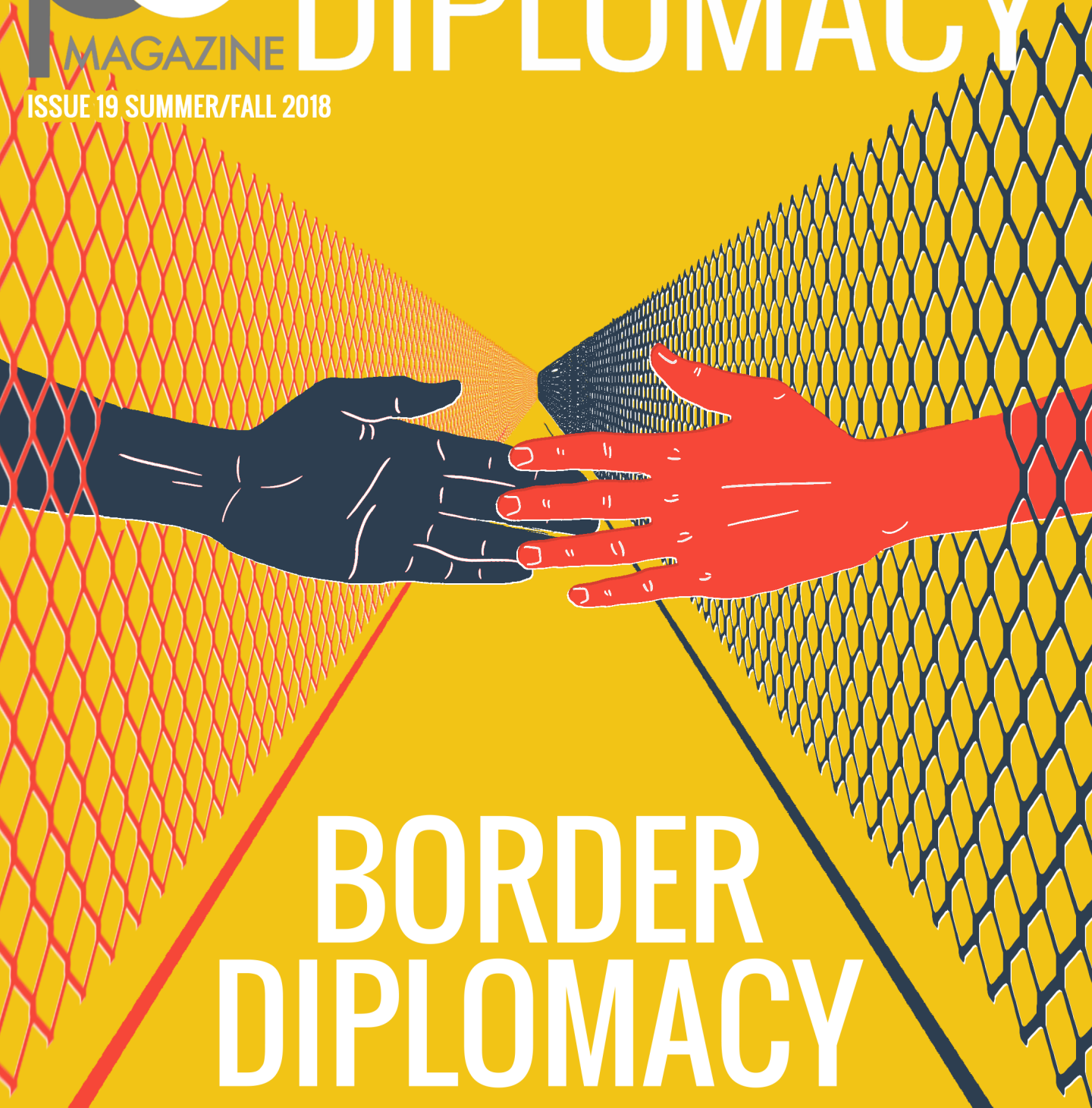


UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA



PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

ISSUE 19 SUMMER/FALL 2018



BORDER DIPLOMACY

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

ISSUE 19
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“Border Diplomacy”

As this issue of *Public Diplomacy Magazine*, aptly named “Border Diplomacy,” goes to print, the issue of immigration is lightning hot in the United States. The Trump administration recently upped the ante by separating children from their often-asylum-seeking migrant mothers and fathers fleeing violent homelands. Americans were horrified to hear wailing children and see images of them locked in cages like animals.

Meanwhile, U.S.-Mexico relations continued to fray over Trump’s border wall, the Trump administration drastically cut the number of refugees admitted into the United States each year, and the fate of the DACA kids hang in the balance as Congress repeatedly failed to pass comprehensive immigration reform.

In reality, illegal border crossings are at a record low. As Paul Krugman wrote in *The New York Times*, “There is no immigration crisis; there is no crisis of immigrant crime. No, the real crisis is an upsurge in hatred”—against immigrants. As we see in this issue, public diplomacy can help heal these border divides.

Jenna Gilbert outlines how the Trump administration is manufacturing a crisis at the border in order to push its extreme anti-immigrant policies. *PD Magazine* Managing Editor and incoming Editor-in-Chief Brooke Adams interviews Miry Whitehill, who created a program that helps refugee and immigrant families transition into and then thrive in their new lives stateside. Carolina Sheinfeld writes about her experience in an exchange program between Germany and several U.S. cities with the goal of creating welcoming communities for immigrants and refugees in both countries.

Jenna Russo argues that the award-winning musical *Hamilton* shows how important the immigrant story has been to America. Dalal Mawad highlights the positive stories about immigrants and refugees that the mainstream media too often misses or glosses over.

PD Magazine Staff Editor Dena Taha interviews Stéphane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres, about the UN’s approach to the refugee crisis. Jon-

athon Moses writes about workers migrating to and from EU member states in an effort to paint a more nuanced picture of Europe’s migration crisis.

But border diplomacy isn’t just about immigration and the refugee crisis. Nicolás Albertoni Gomez discusses the relationship between international trade and public diplomacy and how they affect public opinion in Latin America toward China and the United States. *PD Magazine* Staff Editor SarahBelle Selig interviews USC Professor of Public Diplomacy Philip Seib about the recent Iraqi Kurdish independence referendum and the possibility of a virtual state.

And finally, I close this issue with a report on Iceland’s highly successful place branding efforts, based on discussions with government and NGO officials during a recent visit to Reykjavik by myself and other Master in Public Diplomacy students at USC Annenberg.

The theme of this issue is more relevant and important than ever. We hope the ideas explored in these pages lead to new solutions to border crises and raise awareness about the key role that public diplomacy can play in them.

Thank you to the authors for their insightful contributions, to the experts who agreed to be interviewed about their work, to the USC Center on Public Diplomacy and the USC Master of Public Diplomacy program for their continued support of this magazine, and to the 2017-2018 *Public Diplomacy Magazine* editorial staff for their hard work over the past year.



Justin Chapman
Editor-in-Chief

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Chapman". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

BORDER DIPLOMACY

SUMMER/FALL 2018

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An Attack on the U.S. Asylum System

By Jenna Gilbert

As I crossed the bridge in Tijuana that led to the U.S. port of entry, surrounded by a group of refugees from Central America and West Africa, my heart pounded and my face flushed with raw emotion. I stared at the little Honduran boy in his cartoon pajamas next to me, grasping a stranger's hand while his father held his favorite blanket and action figure. Our group, followed by activists holding pro-refugee signs, walked the lengthy corridor toward the U.S. port of entry in San Ysidro, and I grew anxious, as though my own U.S. passport would suddenly fail to provide me the easy access I have always benefited from. Unimaginable how I, an experienced immigration attorney and U.S. citizen, felt such unease, while the refugees standing next to me simply continued walking in solemn resolve to demand their right to seek asylum in the United States.

One may ask why such a production would ever be necessary—why a group of refugees would need the fanfare of activists and legal prowess of U.S. attorneys—to request asylum in the United States. According to the law, it should not be. The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which the United States adopted after becoming a party to the Refugee Protocol, prohibits returning a refugee to a country where his or her life or freedom would be at risk. This well-founded principle of international law, known as “non-refoulement,” prevents a state from re-

jecting asylum seekers or refugees who seek protection at its borders.

The Immigration and Nationality Act, in section 208, further permits anyone in the United States or at a port of entry to seek asylum, irrespective of the individual's immigration status. Yet the U.S. government has begun to violate U.S. and international law by preventing refugees from seeking asylum at the border and returning them into Mexican territory. So-called “turn-backs” of refugees and asylum-seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border,

some of whom are Mexican citizens and in immediate risk of continued persecution in their home country, not only violate their legal rights but also place them at heightened risk of other forms of abuse.

A similar scene as the one I experienced last spring unfolded again in late April 2018 as a much larger,

more widely publicized group of migrants and asylum seekers continued their journey from Central America through Mexico, many with the ultimate goal of seeking asylum at U.S. ports of entry along our southern border. This group, known as the “Refugee Caravan,” garnered international attention and the ire of President Trump, who began a tweet-storm against the group on Easter Sunday. In response, President Trump issued a memo calling for 4,000 National Guard to be deployed to the southwest border. Even California Governor Jerry

President Trump has fabricated a sense of urgency of immigrants storming our borders, but his fears are not grounded in reality.



Photo credit: Ilias Bartolini

Brown, famous of late for his public resistance to all things Trump, agreed to send 400 California National Guard troops to the border, though with strict instructions that they not perform immigration enforcement-related duties.

President Trump has fabricated a sense of urgency of immigrants storming our borders, but his fears are not grounded in reality. Anti-immigrant rhetoric promises to split up family units at the border, threats of prolonged detention, and attacks on refugees and asylum seekers have had the desired effect of making many hesitant to seek asylum at the southern border of the United States, even without the need for formal policy changes. The number of people crossing the border illegally is dramatically lower than in past years, and this publicity stunt fails to acknowledge the U.S. obligation to allow those fleeing persecution to request asylum at the U.S. border.

Manufactured Border Crisis

The Trump administration has proposed forcing asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while undergoing

a legal process to seek asylum in the United States, which presents a series of problems including impediments to present testimony and evidence to genuine security risks while awaiting a hearing in Mexico. The administration is also trying to get a bilateral agreement with Mexico to designate it as a “safe third country,” thereby barring any asylum seeker who passes through Mexican territory from seeking asylum in the United States.

As the U.S. government attempts to tie trade negotiations with Mexico to immigration enforcement, violence in Mexico is at an all-time high, with uncurbed cartel violence and systemic xenophobic attitudes toward Central Americans putting refugees at serious risk of kidnapping, assault, sexual violence, and lesser forms of discrimination and harassment. Asylum advocates worry that the manufactured “border crisis” involving the Refugee Caravan is simply a ruse for the Trump administration to push for its extreme anti-immigrant policies. As Paul Krugman wrote in *The New York Times*, “There is no immigration crisis; there is no crisis of immigrant crime. No, the real crisis is an upsurge in hatred.”

Apart from recent attempts to prevent asylum seekers from accessing the asylum process at our borders, the Trump administration has engaged in a full-scale assault on the asylum system and due process protections for those who are already in the United States seeking asylum.

Increased Use of Detention and Criminal Prosecution of Asylum Seekers

Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen recently announced an end to the so-called “catch and release” policy [as of publication, this policy may be back in force], which allowed for apprehended individuals to be released on their own recognizance or with a bond or some other form of conditional release, and then attend a hearing with an immigration judge at a later date. Studies show that individuals who are released from immigration detention are more likely to have access to a lawyer, with only 14 percent of detained immigrants having representation, compared with two-thirds of non-detained immigrants.

Those with a lawyer are significantly more likely to have a successful outcome in their case than those without. That is not coincidental; our immigration laws are often compared to the tax code in terms of complexity. Without an attorney, the likelihood of success on a valid claim is significantly reduced. Access to counsel and due process concerns aside, ending the “catch and release” policy means the U.S. government will spend significantly more money on detention, when much cheaper and effective alternatives to detention are available.

Furthermore, Attorney General Jeff Sessions has called for federal prosecutors to target immigrants

for increased criminal prosecution. In particular, Operation Streamline, a fast-tracked process of group prosecutions which raises significant due process and other procedural concerns, resulted in the criminal prosecution for “illegal entry” or “illegal re-entry” to the United States of hundreds of asylum seekers. Such prosecution is contrary to international law, as Article 31 the Refugee Convention prohibits states from penalizing refugees or asylum seekers for their illegal entry or presence in the state’s territory.

Assault on Due Process

In April, the Department of Justice announced that it is further hindering access to counsel and due process by halting the Legal Orientation Program, which provides detained immigrants with crucial information on available defenses to deportation, applications for relief, and general legal orientation. Given the low representation rates for detained immigrants, who have no right to a free lawyer, these programs are often the only available resource for individuals, including asylum seekers, representing themselves in court. Despite the fact that Congress has funded the program through this year, the DOJ’s decision to halt and review the program is widely considered the first step in the administration’s attempt to eliminate it in its entirety.

The Department of Justice also announced it is halting the Immigration Court Help Desk program that operates out of several immigration courts in the country. This program acts as a vital resource to unrepresented individuals in non-detained removal proceedings. Attorneys at the Help Desk assist pro se immigrants with filling out applications for relief, filing simple motions, and provide group workshops and orientations. The Help Desk has been widely applauded for

The Trump administration’s ability to influence policy through hateful rhetoric and fear mongering, through executive memorandum and order, and through manipulation of the immigration courts has already eroded due process and sent a clear message that immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are not welcome in the United States.

helping expedite and streamline the judicial process, while providing limited scope access to counsel and ensuring due process.

