A Long Way from Mount Sinjar: A Study on the Resettlement of Ezidi Refugees in Wagga Wagga

Fatmanur Noor Boz (BA)

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Research degree

Department of Anthropology
Macquarie University
Sydney, Australia

Supervised by Dr Banu Senay

19 October 2018

Abstract

This thesis examines the settlement experiences of recently arrived Ezidi refugees in Wagga Wagga, southwest NSW. In 2014, many Ezidis experienced genocidal attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in the Iraqi province of Sinjar and had to flee their homeland, seeking refuge in other countries. In 2016, the Australian Government announced it was granting asylum to Ezidis as part of its Humanitarian Settlement Program. Since then, some one thousand Ezidi asylum seekers have arrived in Australia, officially recognised as refugees. The majority of these migrants have been resettled in regional NSW, including Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour and Armidale. Based on anthropological fieldwork, this study investigates the settlement experiences of the Ezidi refugees in Wagga Wagga. My investigation of this topic has two analytical dimensions. First, I explore the efficacy of the social welfare services provided by the Australian government through its multicultural bodies in assisting and supporting the settlement of the Ezidi refugees in Wagga. Second, taking a phenomenological approach, the study examines the lived experiences of the Ezidi families there, including their creative efforts to establish new homely places for themselves in this rural town.

Statement of Authorship

This is to certify that the following thesis is all my own work, except where acknowledgement has been made to the work or ideas of others. It has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed: …….

Fatmanur Noor Boz

Human Research Ethics Approval Number

Ethical and scientific approval has been granted for this project to be conducted by Miss Fatmanur Noor Boz under the supervision of Dr. Banu Senay by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Reference Number: 5201700905

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all those I met in Wagga for kindly sharing their opinions and time with me. I extend my deepest gratitude to staff members at the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga, volunteers, and to the Ezidi families who made this thesis possible. Special thanks to the Silo, Zorova, Mato, Mahati and Gundor families for welcoming me to your homes and showing me generous hospitality. I am immensely grateful for your kindness.

I wholeheartedly thank Belinda Crain and Luke Delaney for sharing their professional knowledge with me. Their wisdom has been invaluable for this research project.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor and friend Dr Banu Senay for her patience, encouragement and profound insight.

I thank the staff of the Department of Anthropology at Macquarie University, who have helped shape my insights. I also thank my anthropology colleagues for their friendship and motivation.

I am grateful to my friends and family who have supported me throughout my research journey.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to my parents. To my mother, Sabriye Boz, I thank you for your moral support and spiritual guidance in all aspects of my life.

Table of Contents

List of Figure

Introduction

The 450 kilometre drive from Sydney to Wagga Wagga down the Hume Highway is almost like travelling through an Australian rural landscape painting. Sting's 'Fields of Gold' plays as I gaze out to the silent, dusty plains, burnt green hills and golden barley. The long road takes me past a flock of sheep cooling off under a large gum tree. They huddle together to avoid their enemy, the scorching summer sun. After a long five hours on the road, I arrive at Wagga Wagga. The country landscape fades into urban scenery. I now pass car dealers, residential homes, and small shopping centres. The streets are quiet and the peak hour traffic is negligible compared to Sydney.

The place where I am staying is nine kilometres south of the town centre, set amid vast dry plains and horses. My hostess hands me a set of keys, and I wearily walk into a room with a large glass window looking out towards 'Wagga'. I gaze out the window at the majestic blue-sky arching over the golden fields that encircle the city. As night falls, the lights in the city show like sparks in the surrounding blackness. That night, as I am about to close my eyes, I contemplate what it will be like to meet the Ezidis tomorrow.

The following morning I make way to the local aquatic centre to meet my potential informants, who have been residents of this central NSW town for the last two years. Around the pool, the Ezidi mothers are preparing their young children to be assessed for their swimming ability as part of a program offered by the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga (MCWW), sponsored by the Australian government. The instructors are having difficulty pronouncing the children's names. I find a seat next to the mothers, who are curious to find out if I too am a volunteer. Knowing many Ezidis speak the Kurdish dialect of Kurmanji, I answer with my thick accent: 'Na volunteer, ez kitap writing on Ezidi insan' ('I'm not a volunteer, I'm doing a study on Ezidi people'). 'Do you speak Kurmanji?', asks one of the mothers. 'Only Turkish and English', I reply.

For the first time among Kurdish-speaking people, my Turkish works in my favor! Some of the mothers start telling me how well they know Turkey. For many families fleeing the war and the depredations of ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)[1] in Iraq, Turkey was a transit zone before they could seek asylum in Australia (or elsewhere) and finally settle here. A young girl,

[1] Otherwise known as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and Daesh.

Martini,[2] (aged 16) approaches me excitedly and utters a few sentences in Turkish. She, too, had stayed in one of Turkey's refugee camps for three years before coming to Australia. After our first meeting at the aquatic centre, Martini asks me to visit her house for tea and food. I arrive with a box of chocolates. She places the kettle on the stove and, waiting for the tea to brew, she starts telling me her long journey to Australia…

Martini left Sinjar, a town in Iraq's Nineveh Province, following the genocide that occurred in her village four years ago, in 2014. She was 12 years old when she witnessed bombings, death and grotesque violence. That morning, her family had already prepared to leave when news arrived that ISIS was on its way to their village. Her parents, two younger sisters, and four brothers squeezed themselves into the car and hurried off to the mountains. They camped on Mount Sinjar in Northern Iraq for four days but, upon observing the ruins of their village, they joined thousands of fellow Ezidis, all leaving the area to seek help elsewhere. In the mountains, temperatures reached as high as 50 degrees Celsius. Many suffered from starvation and dehydration. And not everyone completed the journey, including Martini's two-year-old brother. He fell ill and drew his last breath at Mount Sinjar.

