little room for refugee agency' (Thomson 2018:217) is widely supported in the literature (see also: de Boer & Zieck 2020, Garnier, Jubilut & Sandvik 2018). The little agency left to the refugees lies in their attempts to influence UNHCR decision making; for example, in the manner in which they tell their stories, 'which details to omit, which to stress', by framing their stories according to the parameters set out by the international community (stressing persecution, vulnerability etc.), by 'lying or cheating, [...] paying bribes and committing fraud, and [...] soliciting higher powers' (Thomson 2018:217). As Thompson points out, these tactics should be seen as 'a symptom of the injustices of the system' (ibid.): accessing resettlement is how refugees can regain control over their own life.

National criteria through intrinsic political motivation and values

As mentioned in the background section, the EU plays an important role in reinforcing UNHCR's definition of a refugee. However, it is at the state level where selection of refugees is ultimately set into play. When it comes to national selection criteria, these vary extensively between countries. Muftee explains that decisions on who are welcomed to each country are made based on 'factors such as the state's own laws, and migration policy, as well as the state's political relations with other states' (2014:16). As with the

¹⁸ Exceptions are 'the right to object to a particular interpreter, and the right to stop the resettlement interview if the refugee feels [they are] not being understood or [they need] a break' (de Boer & Zieck 2020:62).

EU's economic support of member states' resettlement efforts, national criteria are to a large extent linked to UNHCR's definition of a refugee and of vulnerability (Perrin & McNamara 2013). When it comes to EU member states, some, such as the Czech Republic and Romania, choose to strictly follow the Geneva Convention's definition of a refugee. Other states, such as Denmark, Finland, and Sweden, follow UNHCR's broader definition, thus including persons who meet the conditions for subsidiary or humanitarian protection. UNHCR takes these requirements into account when selecting individuals to be sent to each country (ibid.).

These definitions can thus be considered the *sine qua non* of the selection process. However, beyond these basic conditions and restrictions, some states choose to implement their own particular criteria, which vary widely depending on political, economic, and legal factors in different contexts (Perrin & McNamara 2013:29). Several countries restrict their acceptance of resettled refugees to people hailing from specific geographical areas or that belong to selected categories (ibid.). Taking on particular groups is often tied to so-called strategic use of resettlement. This means that acceptance of particular groups, such as for instance Burmese refugees to the Czech Republic or Sudanese to the Netherlands, should be seen in the light of long-term political decision-making regarding internal affairs, and, especially, questions of foreign policy (Perrin & McNamara 2013:31).

Values are thus part and parcel of why both international organizations, such as UNHCR and the EU, and states choose to engage in resettlement. However, the reasons and aims for doing so is often not explicitly expressed by these actors themselves, and they also vary significantly by actor type, in that, for instance, states, regions, and municipalities of the same country might hold different motivations for their engagement and practices when it comes to resettlement (Beirens & Fratzke 2017:10). Such motivations can range from a sense of moral obligation; a desire to share 'responsibility' or the 'burden' – often named 'solidarity' within the EU; a response to one's own responsibility or involvement in a conflict (such as the US involvement in the Indochinese refugee crisis after the Vietnam war or German and Norwegian special resettlement and humanitarian admission programs for Afghani interpreters and other personnel who assisted their NATO-based missions in the country); or as way to encourage other countries to take on a similar 'burden' in order to, for instance, decrease asylum-based immigration (Beirens & Fratzke 2017:10-13, Hashimoto 2018).

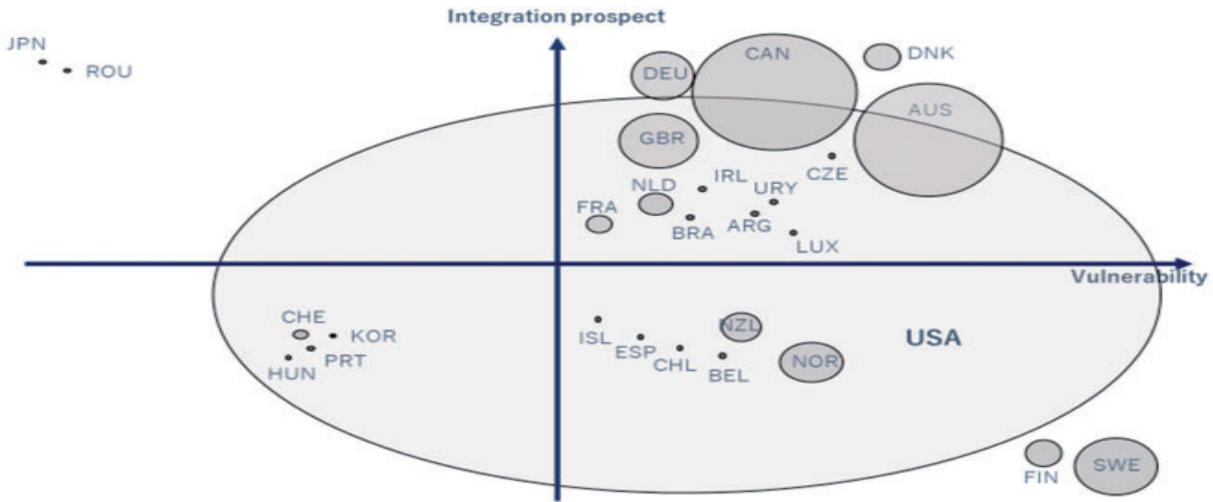
While these motivations are not necessarily expressed explicitly in each nation's selection criteria, the political environment and general policy framework when it comes to each country's approach to migration governance, must be considered in parallel to its resettlement selection criteria. Hashimoto (2018) provides a further example of these links between different policy strands hailing to migration politics, when posing the hypothesis that resettlement is increasingly being perceived as an alternative to asylum when it comes to migration management. Within the current political landscape, which in many EU member states is polarized through questions related to migration,

resettlement becomes a ‘controlled’ way for states to both appease a migration critical public and abide by the Geneva Convention.