These announcements come only one week after Sessions issued a directive to immigration judges imposing strict quotas on case metrics, demanding that judges complete more cases more quickly. Immigration judges have expressed concerns that quotas and case metrics impede their ability to independently adjudicate cases. The Executive Office for Immigration Review, the agency governing the immigration court system, operates under the authority of the Department of Justice and the attorney general. It is not a function of the judicial branch. Calls for an independent judiciary are even more important now as Sessions and Trump espouse their anti-immigrant, anti-asylum views publicly, including by comparing Central American asylum seekers to MS-13 gang members. Simply put, the administration is trying to build a deportation machine that strips individuals of due process.

As further evidence, in recent months Sessions has begun certifying immigration cases to himself in an attempt to reverse existing case law to better reflect the Trump administration's overall disdain for immigrants and asylum seekers and erode due process within the immigration court system. In one such case, Sessions is attempting to reverse a 2014 case precedent that permitted women who are victims of domestic violence abroad, in countries where a government is unable or unwilling to provide meaningful protection, to qualify for asylum in the United States. Similarly, Sessions is attempting to limit judicial ability to grant continuances when otherwise appropriate. These acts are unfortunately within the attorney general's authority, but they highlight the need for an independent immigration court system not beholden to the politics of the day.

The United States: A Hostile Country Rather than a Safe Haven

Absent from the shifting policies and changing rhetoric described above is any new congressional legislation amending or modifying the statutes affecting asylum seekers. However, the Trump administration's ability to influence policy through hateful rhetoric and fear mongering, through executive memorandum and order, and through manipulation of the immigration courts has already eroded due process and sent a clear message that immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are not welcome in the United States. This message has resonated with some of the more extreme anti-immigrant legislators in our nation's capital, and it may be only a matter of time before some of those ideas manifest themselves in more sweeping anti-immigrant and anti-refugee legislation.

There once was a time when refugees, in particular, were not a partisan topic of discussion. In recent presidential administrations, Republicans and Democrats alike joined together in discussions of immigration reform. Even now, most lawmakers and the vast majority of Americans are united in their support of DACA recipients and DREAMers.

The Trump administration has managed to stoke fears about immigrants and encourage nativist "America first" ideas that serve to divide our country and turn our backs on one of our longest-standing principles. We are a nation of immigrants, and in the aftermath of World War II we made a clear commitment to stand up for the rights of the oppressed who fled their home countries after suffering persecution. Maintaining those values is essential for this country to move forward and continue leading the way as a safe haven for refugees and asylum seekers. *PDM*

Jenna Gilbert is the managing attorney of the Los Angeles office of Human Rights First, where she oversees the pro bono legal representation of indigent asylum seekers. She provides support to volunteer lawyers from law firms in the Los Angeles area who represent asylum seekers at all levels of the system. She also provides information and legal services to asylum seekers in U.S. Department of Homeland Security detention and helps to coordinate their legal representation. Prior to her role as managing attorney, Jenna was a staff attorney in both the New York and Los Angeles offices of Human Rights First. She is a frequent speaker on immigration-related topics affecting asylum seekers.

Welcomed to the Table

An Interview with Miry Whitehill, Founder and CEO of Miry's List

Interviewed by Brooke Adams

Miry Whitehill did not plan for a visit to the Los Angeles apartment of an immigrant family to spark the birth of a non-profit organization helping new arrival families feel safe upon resettlement in LA. Whitehill, founder and CEO of the non-profit organization Miry's List, began her plight to address problems concerning settling immigrant families by formulating Amazon wish lists for the specific needs of a new arrival family. Anyone could then purchase items from the list which would be directly sent to the family.

After the start of wish lists in 2016, lending to the name Miry's "List," Whitehill has grown her organization to encompass numerous programs welcoming new arrival immigrant families into communities. Through the New Arrival Super Club program, Miry's List is influencing public perception of immigrant families through the sharing of food. Cultural diplomacy can be utilized not only by governments, but by organizations like Miry's List, who are in communities, listening to problems, and creating solutions. Whitehill set out to address a problem, leading to Miry's List, an organization acting as a mechanism for a positive change in public perception of new arrival immigrant families in Los Angeles.

Whitehill recently sat down with *Public Diplomacy*

Magazine to discuss her work.

***Public Diplomacy Magazine:* What was the problem Miry's List initially desired to address?**

Miry Whitehill: To provide resettling new arrival families with the supplies they needed to feel safe.

Could you explain the three pillars of Miry's List?

There are three phases of our program: survive, hive, and thrive. "Survive" is the state most families are arriving in: survival mode. It's something we have all felt when you feel like you cannot control your own life. In this "survive" phase, this psychological jail where you must be quiet and a secret to survive, the things that we address are the people, services, and supplies to help individual families feel supported. We are not going to solve all their problems, but we are going to communicate to them, so through their problems they are not alone. We want them to be rested and relaxed. A lot of the times it is as simple as sleeping off jet lag, but other times it is much more complex. The thing that would take one person out of



The Miry's List team at the New Arrival Festival on June 28, 2018, at the Pico House in downtown LA | Photo by Christina Gandolfo

survival mode won't work for another. It begins when the family steps off the plane.

The next phase is "hive," when we surround a new arrival family with our hive like swarming bees. We enroll them in our wish list program and a network that welcomes them. The ways in which hive has manifested are as simple as neighbors hosting a new arrival family's wish list so people can anonymously send the families needed diapers. It isn't necessarily something a case worker is going to address when they are meeting with them once a week or every other week.

The last phase is "thrive," what we ultimately want to empower our families to achieve. This looks like a family where parents are employed, kids are in school, and they are secure in their support system. We have not solved all of their problems. For example, after nine months of resettlement you may have a basic level of English to use, but it has also been nine months since you have seen your mother. Dealing with the long-term longing for people you consider your "home" we cannot take away. But when

families are in "thrive" they will contact someone in Miry's List to ask if they can volunteer. This is the easiest way for us to tell that a family has reached the "thrive" point of resettlement, a milestone where the family is secure enough in their own needs that they now look out the window and say, "I wonder if my neighbor needs help, what about the families coming after me, what about the families with twice as many kids as me?" It is healing for someone to be of service to someone else. It's what happened to me.

Where has Miry's List seen the biggest disparity between the reality of new arrival families and public perception?

There is definitely a perception out there—indeed it was my perception before beginning this work—that the troubles for refugees begin when they get resettled and the perception is that the system will take care of them. The news covers a lot about the problems of "refugees." When I say "refugees," I mean people who are awaiting resettlement. People waiting for their lives and if they win the lottery, basically, they

are awarded resettlement. So much of it is just luck.

There is also the perception once they are here in Los Angeles they are fine, and the danger is over. The reality is very far from this as the chapter of being a refugee has ended while the chapter of being in a new neighborhood has a whole new host and portfolio of challenges. In some ways the risks are much higher. In America, there is the risk of falling through the cracks, psychologically drowning, the risk of continuing to be a refugee in your mind when you are no longer physically a refugee. The system does not have them covered. We are right here in the neighborhood and we can help fill in those blanks.

How do family advocate volunteers work to fill in those blanks?

Any and everything. We designed and developed our organization based off the needs our families express.

When we are enrolling a family in our program we ask them, "What do you need to feel safe?" So, a father saying he needs a driver's license to feel safe, so he can get a job and support his family, is a very practical need. It's also the perfect thing to match with a volunteer because you don't need special training to pick up a neighbor at their

house, take them to the DMV, and find the in-language driving handbook, then drop them off at home. You don't need to be a professional driver to drive around a parking lot with someone and teach them how to read street signs.

If a mother is 12 weeks pregnant, has never been seen by an OBGYN, and is living in a motel room because she arrived 72 hours ago in Los Angeles from Afghanistan, for her to feel safe she wants to be seen by a doctor. The answer to wait for your Medi-Cal card to arrive is going to make her feel anxious and terrified. We bring in doulas to motel rooms to sit with her, talk about her symptoms, and say, "I want to go with you to the ER to get these tests done so you feel safe until you are meeting with your doctor." There is really no limit to what a volunteer is capable of because there is really no limit to what humans are capable of.

What is New Arrivals Supper Club?

New Arrivals Supper Club (NASC) is our program for employing new arrival chefs to prepare meals for their neighbors and others who want to welcome them. We sell tickets and they make money. Our first NASC was February 14, 2017, and it sold out in two hours. NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt came, and we knew very quickly this was the beginning of a model that would be embraced by Southern California. Since then, we have continued with monthly dinners.

What has been the audience response to NASC, those who have come to these dinners, bought tickets, and had these meals cooked for them by your families?

So many people only know about Miry's List through the supper club. That is what I call our gateway drug to ML. It's not like we're doing anything that crazy or special, it is as simple as coming to an event, meeting one family, eating a meal, sitting at a table full of people, maybe a couple you know but most you don't, and the only thing we all have in common is that we want to meet our new neighbors. It's very moving. It's unforgettable for the people who attend.

How do new arrival families respond to the opportunity to cook meals for their neighbors?

Changed perception or attitudes is something we can decipher in retrospect. In five years, we will be able to look back and see the attitude shifts. What I see and hear are what our families tell us. At every event, one representative from the new arrival family cooking the meal speaks, welcomes guests, talks about the food and their family's experience, and expresses thanks. I think it is very uplifting for the families because as a refugee, you take what you are given.

The role of a refugee is basically to wait, be told what to do, where to go, and who to be. When we hire a family to cook for a dinner, we ask them to curate

The refugee crisis will never be solved, but we are chipping it down. We can make change attainable. We are not powerless.

a menu based on questions such as: what are your comfort foods? What do you simply enjoy cooking? What foods make your kids smile? What are the smells that remind you of home? The goal of New Arrival Super Club is not “new American-Syrian fusion,” this is about comfort foods and sharing culture, allowing families to be culturally proud. This is a position most families who are cooking have not had the opportunity to be in.

You come here as a refugee and you must become American by learning English, getting a driver’s license, and learning our laws, but their culture is so beautiful and delicious and warm and inviting. Part of what makes this a wonderful country is we have a melting pot. Ultimately, for families in the thrive category this a launching point. We have paid over \$10,000 in salaries to new arrival chefs over the last 60 days. Financially, it is a wonderful opportunity, but emotionally and spiritually the feeling of pride for a family and affirmation that their culture and cooking are wonderful.

What other opportunities has Miry’s List been given because of the New Arrival Supper Club?

Miry’s List has been given many amazing opportunities. We have not sought out any of them, all came from people approaching us asking if they can participate. We got a call from a production company, Participant Media, who initially heard about us because of our Amazon wish lists for new arrival families. They were screening the film *Human Flow* about the global migrant population and crisis and asked if we would cater the reception. We were already going to say yes, and then Participant informed us the screening was for the Academy and we said, “Hell yes.” At that point we just had a New Arrival Supper Club at Zweet Café, catered by the Kanjo family from Syria. I was so impressed with how professional they were and the mouthwatering meal. I felt the Participant opportunity belongs to the Kanjos. Two days later, we get a call asking if we can also cater a breakfast for the British Academy screening. We invited key members of our

team to the screening with Participant. Half of our staff are previous recipients of Miry’s List programs.

Everything Ai Wei Wei touches is stunning; the subject matter is heavy, but he made it beautiful. There are triggers in *Human Flow* for immigrants, especially those experiencing the immigration process right now. This film showed things that were immigrant families’ reality and world for a long time. Things they will never forget or some things they have forgotten. So, we told our team, we want you there if you want to be there. You can come and leave. You can come and stay. You can come and stand outside. At the screening, we sat in the back row with our Miry’s List people. I sat in the back row behind the director of operations and logistics for our El Cahon project. He is from Syria and had just celebrated his one-year America-versary. I watched two and a half hours of the most breathtaking and heart wrenching film and watched our director of operations in front of

me—this big, tough man—with tears running down his face. It was a reminder for me while he is strong, powerful, and is himself a support system for hundreds of people, he is still someone dealing with his own pain.

After the film and a Q&A session hosted by Angelina Jolie with Ai Wei Wei, everyone emerged to this beautiful dinner reception catered by a Miry’s List new arrival family. It is not

the answer to the crisis, but it is an answer to one problem. We cannot solve all the problems *Human Flow* depicted, but we can come out and meet one family who painstakingly cooked a beautiful meal.

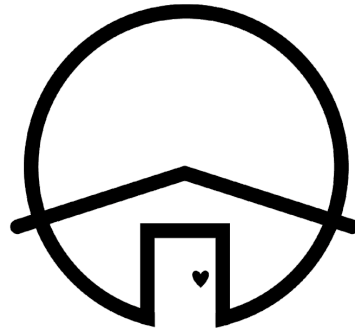
Now, we cater a monthly staff lunch at Participant Media and the Kanjos are in-house new arrival resident chefs. Participant has always done a monthly staff lunch with a traditional caterer. Everyone from the administrative assistants to interns to the president of the company shows up, which was not previously happening. These lunches have become a career for the Kanjo family. Ideally, I want companies all over Los Angeles who are already catering staff lunches to be matched with a resident new arrival chef instead. Companies and new arrival families can build a relationship. This is the vision. To create an intimate

There is a perception that once refugees arrive in Los Angeles they are fine, and the danger is over. The reality is very far from this.

experience around food cooked by new arrival families.