Since 2014, some 50,000 Ezidi people have had to flee their towns and villages in Sinjar due to the horrific attacks by ISIS, a militant organisation that followed a religious ideology to form its own 'Islamic' state.[3] Kurdish guerillas from northern Syria rescued many Ezidis, including Martini and her family, and helped them reach a camp in Zakho, a district in northern Iraq. Not long after, Martini's family crossed the border to Turkey. For the next three years, they lived in a series of refugee camps set up by the Turkish government in the country's southern-eastern cities of Nusaybin and Midyat. In 2017, having been granted refugee status by the United Nations, the family was resettled in Australia. Since 2016, as part of its Humanitarian Settlement Program, the Australian government has accepted some one thousand Ezidi people as refugees, the majority of whom were settled in Wagga Wagga.

Research Context

Wagga Wagga – literally, 'many crows' in the local Wiradjuri language – is a regional city located in the Riverina region of southwest NSW. Home to a population of 64,000

[2] All names used in this thesis are pseudonyms.

[3] According to Pelletier et al. (2016: 871) 'a closer examination of Islamic Law reveals inconsistencies, contradictions, and tensions between ISIS's conceptualization of Islamic Law and that of the broader religion of Islam. Whether one subscribes to the belief that ISIS is little more than a terrorist organization, or that it is a larger social movement, there is little doubt ISIS is using the religion of Islam as a vehicle to forward its political agenda and achieve its strategic objectives.'

(.idcommunity n.d.), it is one of the fastest growing inland cities in NSW. Wagga's agriculture sector and the presence of well-established health and tertiary education institutions (i.e. TAFE and Charles Sturt University) are key factors in this population growth (Ellicott 2018). Since 2005, Wagga has also been key site chosen by the Australian governments for refugee resettlement in NSW, absorbing newcomers from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, including the Ezidi refugees resettled from Iraq and Turkey. The majority of these Ezidi families are originally from the Iraqi city of Shekhan, in the Dohuk Governorate, and from Sinjar.

The name 'Ezidi' – also referred to as 'Yazidi', 'Yezidi' or 'Ezdayi' – denotes, in the first instance, a religious identity or affiliation, corresponding to the meaning 'the one who created me', the God Qudeh (Kizilhan 2017). Ezidism is a monotheistic faith that includes a belief in seven archangels who follow God, also mentioned in the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the Ezidi belief system, the leader of these angels is Taus Melek, the Peacock Angel, appointed by God to provide protection. Historically, outsiders to the religion have conflated Taus Melek with the 'devil', leading to negative stereotypes condemning the Ezidis as 'devil worshippers' and spawning deep-rooted tensions between this minority group and other ethnic-religious communities in Iraq. Over the last fifty years or so, a majority of Iraqi Ezidis left their homeland in search of job opportunities in countries such as Germany and Armenia. More recently, the Ezidis became a target of violence from extremist organisations such as al-Qaida and ISIS for their non-Muslim identity (Kizilhan 2017: 336). Most Ezidis have fled from Iraq to other parts of the world to seek safety and refuge from persecution. Some have been accepted as refugees in America, Canada and Australia.

Research Aims

One of the central aims of this thesis is to explore the resettlement experiences of the Ezidi people as recently arrived refugees in Wagga. More specific research questions emerged from the convivial relationships I established with my informants, as well as from the participant observation activity I conducted at various sites in Wagga. Studying 'settlement' requires an investigation of state-sponsored services in a number of areas, such as housing and social welfare. It also requires a critical understanding of the process and practices of home-making. What does it mean for the Ezidis to build 'homely' places for themselves in a place like Wagga? And what creative practices go into this?

Why undertake another study on settlement and home-making, given the extensive research and writing extant on this topic (see e.g. Lloyd & Vasta 2017; Baldassar 2001; Levin 2015; Mansouri et al. 2006; Boese 2015)? My conviction is that study of the settlement process and experience of

home is not something that can or should ever go out of date. As Michael Jackson writes at the beginning of his book, *At Home in the World*, 'Ours is a century of uprootedness. All over the world, fewer and fewer people live out their lives in the place where they were born' (1995: 1). My aim is to contribute to this ever-growing literature on the settlement experiences of migrants and the notion of home in diasporic contexts by taking a phenomenologically grounded approach to examine the lived experiences of Ezidi migrants.

The findings of this study are timely. It provides much-needed knowledge about this most recent migrant group arriving in Australia. While some demographic research has been conducted on the Ezidi refugees in Australia (STARTTS 2016; Collins et al. 2018), no anthropological or social science research sympathetic to their lived experiences has been undertaken so far. Public discourse circulating about the Ezidis is far from satisfactory. Media reportage from the SBS and ABC has introduced Wagga's Ezidi community to Australian audiences, but has often focused narrowly on their tragic lives under ISIS (Tay 2016; Dabbagh 2017). They have romanticised resettlement, describing the Ezidis' arrival in Australia as 'like magic' and a 'second chance' (Dabbagh 2017).

Additionally, the Australian government's decision to resettle refugees and migrants in rural and regional areas (in places like Wagga Wagga) has been a debated issue among researchers (see e.g. Cooper et al. 2017; Schech 2014; Wilding & Nunn 2017; Boese 2015; Radford 2017; Correa-Velez & Onsando 2009). One side of the argument criticises such policies, claiming that migrants are being 'dumped' in rural towns to counteract the government's concerns about 'being swamped by ethnic Others' in major cities (Schech 2014: 602). Similarly, critics argue that these policies will have adverse effects, particularly within the rural host community, whose residents are in some cases intolerant towards refugees and migrants (Neal 2002). On the other hand, some researchers have emphasised that locals in some rural towns in Australia are more tolerant towards newly arrived migrants given the degree of ethnic diversity already existing in those places (Briskman 2012). Other studies have also identified benefits of rural settlement for refugees, pointing out that rural towns offer quieter and less stressful lifestyles than big cities (Mungai 2014: 193; Boese & Phillips 2017: 63). In this thesis, I assess both sides of the argument in relation to the Ezidis in Wagga and investigate the impact of rural settlement on both the host community and the Ezidi refugees.