Explicit criteria: Vulnerability, security, integration

The reasons for why states choose to engage in resettlement vary considerably, and are, to understand resettlement selection from a value perspective, important to explore. Lindsay (2017) argues that in practice, most states who engage in resettlement rely on some sort of criteria beyond those implemented by the UNHCR when deciding whether to accept refugees into their territories, meaning they engage in some sort of reasoning when deciding on who is allowed to settle in their country (ibid.). Hashimoto (2018) shows that such criteria can be understood along two axes – one (x) of vulnerability versus one (y) of ‘integration prospects’ (see Figure 1 below). While what the latter prospects entail varies over time and geographical context (Kohl 2015), Hashimoto stakes out that where these criteria apply, they are generally assessed based on ‘health conditions, vocational skills, educational backgrounds, language proficiency, cultural or religious backgrounds, and ties with receiving communities’ (2018:171). Figure 1 shows the degree to which different states apply either or both types of criteria by placing them along these axes, while the size of the circles indicate the total amount of refugees resettled in each country (in 2015). While countries in the lower right corner largely select on the basis of the vulnerability criteria with no particular integration considerations, countries in the upper left corner base their selection solely on integration prospects. The countries in the upper right box employ a mixed approach, taking into consideration both vulnerability and integration prospects, while the countries in the last box, on the lower left, have unclear criteria (Hashimoto 2018).

Figure 1. The extent to which vulnerability and integration prospects are taken into account in resettlement selection.



Source: Hashimoto (2018)

Furthermore, while not all states apply explicit ‘integration criteria’ (educational level, age, or profession, or knowledge of language), as seen in countries such as Denmark, Finland, and Germany (Lindsey 2017, Muftee 2014), decisions on who to welcome within states are not taken in a vacuum. These policies must be seen considering the larger national policy framework tied to migration and integration within each national context. One example of this are UNHCR’s recent efforts to promote initiatives of community sponsorship within the framework of resettlement (Feith Tan 2020). Such initiatives clearly show the intrinsic connection between resettlement and integration as a continuum along the same migratory process.

Implicit criteria: Values and discourses on gender, sexuality, and family

Values and norms play important roles in the selection process even when they are not framed through explicit criteria. Sommarribas, Petry, Marcus & Nienaber (2016) argue that prioritizing families is an important aspect of the integration criteria for resettlement to Luxembourg since families are considered easier to integrate than single persons. Welfens & Bonjour (2020) show how hegemonic norms on what family means have profound implications for who is selected for resettlement to particular countries in their case Germany. Although admitting families is considered the “natural” thing to do’ (ibid. 3) within European resettlement programs, this uncontested idea veils ideals of what families should look like and do that are tied to racialized, gendered, national, and cultural boundaries of who ‘we’ and ‘they’ are. The authors argue that ‘normative practices are at the heart of border and mobility governance’ (ibid. 16), by showing that who gets accepted into the German resettlement program and who does not is reflective of what German officials regard proper ways of ‘doing’ family and its connection with assimilability, as well as gendered and sexualized imaginaries of vulnerability. For instance, the absence of family is considered a sign of vulnerability for women refugees, but not for men. Thus, even if family norms are not officially a part of the German selection criteria, they are, through resettlement, full-fledged part of German bordering practices, including imaginaries of which refugees will be able to integrate or not.

Koçak (2020) also shows how norms tied to selection criteria and practices have profound effects on the everyday lives of potential resettled queer refugees in Turkey, in that people incorporate hegemonic narratives of ‘deservingness’ into their daily lives as part of their perceived continuous vulnerability assessment by the UNHCR. Refugees negotiate their own ‘deservingness’ vis-à-vis the UNHCR by juxtaposing their own stories to tropes of ‘fake cases’ – those who pretend to be LGBTQI in order to obtain resettlement placement, which also leads to ‘peer policing’ indirectly becoming a part of the assessment procedures. This generates a feedback loop between UNHCR vulnerability assessment and refugee practices and narratives, in which norms of deservingness, sexuality, and gender are reproduced.

Kohl (2015) shows how criteria used as part of Denmark’s resettlement scheme have not only changed over time, but that the same criteria have been interpreted in very

different ways. She analyses the 2005 reform of the Danish resettlement program that introduced integration criteria to, among other elements, increase the potential for labour market participation of admitted resettled refugees. This meant a re-interpretation of what ‘weakness’ meant, a term linking refugees to the UNHCR’s criteria of vulnerability. While prior to the reform it was *the* criterion used for refugee selection, which in practice meant a prioritizing of those deemed the most weak or vulnerable, such as pregnant women or injured or sick individuals, the post-2005 criteria meant excluding those interpreted as some sort of risk to Danish society, including people deemed ‘mentally ill’, ‘illiterate’, ‘substance abusers’, or ‘criminals’ (Kohl 2015:205). Weakness thus arguably became a risk factor, rather than a criterion for selection for the Danish resettlement program. Intersecting with other normative and, for instance, gendered and religious imaginaries of who are seen as weak or risky in other ways, particular people are much less likely to be selected for resettlement to Denmark. These include single men, perceived as a bigger risk for being ‘troublesome’, while family units were more likely to be selected. Hyndman et al. (2017) show a similar discourse in Canada, where single men are generally not selected for government sponsorship for resettlement, while Turner (2017) shows that the same ideas circulate in other resettlement states, pointing particularly to the challenge Syrian men displaced in other Middle Eastern countries face in accessing resettlement.

Ultimately, it is also important to underline that the economic parameters for understanding ‘integration’ often take primacy when assessing whether integration has been successful or not. A study on the motivation and goals of resettlement policy by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) highlights a lack of evaluation and monitoring of integration, particularly of resettled refugees. Meaning, the often-heightened vulnerability of resettlement refugees in comparison to e.g., asylum seekers who arrive to receiving countries on their own, is not taken into consideration in the evaluation of integration projection of resettled refugees (Beirens & Fratzke 2017:34). This can lead to overly ambitious integration projections for people who at times are in extremely vulnerable positions upon arrival in the third country (ibid.). Monitoring the outcome by evaluating if integration has been successful without considering the stated aim and process of resettlement may provide contradictory results. The main critique Beirens and Fratzke (2017:35) bring forth is that ‘using standard metrics for measuring integration (e.g. economic self-sufficiency, level of education, and employment) may not be appropriate to capture the integration trajectory and successes or failures of the programme’. Rather, the authors argue, one can evaluate ‘whether refugee selection criteria accurately reflect policy objectives’ (ibid. 31) and if the primary aim – to resettle the most vulnerable cases – is reflected in practice. The stated humanitarian motivations of most receiving states of resettlement thus arguably misalign with common ideas of successful integration (i.e. becoming autonomous members of society and financially self-sufficient).