How do you hope Miry's List will impact the refugee conversation?

The biggest answer is people realizing they can easily have an impact. There is this big wall up when it comes to wanting to help resettling families because people do not know how. There are a lot of organizations where you can donate money, but the question is how it impacts the family and what is happening to the families once they come here. So, allowing people to have direct access to our families and letting our families have direct access to their neighbors simplifies things. The refugee crisis will never be solved, but we are chipping it down. Forget the word "crisis," let's talk about families. Forget the word "families," let's talk about people. Forget the word "people," let's talk about diapers. Miry's List wants to make it so simple and attainable to help new arrival families. For me, this was empowering when I met that first family I delivered baby supplies to. I was in a time in my life where I was having my own crisis and my life seemed completely unsolvable. Then I met this family in their own crisis, which for them was a crib with no mattress, kitchen cabinets with no dishes, and a bathroom with no towels. A crib mattress, towels, dishes, those are three really easy to solve problems. Let's do that. Then multiply this by hundreds of families, thousands of people, and we make change attainable to the refugee crisis. We can fix things. We are not powerless. *PDM*



MIRY'S LIST

Visit miryslist.org to learn more.

Miry Whitehill started Miry's List in July 2016 when a friend introduced her to a family of new arrival Syrian refugees resettling in Los Angeles with kids the same age as her own. Until then, she was a stay-at-home mom and community activist with 10 years' experience in digital marketing. She speaks fluent Hebrew and is learning Arabic in the car on an app with her sons. Whitehill can typically be found digging in the garden with her sons, Reuben and Sabo, or walking around Occidental College with her dog, Leroy.

Brooke Adams is a Master of Public Diplomacy candidate in the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California and holds a B.A. in English Literature from Azusa Pacific University. Brooke has worked with community development projects in Mexico, South Africa, and Uganda, leading to a passion for empowering others to create lasting change. She is the American program coordinator for an American-Ugandan public health partnership, chief storyteller for the non-profit the Dream Box, and managing editor for *Public Diplomacy Magazine*.

Refugee Integration in the United States and Germany through the Welcoming Communities Transatlantic Exchange Program

By Carolina Sheinfeld*

**The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and not those of LAFLA.*

Background on U.S. Resettlement

After the 2016 U.S. elections, many of us in the immigrant integration field were uncertain of what to expect from the new administration. It was not long before several executive orders would change the landscape of our work and our ability to help those in need of protection.

Since January 2017, we have seen three different Travel Bans—including one Refugee Ban—as well as the end of the in-country refugee processing for Central American minors and an unprecedented reduction of the yearly quota of refugee admissions to the United States. In turn, hundreds of refugee resettlement programs are experiencing budget cuts and

brain drain, constraining the capacity of reception and placement operations of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP).

A public-private partnership, the USRAP is the world's largest formal refugee resettlement program. Together with Australia and Canada it receives 90 percent of the refugees referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).¹ Until recently, it had been a model for other countries interested in becoming active in resettlement.

For fiscal year 2018, U.S. resettlement agencies are anticipating the lowest number of refugee admissions in the program's history, given that as of April 30, 2018, only 12,188 refugees² have arrived (of a

maximum set capacity determined by the president at 45,000).³ For comparison, since 1980, the United States has resettled as many as 207,116 refugees per year (in 1980, mostly Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees) and as few as 27,131⁴ (in 2002, due to a temporary slow-down of the program post-September 11).

Global Refugee Crisis

While the need for protection for people on the move has been on the rise in the past decade, the global refugee crisis became the center of attention in 2015, shortly after the death of Alan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned in the Mediterranean as his family was trying to reach Europe. That devastating image of Alan lying face down on the beach wearing a red shirt woke people up around the world and made the dimension of the problem more evident than ever before. Former High Commissioner for Refugees and now UN Secretary General António Guterres shortly after the incident very bluntly said, “Unfortunately, only when the poor enter the halls of the rich, do the rich notice that the poor exist.”⁵

Intro to the U.S. Refugee Crisis

While this was just beginning across the Atlantic, the United States had already been dealing with its own refugee crisis due to a surge of arrivals of immigrants in need of humanitarian protection during 2014. Thousands of unaccompanied minors from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala arrived in the United States, collapsing an already backed-up asylum system.

Since then, more than 130,000 unaccompanied minors have arrived at the United States.⁶ And more continue to arrive to date. California has had the largest influx of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum from the Northern Triangle, who were escaping violence in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala. From October 2014 to September 2017, more than 18,000 migrant

children who arrived at the United States without a parent were connected with their families in California.⁷

U.S. Response

The U.S. refugee crisis did not make the global news for as long as the Mediterranean crisis did, but it received plenty of attention by the service community in Los Angeles. In the United States, unaccompanied, undocumented minors are placed in special homes for short-term care under the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement. The most urgent need of the children, after being reunified with their family members in the United States, is securing legal representation to obtain relief from deportation, which is a sometimes long and complex process. This explains why the initial response to the crisis of

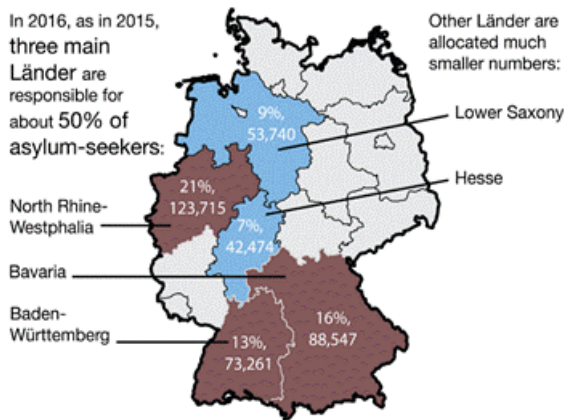
We felt empowered after showing the German team the Los Angeles we know: a caring and compassionate community full of citizen diplomats that will stand for the immigrants, the refugees, and the voiceless.

Central American refugees in 2014 came from the legal service community (NGOs) which activated networks like the Asylum Collaborative of Los Angeles and convened service providers, local governments, school districts, and community-based organizations to provide community education to parents and custodians in the city and

to find ways to assist and protect the children from deportation.

The Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, under the leadership of Dr. Linda Lopez, involved local foundations to support and expand the work on behalf of these children and ensured there were enough shelters in the Los Angeles area until they were reunified with family members. From these collaborations, many new networks developed, such as the Unaccompanied Undocumented Minors network that includes legal and social service providers in addition to other initiatives from faith-based groups, such as the UCARE (Unaccompanied Central American Refugee Empowerment) Coalition, that have been able to provide more assistance to the refugee children beyond the legal services and that have helped them heal and integrate into their new communities.

Quota of selected Länder, respective numbers of registrations



IOM: Migration, Asylum and Refugees in Germany: Understanding the Data (Jan. 2016)⁹

Dealing with this crisis allowed many of us to connect as a community and showed us the support for social justice initiatives in our city. While it has been four years since the crisis began, there are different sets of challenges now that require our attention, such as family reintegration, avoiding school dropout, and accessing employment without sacrificing higher education.

Background on Germany's Migrant Policy

During 2015, Germany received over 1 million people seeking protection (asylum seekers)⁸ from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other war-torn countries. Upon arrival and registration, asylum seekers would be distributed to different *Länder* (states) and assigned housing accordingly.

Once settled, they would start the application process and their cases would be evaluated under the different forms of relief. This burden-sharing system and the availability of services for asylum seekers are both very different from the United States, where asylum seekers who are out of detention centers do not have access to public benefits or public housing.

In Germany, between 2015 and 2016, hundreds of citizen-led initiatives appeared on the map, as the

volunteerism movement in the country experienced a historic peak. Everybody—retired teachers, private sector professionals, heads of households, and students—wanted to give them shelter and assist in the response. However, with time, it became more challenging to keep volunteers engaged in integration efforts and not just limited to in-kind donations. Some local governments addressed this issue with the creation of “Welcome Points” that were of help not just to the new arrivals but also to members of the receiving communities interested in assisting.

A number of events and incidents of crime and the respective media coverage (or lack thereof) at the end of 2016 created tensions in the receiving communities and the perception of refugees and asylum seekers changed significantly.

Background on the WCTE Program in Germany

Considering the varied demographics of the arrival population and their odyssey to get to Germany, there was no one-size-fits-all preferred type of assistance. A holistic approach was needed to tend to the multiple necessities of the displaced. Housing, feeding, and distributing the new arrivals throughout Germany using the already mentioned distribution quota (*Königsteiner Schlüssel*)¹⁰ were the primary concerns. However, a long-term plan and new ideas were crucial to assist in the process of integration of these new arrivals to Germany.

The Welcoming Communities Transatlantic Exchange (WCTE) program was conceived in 2015 to create a support network for German integration practitioners. At that time, given the reputation and dynamism of the United States' immigrant integration landscape, they looked across the Atlantic for guidance to develop new initiatives and to envision the long-term impact of those arrivals. Yearly since 2016, this exchange program has allowed 25 professionals from five German communities to travel to the United States and 16 professionals from four U.S. communities travel to Germany. In 2017, Los Angeles was selected as one of the U.S. communities to participate in the exchange. By the end of the program in 2018, 27 communities will have benefited from this exchange.

Organized and administered by Cultural Vistas, Wel-

coming America, and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung North America, this program is funded by the Transatlantic Program of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany's Ministry of Economics and Energy (BMWi) as well as by the U.S. Department of State, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, and BMW Group. Its aim is to create welcoming communities by sharing and learning best practices and challenges experienced in welcoming immigrants and refugees in both countries.

The political environment and tensions around the topic of immigration have changed significantly in both countries since the inception of the program which needs to focus on integration and self-reliance of new arrivals and the impact of such groups on the receiving communities' economies and cultures.

Need for Innovative Solutions and Sharing Experiences

In comparison to Germany, U.S. numbers for 2015 (approximately 70,000 formally accepted refugees, 26,000 asylees,¹¹ and 120,000 asylum seekers¹²) sound much lower than the 1 million arrivals that Germany received. We should take into account, however, that the United States does not receive spontaneous arrivals due to its own border controls and Mexico's, whose government between 2014 and 2016 detained and deported more than 450,000 migrants¹³ through its Southern Border Program. Additionally, those that manage to enter the United States without a visa are not registered until they request a form of protection, so the U.S. numbers could be much higher if these factors were considered.

Throughout 2016, a group of colleagues and I had been reading and hearing about the German response to the refugee crisis, and learned about this exchange opportunity through Welcoming America, which we thought would be invaluable as we looked for innovative solutions to our ongoing refugee crisis. We

thought that sitting down with our German counterparts and discussing long-term strategies for assisting unaccompanied refugee minors and other new arrivals would be a good way to think outside the box. We also thought that some of our lessons learned should be shared with them.

Our team included Nicole Mitchell of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD); Dr. Linda Lopez of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs; Reverend David Farley of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE); and me, representing the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles (LAFLA) and the Refugee Forum of Los Angeles. Our proposal was selected to participate in the 2017 Welcoming

While it has been four years since the crisis began, there are different sets of challenges now that require our attention, such as family reintegration, avoiding school dropout, and accessing employment without sacrificing higher education.

Communities Transatlantic Exchange Program together with Nashville, Detroit, and Salt Lake City. As part of this exchange, we would receive the five selected German communities from the cities of Düsseldorf, Freiburg, Kreis Duren, Leipzig, and Münster and later in the year travel to Germany to continue the exercise.

Los Angeles: Agenda

Twenty-five German immigrant integration professionals came to the United States between April and May 2017, a mix of state and civil society actors including elected officials, local government employees, volunteers, and NGO practitioners. They visited Washington, D.C., together and were later split in three smaller groups that traveled to Detroit, Nashville, and Salt Lake City, respectively. All five communities concluded their tour in Los Angeles, where "Team LA" had prepared a packed agenda around two topics: Los Angeles as a welcoming city, and how we have been responding to the unaccompanied refugee minors crisis since 2014. From May 5-9 they met with different stakeholders from the public and private sectors involved in immigrant and refugee welcome.

The program started with a visit to a Welcome Center

that serves the unaccompanied minors and their family members upon reunification. We started by talking about the lack of government-sponsored legal representation for immigrants in proceedings—including children—which, together with the fact that children can be put in deportation proceedings, was quite shocking for our guests. During that visit, they learned about all the different actors involved in the journey upon entry to the United States and how we were able to create a coordinated response.

On the following days, the participants heard about services for immigrants through the Citizenship Corners (recently rebranded “New American Centers”) at the Los Angeles Public Library. They visited City Hall and learned about the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, the creation of the Los Angeles Justice Fund, and the role of the Los Angeles Police Department in protecting immigrants and its historic Special Order 40. Additionally, participants had a chance to visit the largest Mexican Consulate General in the world, where they were impressed by the numerous services

offered to the approximately 1 million citizens who are part of the Mexican diaspora residing in the city as well as the diplomatic efforts to build relationships between the state of California and Mexico. Another important meeting during their visit was with resettlement agencies and other members of the Refugee Forum of Los Angeles, where they exchanged ideas around some of their innovative projects to provide psycho-social support for refugee minors.