Research Methodology and Fieldwork

The fieldwork activity for this study took place in 2018 over a period of three months. The MCWW had arranged for me to meet the Ezidi families at government-sponsored events for

Ezidi refugees. After I formed relationships with the Ezidis, I worked closely with the Rama, Sepo and Zoloha Ezidi families residing in Wagga, participating in their daily lives at home and in social contexts.[4] Cooking – or, better, 'apprentice' cooking – was one primary fieldwork activity. I mastered several Ezidi dishes under the guidance of my Ezidi informants. Participation in such daily encounters provided many valuable insights into my informants' creative practices and the ways in which they use domestic spaces and local ingredients for food in Wagga. Their unmediated remarks and statements also helped me develop an understanding of their perceptions of home in the historical present.

More particularly, I participated in and observed a range of public events involving the Ezidi refugees, from religious festivals such as Carsamba Sor and Xidir Ilyas, to English classes catering for the Ezidi community, to sporting activities. Many of these events were funded by the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga (MCWW), a service provider established in 1988 to deliver community engagement and assistance for humanitarian migrants. The conversations I had with MCWW staff members and volunteers working closely with the Ezidis offered further insights into the settlement experiences of these humanitarian migrants. Other fieldwork activities were organised by various civil society organisations, including the St Vincent De Paul Society and the Service for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS), and by government-funded refugee health clinics.

Finally, semi-structured interviews complemented the qualitative inquiry. I conducted interviews with ten Ezidi families, as well as with five staff members from the MCWW, three volunteers, and a refugee doctor. The cohort of 30 participants were mainly parents and women aged between 18 and 60, with the majority aged between 30 and 40. I obtained my informants' oral consent to voice record their interview responses with my mobile phone and transcribe them into my journal.[5] This thesis incorporates the informants' comments from both the interviews and notes from my journal. Their statements were then later analysed and coded into themes that were related to the topics of settlement and home-making. These methods provided me with information about both the Australian government's role in the settlement process and the lived experiences of the Ezidi migrants themselves.

[4] In this thesis I specifically mention three families, and various Ezidi individuals such as Hani (see page 14) and Khilas (see page 32). However during fieldwork I formed close relations with at least ten Ezidi families. All families could not be included in this thesis, because I wanted to be more specific and do an in-depth study on the topic of homemaking. The three families in particular were also the most supportive of my research, which allowed me to access more ethnographic data.

[5] Due to the nature of my topic area and the Ezidis' emotional sensitivity, it was not necessary to openly ask them about their distress and trauma. I was more interested in obtaining data on how they settled in Wagga. Nevertheless, information regarding the Ezidis' trauma was indirectly expressed in their storytelling and experiences as I formed closer relationships with them.

Chapter Outline

The thesis is organised around three chapters. The following chapter provides an overview of the government-funded Humanitarian Settlement Process supporting the Ezidi refugees in Wagga. My findings largely reflect the information I obtained from the MCWW staff working with the Ezidis. The chapter provides a general overview of the history of settlement services for humanitarian migrants in Australia, the Australian government's more recent strategy of resettling refugee migrants in rural and regional areas, and changes that government agencies have recently implemented in service provision. I finally discuss the implications of these changes for the Ezidis' utilisation of such services in Wagga.

Chapter Two takes a narrative-based approach to describe and analyse the biographical accounts and lived experiences of two Ezidi families from northern Iraq. Their narratives concentrate, in the main, on their journeys from Iraq to Turkey and, eventually, to Australia. My analysis involves an exploration of the themes of waiting, patience and endurance by focusing on the migration experiences of one Ezidi family. I also discuss experiences of sickness and bodily pain by reflecting on ethnographic material about another Ezidi family. Rather than offering any 'conclusions', I provide an interpretation of these families' life stories.

The process and practices of home-making are the focus of Chapter Three. I first discuss how my informants make use of household spaces, utilising various strategies to create a sense of 'home' in their personal spaces. The analysis focuses on a number of events and practices, in particular, cooking, convivial communal events such as religious celebrations, and cross-ethnic relationships with other residents in Wagga. The notion of nostalgia is useful for exploring migrants' experiences around these issues. The second part of the chapter shifts the focus to the question of whether (and how) the Ezidis feel a sense of 'home' within the Ezidi community, neighbourhood and local community of Wagga. The discussion also discloses how the services provided by the MCWW have helped these migrants build a local community while establishing various intercultural spaces for the Ezidis.

Chapter One

"Welcome to Wagga Wagga"

'[The motion] recognises the importance of justice for Yazidi victims and survivors of ISIL and calls on the Australian Government to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of ISIL's crimes against the Yazidis where possible in Australian courts, including by providing mutual legal assistance, and supporting other national, international and/or hybrid investigations and prosecutions of crimes committed by ISIL against Yazidis.'

– The Hon Chris Crewther, MP (2018)

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the number of forcibly displaced persons at the end of 2017 reached 68.5 million worldwide (UNHCR 2017). The need for humanitarian assistance also increased for 11 million Syrian people since the Syrian civil war began in March 2011, with over 4 million displaced by the end of 2015 (Renzaho & Dhingra 2017: 5). Among these displaced populations are the Syrian and Iraqi Ezidis, forced to flee their homes in the face of state instability, or worse, as a result of the ISIS-led invasion of their villages. In 2015, the Australian government responded to this humanitarian crisis by announcing it would resettle 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees. This intake is in addition to the 13,000 humanitarian migrants resettled every year under the Refugee and Humanitarian program (Renzaho & Dhingra 2017: 2).

The Australian government targeted 'those most in need – the women, children and families of persecuted minorities who have sought refuge from the conflict in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey' (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2015). Correspondingly, the refugees are chosen for settlement into Australia from UNHCR-administered refugee camps or from cities in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey (Collins et al. 2018: 5). Between 1 July 2015 and 31 December 2017, the number of resettled Iraqi and Syrian refugees in Australia increased to 24,926,[6] with the majority settling in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland (Collins et al. 2018).