Ultimately, when it comes to the selection procedure, we have seen that it is the definition of vulnerability prescribed by the UNHCR that sets the bar for inclusion and

exclusion in the resettlement process. Being deemed sufficiently and properly vulnerable thus becomes paramount for individual refugees hoping to start a new life in a third country. However, proving this ‘deservingness’ is, as the literature shows, not straightforward. The refugee experience is highly gendered (Kublitz 2011), as are categorizations of vulnerability and victimhood (Begikhani et al. 2018). Western European gender and family norms on what a ‘proper’ refugee is, means that women and children are much more likely to be selected for resettlement, especially in comparison to single men (cf. Thomson 2018, Turner 2017, Welfens & Bonjour 2020). Refugees toil to adapt their narratives to one that will be heard and deemed worthy by the UNHCR, often by trying to differentiate oneself from others by claiming the existence of false narratives (Koçak 2020). It is arguably in adapting to normative narratives of vulnerability that refugees might grasp at some straws of agency within this process (Thomson 2018).

Conclusively, decisions regarding who to resettle in particular countries – whether tied to explicit national criteria or not – are always linked to a larger political framework on the local, national, and global levels. UNHCR’s definitions of vulnerability and deservingness are, furthermore, continuously interpreted and practiced within these different frameworks, and are employed to pursue particular political and social aims. It is therefore particularly paramount to understand how and which values are at play when it comes to selection within global and national resettlement systems.

Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO)

Pre-Departure Orientations (PDOs) – or Cultural Orientation Programs (COPs) as they are often called – are an important part of most receiving states’ resettlement programs (Chindea 2015), and they are the most evident way in which norms and values are explicitly made part of the resettlement process. These programs serve the purpose of preparing the chosen refugees for their departure and following integration into the new country. PDOs are developed and coordinated by the national institutions and are in many cases implemented by international or local partners. IOM, as a central actor in resettlement, takes care of implementing PDOs for a range of countries, including Sweden and Germany. PDOs cover organizational and administrative topics (covering integration procedure, travel arrangements, legal information etc.) but often also provide language introduction and information about the resettlement country’s culture, values and daily life customs (Muftee 2014, Fratzke & Kainz 2019), while some programs, such as the one implemented by Australia, also include a focus on empowerment and the development of ‘life-skills’, meaning knowledge and practical skills, such as being able to find adequate information and access services, use public transport, manage one’s money and tenancy issues, as well as employment and education, which can ‘enable positive developments in migrants’ confidence and ability to engage with the environment’ (Suleman & Whiteford 2013:204).

These programs thus take various shapes and forms depending on different factors, such as geographical context, political situation, and economic resources (Muftee 2014). While some countries have given short introductory meetings in combination with selection missions or prior to departure, such as the UK (Collyer et al. 2017), others, such as Canada and Norway (Muftee 2014), have developed separate more extensive educational/pedagogical programs. What these efforts have in common is that they aim to link ‘the pre-departure phase to post-departure [...], by preparing participants for their introduction in the new country already before the move’ (ibid. 2014:31), and by constructing a solid foundation of knowledge ‘upon which reception and integration services can build’ (Fratzke & Kainz 2019:3) when the refugees arrive in their receiving country.

Content and pedagogy: What to convey and how to convey it

Based on a study of the pre-departure orientation programs of Austria, Canada, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and Romania, the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) concludes that the delivery of effective PDOs usually entail not only informing refugees about conditions in their new country of residence, but should, further, build skills and a positive attitude towards their new lives (Fratzke & Kainz 2019). Preparing refugees for what resettlement and life in their new place of residence means is important both for the receiving society and, especially, integration workers (ibid.), and for the refugees themselves in terms of building a new life. Both pre-resettlement and post-resettlement trauma has proven to correlate with refugees’ mental health (Lindencrona et al. 2008; Kim 2016). Structural factors of the receiving context and the possibilities and abilities of individuals to adapt to them are thus important (Kim 2016).

‘Cultural and values instruction is most effective in promoting integration when it emphasises the role of values in shaping the behaviour of society as a whole, rather than instructing migrants and refugees that they must change their beliefs and behaviours to conform’¹⁹

In terms of pre-departure orientation, this thus entails clear and tailored communication in a stress- and distraction free environment. It also entails engaging service providers in the reception countries in the PDO process, as well as preparing the reception communities at large for the arrival of the new residents. Overall, research indicates ‘that cultural and values instruction is most effective in promoting integration when it emphasises the role of values in shaping the behaviour of society as a whole, rather than instructing migrants and refugees that they must change their beliefs and behaviours to conform’ (Fratzke & Kainz 2019:11). As such, MPI recommends that the focus of PDOs should be on building ‘refugees’ confidence and feelings of control, as well as their ability

¹⁹ Fratzke & Kainz 2019:11.

to cope with unfamiliar situations and to navigate everyday life in the resettlement country' while also aiming to 'help refugees develop realistic expectations of life after resettlement and understand what will be expected of them after arrival' (Fratzke & Kainz 2019:1).

States decide how much time they will allocate for the pre-departure orientation, which can vary between a couple hours up to five days. As mentioned, another central difference is between states who send their own staff to the countries of first asylum to run the orientations and the states who delegate this task to international organizations, such as IOM.

Drawing on this and other research, it is possible to stake out two main elements through which norms and values arguably are transmitted to refugees through PDOs. These two ways will overlap in the same program, and as already pointed out, the attention paid to either of these elements by different reception states' programs have continuously shifted over time. The first element is *what* it is that is explicitly being conveyed in the PDO, and the second element is *how* it is being conveyed. In other words – content and pedagogy are paramount when it comes to value transmission.

Reception

The resettlement process does not only concern the selection procedure and pre-departure orientation but continues during the initial reception in the third country, the placement in communities and the integration into these communities. We will discuss here in which way values intersect with reception practices and policies. The reception phase can be understood as the initial period after arrival in the country of resettlement (EU Resettlement 2007) and is often referred to as the first few weeks, although the length is not defined and differs across contexts. A unique feature of resettlement reception is that the refugees already have a legal status and do not undergo an asylum process, however, 'the experiences of refugees themselves show that reception can be extended for many years in a way that blurs the sociological and political distinctions of reception and integration' (Kaya & Nagel 2020: 25).