The LA program concluded with a panel led by USC Professor Manuel Pastor, who wrapped up the learning experience with a discussion on the city’s landscape and evolution and its leadership in immigrant integration. Here, the German delegates met leaders of two major local foundations (Weingart Foundation and California Community Foundation) who contributed substantially to the creation of the LA Justice Fund, which has distributed \$10 million to local non-profit agencies to represent immigrants in removal proceedings—and who were also instrumental in the creation of the Our Children Relief Fund¹⁴ in



German WCTE delegates during a visit to LA City Hall, May 2017

2014 which funded operations of non-profit agencies in Los Angeles County that were providing immigrant integration supported services to unaccompanied minors.

This was an enriching experience for both the German and the American teams, where we built bridges, discovered our commonalities, created new bonds, and strengthened existing ones that would allow us to do our work with a fresh perspective. We felt empowered after showing them the Los Angeles we know: a caring and compassionate community full of citizen diplomats that will stand for the immigrants, the refugees, and the voiceless. La La Land is so much more than what they had expected and seeing our city through their eyes gave us great satisfaction to continue our fight.

Team LA goes to Germany

Overall, 2017 was a difficult year for immigrant integration practitioners in the United States. Refugee admissions dropped following the temporary halt of the refugee program. Executive orders were issued imposing three different travel bans for immigrants from Muslim majority countries and numerous lawsuits were filed to challenge the bans while hundreds of protests across the country became the norm. The community went through unbearable uncertainty but at the local and state levels, our partnerships strengthened and our institutions responded with bold alternatives and funding for programs that would ultimately allow the protection of those immigrants already here, their families, and our communities.

Just one week after our German colleagues left Los Angeles in May 2017, I went on maternity leave and embarked in a whole new journey. 2017 was indeed a hard year, but in spite of all those difficulties, the two things that I will remember the most are the birth of my daughter Olivia and participating in this exchange. Fortunately, in November 2017, I got to combine both of them, as Team LA traveled to Germany with a five-month old baby, ready to learn about immigrant and refugee integration practices.

Our teams learned about the way Germany received and welcomed asylum seekers and were impressed with the availability of services for immigrants in need of humanitarian protection whilst their cases were yet to be decided. The themes covered during the exchange were the German federal system and the asylum process; refugee housing; integration response; policies and procedures at local, federal, and EU levels; empowerment of refugees and immigrants; civic participation for migrants; workplace integration (vocational training); and the role of charities.

We started the German tour in Düsseldorf where we met with all the selected U.S. teams from Detroit, Nashville, and Salt Lake City and our German colleagues. This was our introduction to the German refugee resettlement system, at the capital of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), the most populated state in Germany. We met with NGO staff, volunteers, refugees,

and local and regional civic officials (including the new commissioner for refugees, the mayor of Düsseldorf and the head of home affairs at the state chancellery for the NRW to the European Union). The diversity of stakeholders

involved in the process was eye-opening, and the type of services they aimed at providing was inspiring.

Access to housing was one of the services that differ considerably from our services in the United States, especially when talking about asylum seekers. While their cases are still to be decided (which most likely takes three to four years), asylum seekers in the United States do not have access to temporary housing or public benefits. This is a big challenge in a city as expensive as Los Angeles, and seeing that Germany had given priority to this service to new arrivals was mesmerizing.

From Düsseldorf, some of us traveled to Freiburg, in the southwest of Germany, at the borders with both Switzerland and France. By meeting with different stakeholders, we had started to understand the distribution of responsibilities among them. The federal government dealt with initial registration and distribution; the states/*Länder* dealt with housing; counties

The two things that I will remember the most are the birth of my daughter and participating in this exchange.



Members of the LA Team: David Farley (UMC/CLUE), Dr. Linda Lopez (Mayor's Office), Nicole Mitchell (LAUSD-SEPA Center), and Carolina Sheinfeld (LAFLA & Refugee Forum of LA) with daughter Olivia

and urban districts dealt with their preliminary accommodations; municipalities dealt with subsequent accommodations; and, ultimately, the individual would be responsible for their permanent housing. In the case of Freiburg, they provide public housing for 3,000 people and 55 percent of them are asylum seekers.

We visited the Office of Migration and Integration (Abteilung für Migration und Integration, or AMI), where we witnessed a great model of service provision and highlight of the exchange. It is a one-stop shop for asylum seekers, whose different departments help with integration, housing, benefits, and immigration/legal services.

Also in Freiburg, we met with colleagues from Caritas that are providing legal and social services to unaccompanied refugee minors, which has been one of our focuses in Los Angeles since 2014. They shared that in 2015, the federal government responded with fund-

ing to support specialized integration services, which allowed their teams to grow and specialize. Also, it was reaffirming to hear that they, too, were paying attention to staff and volunteer wellness, to ensure the sustainability of the sector. While in Southern California (and through the United States) we see multiple nationalities seeking asylum according to political changes around the world and the diasporas. We learned that in Germany five countries are given preference at the time of getting refugee status: Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Eritrea, and Syria. This can make it more difficult for those coming from North and sub-Saharan Africa, who might have valid claims of persecution and are also seeking humanitarian protection.

An area that was very different between Germany and the United States was language acquisition and integration. In the United States, the main focus for integration is obtaining employment, regardless of the refugee's limited English proficiency. This may be



Members of the U.S. team (Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, Detroit, and Nashville) with colleagues from Caritas Freiburg, learning about legal and social services for refugees

connected to the fact that refugees with limited English proficiency can still get a job in the United States (which is very understandable in cities with large immigrant populations like Los Angeles). Differently, in Germany, while labor market integration is their paramount objective, the integration path for immigrants requires learning the German language first.

The other integration area that differs from the United States is citizenship. Having worked in the immigrant integration field for almost 15 years, I can attest that the final goal and the ultimate protection for humanitarian immigrants is citizenship. Allowing them to have a new nationality, the one of the country that received and protected them, fills refugees with pride and honor. It will also open additional doors to them, as U.S. citizens can vote, run for office, work for the federal government, and petition for additional family members. Naturalizing to become a U.S. citizen is the ultimate goal.

From my point of view, in Germany that did not seem to be a priority yet. While Germany has a long-standing tradition of being an immigration country and while availability of services to immigrants is quite comprehensive, with this latest wave of humanitarian immigrants that started in 2015 the focus still seems to be on meeting immediate needs and not on long-term strategies such as citizenship and political participation. However, I have no doubt that as the new groups adjust and contribute to German society and as the

perception of them as just vulnerable immigrants, integration priorities will continue to evolve and more weight will be given to these groups becoming German citizens.

At the conclusion of our visit to Germany, U.S. teams designed and committed to action plans for each of their cities, inspired by what we witnessed. In Los Angeles, for the past five months, we have been actively working to make the city more welcoming by connecting more with the receiving community. We returned to Los Angeles energized with vibrant ideas and with new partners whom we expect to continue building vibrant and resilient communities with.

At a key moment for the relationship between the U.S. government and the German federal government, this type of exchanges at a citizen level bring a breeze of fresh air and help build bridges for transatlantic collaboration on a topic where mutual exchange can provide solutions to some of our common problems around immigrant integration.

After three years of exchanges, Cultural Vistas, Welcoming America, and Heinrich Böll Foundation will conclude the WCTE in November 2018 with a conference organized and led by alumni of the program. The presentations will combine U.S. and German team members under the theme “The Future of Welcoming Communities” and will take place in Berlin. Although the refugee rights sector has been experiencing chal-

lenging times, the WCTE program has been able to revitalize the efforts of these refugee integration practitioners in both countries in the hope that its impact will continue well into the future and that newcomers in need of humanitarian protection receive the support they need to start new lives and become integral parts of their new communities. *PDM*

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Carolina Sheinfeld has been with the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles since 2003, first as an international human rights analyst and most recently as the project coordinator for the foundation's Torture Survivors Project. With a team of four attorneys and one social worker, her program provides legal assistance, case management, and community education to refugees and asylum seekers and facilitates the integration process of vulnerable immigrant groups. Her program serves survivors from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Carolina is responsible for external relations and program development for her project and most recently, her work has focused on newcomer populations, including unaccompanied minors from Central America and Syrians seeking asylum. To connect old and new practitioners and to promote the exchange of information, she developed a professional network for legal and social providers called the Asylum Collaborative of Los Angeles, which has been in existence for over a decade. In 2016, she serves as chair of the Refugee Forum of Los Angeles. She holds a Master of Public Diplomacy from USC's Annenberg School for Communications and Journalism and is a Fellow for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Programme since 2011.

Critical Acclaim of *Hamilton* and the Immigrant as an American Archetype

By Jenna Elizabeth Russo

In Lin-Manuel Miranda's critically acclaimed *Hamilton: An American Musical*, immigration plays an important and prevalent theme in the narrative of Hamilton's identity and public reputation.

The musical opens with both the paradox and the revelation: "How does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore, and a Scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten spot in the Caribbean, by providence impoverished, in squalor, grow up to be a hero and a scholar?"

The audience learns that as a child, the orphaned Alexander Hamilton relied on his faith and longing to be part of something larger than himself to maintain hope despite the brutalities he witnessed. Like a magician, Hamilton transformed the convenience of physical or moral death into a fervent desire to write his authority and survival into existence. People recognized in him a unique, even insane, persistence to transcend the barriers that most surrendered to in resignation. Impressed by his work ethic and voracious appetite for books and learning, the local Caribbean community gathered its resources to send Hamilton to New York, which held the promise of his becoming a "new man."

A new man Alexander Hamilton certainly became in terms of his outward achievements, but the scepter of

his roots continued to haunt him and shake his identity. Mention of his family caused his attention to scatter and his hands to fidget, and his relentless search for the beyond left him unsatisfied with the present. In spite of his Ivy League education, military service, and appointment to the first presidential cabinet of the United States, Hamilton wrote in a race against the clock, as if he were living a dream that could vanish in an instant, as if everything he built—including himself—were as precarious as quicksand.

Colleagues were simultaneously in awe of his brilliance and suspicious of his intentions. Aaron Burr, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams were eager to dismiss Hamilton as a "bastard, orphan, son of a whore," but could not deny that "the immigrant kept them on their toes." Though Hamilton had amassed unprecedented financial power and created the first national banking system, colleagues jeered that he only did so with "Daddy" Washington's endorsement, without which "he would be nothing." His foreign roots constantly subjected him to accusations of disloyalty, deception, crookedness, and desperation.

Like Hamilton, America, too, found itself orphaned in declaring its independence, and relied on its faith in a new world to defeat the great odds of failure. "How

does a ragtag volunteer army in need of a shower somehow defeat a global superpower? How do we emerge victorious from the quagmire?" Like Hamilton, America dreamed of bringing the unimaginable to fruition, and of uniting a people whose hunger to govern themselves and create their own narratives would forge an unprecedented society.

But also similar to Hamilton, America's roots lurked dangerously close. King George's promises that America would be defeated and forced to return submissively to Britain highlighted the vulnerability of the national psyche. And while foreigners like Marquis de Lafayette fortified the American army, they also represented America's departure from tradition and lack of historical legitimacy in the eyes of the world stage.

In this sense, Hamilton and America served as mirrors of each other, both painstakingly aware of their role in birthing a new symphony where people could compose history, rather than being composed by it. And yet, history did compose Hamilton and America, for where they came from informed

where they were going and why they desired to challenge the human narrative. Burr questioned how an obnoxious loudmouth like Hamilton could be seated at the right hand of the father (George Washington), while America negotiated its estrangement from its "father," King George. This language is deeply imbued with Christian significance, and posits questions of salvation or estrangement from heaven.

When Americans are grappling over issues of immigration and border diplomacy, therefore, perhaps underlying these questions is a deeper concern over whether departure from tradition is divinely sanctioned. In a society rooted in the separation of church and state, mention of divinity might seem out of place. But our nation is home to many peoples who have left

their home to write a new story, and yet carry their homes with them. And our nation, itself, violently departed from its home of Britain, and yet has arguably carried a desire for historical approval ever since, as evident in its imperial emulations. Where is the divine in those departures and returns? What form of power is sanctioned—the power to leave and forge a new path, the power of rooting oneself in tradition, or an unprecedented combination of the two?

In other words, so central is the immigrant to America's identity that as an archetype, it has become both its hero and its shadow. America is founded on the hope and faith that people can become the authority of their own lives, regardless of their origins. Yet we have not made psychic peace with our own origins, and therefore that same narrative is also a threat

So central is the immigrant to America's identity that as an archetype, it has become both its hero and its shadow. We have not made psychic peace with our own origins, and therefore that same narrative is also a threat because we do not know if it is possible to truly transform one's roots.

because we do not know how it ends or if it is possible to truly transform one's roots. The path might lie in a reconciliation of the present and the past, of innovation and tradition, so that the road to the future is not an escape from history, but an embrace of its strengths and poten-

tial and forgiveness for its shortcomings.

Given *Hamilton's* immense popularity, these challenges may be more familiar to the collective American psyche than we explicitly acknowledge. Perhaps the subject of immigration requires a news lens then, through which we recognize our motivations for debating quotas and which peoples and cultures are welcome to cross our border. Underlying these discussions lie different perceptions as to who we are as Americans in the historical past, present, and future, and to what extent we take comfort in our own lack of rootedness, so to speak. The unique beauty and enigma of America derives from the fact that if you trace the lineage of most people here, you reach a different country. We are suspicious of the foreigner despite the

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fact that we are predominantly foreign, and romanticize a return to authenticity when we are largely dissociated from the traditions native to this land.