In 2016–17, Australia granted offshore humanitarian visas to 668 Syrian and Iraqi Ezidis residing in Turkey and Iraq (Department of Home Affairs 2018: 6). The Australian government has settled these Ezidis in regional areas across New South Wales (NSW), including Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour, Tamworth and Armidale, and Toowoomba in south-east Queensland. This study concentrates specifically on Wagga Wagga (hereafter, Wagga), as it was the first

[6] This amount includes the 12,000 visas for Syrian and Iraqi refugees and those that resettled under the humanitarian assistance program between 2015 and 2017.

place of settlement in Australia for Ezidi refugees from northern Iraq. In fact, prior to August 2016, only two Ezidi families were recorded as residing in NSW (STARTTS 2016: 6). By February 2018, it was estimated that more than 60 Ezidi families had been resettled in Wagga. This number is likely to increase given the Government's plan to settle more Ezidi refugees in Wagga.[7]

These newly arrived refugees are resettled by the Australian government's services under the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP)[8] for the first 6–12 months after their arrival (SSI 2017). The HSP is delivered by settlement service organisations, including the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga (MCWW) and the Red Cross in Wagga, who support their clients by recognising their basic needs and providing services that meet those requirements.

The MCWW outlines the HSP's objectives as follows: first, to support refugees to begin a new life in Australia; second, to strengthen their ability to participate in economic and social life; and third, to help them develop skills and knowledge to independently access services (MCWW 2017). The implementation of the HSP program is followed by the Settlement Grant Program (SGP), which offers services to the refugees for the following five years. The Department of Social Services states that the key aims of the SGP are to foster refugees to develop social and economic participation in the Australian society, to help them maintain personal wellbeing, and to ensure independence and community connectedness (DSS 2018a).

This chapter investigates the Humanitarian Settlement Program, and how the Australian government and its state-sponsored services have utilised this program to assist the Ezidis in the areas of housing, welfare and support services in Wagga. It also discusses the reasons behind the Government's decision to assign the regional town of Wagga as a location for the settlement of the Ezidi refugees.

Resettlement of refugees and humanitarian entrants in Australia

Australia has an extensive history of receiving refugees from all around the world, including displaced persons during and after World War II. Since 1945, Australia has accepted more than 800,000 refugees (Phillips 2017) and is a party to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Phillips 2005). The nation's immigration profile was established after the Second World War, when thousands of European migrants were sponsored to migrate to Australia. The

[7] Members from the MCWW tell me that at least 1–2 families are resettled each month in Wagga. The increase in Ezidi refugees has also mentioned in Parliament by the Hon Chris Crewther MP, who states that he 'welcomes the Australian Government's decisive action in resettling Yazidi refugees' (Crewther 2018).
[8] Humanitarian Settlement Program. This program was formerly known as Humanitarian Settlement Services (DSS 2018a).

first refugee policy was devised in the late 1970s as a response to significant numbers of Indochinese 'boat people' seeking asylum following the Vietnam War, and marked the official end of the racist 'White Australia' policy (Phillips 2005).

To understand the nature of Australia's current settlement scheme for humanitarian migrants, it is imperative to have knowledge of its past. Policies directed at migrants in Australia prior to the Whitlam government period (1972–75) aimed at preserving cultural homogeneity, and migrants were expected to assimilate to Christian British values. Racial discrimination was at the heart of immigration policies until 1975. As James Jupp notes, by 1947 Australia had become one of the 'whitest' countries in the world since its doors were tightly closed to non-European people (2002: 9). Even when the Australian government during this time sought to boost the nation's population, it did so by persuading mainly British migrants. After the Second World War, Australia accepted displaced persons from Europe, and in 1951–52 agreements were also signed with Italy and Greece for settlement into Australia. The intake of Europeans contributed to ethnic diversity in Australia, and by 1971 Australia had become a multicultural society (Jupp 2002: 12–13).

During the 1970s, there was also a conscious move toward non-racist views and beliefs in Western countries such as America. These movements also affected Australia's stance on racist and discriminatory policies, particularly its immigration laws (Anderson 2013: 909-10). Whitlam's 1972 campaign aimed at removing impediments for ethnic equality in order to establish a diverse, tolerating and progressive nation. His popular slogan, 'It's time' symbolised the desire for a change. The White Australia policy officially came to an end, and other policies and measures, such as the *Racial Discrimination Act* (1975), were introduced. Whitlam's Labor government symbolised a period of change in Australian identity with its promotion of multiculturalism and policy changes (2013: 910).

Multiculturalism was established as an official policy during Malcolm Fraser's (1975–1983) term as prime minister. Policy changes were favorable towards refugees, including those from Asia and the Middle East (Jupp 2002: 43). The Galbally Review of Post Arrival Programs and Services for Migrants also issued its report in 1978, in which it was noted that 'special services and programs are necessary at present to ensure equality of access and provision' (Koleth 2010). The report led to the expansion of multicultural centres, which were funded to provide support for the welfare of ethnic communities (Boese 2015: 405; Koleth 2010). The establishment of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs also aimed to promote tolerance for ethnic diversity (Anderson 2013). In a report issued in 1977, the Institute officially defined multiculturalism

through an approach called ‘cultural pluralism’, which was based on the values of social cohesion, equality of opportunity and cultural identity. The report concluded:

> What we believe Australia should be working towards is not a oneness, but a unity, not a similarity, but a composite, not a melting pot but a voluntary bond of dissimilar people sharing a common political and institutional structure. (Jupp 2002: 86)

By 1993 the Keating government had separated the humanitarian program from the broader migration program. The humanitarian program was implemented for refugees and those in need of humanitarian assistance, while the migration program was utilised for skilled and family-stream migrants (Phillips 2005). Until this period, most persons seeking asylum were given permanent protection visas. Temporary humanitarian protection visas – such as the ‘Domestic Protection (Temporary) Entry Permit’ – were also used from 1990, but asylum seekers were allowed to apply for the Protection (Permanent) Entry Permit (Mansouri & Leach 2008: 102).