Where and how refugees are welcomed once they arrive in the resettlement country also differs among EU member states. The ways in which reception is facilitated has been studied and discussed broadly in the literature. First and foremost, literature on resettlement highlights the relevance of not losing sight of the process even after refugees arrive in the country of resettlement. Reception is one step towards integration and how reception is facilitated may have a significant influence on integration in the long run. Resettlement is portrayed as a 'linear model [...] in which the state's role is to "remove barriers" to settlement while the refugee's role is to seamlessly "integrate" in an existing community of responsible citizens' (Frazer 2020:7). The literature discusses refugees' initial encounter with their new home through reception practices as important, though how this should be done is contested. Frazer (2020) underlines the importance of belonging, which is shaped through emotional integration such as through meaningful

contact and friendship. Moreover, fostering care and respect for difference in the encounters between newcomers and the local society are highlighted as valuable components of reception. Such encounters are often facilitated by volunteers and civil society, who play a central role in the resettlement process (Muftee 2014; Karakayali 2017; Frazer 2020).

To what extent reception and integration are the responsibility of the state alone or are shared with other actors differs between countries. In some countries the state chooses to formally outsource reception and integration work and delegates this responsibility to non-governmental organizations. In other contexts, civil society identifies gaps in reception and integration assistance which are then filled by local humanitarian initiatives and volunteering individuals (Kaya & Nagel 2020). In light of the increased influx of asylum seekers during 2015/16, the so-called ‘welcome culture’ formed in many countries brought together a large number of civil society actors and volunteers to provide initial assistance. However, a report by the RESPOND project shows that, since then, ‘the so-called “welcome culture” has cooled down in many countries’ (Kaya & Nagel 2020:29), eventually revealing gaps in the reception network that may have existed before or have formed due to an increase in the demand for reception assistance.

Van Liempt and Miellet (2020) observe the ongoing trend of shifting responsibility for integration away from the state towards the individual resettled refugee. This shift, which frames successful integration as depending on personal skills and attitudes of the refugees, stands in stark contrast with, for instance, the setup of the Dutch resettlement programme in which the refugee is seen as (and made) a passive beneficiary. Once refugees arrive in the municipalities they are (in many cases) left to their own devices, often residing in suburban towns far away from family or a pre-existing social network. Literature on the reception of resettled refugees in the Netherlands highlights the disappointment or anxiety felt by refugees who have undergone the resettlement process and suddenly felt left alone after receiving support on every other step of the way (van Liempt & Miellet 2020).

Lastly, in some contexts the conditions of reception practices in the initial phase differ between resettled refugees and those of asylum seekers. This can be regarding the assistance and services provided for them, the attitudes of the local community, or more targeted integration support. Arguably, dissimilarity in how refugees are received because of their legal status (resettled or asylum seeker) carries an understanding of difference which may result from an underlying assumption that resettled refugees are more deserving than asylum seekers on the basis of their vulnerabilities (Kinlen 2013:32).

Placement and dispersal

Upon arrival, refugees are placed into municipalities in the third countries. Decision-making about these placements is a mainly bureaucratic procedure which yet again differs within EU countries. Communities that voluntarily welcome refugees often have

a well-organized support network with state and non-state actors cooperating, whereas those who do not necessarily wish to receive refugees rely more on the state mandated integration services. These decentralized practices result in a myriad of differences in the support networks, opportunities, and contexts that refugees encounter when they reach their new place of residence.

As with other parts of the resettlement process, decisions are usually made *for refugees* and seldom *by refugees* when it comes to placement. There are instances in which refugees are consulted for their preferences of location within a federal state, although this depends on the location and differs greatly across countries. If they are consulted, they may provide ‘relevant reasons’ to be resettled in a particular place, such as family affiliation, specific medical requirements, particular religious care needs and employment prospects or education opportunities (Grote et al. 2016). However, more often than not, refugees’ expressed needs and preferences are not considered by the people in charge of migration management and integration planning (Lewis & Young 2018).

The placement of refugees in municipalities follows the logic of dispersal policy, a tool to increase responsibility sharing within a state. Andersson (2003) investigated the arguments for dispersal in several EU countries and presents four tenets constituting dispersal as national policy. One aim may be to counteract ethnic clustering, as is a key component in the UKs policy. However, as Suter and Magnusson (2015) show, placements in municipalities can enable the forming of strong ties and facilitate integration of a whole ‘group’. Ethnic clustering can thus prevent isolation of people who have a hard time learning the language and communicating with people other than those that share the same native language (ibid.). Secondly, dispersal policy aims to distribute integration costs based on the assumption ‘that asylum seekers and refugees are financial and welfare “burdens”’ (Andersson 2003:30). Other motivations for dispersal are an ‘effective use of housing capacity’ and ‘stimulating positive social interaction’ by placing minorities in small numbers (Andersson 2003:30). Hagström (2009) argues that among integration workers there is an explicit understanding that integration is favoured by contact with Swedes rather than people from the same ethnic/cultural group. Lastly, dispersal policy may even function to ‘deter’ further immigration by generating situations that are deemed undesirable by other (potential) immigrants, such as living far away from social and support networks (Phillimore 2020).

Dispersal policy has received some attention in academia, often questioning the efficiency of the ‘burden sharing’ policy and criticizing its effect of increasing isolation, placing refugees in areas with poor economic opportunities and insufficient access to integration assistance (Phillimore 2020; Suter & Magnusson 2015; Hagström 2009). The arguments for dispersal policy, presented above by Andersson (2003) may not consider sufficiently the effect of the policy on the refugees’ integration prospects. The integration prospects depend on the particular services and options available in the municipality refugees are resettled into, such as opportunities for education and employment (Jones & Teytelboym 2017). Suter and Magnusson (2015) show that the

clustering of Burmese Karen in a few numbers of municipalities in Sweden was beneficial to their integration prospect (building up a new life, feeling at home), while the spreading out of Somali resettled refugees into many more municipalities (with no prior Somali immigration) was detrimental to their well-being.

Simich (2003:586) shows in her study on secondary migration and settlement patterns in relation to social support that ‘paradoxically, for some refugees “settlement” may entail relocating’. The study conducted in Canada gives insight into more subjective reasons and the relevance of various motivating factors for relocating beyond purely economic incentives especially within the first year. As the most relevant motivating factor she identifies social support through reconnecting with friends and family, especially within the critical first year of integration (ibid. 587). The support of friends and family is highly significant since they often share similar cultural backgrounds but have undergone the ‘migration and adjustment process’ and are able to assist the newcomers in significant ways that the government assistance overlooks (ibid.). For example, besides the practical assistance by the state within the resettlement process, refugees in Canada rely on family and friends for critical needs that the state social provision often does not meet, such as search for adequate housing or childcare (Simich 2003:587-88). Van Liempt and Miellet echo the finding on secondary migration of dispersed migrants in the early stages of settling. In the Netherlands, many refugees relocate within two years and up to half of all refugees will have moved within ten years (van Liempt & Miellet 2020:15).