The American dream is so powerful in its appeal to people throughout the world that it must, in some significant sense, offer the promise of something real. But in order for that dream to manifest and not be a castle in the sand, we might want to consider those aspects of our respective traditions we hope to sustain, and those which need to consciously be put to rest.

PDM



Lin-Manuel Miranda as Alexander Hamilton

Jenna Elizabeth Russo is a research associate at the Public International Law and Policy Group in Washington, D.C., and a dual JD/MA in International Affairs candidate at American University Washington College of Law. She envisions becoming a prominent voice for spiritual and cultural diplomacy, and has presented on these topics at the International Peace Research Association and Science and Non-Duality Conferences, respectively. Jenna graduated with a M.Div. Magna Cum Laude and a certificate in Religion and Conflict Transformation from Boston University School of Theology in 2017, and with a B.A. Cum Laude in Philosophy from Wellesley College in 2014, where she was also an Albright Fellow in International Affairs, a BOW Mellon Just Business Fellow, and the recipient of the 2014 Jorge Guillen Prize in Spanish Studies. She is fluent in Spanish and beginning to learn Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and French. Jenna is just as passionate about enjoying life as she is about her studies, and her ideal day would consist of cooking at home with family and friends and enjoying a long evening of dancing outdoors, laughing, and sharing stories and insights about life lessons and purpose. Jenna hopes that her existence will leave a lasting imprint of love and courage in the world.

Telling the Positive Stories of Refugees

By Dalal Mawad

People always ask me what it is like to cover refugees. Having spent more than five years now filming and writing about displaced people in the Middle East, I could say it is often painful and disheartening. But that is an answer you would probably expect. What you don't necessarily expect is this: refugees are not helpless people. They are beautiful human beings who often overcome hardship with so much courage and pride, they are ambitious men and women who still manage to dream, they are talented and skilled individuals who have made the best out of the worst possible situations, and from them, I have personally learned a great deal.

There are 65 million people displaced around the world. That's 22.5 million refugees, 40.3 million migrants, and 1.8 asylum seekers. The numbers are huge, and are actually unprecedented in history. But the continuous use of labels such as "refugee" or "migrant" and the constant use of figures can often dehumanize them. Displaced people are depicted as mere numbers, a mass or a large group, but rarely as individuals.

The refugees' stories you often come across in the media are mainly those of persecution and distress: men and women whose lives have turned into rubble, forced to flee through dangerous pathways to neighboring countries in the hope of finding peace and safety. They live in dreadful camp conditions, in deprivation and poverty. Their children are a lost generation. Families are drowning in the sea trying to reach Europe. Some governments have chosen to close their borders to refugees. These and more are just some of the issues the media has widely reported on, reflecting upon a grim reality faced by refugees every day. But

this is only part the story; another part is often untold.

I joined UNHCR's content team as a regional video producer in October 2015. I had already been reporting on refugees for mainstream media outlets, mainly focusing on the woes of displacement. I rarely had time to sit and chat with refugees at length. Coverage was brief and news-hungry. Once with UNHCR, there was more time and access to dig for stories, more time to film and spend with refugees.

UNHCR wanted to shed light on positive stories that had the power to humanize refugees by telling their individual stories, stories that break the stereotype of refugees being weak and hopeless persons. I started coming across inspirational men and women whose resilience is truly remarkable. I met a 20-year-old Syrian refugee in northern Iraq who lost both of his legs. Belind was a weightlifting champion back in Syria. Despite his hardship and being in exile, he made it his mission to empower and train other kids in his camp on weightlifting and break dancing.

I met Syrian doctors in Lebanon who were not allowed to work and so had started volunteering to help Lebanese and Syrians find blood when needed. I met Fatima, a former teacher who transformed her tent into a school to educate refugee kids in Lebanon. Those were just some of the refugees who had refused to succumb to desperation, keen on thriving and making a difference despite everything.

In Europe, too, I have witnessed first-hand the positive impact of refugees on their host countries. Many of them want to give back to the societies that have given

them the opportunity to start a new life. We filmed Razan Alsous from Syria who once in the UK managed to start a halloumi cheese production company in Yorkshire that employs tens of local families and won 17 cheese awards. Her father, Dr. Ryad Alsous, was a renowned beekeeper in Syria. He lost 500 beehives in the war. But once resettled in the UK, he managed to get back in business and is now caring for more than 17 hives, helping locals in Yorkshire with their apiaries, and training refugees and jobseekers on beekeeping.

Host communities are often as inspiring as the refugees that we meet. In the Middle East and in Western countries, local support has been life-changing for refugees, from families welcoming refugees in their homes and schools supporting their education to businesses training and employing refugees and initiatives that speak of genuine solidarity and support.

Two of the most widely viewed stories at UNHCR are positive local hospitality stories: one is of a grandmother in Idomeni, a town in northern Greece, hosting refugees in her house and another is about a Lebanese surfing club helping a Syrian boy learn how to surf.

Why am I mentioning all these stories? Amid what is really an excessive negative bias in the coverage of the refugee crisis, positive stories are crucially needed.

A study published by the University of East London in 2016 under the title *Publishing the Positive* shows that in times of divisive politics, positive news stories have the “potential to unite, inspire, and empower groups of people in society.” According to the study, participants said that negative news led them to see “the negative in other people, and feel isolated from society.” However, the opposite was experienced when participants read positive news, which created a sense of admiration for other people and “restored their faith in

humanity and their ability to make a difference.”

The findings of the study are not surprising. I have told both negative and positive refugee stories. The human rights abuses and the hardship of refugees are important stories to tell. They raise awareness about what it’s like to be a refugee and are needed to improve their conditions. But the audience interacts more with the positive stories. The public are more likely to sympathize with refugees, accept them, and help them if exposed to more positive stories.

Amid what is really an excessive negative bias in the coverage of the refugee crisis, positive stories are crucially needed.

I have also come to realize that people relate more with individual stories versus the ones that depict refugees as a group or a number. In an article published by R. Bleiker et al. in the *Australian Journal of Political Science* on the visual dehumanization of refugees, the authors argue that putting a human face to suffering is key to gaining viewers’ attention and willingness

to act. “The fewer subjects, the more attentive are the viewers to their plight and the more able to correspondingly identify with them.”

The article mentions an experiment whereby participants were asked to donate the same amount of money to one sick child or a group of eight sick children with both represented in photographs. Donations were substantially higher for the individual child. Individual stories humanize refugees.

We should definitely keep talking about the plight of refugees. That is still largely the story that matters. But that is not the only way to advance their cause. Refugees are just like you and me. They had a family, a home, and a job, but war gave them a new identity. They were students, teachers, engineers, and athletes, people with hopes and dreams. They are more than just refugees. *PDM*

Dalal Mawad is a Lebanese journalist who has been covering the refugee crisis in the Middle East since 2011. Mawad has worked as a regional video producer with the UN Refugee Agency since 2015 and was previously a TV reporter with the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International. She also held the position of a deputy news editor with Al Jazeera English in 2012. Mawad holds a Master’s degree in Broadcast Journalism from Columbia University and a Master’s in International Political Economy from the London School of Economics and a BA in Economics and Political Science from the American University of Beirut.

Refugees, Travel Bans, & Humanitarian Diplomacy

An Interview with Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for UN Secretary-General António Guterres

Interviewed by Dena Taha

Stéphane Dujarric, the spokesman for United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, recently sat down with *Public Diplomacy Magazine* to discuss the refugee crisis, Trump's travel ban, and humanitarian diplomacy.

***Public Diplomacy Magazine:* At the end of 2017, the third version of President Trump's controversial travel ban went into effect, and the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the ban. What is the UN doing to prevent the ban from fully going into effect?**

Stéphane Dujarric: Speaking for the Secretary-General, the UN is not there to impose anything, to take anything from a country's sovereignty. The goal of the Secretary-General, through the Migration Compact, is to try to bring together the world's countries. It is not about telling countries how to manage their work, it is about ensuring that refugees, the rights of refugees, are respected. It is about ensuring that migrants are treated with dignity, and it is about really understanding that there is no greater test for international cooperation in our time than managing the mass movement of people.

People have been moving in search of a better life since humans were able to walk, and if not before.

Almost 3.5 percent of the world's population are on the move. We have never seen more refugees than we have today.

So, you can't put your head in the sand and say that migration doesn't concern me. What the UN is there for is to be a platform and a convener to make sure that all countries are sitting around the table to discuss how they manage migration. It is basically a solution that has to be found between, I would say, three different groups of countries: the countries of origin where people come from, the countries of transit, where people go through, and the countries of destination, where the people want to go.

The people who manage mass migration now are criminals. The people who do human smuggling are the people who manage refugees and migration on boats that they know will sink. Humans have become a criminal commodity, and so what we want to do in a sense is take the management of the movement of people out of the hand of smugglers and create better legal pathways, clearer laws, and just better management.

Now that comes in the form of international agreements, that comes in the way of also changing the narrative, changing the way migrants are depicted in the media, whether in the news or in general culture. The fact is that most migration—contrary to what people think in the Western world, in the Global North—is really from one poor country to another. It is South-South, it is not South-North. Most of the refugees of the world, almost 80 percent if not more are in fact hosted by developing countries, so how do the wealthier countries support those countries?

That is one of the issues. It is also standing up and speaking out, as the Secretary-General and others have done, against the vilification of migrants, against blaming refugees, the so-called "other," for the countries' woes. We have seen that in the North, we have seen that in the South. It is a common refrain.

The other thing that in fact needs to be explained is the economic benefits that migration brings, not only to obviously the people who find jobs. In a lot of countries, they are meeting a market need. A lot of countries especially in the Global North have a very low if not negative fertility rate. So they need people to fill jobs that go unfilled. Also, the amount of money that migrants send back to family members in their home countries in remittances is substantial. Part of it is that civil society groups and politicians need to explain to their constituents the benefits of migrants. Migrants come into communities, they may have jobs, they may open businesses, they spend about 85 percent of their earnings locally, they send back 15 percent, and if you look at the remittance levels across the world, they are larger than the development budgets. They are critical parts of the global economy.

So right now, we are in a situation where migration is not managed, where migration is depicted in very negative terms, and where really it is in the hands of smugglers and criminal elements.

People are moving because of conflict; it pushes us to do better at prevention, at the issue of solving conflicts that have erupted and preventing conflicts from erupting.

How do you avoid overstepping on countries' sovereignty considering the UN has 193 members? How do you really balance between what you are supposed to do or your responsibility towards the most vulnerable, and at the same time respecting the countries' sovereignty?

Every country has a right to manage its borders. Every country has the right to say who will come in and out, who is allowed in their country, to manage their borders. That is their right. The UN is not a world government to impose that kind of policy, but you have to remember that there is a Refugee Convention from 1951 that gives refugees certain rights. Most countries of the world have signed up to that convention, they need to live up to those needs, and there is a self-interest in managing migration because it is not going to go away, and it is beneficial. So in a way



Stéphane Dujarric

you have to manage it. How do you create more legal pathways so people who are needed can come into a country and not live in the shadows but instead have jobs and contribute to society?

It is important that the issue of national sovereignty is a guiding principal to our discussions, but the way to understand it is that no government can unilaterally manage the issue of migration alone. It is like climate change, the spread of disease, or any of the issues that the UN deals with that really cross borders.

Unfortunately, today we are seeing xenophobia developing among some of the citizens of these countries—whether it is anti-Muslim prejudice or something else. How important is it to develop programs in these communities to overcome this obstacle so that even the people can embrace those migrants?

I think this is critical. It is like the climate issue that should not be left to the UN alone. It has to involve NGOs, it has to involve grassroots efforts, it has to involve politicians, it has to involve businesses. You use the term xenophobic communities; I don't think they are xenophobic communities. I think they are political leaders who exploit the issue of migration, who exploit the fear of the other, who try to create xenophobic feelings. We have a UN-wide campaign called the Together Campaign, which is about humanizing

migrants and understanding their benefits.

We have seen cases in many countries, and even in the United States where there may be strong feelings against illegal migration, but then people are deported, and sometimes they can be a pillar of the community. So it is often that people have a different take.

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was the idea of leaving no one behind, and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals reference migrants and refugees. How do you assess the implementation of the SDGs today vis-à-vis refugees and migrants and where would you like to see more improved action?

There is a tremendous amount of work that needs to be done because it is one of the more politically sensitive and politically exploited issues that has to do with the SDGs. Because it has to do with politics and it can be exploited, and that is why the Secretary-General is putting so much effort into ensuring that countries come to continuous rounds of table to discuss his global compact for migration which is really a new way, and a holistic way, to try to manage migration.

On the humanitarian level how would you assess your efforts and what are your greatest challenges in terms of humanitarian diplomacy?

Dealing with the issue of mass migration with the understanding that people will always move brings up a number of issues. The humanitarian support of refugees and migrants in a sense is a bad mandate, it is a needed mandate, but it is a bad mandate which creates a temporary measure.

What you need to address is the root causes of why people are moving. People are moving because of conflict; it pushes us to do better at prevention, at the issue of solving conflicts that have erupted, preventing conflicts from erupting, and the change of climate and desertification is part of that as well. We see people moving because of changing climate, so our fight to contain and to address climate change also has repercussions on migration.