It wasn’t until 1999 that the Howard government implemented Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) for unauthorised asylum seekers (Phillips 2005). This meant asylum seekers were ineligible to apply for the permanent protection visa (Mansouri & Leach 2008: 104). As Mansouri et al. (2006: 397) claim, TPV refugees experience a life ‘in limbo’, as they are denied many rights and have restricted access to government-funded settlement services. Governments also justify harsh immigration policies on grounds that asylum seekers and refugees are ‘problems’ for the nation.

The Australian government has not always supported immigrant settlement (Jupp 2002:121). This is seen in Australia’s harsh policies toward refugees arriving by boat, including detention centres in places such as Nauru, Manus and Woomera (Amnesty International 2016; Loff et al. 2002). Asylum seekers have been arriving by boat since the late 1970s and have the right under UN conventions to seek asylum. In 1992, the Keating Labor Government introduced mandatory detention and, by 2001, the Howard government devised the ‘Pacific Solution’ to settle asylum seekers arriving by sea in detention camps outside of Australia. This has been implemented through border protection policies that forcibly prevent boats entering Australian waters (Jupp 2002: 196). Twenty-six years on, mandatory detention and the Pacific Solution are still part of Australian policy.

In 2001, detention centres were opened by Howard government on Papua New Guinea’s Manus Island and in Nauru as part of the Pacific Solution, which resulted in a decrease in the number of asylum seekers arriving by boat to Australia. In 2016, the PNG court found the Manus Island

centre to be illegal, and has pushed the Australian government to close down its offshore detention centres. Deaths among refugees, such as Omid Masoumali and Fariborz Karami, have occurred as a result of the suffering endured in the camps (Amnesty International 2016b; Rushton 2018).

Another of the Howard government's strategies for humanitarian settlement was the separation of asylum seekers into onshore and offshore categories in 1996. The onshore humanitarian program assists refugees who apply for protection after arrival, while the offshore humanitarian program comprises two kinds of permanent visas, the Refugee visa and the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP) visa. The 'Refugee' category includes those who face persecution in their home country and are in need of protection and resettlement; the SHP is directed at those outside their home country who are subject to various forms of discrimination and gross violations of human rights (Department of Home Affairs n.d.).

The offshore humanitarian resettlement program also provides for refugees to have their travel and medical costs covered by the Australian government. These humanitarian migrants are able to access a range of services, including English tuition, translation, and information facilities. They are also eligible for accommodation assistance, health support, counseling and assistance by both community and government organisations (Hugo 2001: 30).

Since 1998, Australia has granted visas under the humanitarian program to around 13,000 refugees per year (Phillip 2005). During 2016–17, the visa quota for the Refugee and Humanitarian program was 13,750, increasing to 16,250 in 2017–18 and to 18,750 in 2018–19 (Refugee Council of Australia 2017). The majority of these refugee visas were allocated to those applying through the offshore program.

The humanitarian program is delivered by refugee settlement services. The Australian government contracts these services through a competitive tendering process. In the past, Migrant Resource Centres (MRC) and settlement services received three-year grants from the government, with that funding used for infrastructure, rent and other utilities for the development of refugee communities. This system changed when the MRC programs were commercialised in the mid-1990s. Commercialisation puts settlement service providers in a vulnerable position, as these services are forced to compete with other organisations for funding through the request-for-tender process (Roumeliotis & Paschalidis-Chilas 2013). Competitive tendering has risks and can potentially reduce the quality of services. In order to win contracts, service providers also cut costs, including skilled staff. In a competitive environment, service providers may also be

dissuaded from sharing useful information with other organisations (Refugee Council of Australia 2015: 9).

In the case of Wagga, the settlement program was operated by the MCWW from 2005 to 2017. After tendering for the new HSP contract in August 2017, the MCWW lost to the Red Cross. Since October 2017, the Red Cross has been assisting with the HSP program for the areas of Riverina, Canberra and Wollongong. This organisation is relatively new to managing the HSP program, and has been experiencing difficulties in the settlement of Ezidi refugees. One of my Ezidi informants remarked: 'I feel sorry for the newly arrived Ezidis, because they have to be assisted by the Red Cross. That organisation is inexperienced, and have no idea what they are doing.' Another Ezidi informant, who is a client of the Red Cross, is also disappointed that his caseworker could not assist his family when desired stating '[my caseworker] says that he is always busy.' This is likely because the number of Red Cross staff was reduced when it won the tender to assist in the HSP program, meaning fewer caseworkers are available to assist in helping out a larger group of refugee clients.

During my fieldwork in Wagga, I was not granted consent to document the Red Cross's delivery of HSP for the Ezidi refugees. However, I was fortunate enough to be provided information from the members of the MCWW, who shared how they operated the humanitarian settlement program for the Ezidis and for other humanitarian refugees who had been resettled in Wagga. The following section analyses this topic in depth.

The Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga and the Red Cross

Joanne is the team leader of MCWW and has been working within the area of settlement services for over 20 years. She and I sip our tea in the backyard an Ezidi family, who I identify here as the 'Sepo' family. Joanne hands out a packet of cigarettes to the parents, and we all laugh over conversations about okra and beans. After many cups of tea and cigarettes, I ask, 'Jo, can you explain why and how the Ezidis arrived here to Wagga?' She lights up another ciggy, puffs out the smoke and narrates the arrival process.

> Initially, the Ezidis were to settle in Albury [a city in South NSW] since the government had concerns about previous Afghan communities here. My colleagues and I pushed the government for them to stay here in Wagga, because it is close to our head office and all other support facilities. We consulted with the communities, stakeholders and schools, and discussed the large number of people that were to arrive in Wagga.