As a distinct bureaucratic policy, placement in municipalities opens up a debate about what happens after the initial reception phase and advocates for an understanding of resettlement which incorporates the journey within the resettlement country and the process of home making and belonging (van Liempt & Miellet 2020).

Private and community sponsorship

Private and community sponsorship is a particular mode of immigration within the resettlement regime. ‘Sponsoring’ refugees has a long history in Canada where the program started after World War II. Refugee sponsorship aims to provide additional spots for resettlement and at the same time endorses citizens to actively participate in the process of resettlement. The particular organization of sponsorship differs across countries, but the basis is the same. One common element described is ‘a transfer of some degree of responsibility – at times for identifying and preparing refugees to travel, and often for helping them settle and integrate into a new society – from the government to private citizens and civil-society groups’ (Fratzke et al. 2019:1). Private and community sponsorship presupposes a public-private partnership in which residents act (at least partially) as agents of the state (Lenard 2020:739). Private sponsorship presupposes ‘a respectful partnership between government and citizen groups [...], one that respects the voluntary work and decisions of a mobilised civil society and aspires to the fair selection and successful settlement of refugees’ (Hyndman et al. 2017:59).

Resettled refugees receive additional assistance through individuals or mentor groups who also sponsor them financially for up to two years. This includes paying the rent and providing initial reception assistance and further integration support in addition to the state provided assistance. Hence, the resettlement process starts out in the same way, but sponsored refugees receive different treatment during the reception and placement phase, as they are placed in close proximity to their mentors. A study on reception and integration of resettled refugees in Germany showed that resettlement refugees have a higher need for assistance and support within the first six months after arriving in the municipality in contrast to asylum seekers (Baraulina & Bitterwolf 2016). Canadian studies provide evidence 'that refugees who arrive with sponsors integrate more efficiently and effectively – in particular, they become net contributors to the economy quickly – than do those who arrive without designated sponsors' (Lenard 2020:740; see also Hyndman et al. 2017).

Mentor groups act as sponsors and undergo selection and preparation seminars. They are matched with an individual or refugee family according to their particular need (ex. medical attention) and the mentor groups' particular capacity/resources, as well as their location and available services (in regard to specific needs, such as health requirements, accessibility, and size of housing). 'This means that newcomers arrive with an extensive and extended support group on which to rely, and this facilitates their rapid integration' (Lenard 2020:733). The conditions and categories for matching differ across countries.

Private and community sponsorship schemes are heavily value laden in the sense that individuals' involvement is motivated by values, such as humanitarianism, though the source and content may differ. In a study on Community based sponsorship of refugees resettling in the UK, van Selm explores the role of British values and concludes that the overall reason to sponsor refugees is based on broader humanitarian values and the commitment to spread these values in society beyond those directly involved (2020:193-95). Lenard (2020) discusses a myriad of relevant ethical and practical questions regarding private and community sponsorship. Depending on the model of sponsorship, citizens have the opportunity to participate in the selection of refugees who they will sponsor, this is most commonly practiced in Canada, however not part of the practice in the EU. This often means that sponsors select refugees to whom they have a personal connection (friends/family). Lenard (2020) argues that citizens should be encouraged to take an active role in resettlement but that the conditions under which they participate in the selection need to be regulated to prevent discriminatory practices. One argument for private sponsorship and also for citizen selection is that citizens are motivated to be involved and provide support on the 'desire to support friends and family members' rather than a general moral obligation for justice (ibid. 736). Permitting sponsors provides more resettlement spots which are scarce (in the cases where sponsorship is understood as additional pathways and not as part of the resettlement quota overall).

In comparison with the models of private and community sponsorship in EU member states, Canada embraces the citizens motivation to support friends and family members directly through sponsorship selection. This may encourage a greater number of persons to get involved in resettlement of refugees if they also could select individuals or families directly. It needs to be considered that the Canadian model of sponsorship at the same time fulfils the role of upholding family reunification where the tools of the state are not sufficient or problematic.²⁰ Kumin (2015) advocates for private sponsorship as one way to strengthen refugee resettlement in the European Union in response to the increased humanitarian need during the 2015 refugee reception crisis. She sees private sponsorship receiving more attention considering the crisis in Syria and the possibility it provides to ‘offer a viable alternative to irregular movement’ and create safe and orderly means for refugees to reach protection (Kumin 2015:21). She is convinced that mobilising civil society and the will of private actors to play an instrumental role in refugee policy via private sponsorship, ‘may help to generate political will to initiate or expand government resettlement programmes’ (Kumin 2015:16). Hyndman, who has worked extensively on the Canadian sponsorship model, emphasizes that private sponsorship needs to be additional to government assisted resettlement commitments rather than a substitute which the state relies on to fulfil its international obligation of protection (Hyndman et al. 2017: 56).

In terms of recent developments, Germany started their own private sponsorship initiative with a pilot project called NesT (Newstart in a team) in 2019. Sweden is in the process of implementing their own community sponsorship as a permanent part of their resettlement efforts (Feith Tan 2020). The aim is to launch a pilot project in cooperation with UNHCR. This is an interesting development in Sweden, where a lot of emphasis is placed on integration as solely a state affair and migration efforts are the responsibility of the government.

To conclude, private and community sponsorship permits a more active role for citizens in supporting resettlement of refugees and allows them to ‘generate a community that is robust against anti-refugee sentiment, in which refugees can focus on the difficult work of integrating into a new environment’ (Lenard 2020:742; see also van Selm 2020). This seems especially relevant in times where xenophobic parties/groups receive increasingly more support among the population. Citizen involvement in resettlement can send a different message through their work, one that is welcoming of refugees instead.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

This paper has presented an overview of the resettlement process with consideration for the European context. It has done so by reviewing the available academic literature on the subject. Specific attention has been paid to how norms and values shape the

²⁰ For example, due to narrow definitions of family or bureaucratic hurdles (Lenard 2020:741).

resettlement process. In these concluding pages we first provide our results and point at gaps in the literature. We then go one step back and provide a short summary of the role of norms and values in the existing academic literature on resettlement, before discussing the notion of vulnerability that emerged as one of the central concepts throughout the resettlement process. As we highlight, vulnerability is a central notion of the resettlement process, however it is not without frictions, which we see as an expression of conflicting norms and values.