I would also argue that our development policy sometimes has unintended impacts on increasing migration. We need to look at development policies to encourage people to stay in their community, maybe to ensure people stay in the village because life in the village is sustainable, instead of pushing people to move to urban areas, or to seek jobs someplace else.

António Guterres was High Commissioner for Refugees during what was referred to as the world's worst refugee crisis since World War II, and then he headed the UN during the same period. The whole world had its eyes on the UN to see if having a humanitarian head the organization would make any difference. To what extent is this reflected in his work today?

I think what drives him is exactly what I talked about—it is prevention. Almost 10 years as High Commissioner for Refugees, having delivered band aids, he wants to go to the root causes so that there are no more refugees. It goes back to preventing conflicts, preventing climate change, and building resilient

societies and resilient countries that do not push their people to move. So his agenda in one word is prevention.

The role of High Commissioner for Refugees and the role of Secretary-General are different. One important thing to remember is that he sits atop of an organization, but he really has to manage 193 member states and the Security Council, and I think he has done so in a way that is extensive given the circumstances in the world that we are in, where the relations between the larger countries are not only more fraught, but they are also more unpredictable and more dangerous. But I don't think he has ever given up or lost any of the principles that he has, which is speaking up for migrants, speaking up for tolerance, defending his principles on climate change, on the Middle East peace process, on the two-state solution. You find that all the big issues he has spoken up strongly and on principle.

But he is also Secretary-General of the UN at a time where, frankly, the world is in a mess. *PDM*

Stéphane Dujarric is the spokesperson for United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. He has held that position since March 10, 2014. Dujarric previously served as spokesperson for Secretary-General Kofi Annan from 2005 to 2006 and then as deputy communications director for Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon from 2006 to 2007. Just prior to his current appointment, Dujarric was the director of news and media for the UN Department of Public Information and director of communications for the UN Development Programme. In the private sector, Dujarric worked for ABC News television for close to 10 years in various capacities in the network's New York, London, and Paris news bureaus. He traveled extensively on assignment to cover major stories throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. Born in France, Dujarric has been living in the United States for most of the last 30 years. He graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1988. Dujarric is married and has three children.

Dena Taha is a graduate student in the Master of Public Diplomacy program at the University of Southern California. She previously served as a news producer at Al-Arabiya News Channel in New York.

The Two Faces of European Migrants

By Jonathon W. Moses

As populism rises across Europe, its anger is trained on the foreigner in our midst. This is due, in part, to the humanitarian crisis unfolding on Europe's southern flank. Propelled by war, oppression, and poverty, millions of refugees have crossed the Mediterranean in derelict crafts, braving extreme risk in order to seek safe haven in Europe.¹

This tragic picture tells only part of the story. There is another face to the migration crisis: that of migrant workers from other EU member states. Unable to find sufficient employment at home, millions of workers must seek employment elsewhere. This migration is driven by the inadequacies of European policies, and the inability of many EU member states to ensure economic opportunities for their citizens. While this crisis receives less international attention, it is the more significant source of fuel for Europe's growing populism. This brief essay details both types of migration in an effort to paint a more nuanced picture of Europe's migration crisis.²

Any study of immigration is complicated by the different ways in which migrants are or are not reported: migrants can be either formal or informal as students, family members, workers, retirees, returning citizens, or refugees seeking protection. Formally, external migrants to EU member states are categorized as asylum-seekers, refugees, beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, irregular, and legal immigrants.³ But each member state classifies migrants in different ways, making aggregation and comparison difficult. The reporting in Europe is further complicated by

the need to distinguish between internal mobility (the migration of citizens from one-member state to another) and immigrants from abroad.

In 2015, EU member states took in 4.7 million registered immigrants (in the same year, some 2.8 million Europeans emigrated from EU member states). As depicted in Figure 1, these immigrants can be bundled into two groups, of roughly equal size. On the right side, we see 2.4 million immigrants that came from outside of the EU. While this figure includes several different migrant types, refugees constitute an extremely small share.⁵ For example, the total number of positive European asylum decisions in 2015 was just 26,415.⁶

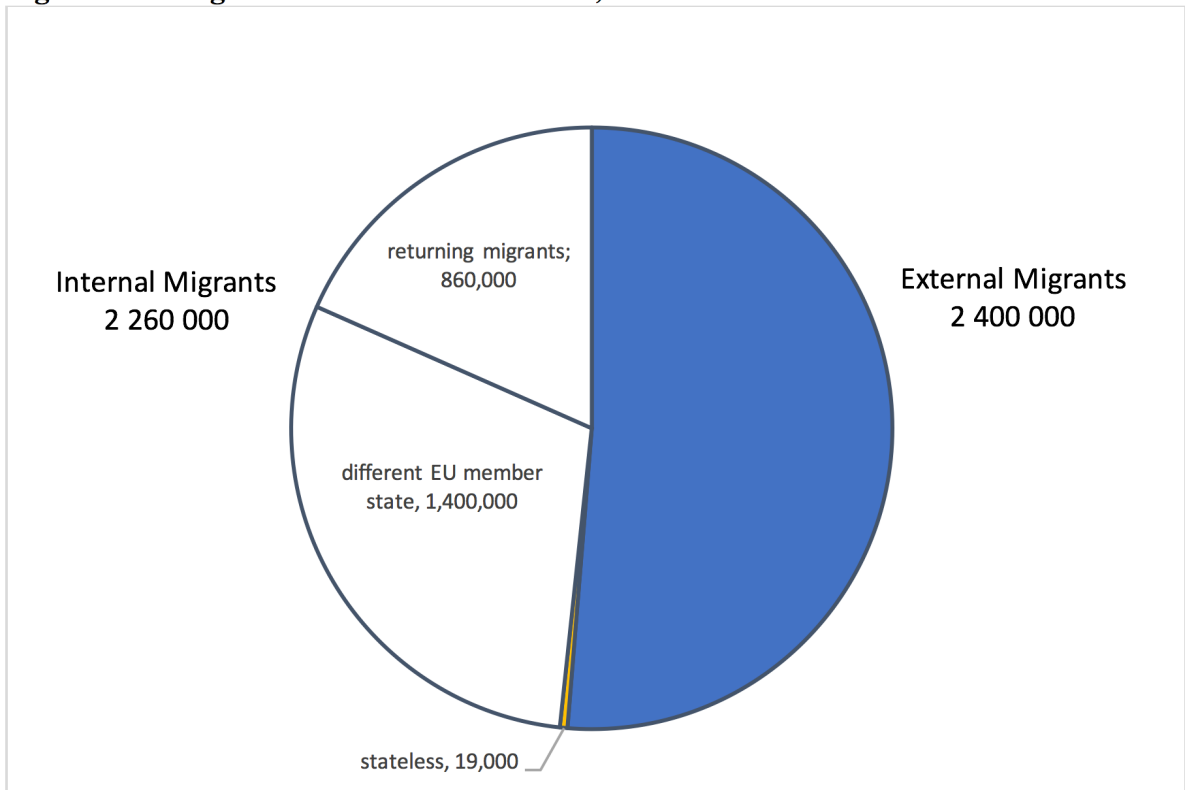
The left side of the figure denotes the 2.26 million immigrants coming from other states within the European Union. These internal migrants are either foreign nationals or returning citizens.

External Mobility

The number of refugees in Europe's annual immigration figures constitutes a modest response to a serious international challenge. European states, like most of the developed world, have incurred treaty obligations requiring them to assist refugees in their time of need.⁷ As one of the world's richest regions, many Europeans also cite a moral obligation to contribute aid. Unfortunately, these obligations are too often forgotten.

While the number of refugees granted asylum in

Figure 1: Immigration to EU member states, 2015



Source: Eurostat (2017, p.1)4

Europe is remarkably small, the number of applicants grew precipitously in 2015, as shown in Figure 2. The number has decreased just as rapidly in subsequent months, and is now below 20,000 a month—roughly the same level as it was in 2008-10. In my country of residence, Norway, the largest source of migrants are not refugees, but workers from across the European Union, followed by those that have come for reasons of family unification or education. The inflow of refugees, from year to year, is about the same size as foreign students.

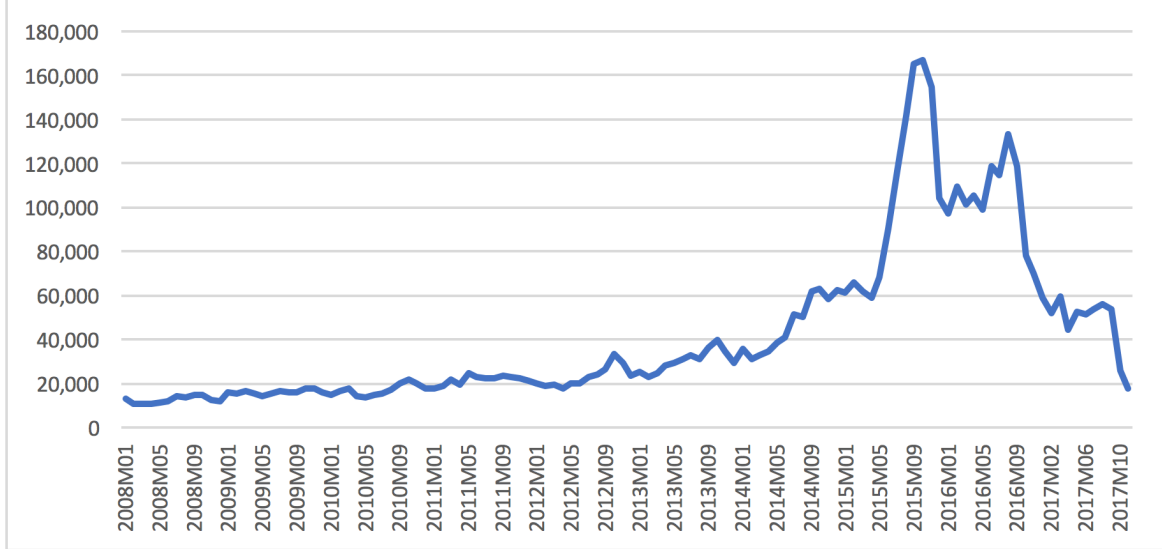
It should go without saying, but the asylum market is not governed by Say’s Law: increased supply does not automatically generate its own demand. While the world beyond Europe is still enveloped by war, disaster, and abuse, Europe’s willingness to help is in quick retreat. One common excuse is a fear that the refugee flow contributes to Europe’s rising xenophobia. But this explanation is far from sufficient.

Internal Mobility

Many immigrants to European states are fellow Europeans. While the Polish plumber has become a common caricature, today’s migrant is equally as likely to come from Greece, Ireland, or Latvia. Indeed, for decades, European officials have encouraged the free movement of workers among member states.

European states have lost the capacity to manage their domestic economies. Consequently, unemployment and inequality levels in Europe recently reached new heights, as have the levels of political dissatisfaction. I submit that it is these economic and political shortcomings, more than refugees in flight, that are fueling Europe’s populism. As the capacity of member states to control their national economies has receded, workers have found it necessary to migrate in search of a livelihood. This market-forced migration was especially evident in the wake of the

Figure 2: First time asylum applicants to EU member states



Source: Eurostat [migr_asyappctzm]

2009 Great Recession, as workers from across Europe were forced to find refuge in better functioning labor markets elsewhere.⁸

Latvia provides an illustrative example. Often heralded as a poster-child for Europe’s response to the financial crisis, the cost of that country’s economic adjustment was borne on the backs of its workers: over 150,000 people left Latvia between 2007 and 2011.⁹ This exodus occurred from a country that has fewer than 2 million people, and its population is shrinking as a result.

In short, while much of the media’s attention has been trained on the non-European asylum seeker, much of today’s political crisis can be traced back to the inadequacies of European policy. Many waves of migrants have been propelled by the inability of European member states to fend for themselves.

Treaty Linkages

Three treaties lay at the heart of Europe’s current dilemma: Dublin, Schengen, and Maastricht. The 1990 Dublin Regulation (and the Dublin System that surrounds it) requires asylum seekers to register their claim in the state where they first arrive to the EU,

and the decision of that first country constitutes the final decision in all EU countries. This regulation was intended to deter “asylum shopping,” where refugees apply for asylum in several states, or aim to apply in a specific state (e.g. Sweden) after transitioning through other states (e.g. Hungary). Whatever its intention, the Dublin System delegates a disproportionate burden to those states such as Italy and Greece that border a world scarred by political disruption and dysfunction.

The 1999 Schengen acquis erases the borders that once separated signatory states to facilitate free migration in Europe. Today’s Schengen area contains 26 states in Europe, both within and beyond the European Union. Finally, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty laid the groundwork for a common economic and monetary union in Europe, including a common currency. This treaty has removed significant instruments of economic policy from the hands of elected policymakers and has increased economic insecurity across the continent, forcing many workers to migrate across member state borders in search of employment. The Schengen acquis facilitates this market-forced migration.

Together, these three arrangements set the stage for Europe’s current predicament. On the one hand,

Maastricht and Schengen opened the gates for internal migration among member states. Far from being deterred, this sort of migration has been heralded as a freedom and encouraged at every turn. On the other hand, the lack of internal borders made it impossible to allocate the “foreign” (read non-European) migrant, once they entered the Schengen space.

This contradiction influences migrant decisions. In Europe’s migrant maze, the refugee sets course for Europe’s Schengen area to states such as Italy or Greece, which are already inundated with refugees and unable to process their applications promptly. Aware of the Dublin regulation, the refugee immediately heads north to seek asylum in richer states such as Germany or Sweden, taking advantage of the Schengen acquis. In doing so, migrants pass through states that have suffered under the recent economic crisis and head toward states already flush with internal migrant workers from other member states.