> Critical mass was also vital, and we thought about the numbers before they arrived. Instead of sending one family, we wanted more to come. Usually the Riverina [a region in southwest NSW] settles 150 refugees per annum, but the period between 2016 and 2017 hit the records. We had over 400 individuals settle, making it by far the most on record. The largest cluster of Ezidis arrived in February 2017; 72 people from nine families. They literally took up the whole plane. It was a busy, yet exciting period for all of us.

'What happened when they came here?' I asked. Joanne continued:

> 'Well Noor, as part of the Key Performance Indicators for the Settlement Services [administered by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services], individuals are required to be medically examined within the first four weeks of arrival. In 2017, we had a contract with the Refugee Health Clinic so that the health issues of the Ezidi refugees could be managed at our head office. Normally the clinic runs on Mondays with one doctor. However, last year in February we had two doctors operating because nine families had to be examined. The dental school from Charles Sturt University also collaborated with us and prepared a boardroom in the head office. The strategy was to have a one-stop shop so that all Ezidi individuals could be medically examined effectively at a fast pace. It worked out so well that we ended up winning a partnership award with the dental services. It was a chaotic period. I was at the real estate agents daily; it was like I was stalking them every day. But everything turned out good. Our tenants were fantastic.

'And what is the housing process for new refugee arrivals?' I asked, handing her another glass of tea.

> You see, we, the Multicultural Council, lease the settlement houses for the first six months of arrival for each Ezidi family. After six months, the lease could go under the family's title, but they also have the option of leasing another place. We planned their houses to be central, so that it was close to facilities such as TAFE, public schools and childcare. The aim was to have the families to get to places without needing to use transport. Buses are also not commonly used in Wagga, and the prices of bus fare are too dear. The Ezidis' homes are also scattered around different streets next to Australian neighbours. This was done so that the families integrate and interact with other Aussies. But they are only a walking distance to other relatives in Wagga.

‘Is there anyone to guide them through their everyday tasks?’

> Yeah of course, each family is initially provided a caseworker, who helps each family with matters such as Centrelink, banking, school, Medicare, housing etc. They come on a weekly basis to check up on the family to see how they are doing. We also collaborated with Vinnies [the St Vincent De Paul Society], who managed to get many volunteers to help out the Ezidis. The volunteers are great, because they help the family go shopping, and show them how to use the stove, oven, laundry and other housekeeping stuff. They also help kids with their homework.

Joanne recounted the settlement procedure for refugees supported under the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). The program includes meeting arrivals at the airport, providing them with six months of free housing, household items and medical examinations (Boese 2015:405). Caseworkers are also assigned to help newly arrived families navigate registration for government welfare and support services (Sampson 2015: 102). Volunteers are not used in all HSP programs, but they have a positive impact on the lives of Ezidi families. For example, my Ezidi friend, Hani, posted a status update on his social media during Refugee Week: ‘Today was a beautiful day. Thank you to all Australians who love refugees. Thank you to my grandmother and grandfather. God bless our new country and new family.’ His ‘grandparents’ in this case are not his biological relatives, but two elderly Australians volunteers living in Wagga. They have captured the hearts of Hani and his family to the extent that they are considered family.

Unlike the MCWW, the Red Cross does not use any volunteers to help with the HSP program. Shiro, one of my newly arrived Ezidi informants, was disappointed that other Ezidi families had the opportunity to seek help from volunteers. She commented:

> Nur, I wish we had a volunteer. Some of my other Ezidi friends are so lucky, because they get to go on holidays with their volunteers, and are driven to the supermarket and shopping centre. We don’t get the same opportunities as they do.

The changes in the Humanitarian Settlement Program have caused concerns for the Ezidi refugees and for organisations like the MCWW and St Vincent’s. The MCWW is also limited in helping out newly arrived Ezidi refugees, including their issues with the Red Cross. However, out of goodwill and concern for the community, the MCWW continues to assist the new refugees as much as possible. These changes have also affected volunteers and other members, who feel that the Australian government gives precedence to profit rather than effective social welfare. ‘All our hard work has gone down the drain,’ one disheartened volunteer tells me.

My observations were recorded during the recent transition period, so it is to be expected that the Red Cross faced additional difficulties and ambiguities. However, if there is a lack of staff, as the MCWW and other Ezidis claim, it is concerning. The Refugee Council of Australia (2015: 9) acknowledges that

> the settlement process may be delayed by inadequate support…we note the importance of ensuring that contracted service providers have specific expertise and a proven track record in working with people from refugee backgrounds and a demonstrated understanding of the needs of communities settling in their local area. While quality tailored services may have a higher initial cost, they are also more effective and, therefore, more efficient over the long-term.

If this is the case, the Australian government needs to reconsider how settlement services can better deliver assistance in the areas of refugee resettlement. Effective planning and collaboration, as well as sincere concern for the wellbeing of refugees, would better contribute to the struggles of humanitarian migrants to build new lives.

Rural and regional settlement

Over the last decade, the Australian government has resettled humanitarian entrants with no links to family or community in Australia in rural and regional areas (see Johnston et al. 2009; Collins 2013: 167; Cooper et al. 2017; Boese 2015). In 2004, the government dedicated $12.4 million to sponsor more refugee settlement in rural towns (Phillips 2005). Refugees are resettled in rural areas through decisions made by the government, the entrant or the local community (Piper 2017: 5). For example, the Ezidis were chosen to settle into Wagga through government-planned initiatives. In government decisions, the Department of Social Services (DSS) chooses the regional location after evaluating whether the allocated area would be able to cater for the needs of entrants.

Policies to assist the dispersal of refugees were first put in place in various European countries and were later adopted in Australia. According to Cooper et al. (2017), the dispersal policy aims to reduce the concentration of ethnic minorities in large cities, to avoid ghettoisation of migrant groups, and to control the patterns of refugee settlement. The government promotes these objectives by describing how newly arrived refugees can contribute economically and socially to rural areas (Refugee Council of Australia 2010; Boese & Phillips 2017: 52). Critics argue that the dispersal policies cause double victimisation of refugees, who are first displaced from their homelands, and then compelled to reside in places that are undesirable (Schech 2014). Cooper et

al. (2017: 79) point out that refugees in rural areas are often exposed to social exclusion because they have limited employment opportunities, lack cross-cultural contact with the host community, and have limited access to social, health and education facilities (see also Correa-Velez & Onsando 2009).