First, the academic literature on refugee resettlement shows great variation when it comes to the amount of research conducted on the different steps and practices of the resettlement process. In general, research on resettlement in/to the EU has been done far less than on resettlement to, e.g., North America, although it has been steadily increasing in recent years. Also, most of the literature found for this review has focused on issues regarding selection, as well as reception and integration. Placement and dispersal, private and community sponsorship, and pre-departure orientation are less researched topics. **Importantly, the literature shows that even if resettlement can be considered an external dimension of European migration policy, this process does not end at the border.** Rather, resettlement entails particular forms of reception, placement and dispersal as well as integration practices that refugees are confronted with once they arrive in their resettlement country. These practices should thus be understood in the context of the resettlement regime as a whole. **Finally, the available academic literature has by and large overlooked the issue of norms and values in the resettlement process.** However, this does not mean that norms and values do not play a role. On the contrary. Values steer actions and judgments, while norms constitute expectations or rules that are enforced socially, and, as the literature review has shown, there is abundant room in the different steps of the resettlement process for the various actors to make decisions, make judgments and fill the content of educational courses for refugees. **As such, while a focus on *explicit* values and norms is for the most part missing, the review clearly shows that the resettlement process is imbued with *implicit* norms and values.** This is of course accentuated by the huge mismatch between demand and offer of resettlement places, leaving plenty of room for the bearing of norms and values in the practical steps of the resettlement process. Our literature review hence reveals the need for further research regarding the role of norms and values in the European resettlement context.

Before concluding, we will briefly summarise the results of the literature review and sketch out some challenges and questions brought forth. As it appears the European values that form part of the founding documents of the European Union – such as respect for the rule of law, solidarity, justice, equality (Facchi et al. 2019)²¹ – are found mostly on the policy level and in discussions on inter-state responsibilities when it comes to

²¹ The legal-philosophical analysis of the Values in the EU Charter of fundamental rights on how to understand and interpret the main values and what they mean for migration is another output of the NOVAMIGRA project.

resettlement. However, whether these values are applied in the ‘street-level bureaucracy’ and different practices of the resettlement programs, is less clear. This does not, however, preclude the importance of values and norms from these parts of the resettlement process. **Rather, norms and values are intrinsic to the process as a whole and are made visible in its different tensions and power imbalances.**

In the *selection* of refugees for resettlement – apart from the criteria of vulnerability coupled with security concerns and integration potential – the literature also shows that there is a tendency to favour families over single individuals and above all, over single men. The family norm is strong, and the understanding of what constitutes a family is strongly tied to a Western understanding of family. When it comes to *pre-departure orientation*, values and norms come in the selection of material (topics) that is presented during such preparatory courses. Both in terms of what is covered and how this is being conveyed and communicated.

The literature clearly shows that values also are at play in the *reception* phase. Generally, reception practices differ among the EU countries, as reception and integration policy are inherently a national practice. Civil society has an important role in the reception phase, and its influence here is growing. How much the state outsources their responsibility for integration facilitation and what that says about a shift in integration policy is an ongoing discussion in academic circles. **Reception policy is value driven in the sense that the underlying values determine the extent and facilitation of reception services.** The involvement of civil society, whether intentional or born out of the lack of state services, leaves much of the assistance up to volunteers and hence differs greatly across municipalities. This can, on the one hand, provide room for assistance provided on the basis of care – furthering belonging to a community through friendship and respect. On the other hand, in municipalities without great reception infrastructure this may result in feelings of desertion or even enforcing of stereotypes, hierarchies, and boundaries between the newcomers and the welcoming society.

The way refugees are *dispersed* throughout the country upon arrival may also reveal underlying assumptions regarding refugees, as well as norms and values of the receiving society. While spreading out resettled refugees may be beneficial to their learning the language faster through contact with native speakers, studies show it may be detrimental to their well-being as it intensifies feelings of isolation. **It is thus a question of values, how (narrowly or broadly) successful integration is defined, and whether mental well-being and the belonging to a community fostered through care and friendship are central elements in facilitating integration.**

When it comes to the issue of *private and community sponsorship* two resettlement models which have been increasingly more discussed and tested in recent years, we found that they are heavily value laden in the sense that individuals’ involvement is motivated by values, though the source and content may differ. **Private sponsorship operates in a sphere above the state’s international obligation of protection and provides interesting insights into the values underlying protection efforts and if these are indeed motivated by humanitarian values, solidarity, and justice.** Hence, the

resettlement process begins the same but sponsored refugees receive different treatment during the reception and placement phase. This brings forth a question of deservingness, as discussed in regard to the selection process. As the literature review has shown, private sponsorship (i.e. increased citizen participation) can function both as a tool to influence migration policy in general and to foster feelings of community and belonging among the sponsors, as well as the sponsors and the refugees.

Finally, we would like to draw attention to an important common theme (and concept) in the existing literature: the notion of vulnerability and the tensions connected to it. Vulnerability is a central concept in international refugee protection, and even more so in resettlement. **As our review has shown, ideas and practices regarding vulnerability are, throughout the resettlement regime, in continuous tension with those of security, as well as those of integration.** These different, but interconnected, tensions are made visible in the power inequalities that imbue the system as a whole.

Vulnerability is, thereby, a core criterion for the selection process within the resettlement regime. How the concept of vulnerability is understood and put into practice, particularly by the UNHCR, separates those deemed eligible for resettlement from those who are not. However, as the literature review shows, in practice vulnerability seldom works alone. **In fact, there is a certain friction imbued when countries select refugees on the basis of vulnerability and, at the same time, on the basis of an assumed potential to integrate (i.e. to become economically self-sufficient).** In stark contrast to the humanitarian basis for selection by the UNHCR are the so-called integration criteria that several receiving states include as part of their resettlement processes. Such criteria have been found to be shifting over time and according to general national discourses of which gendered, racializing, and religious categories of people are seen as victims versus security threats. Also, in evaluation of integration results, the element of vulnerability which served as criterion for resettlement is often neglected. This is remarkable particularly in national contexts in which the responsibility for integration is increasingly shifted away from the state and to the individual. Paradoxically, in most countries during the initial phase of resettlement, refugees are suddenly expected to be proactive and self-sufficient. It is asked that they exert the agency which they previously have been denied while they were treated as passive beneficiaries, namely during the previous steps of the resettlement process.