Herein lies the dilemma: Europe wants free mobility for one type of migrant, yet hopes to restrict it for the other. Europe’s proposed solutions reflect this dilemma. Political attention is aimed to seal off access for external migrants and distribute current asylum seekers more evenly across EU member states.¹⁰ Whether these efforts will succeed remains to be seen. By contrast, the problems of economic management, political dissatisfaction, and market-driven internal migration remain unaddressed. Unfortunately for Europe, these internal problems continue to fuel the populist movement. *PDM*

ENDNOTES

1 A well-known example is the haunting image of a lifeless three-year-old Kurdish boy from Syria, Alan Kurdi, lying face down in the sand of a Turkish beach. Of course, Alan Kurdi is not alone: the IOM estimated that more than 3,770 people died in 2015 trying to make it to Europe. See BBC News (2016) “Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts”. 4 March. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

2 This piece is necessarily brief. For an introduction to the challenges facing European migration policy, see the forthcoming debate in the pages of the 2017 European Political Science journal. AOP copies of the contributions, include: “Introduction: Migration in Europe,” Jonathon W. Moses; “Asylum or austerity? The ‘Refugee Crisis’ and the Keynesian Interlude,” Peo Hansen; “Europe’s Commitments and Failures in the Refugee Crisis,” Rainer Bauböck; and “The 2015 Refugee Crisis Was Not a Turning Point: Explaining Policy Inertia in EU Border Control,” Virginie Guiraudon.

3 For definitions of each, see European Parliament (n.d), “Migration and Asylum.” European Parliamentary Research Service. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/infographics/migration/public/index.html?page=definitions>.

4 Ibid.

5 Member states record immigration status in different ways, so this figure includes all the different types of external migration listed above. For example, asylum seekers are included in the migration figures for Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, the UK, and Switzerland, but not for Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, or Sweden. See Eurostat (2017) “Migration and Migrant population statistics.” Statistics Explained 30/08/2017, p. 19.

6 Eurostat, migr_asydcfina, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asydcfina&lang=en

7 E.g. the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol. See UNHCR “Convention related to the Status of Refugees.” <http://www.unhcr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/StatusOfRefugees.aspx>

8 See, for example, my recent study of the political costs to European monetary union. Moses, Jonathon (2017) Eurobondage: The Political Costs of Monetary Union in Europe (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: ECP Press).

9 Eurostat, migr-emi2, http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=migr_asydcfina&lang=en

10 In particular, Europe hopes to secure international agreements with neighboring countries to cut off potential sites of entry (e.g. the EU-Turkey Statement, the EU’s Migration Partnership Framework, and a recent agreement between Italy and Libya). See Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Kate Hooper (2017) “Building Partnerships to Respond to the Next Decade’s Migration Challenges.” Council Statement of the 17th Plenary Meeting of the Transatlantic Council on Migration (December). In addition, the European Commission introduced a distribution key in 2015 to allocate the refugee burden more equally across member states. The problem is that reluctant member states (e.g. Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic)—and even the President of the European Council Donald Tusk—have opposed these reforms. See European Political Strategy Centre (2015) “Legal Migration in the EU: From Stop-Gap Solutions to a Future-Proof Policy.” 30 April. https://ec.europa.eu/epsc/publications/strategic-notes/legal-migration-eu_en

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The Public Diplomacy of International Trade

By Nicolás Albertoni Gomez

Trade policies are those that regulate the flow of goods and services across borders. In the last several decades, international trade has become a central issue of governments' economic and political agenda. Given the increasing effects of trade in the labor market and countries' economy, in general, international trade is normally a contentious issue between non-governmental organizations, companies and governments. However, in spite of the increasing relevance of this topic, notably absent from the existing literature on public diplomacy is a sound body of work on the possible relationship between international trade and public diplomacy.

In this article I discuss the relationship between international trade and public diplomacy by presenting some preliminary findings of a working paper¹ in which I study the potential effect of international trade in public opinion toward China and the United States from 2001 to 2016 using *Latinobarometer*, a cross-sectional survey with individual respondents that collects public opinion data from Latin America every year.²

The Relevance of International Trade

The main question I would like to pose is whether patterns of international trade influence public opinion. In doing so, my research specifically studies a possible correlation between international trade flows and public opinion data. Although, at this point, I do not claim causation between trade and public opinion, what I would like to introduce are potential new questions for further research on public diplomacy.

For instance, do international trade agreements affect public opinion within the signing countries? To what extent does the type of trade (labor-intensive versus capital-intensive) correlate with fluctuations in public opinion toward the trading countries?³ If trade and public diplomacy are not exactly correlated, what is the marginal rate of decline or utility of increasing trade relation with a specific economic partner? Is it best to have a few high profile international trade agreements or a solid trade integration with one country? To put it more tactically, would a country do better to have many more symbolic trading relation-

ships with many countries or just a few extremely deep, high volume relationships with one or two trading partners?

The preliminary findings of my research shows there is a positive correlation between international trade and positive public opinion about the importer country. In other words, when there are higher exports from Latin America to the United States or China, public opinion about the importers is better. Second, while exports from one country to another increase, the number of people that do not have an opinion⁴ (either positive or negative) about the importing country decreases. Another finding is about the effects of Free Trade Agreements (FTA) on public opinion. Interestingly, while the United States signing an FTA does not seem to have a strong effect on public opinion in the Latin American countries in my sample, having an FTA with China seems to have a very relevant positive effect.

One of the potential contributions of this research could be that public diplomacy sometimes happens as a result of “unintended consequences.” Indeed, this puzzle takes up the issue of international trade as an unintended but possibly effective instrument to be developed under the umbrella of public diplomacy.

Why is this topic relevant today? In the past 10 years, many countries—developed and developing—have implemented new restrictive commercial policies. This “new protectionism” seems to threaten to derail the free trade path that the world had been on until the 2008-09 global financial crisis. By considering international trade as a more relevant variable when measuring public diplomacy, we may study, for instance, how this new global trend affects public diplomacy strategies. Hence, this is a relevant topic not only from a theoretical and contextual perspective given the current global juncture in which a trade protectionism is on the rise.

Combining the preliminary findings mentioned above and the current global economic context, what this study suggests is that international trade should be considered more seriously within the public diplomacy and nation branding literature. For instance, governments that embrace a “protectionist ideology” are overlooking an important opportunity to use international trade as a vital tool of public diplomacy.

Previous Related Studies

There is a limited amount of empirical work that considers the relationship between international trade and public diplomacy. Ruël (2012) highlights the need for fostering trade and diplomacy research. More specifically, he talks about “commercial diplomacy,” defined as the international relations of business that “knits together political and entrepreneurial activities and agents in the global market.”

Kostecki and Naray (2007) point to commercial diplomacy as a “significant factor in the ongoing process of globalization, yet there is a shortage of empirical research on this activity.” They show that commercial diplomacy “contributes to the promotion of international trade and corporate

partnership, to the resolution of business conflict and the marketing of a country as a location for foreign investments, R&D activities, or tourist destination.” Although many of these studies assert the relationship between international trade and diplomacy (Kopp 2004; Kostecki 2005), they do not necessarily consider trade as an instrument of public diplomacy. It is this area that calls for more empirical analyses given the current economic context.

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) have been one of the most relevant transformations in global trade in the past 30 years. FTAs have rapidly proliferated, rendering deeper and more extensive commitments. Most FTAs have moved beyond commitments only

In the past 10 years, many countries—developed and developing—have implemented new restrictive commercial policies. This “new protectionism” seems to threaten to derail the free trade path that the world had been on until the 2008-09 global financial crisis.

in market access of goods to include services and investments. Hence, international trade agreements are rarely about trade alone. After decades of multilateral trade negotiations focusing on reducing trade tariffs, trade agreements have now expanded to the extent that they are tools of public diplomacy.

As Buera and Oberfield (2016) argue, free trade is about more than goods and services, “it’s about ideas, too.” Considering FTAs as one of the tools of countries’ trade policy, we can see that trade negotiations are about much more than reducing or eliminating barriers to trade. When negotiating a deal, member governments also discuss a range of other issues and provisions. Some of these issues have been around for decades, others are just emerging in the the GATT-WTO system. Examples of these issues can be seen in trade agreements’ chapters on gender equality, anti-corruption, competition policy, consumer protection, data protection, environmental laws, labor market regulations, and intellectual property rights, among others. Horn et al (2009) call these agreements “WTO extra” to define those commitments dealing with issues going beyond the current WTO mandate altogether, e.g. on labor standards. Their findings show that the WTO extra agreements grew significantly in the last decade. The inclusion of cross-cutting issues (those that go beyond market access) in international trade negotiation may result in more institutions becoming interested in trade negotiations. These new trends change the policy-making dynamics of trade policy.

For many decades following World War II, Europe, the United States, and Japan expanded trade and economic integration under rules established by the GATT. In the same period, developing and Eastern Bloc countries used a protectionist trade strategy to promote development. After many years of trade liberalization, which began in the 1980s, we saw what Rodrik (1992) called the “rush to free trade.” With

the election of President Donald Trump in the United States in 2016, trade protectionism is increasingly being used as national trade policy strategy.

Given the current literature, the main questions that arise here are how the inclusion of these new issues have affected people’s perception about trade and trade partners. To what extent do these new dynamics of trade explain the reappearance of trade protectionism? To some extent, this paper wants to contribute to this debate. Again, considering the few studies that focus on this topic and the relevance of this issue in the current global context, it seems relevant to consider international trade as a potential tool of public diplomacy.

The Role of Public Opinion

Public diplomacy literature should take international trade more seriously. It seems theoretically and contextually relevant to think that international trade could be an instrument of public diplomacy.

The notion that public opinion matters for political decision-making seems to be a well-established trope in both political science and economics. But how important is the relationship between public opinion and public diplomacy? A 2006 study undertaken by the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, *Public Diplomacy Practitioners, Policy Makers, and Public Opinion*, clarifies this

relationship. A first point of this study is that pollsters understand their role in the public diplomacy process as a strategic one. Polling cannot provide the instruments required to sway mass opinion. However, it can help identify trends in public opinion and provide information about how changes in policy affect the attitudes of the audience.

The study also notes that this information is especially helpful in the policy formation process where practitioners are able to “alter policy details and tailor specific communications strategies to address public concerns identified through polling.” The second main point is that effective public diplomacy strategies often take the form of “niche diplomacy.” In pursuing international cooperation, it is crucial for diplomats

to identify those aspects at which political and public interests intersect. Polling is therefore an essential tool because “it can reveal common interests and concerns across regions and borders.”

Discussion

In sum, the main discussion we should introduce here is that public diplomacy literature should take international trade more seriously. As mentioned, notably absent from the existing literature on public diplomacy are empirical studies on international trade and its relations with public diplomacy. In other words, it seems theoretically and contextually relevant to think that international trade could be an instrument (intended or unintended) of public diplomacy.

For further studies, it would be interesting to explore the potential causal mechanisms behind the positive correlation between international trade and public opinion. For instance, one causal story behind these results—which can motivate further studies along these lines—is related to how new communications technologies could result in the public’s increased awareness of international trade as well as increasingly favorable public attitudes about trade partners. International trade in itself cannot necessarily affect the opinion of a trading partners’ citizenship. However, communicating how a bilateral trade agreement can mutually benefit a group of countries—something that China has done a lot of in Latin America—may have an important impact in trading partners’ citizens.

Finally, the relevance of this discussion is not only the linking of a new topic to the study of public diplomacy, but also to consider this link in the current global context where trade protectionism threatens to derail the gains made over the past decades. *PDM*

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ENDNOTES

- 1 This article written for Public Diplomacy Magazine is a summary of a working paper entitled “The Public Diplomacy of International Trade.” You can find this working paper in: https://www.academia.edu/35102969/WORKING_PAPER_-_The_Public_Diplomacy_of_International_Trade.pdf. I would especially like to thank Nicholas Cull and Eytan Gilboa for their excellent comments and suggestions. I also thank assistants of the 2017 USC Center for Public Diplomacy Summer Institute for their helpful comments.
- 2 To learn more about Latinobarometro, visit latinobarometro.org.
- 3 For example, there could be any number of variations on public opinion depending on the type of trade between countries (complementary trade or competitive trade). Another way to answer these questions would be by analyzing public opinion data at the more specific industry levels.
- 4 Don’t know/No answer.

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The Kurdish Independence Movement and Virtual State

An Interview with Philip Seib, USC Professor of Public Diplomacy

Interviewed by SarahBelle Selig

The fight for Kurdish independence dates back centuries and across several states in the Middle East, but recently gained the attention of international media when an overwhelming vote for Iraqi Kurdish independence was met by the Iraqi government and neighbors Iran and Turkey with opposition, a massive show of force, and a strict crackdown on trade and travel. Much to the chagrin of the Kurds, the September referendum incited little action from Western powers and internal dysfunction has left the recent momentum in ruins.

Philip Seib is a professor of journalism, public diplomacy, and international relations at the University of Southern California who has written extensively about the Kurds. He served as the director of USC's Center for Public Diplomacy for four years and has authored numerous books on terrorism and the media. Seib writes frequently for Huffington Post, serves as an editor for two academic book series, and is the founding co-editor of the journal *Media, War, and Conflict*.