As mentioned by Wilding and Nunn (2017), rural areas in Western countries are also imagined as settings with a strong sense of white national identity and intolerance of cultural diversity. This is due to perceptions of rural people and communities as 'exclusionary of outsiders: both new arrivals who are ethnically similar and those who are visibly different' (2017: 2544). Neal (2002: 447) investigates how rural areas in Britain are racialised, since they are characterised as places that provide 'white safety'. Immigrants and 'un-English' people are described as a threat to such spaces. This is in contrast to urban cities, which are depicted as dangerous because of the influx of migrants.

The policy and practice of refugee settlement in rural areas has raised serious questions. To what extent have 'ethnics' become marginalised in such 'white' rural landscapes? How effective have dispersal policies been in serving migrants' needs? How do host communities respond to the arrival of refugees in their local neighbourhoods?

I explore these questions in relation to the Ezidi refugees residing in Wagga Wagga, a regional town where 87.8 per cent of the population is Australia-born and only 4.6 per cent speak a language other than English at home (Cooper et al. 2017: 81) My observations in Wagga go against stereotypes of rural people as 'redneck, anti-diversity and even racist' (Briskman 2012: 147). At no point during my fieldwork did my Ezidi informants report being subject to any racist, discriminatory or hostile experience in Wagga. In her study of rural towns in Australia, Briskman (2012) also acknowledged that some rural communities are not intolerant of refugees. This is because the ethnic landscape of rural and regional areas is constantly changing, and 'white' hegemony is being diluted as a result of migration and refugee settlement.

A clarification concerning the terms 'regional' and 'rural' is necessary here. Mungai (2014) defines regional areas as non-metropolitan places outside of major cities and with a smaller population. These places include rural farms, towns, cities and other areas. On the other hand, rural areas are places where the social and economic conditions of the resident population are dependent on agricultural production (2014: 150). Wagga Wagga comprises both urban and rural areas. It is a cosmopolitan city accommodating institutions such as a university and an army base, as well as meat factories and other industrial outlets. It also has farmlands that are used for

sheep grazing, dairy and farming (.idcommunity n.d.). Cultural diversity is increasing in Wagga, even if the number of immigrants remains relatively small.[9]

The Ezidis in Wagga arrived on Refugee visas (sub-class 200), which entitles them to access to services provided by the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). As mentioned previously, the MCWW and the Red Cross facilitate this program and assist in the resettlement of refugees. Yet as Ramsay (2017: 171) points out, legal entitlement to such civic rights does not 'automatically' provide refugees a sense of belonging. The resettlement process is not only dependent on government policies regarding humanitarian assistance, but is also strongly influenced by the host society's attitude to refugees. Consequently, if the host society is accepting of the settled refugees in their community, then these refugees will also experience settlement positively.

For example, when I asked Joanne how the Wagga community reacted to the settlement of the Ezidis there, she explained that the local society expressed support after being provided information about the new refugees. The Ezidis I spoke to also found the local community in Wagga helpful and accommodating. As one of my Ezidi informants remarked:

> Nur, my parents say that they are making *dua* [prayer] to all of Wagga people, because they have helped all of us so much. My parents love Joanne, the Australian teachers at TAFE, the caseworkers, the doctors, volunteers and our Australian neighbours. They are both so grateful for being here in Wagga. I love Wagga and the people here as well!

Caseworkers, volunteers and Australian neighbours also thought of the Ezidis in Wagga as 'wonderful people'. A volunteer expresses her views of the Ezidis: 'They are so generous and hospitable. Every time we visit their homes, we have to make sure to go hungry, because they give us a lot of food.' One of the caseworkers also stated that the Ezidis are more popular than other refugees. 'The Australians took years to warm up to the Africans. I guess the Ezidis are much more popular because the media shares their tragic life stories in Sinjar under ISIS.' Indeed almost every local Australian I interacted with in Wagga knew something about the Ezidis' recent traumatic history. Since the Ezidis were targets of a violent organisation that had committed atrocities, the Australians sympathise with the Ezidis' pain as they perceive them to be innocent victims. Furthermore, the Ezidis have not had any negative media attention to date, and appear to have been a very peaceful community who were caught up in the politics of the Middle East.

[9] According to the Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga, 1,697 individuals (484 families) were resettled from 2005-17 as part of the Humanitarian Settlement Services Program (MCWW n.d.).

Although the Ezidis' migration to Wagga has been generally well received, not all refugees in Australia have experienced the same positive attitude under the government's refugee policies. This is particularly true of TPV holders, who have restricted rights, and are not provided the same services as refugees who enter the country via the offshore humanitarian program (Johnston et al. 2009: 192; Boese & Phillips 2017). TPV holders also experience stigmatisation, with some right-wing media and politicians in Australia attempting to delegitimise them as 'queue jumpers' and 'illegals' (Mansouri et al. 2006: 397). According to Jacob from the MCWW, 'The Ezidis are a bit luckier in comparison to other refugee groups, especially those who had arrived by boat. The Ezidis are seen as having [arrived via] the "right" channel as legit refugees'.

The refugee settlement process can be managed effectively if refugees are supported by the appropriate government services and if measures are taken to ensure that local communities are informed about the resettlement of refugees in their neighbourhood. However, Australian policies are also a long way off providing a perfect solution for refugees, as they only accommodate certain 'types' of refugees, such as those who 'wait their turn' to resettle. This is in contrast to those who actively undertake difficult endeavors to get to Australia, such as asylum seekers who arrive by boat (Coghlan 2011). The Australian government needs to assess and review its policies, and make fair decisions for all refugees.