Vulnerability as a key notion in resettlement may thus also be connected to resettlement as a process imbued with strong inequalities in terms of decision-making. **Refugees to be resettled find very little room for agency in impacting the process (and thus, the course of their lives).** From the beginning (the refugee status determination process) to the end (the placement in the municipalities and the integration programs they ought to partake in), the process is by and large devoid of any opportunities for refugee influence. This may not be a surprise as there is a strong tendency in international refugee protection to perceive the figure of the refugee as a blank sheet, devoid of history and (meaningful) agency (see Malkki 1996; Thomsson 2009 and others). This has also

been found in research on pre-departure orientation for refugees, on reception, and on refugee placement within reception states.

On the international and national (policy) level, vulnerability as the basis for resettlement also contributes to reproducing refugees as a 'burden' (that should be equally distributed between states in order to promote solidarity between the latter) (Garnier et al. 2018). **Resettled refugees, who are often portrayed as vulnerable due to the categories foregoing their selection should not be seen as a burden (on the welfare state and the society at large) but rather as active individuals who have skills, experiences and potential (ibid.).** Vulnerability is diverse, often unseen and functions in a multitude of ways, and may even disappear through the act of resettlement.

Finally, our literature review also implies that despite its centrality to the resettlement process, vulnerability as a concept has not been clearly defined. As such it lends itself to numerous interpretations of socio-cultural nature by various actors of what vulnerability may mean in general and in a specific context. For example, the interpretation is often both aged and gendered, evident in the fact that children and women (single women, pregnant women, and women who are single mothers) are often perceived to be vulnerable per definition, while men are seldom considered as such.

The European resettlement regime thus seems, on the one hand, to be continuously balancing the intrinsic tension of ensuring the inclusive spirit of the international human rights framework against states' right to exclude, and as such struggling to balance cosmopolitan against communitarian values (Haddad 2003). On the other hand, its humanitarian basis runs the danger of purporting a reductionist idea of refugees as (solely) victims who then are given little to no say in decisions regarding their own resettlement prospects and lives. When it comes to resettlement it is thus paramount to explore the concept of vulnerability further, and, likewise, the implications of its implementations within this system.

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ANNEX

Resettlement Process in Sweden

Sweden's history of resettlement goes back significantly further than for all other European countries. It has been resettling refugees since the very beginning of the establishment of UNHCR and its resettlement initiative/program in 1950 as one of its three 'durable solutions'. In terms of numbers, Sweden is also the country in Europe with the largest established program quota of resettled refugees, which was increased significantly in the aftermath of the 2015 reception crisis; from 1,900 prior to 2015 to 3,400 in 2017, and to the current Swedish quota of 5,000 from 2017 until today. Worth noting is that this increase has taken place in parallel to a general restriction of immigration to Sweden post-2015, through, among others, the implementation of intra-Schengen border controls, a large-scale increase in temporary, instead of permanent, residence permits for asylum claimants, and the restriction of family reunification possibilities (Osanami Törngren & Emilsson 2020). Although this tandem of resettlement and general asylum/immigration policy development is not official, it should be considered when looking at Sweden's recent expansion of its resettlement efforts.

It is the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) who oversees resettlement in Sweden. UNHCR administers the selection of 'those in most need' (Swedish Migration Agency, 2020) and submit their dossiers to the SMA²². These dossiers are either processed through the regular asylum system in Sweden or SMA delegations travel to the refugee camps from where refugees are selected to interview them. Whether or not refugees are interviewed depends, amongst other things, on their country of origin and whether this is listed as an overall 'unsafe' country according to the UNHCR. Refugees from, for instance, Syria, have in the last five years had a nearly automatic admission to Sweden, and thus interviews have generally not taken place for this group. According to the SMA, as much as 95% of processed cases are approved for residency, which is, for resettled refugees, given on a permanent basis.

When it comes to selection criteria purported by the Swedish state and its Migration Agency, these are purely humanitarian and based on UNHCR's definition and practice of vulnerability. In contrast to several other resettlement countries, Sweden does not include so-called integration criteria for approving/admitting resettled refugees. Once individuals have been approved by SMA, they receive a residency card, usually through a Swedish embassy, and are able to travel to Sweden. IOM and UNHCR assist in organizing travels. Depending on circumstances, refugees might travel alone, with other family members, or as part of a larger group, sometimes accompanied by representatives from IOM.

²² <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Vart-uppdrag/Sveriges-flyktingkvot/Sa-har-gar-vidarebosattning-till.html>

In preparation for travels, refugees are given an information sheet with brief practical information about what to expect during their travels and from their new lives in Sweden. Between 2000 and 2016, preparation took place through the so-called Sweden Program (*Sverigeprogrammet*), a Cultural Orientation Program (COP) organized by SMA themselves but carried out by trained practitioners working with reception and integration in different municipalities across Sweden. Also prior to this program, COPs were held as part of pre-departure preparations, but the foci of these efforts have changed over time. This will be discussed further below. According to a recent MPI report prepared for internal use in the SMA, a continued need for pre-departure orientation (PDO) has been noted among practitioners working within the Swedish resettlement program, particularly in the municipalities. The Migration Agency is currently working with IOM to develop a new PDO/COP, with a pilot run planned in early 2021.

Once refugees arrive in Sweden, they are usually received by representatives from the municipality in which they will reside. The placement and dispersal policy in Sweden overlaps with their reception practices. Where they are placed is decided by the SMA, in collaboration with the regional administration and municipalities themselves. A major policy change regarding the placement system took place in 2016, where reception of both asylum and resettled refugees was made obligatory for all municipalities through the Settlement Law (*Bosättningslagen*). While prior to this, the reception of refugees was voluntary, the 2015 crisis warranted measures to spread this responsibility across the country. Several municipalities, especially in rural areas, had long welcomed resettled refugees, motivated by the labour market and demographic needs. Such municipalities were, then, specialized in this sort of reception, while others were new to 'the game'. As such, reception and integration practices can vary significantly according to local contexts.

Influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic

All resettlement to Sweden was postponed in March 2020 because of the pandemic and partially resumed in September. According to an SMA press release²³ from July 15, 2020, this was both to protect the refugees and to avoid further global spread of the disease, but that it was the Swedish population's health that was in the centre whenever decisions were made in this regard. The aim for the last three months of 2020 was still to comply with the 2020 quota of 5,000 resettlements.

Furthermore, the pandemic significantly impacted work with the new Swedish PDO. Much of the work, including stakeholder meetings and interviews, carried out by MPI to lay the ground for the new program, was carried out digitally. MPI's planned fieldwork to Uganda and Jordan, where they would have interviewed refugees about

²³ <https://www.migrationsverket.se/Om-Migrationsverket/Pressrum/Nyhetsarkiv/Nyhetsarkiv-2020/2020-07-15-Migrationsverket-aterupptar-overforingen-av-kvotflyktingar.html>

their ideas regarding and experiences with PDOs was, however, cancelled (MPI internal report for SMA). Development of the program has been delayed because staff and other resources have had to be allocated to managing the pandemic situation. Pilots of the program have also been postponed.

Resettlement Process in Germany

Germany started with resettlement in 2011 as a pilot project to resettle 300 persons in need of protection between 2012 and 2014. As a reaction to the increased humanitarian need during the refugee reception crisis 2015/16, Germany decided to implement a long-term programme which aims to resettle 500 persons yearly. The number of people admitted by Germany within the European framework of EU-resettlement increased from 1,600 in 2016/2017, to pledging to admit 5,500 in 2020. This includes general resettlement placements, humanitarian admissions (via the Turkey deal), private sponsorship (pilot project, NesT) and direct admission by the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein.

Germany describes resettlement as an addition to – rather than a replacement of – general asylum procedures. Resettlement is categorized as one humanitarian admission programme in the framework of asylum and refugee protection which is not a durable solution for the global refugee problem but rather creates a perspective for the most vulnerable group. Furthermore, resettlement is a sign of international solidarity with the states of first asylum who are often overwhelmed by the number of refugees they receive from neighbouring states and provides one way to share international responsibility to uphold refugees' rights.

Resettlement is organised by the Federal Ministry of Interior, Building and Community (Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat, BMI) who make all decisions regarding legalities (entry ways, legal status), project funding, and the number of people pledged to resettle yearly (pledging). The federal ministry has tasked the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF) with the operational implementation and cooperates closely with UNHCR and IOM to facilitate resettlement.

As in the Swedish case, UNHCR is tasked with selecting refugees eligible for resettlement and complementing dossiers which are then processed by the BAMF. This selection is determined according to the vulnerability of the refugees. Vulnerability defined by the BMI relates to 'individual refugees who are particularly in need of protection due to their age, physical condition, gender, personal experience or legal situation'.²⁴ In addition to the need for protection, Germany also considers the maintenance of family unity and existing ties to Germany in the selection process which have been deemed conducive to integration. An important aspect of the German selection process is the evaluation of a person's ability to integrate, where the degree of schooling

²⁴ [resettlement.de](https://www.resettlement.de)

and vocational training, professional experience, language skills, religious affiliation and low age are considered indicators of a good ability to integrate. These national selection criteria are evaluated in a selection interview with BAMF staff in the country of first asylum. A second interview with the German security agency follows and if both present positive results in accordance with the German resettlement admission act, a refugee can begin their journey.

Between being admitted for resettlement and finally arriving in Germany, IOM takes over responsibility for facilitating the process. IOM arranges travel, organises visa questions with the responsible consulates, and provides pre-departure orientation. Resettled refugees are offered a permanent prospect of staying and full refugee protection. Their status differs however from positive recognition as a refugee after an asylum procedure. Since 2015, resettled refugees receive a unique legal status following § 23 (4) of the Residence Act. This includes a residence constraint, work permit, receiving social welfare benefits, right to participate in an integration course (language and civic education), right to family reunification, but limits the residence permit to three years after which one can apply for permanent residency or extension of the temporary residence permit. All resettled refugees arrive at a central reception facility, the transit camp Friedland (*Grenzdurchgangslager*) where they spend their first two weeks. At the reception facility, the civil society organization Caritas provides further information and training before the journey continues to the allocated municipalities.²⁵ Whereas in Sweden, refugees travel directly to the municipalities they will reside in. Refugees are welcomed by representatives of the communities or municipalities and civil society actors.

Refugees are allocated to states which take over responsibility to disperse them into communities. The resettlement program is no exemption to the general dispersal policy in which refugees are allocated to the federal states according to the *Königsteiner Key*, dispersing refugees per capita to the federal states. However, the BAMF communicates an effort to consider family connections in the initial placement decision. The federal states are tasked with the matching of refugees with municipalities in relation to individual integration prospects and opportunities. Though the federal states have the responsibility to place refugees in the municipalities, their practices differ from using a defined allocation key involving all municipalities to only sending to those communities that have volunteered to welcome refugees. Although they are legally allowed to move to other municipalities and even across federal state lines, their welfare services are tied to their allocated municipality.

In 2019, Germany started their own private sponsorship initiative with a pilot project called NesT (*Neustart im Team*, Newstart in a team). The aim is to increase the overall capacity of admission numbers of resettlement and the greater participation of the society in the admission and integration through mentor groups. The goal is to resettle additional 500 refugees from Egypt, Jordan, Ethiopia, and Lebanon yearly. The

²⁵ <http://caritasfriedland.de/landesaufnahmebehörde/>

project will be evaluated during 2021 and determined if private sponsorship will continue to have a place in the framework of Germany's resettlement programme. BAMF manages the project and is responsible for the operational process and coordination but the actual implementation (finding and building mentor groups, training, support for the mentoring groups) is organised by three civil society organizations who closely cooperate with the federal office, the Caritas, Red Cross and Protestant Church of Westphalia (Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen).

Influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Resettlement to Germany was paused in March 2020 because of the pandemic. The case work of those already referred continued and there were attempts at digital admission and selection interviews. Travel was resumed in late August and overall, in 2020, 2,413 individuals have arrived through the general resettlement programme; as part of the private sponsorship programme, only a few families arrived so far but the goal is to resume travel and matching with mentor groups as soon as the BMI allows for more travel (NesT 2020; Resettlement Data Finder 2020).

BAMF is responsible to monitor and enforce the government's commitment to a certain resettlement quota. Due to the stop in travel and reduced capacity for processing cases, Germany has not pledged any cases for 2021 yet but plans instead to complete the cases pledged for 2020.