USC Professor Phillip Seib recently sat down with *Public Diplomacy Magazine* to discuss the conflict

and what the Kurds can do online to bring the movement back to life.

***Public Diplomacy Magazine:* Before the current war began, cities such as Erbil and Sulaymaniyah were flourishing. With its major oil reserves, an independent Kurdistan is economically viable and could prove a major stabilizing force in the region and an ally to states like Turkey and Iraq if these states surrendered the territory that's already overwhelmingly populated by Kurds. Still, both governments have promised to shut down any pipelines coming out of an independent Kurdistan. Despite an overwhelming vote in favor of independence in September, an onslaught of military and economic threats from the Iraqi government and neighbors Iran and**



Philip Seib

Turkey have prevented any significant movement in that direction. What do you see as the future of the Kurdish independence movement in light of this?

Philip Seib: The Kurds in Iraq face formidable obstacles. The Iraqi government strongly opposes an independent Kurdish state, and the United States is supporting Iraq. Also, any prospect of a Kurdish state anywhere infuriates the Turkish government (Turkey is about 20 percent Kurdish). The issue becomes even more complicated because of questions about who has rights to the oil in Kurdish areas. True independence is unlikely anytime soon. A limited level of autonomy is more feasible. That will not satisfy most Kurds, but reality impedes dreams.

In your work, you have defined a virtual state as a technology-based community that gives cohesion to collective identities

that lack physically defined borders. Did a Kurdish virtual state play a role in the recent attempt at independence for the Iraqi Kurds? In what ways?

Kurds have developed a virtual state of sorts, but among Kurds there are many differences related to culture, language, and other characteristics. The largest concentrations of Kurds are in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, and each of these faces unique as well as shared political challenges. There is also a large Kurdish diaspora scattered around the world. A Kurdish virtual community exists to some extent, but as yet it has not had much effect on the independence movement.

In 2016, following a similar effort from Catalonians in Spain, the Kurdish government announced a new independent top-level internet domain “.krd.” How can

this—along with initiatives like #Twitter-Kurds and the use of satellite TV—play a role in the development of a Kurdish virtual state?

Such factors are useful in defining a virtual Kurdish identity and providing a kind of unity that geographical realities impede. This should not, however, be overrated. Kurdish independence, if it happens, must be more than a “virtual” phenomenon.

Can the Kurds use public diplomacy to increase awareness and understanding of Western allies needed to push their independence ambitions forward? The Iraqi Kurds have been a major American ally in the Middle East since the Gulf War, serving as a major force in the fight against the Islamic State—how has ISIL affected the Kurdish independence agenda? Can the Iraqi Kurds use their fight against ISIL to incentivize U.S. action on their behalf?

The Kurds’ role in the fight against Islamic State certainly earned recognition of their combat prowess. But in terms of generating tangible support for independence, it is unlikely to mean much. As noted previously, other geopolitical interests work against the Kurds’ aspirations. Over the long run, public diplomacy will be essential in keeping Kurds visible in the international community and slowly building support for eventual independence. That sounds nebulous, and it is.

Philip Seib is the vice dean of the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California, where he is also professor of journalism and public diplomacy and professor of international relations. From 2009 until 2013, he was director of USC’s Center on Public Diplomacy. He is the author or editor of numerous books, including *The Al Jazeera Effect*; *Global Terrorism and New Media*; *Al Jazeera English*; *Real-Time Diplomacy*; and *Religion and Public Diplomacy*. He writes frequently for Huffington Post and is editor of two academic book series and founding co-editor of the journal *Media, War, and Conflict*. He holds an A.B. from Princeton University and a J.D. from Southern Methodist University.

SarahBelle Selig is a recent graduate of the USC Master in Public Diplomacy program with a thesis on the soft power of immigration policy. She also received her Bachelor’s in International Relations from USC with specializations in European studies and security. In the near future, she will be working for a refugee organization in Jordan in hopes of pursuing a career in humanitarian communications.

Some scholars have cited a lack of shared experience and common dialect as barriers to a common Kurdish statehood; others cite debt. What do you think are the greatest barriers to common Kurdish statehood and, to a greater extent, to effective Kurdish public diplomacy?

The biggest problem facing the Kurds’ quest for independence is the opposition of major powers, such as the United States, Turkey, and Iran. The lack of unifying characteristics such as a shared dialect is also a problem, but a lesser one.

You have mentioned in your work that the distance between these virtual states and real states is narrowing, and that virtual states are starting to serve as valid counterweights to territorial ones. Can the Kurdish virtual state serve as a new paradigm for a pathway to statehood for ethnic groups without designated territory?

A Kurdish virtual state—if one eventually takes shape with a sizable constituency—would have only a limited role as a model because of the opposition to Kurdish independence from major powers. In other instances, for other populations, where the opposition is not so formidable, virtual connectivity can be useful in defining identity and enhancing unity behind political aspirations. *PDM*



Skaftafellsjökull and Námafjall Hverir, Iceland

ENDNOTE

Branding the Land of Ice and Fire

By Justin Chapman

Photos by Justin Chapman and Mercedes Blackehart

Public Diplomacy Magazine *Editor-in-Chief* and USC Master in Public Diplomacy (MPD) student Justin Chapman recently traveled to Iceland with his MPD class to meet and discuss the country's place branding efforts with government and NGO officials. Each year, a delegation of MPD students organize and attend meetings in a foreign country in order to make connections, promote USC Annenberg and the MPD program, and learn about public diplomacy and related topics from officials and practitioners in the field. This year, Iceland was chosen as the destination because of its successful efforts in place branding and nation branding, central themes in the MPD program. Learn more about the program at annenberg.usc.edu/communication/public-diplomacy-MPD.

With its picturesque waterfalls, moss-covered lava rocks, bubbling geothermal hot springs, enormous blue glaciers, adventurous spirit, and of course the spectacular Northern Lights, one would think that the small Nordic island country of Iceland doesn't need much help attracting visitors. But it is clear that Iceland's government and NGOs have done quite a bit of strategic thinking about how to brand their special corner of the globe.

Part of that has been out of necessity and survival—the country was hit particularly hard during the 2008 financial crash, when the value of its currency crumbled. In April 2010, however, when the Eyjafjallajökull volcanic eruption scattered fine ash across northern Europe and grounded air travel on both sides of the Atlantic for a week, conditions were ripe for a revival.

"It was a perfect storm," said Kristjan Guy Burgess, chief political advisor to former Icelandic Foreign Affairs Minister Ossur Skarphéðinsson, president of

the Social Democrats, and founder and CEO of Global Center Iceland. "Iceland was in the news at a time when it was very cheap and interesting to come here. So we invested in a campaign to promote and encourage tourism."

Suddenly, Iceland was on everyone's mind, and the exchange rate was low. Iceland jumped at the chance to take advantage of this newfound situation. Since then, tourism has grown every year. In a country of just 340,000 people, about 1.7 million tourists visited in 2016, 2.1 million in 2017, and even more are expected in 2018. Tourism has indeed turned Iceland's economy around. It is now the country's main industry, surpassing even its fishing industry.

Place Branding

Iceland has worked hard at "place branding," essentially marketing their identity to the world. Promote Iceland, a public-private partnership, came up with the country's current motto, "Inspired by Iceland," which

followed less focused slogans such as “On the Edge” and “Closer Than You Think.” According to Inga Hlín Pálsdóttir, director of Promote Iceland, for a long time they only used photos of nature without any people in them, until they realized that that made it look like no one lived in Iceland. They are currently pushing hard for tourists to visit the entire island, rather than just the famous Golden Circle and South Coast attractions.

Iceland’s image on the world stage was further enhanced in June 2018 when its national soccer team

participated in the World Cup in Russia. Iceland made history as the smallest country to qualify for the global soccer tournament.

There are still challenges, however. Many of the country’s frequently traveled roads are unpaved and dangerous. There is a noticeable lack of toilets and parking at some of the country’s most visited attractions. Infrastructure in general around the island must

be improved to keep up with demand and use.

Beyond just attracting more and more people, however, Iceland’s government and NGOs are particularly concerned about cultivating responsible, sustainable tourism. Promote Iceland developed a pledge for tourists to take online that includes such promises as not going to the bathroom in nature, not putting

one’s life in danger, and not sleeping outside designated campgrounds.

They’re not too worried about “too

much tourism.” After all, there are natural deterrents, such as a finite amount of hotel rooms and airlines and the fact that everything is expensive in Iceland.

“I’d like to see 10-15 percent growth in the tourism industry this year, followed by slower growth after that,” said Pálsdóttir.

Officials at Visit Reykjavík, a similar organization

Icelanders have financial stability—with unemployment at less than 3 percent—but are now yearning for political stability. There have been five prime ministers in the past five years.



PD Mag Editor-in-Chief Justin Chapman with Icelandic political strategist Kristjan Guy Burgess



USC MPD students Ali DeGuide, Justin Chapman, and Madison Jones with Oscar Avila, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Reykjavík, Iceland

that focuses on promoting the neighborhoods in and around Iceland's capital city, work with Promote Iceland and agree that tourism helped turn their economy around. According to surveys they have conducted, a vast majority of Icelanders favor the growing tourism industry and have positive experiences with tourists. Visit Reykjavík also focuses on hosting cultural programs to strengthen relationships between Icelanders and visiting foreigners.

Political Turmoil

Pálsdóttir added that Iceland's recent political turmoil has made Promote Iceland's job that much more difficult, as well. There have been five prime ministers in the past five years. In 2016, Prime Minister Sigmundur Davíð Gunnlaugsson had to resign after the Panama Papers revealed that his family held bank accounts in offshore tax havens. Last year, Prime Min-

ister Bjarni Benediktsson also had to resign and call for new elections when it was revealed that he tried to conceal the fact that his father wrote a letter of support to rehabilitate a convicted pedophile.

María Mjöll Jónsdóttir, director of information and analysis in the Office of the Permanent Secretary of State in Iceland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, said Icelanders have financial stability—with unemployment at less than 3 percent—but are now yearning for political stability.

The current prime minister, Katrín Jakobsdóttir, of the Left Green Party, is only the second woman to hold the office. (Iceland is a leader in equal rights for women and the LGBTQ community. Last year, Iceland became the first country in the world whose parliament, Alþingi, passed a law mandating equal pay for women.) The Left Greens have had to form an

uneasy alliance with the conservative Independence Party and the centrist Progressive Party. So what do they agree on?

“They all want Iceland to stay out of the EU, and they want to maintain the financial status quo,” Burgess said.

Global Engagement

Iceland submitted an application to join the EU in 2009, but many Icelanders did not support it because they feared EU regulations of their fisheries, so it didn't go through. Iceland is closely watching the ongoing Brexit negotiations, because both the UK and the EU are major trading partners and because it is a member of the European Economic Area (EEA).

Burgess added that he believes Iceland can serve as a good example for the world in a number of ways. For example, when he served as chief political advisor to former Foreign Affairs Minister Ossur Skarphéðins-

son, he championed a program with the World Bank to train east African governments how to harness their volcanic and geothermal energy. Iceland runs almost entirely on renewable, geothermal energy.

“It just goes to show how even a small country like Iceland can wield significant influence,” said Burgess. “Iceland can be a laboratory for solutions to global problems.”

It is also one of the world's most water resource-rich countries, thanks to its glaciers. However, due to climate change, those glaciers are expected to melt in the coming years, which will cause sea levels to rise.

“Iceland is lucky compared to other countries when it comes to water resources,” said Burgess. “Unfortunately, it's not cheap to export water, or easy to find markets. Meanwhile, ‘water wars’ are being exacerbated by climate change.”

When it comes to conflict and security in the Arc-



Diamond Beach, Iceland

tic, Iceland is still very much involved in regional dialogues even though it does not have an army—although it is a member of NATO. (In 2006, then-U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld closed down the large WWII-era U.S. Air Force base in Iceland.) In 2019, Iceland will take over as chair of the Arctic Council and will focus on sustainability in all areas, as well as the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Accord. Many interested nations—especially China—are watching the Arctic closely as ice melts and new shipping routes become available.



Reynisfjara Beach, Iceland

Iceland will also nominate the next executive director of the World Bank for the 2019-21 term, and will co-chair with Ireland the global disarmament agency, Missile Technology Control Regime. It is also preparing its candidacy for the UNESCO executive board.

Gender equality remains one of Iceland’s top foreign policy priorities. Jónsdóttir said it is a cross-cutting theme, prioritized in areas such as development, security, trade, and immigration. Iceland has led the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap index for nine years in a row.

Other nations would be wise to learn from Iceland’s examples, both positive (renewable energy, women’s rights) and negative (political division and turmoil), and to keep an eye on its next moves on the world stage. *PDM*

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Clockwise from top left: Aurora borealis, Kirkjufellsfoss, Reykjavík, and Seljavallalaug, Iceland





Clockwise from top left: Reindeer near Egilsstaðir, Icelandic horses in the Golden Circle, Námafjall Hverir, and Strokkur, Iceland



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The USC Association of Public Diplomacy Scholars (APDS) is the nation's first student-run organization in the field of public diplomacy as a practice and study. It provides a forum for dialogue and interaction among practitioners of public diplomacy and related fields in pursuit of professional development, and it cultivates fellowship and camaraderie among members.



Aurora borealis over Mývatn Lake, Iceland | Photo by Mercedes Blackehart



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