Chapter Two
Roots and Routes

During my fieldwork in Wagga, I exchanged many stories with Ezidi families originally from the northern Iraqi cities of Sinjar and Shekhan. Both the Ezidi elders and youth recounted to me their stressful movements, first, from Iraq to Turkey, and, finally, to Australia. An analogy can be drawn between these movements and anthropologist Tim Ingold's metaphor of 'wayfaring': individuals travel *along* paths, rather than *across* places in their journey to different places (2009: 152). The wayfarers gather knowledge of places in their journey through 'the memories they call up… narrated like stories' (2009: 154). This metaphor illuminates the lived experiences of the Ezidis now living in Wagga, who have moved through different places out of necessity, and have had to accumulate new know-how and ways of doing things as they inhabited these new environments.

What hardships did the Ezidis encounter during this wayfaring? During their temporary stay in Turkey, my informants were either unpaid or earned less than other employees for the low-wage, labour-intensive jobs they took, such as waiters, cooks and construction workers. In many cases, they were refused the opportunity to sell their labour because of their Iraqi and non-Muslim identity. Accommodation conditions were just as harsh; many families who did not stay at refugee camps had to pay excessive rent for dilapidated apartments. During our conversations, however, their accounts of these hardships were also accompanied by reflections on more joyful moments, as they remembered their earlier lives in their villages in Iraq, as well as the new friendships they developed in Turkey. Some families resided in Turkey for around two years, while others stayed for as much as six years.

Using a phenomenological approach, this chapter explores how the Ezidis retell their life stories of the past in places such as Turkey and Iraq. I also address their ability to adjust to their present condition with their distressing memories of the past on Mount Sinjar in Iraq and in Turkey's camps.

The analysis in this chapter draws on the biographical narratives and lived experiences of the Zoloha and Sepo families. I investigate the Zoloha family's story through concepts of waiting, patience and endurance. These themes are reflective of the difficulties they experienced in the refugee camp at Turkey. Similarly, members from the Sepo family endured tragedies and sufferings while hiding from ISIS on Mount Sinjar. My analysis of this family encompasses the

concepts of bodily pain and sickness to exemplify how their tragic memories of Mount Sinjar are embodied in the present time and space.

The Zoloha family

Faruk and Sheeren Zoloha, parents to four sons, are from the Zorova village in Sinjar. When they escaped ISIS in August 2014, their eldest son was five and the youngest just three months old. I met Faruk at an event hosted by the MCCW, and there he told me about his journey to Australia:

> Everyone tried to escape ISIS. We left everything, and quickly ran to the mountains. I was carrying one of my sons on my back and our newborn in my arms. I lost everyone, including my mother, father and brother. On the mountains, we were without food for five days. We drank dirty, black water and washed ourselves in there. This is my son [Faruk opens his phone to show a picture of his 3-year old son] – you can see that he is wearing dirty clothes and has no shoes on.
>
> My three-month-old baby was also very sick on the mountains. Many young children, elders and the disabled were abandoned. My cousin also disappeared when he went looking for food. We told him not to explore outside the mountains, because ISIS would kill him. When he drifted away from us, he never came back. We think he died, because we never saw or heard from him again. The worst incident I experienced on the mountains was watching a pregnant woman give birth to a newborn. After she gave birth, I saw them both die.

Faruk stares deeply into my watering eyes, and sheds a few tears.

Several days after camping on Mount Sinjar, the Zoloha family were finally rescued by Kurdish guerillas. They helped the family travel to Rojava in North Syria. Afterwards, Faruk's family decided to travel to a refugee camp in Zakho, a city in northern Iraq. At the camp, his son survived a car accident, albeit with 61 stitches on his head. Faruk says, 'We told the police not to arrest the Kurdish chauffer, as he didn't intend to kill my son. What happened to my son is fate from *Qudeh* [God]. We, Ezidis, believe that God has a wisdom in everything that happens in life'.

The family then migrated to the city of Hakkari in southeast Turkey, but at the border Turkish soldiers locked them in a prison for twelve days. 'We didn't have our IDs. I told them that we

were running away from ISIS and had no time to take our IDs with us. We were only looking for safety.' Faruk sighs as he raises his hands to his head to express the frustration he experienced.

Immediately after being released from prison in Turkey, the family made their way to Syria again. This time their plan was to travel by sea to Greece; however, after many failed attempts, the family returned to Turkey. They then settled in a refugee camp funded by the People's Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, HDP) in Diyarbakir, a city in southeast Turkey. According to Faruk and many other Ezidis, camp life was extremely difficult. From there, the family was assisted by the United Nations to migrate to Australia.

Faruk smiles, and finishes on this note: 'I would have never imagined myself to be in Australia. When I was on those mountains, I was only looking for safety and refuge for my family, but I received much more than that.'

Waiting, patience and endurance

'It felt like we were never going to go anywhere.'

For many Ezidi families in Wagga, the process of waiting for asylum in Turkey was lengthy and unsettling. The application to settle elsewhere was conducted by the UNHCR through a procedure titled 'refugee status determination'. In this process, asylum seekers are questioned about their background and interviewed in great detail about the reasons for fleeing their country of origin. This is to determine whether they are a person with a 'true' refugee story. If the individual is recognised as a 'refugee', then third-country resettlement procedures are initiated. Approval takes months or even years. The phone call from the UNHCR is paramount to each refugee living in Turkey. 'Yes, UNHCR has approved your application. You will be going to Australia,' were the words that filled many Ezidi refugees in Wagga with joy and happiness.

For many refugees, the process of waiting causes feelings of uncertainty. Will their application be approved? Will they be settled in another country? Will they be rejected? Kristen Sarah Biehl (2015) describes the waiting process for asylum seekers with non-European backgrounds in Turkey, and how feelings of protracted uncertainty are caused by fear of rejection or prolonged waiting. She reports that the process of waiting left some of her informants practically paralysed in their everyday lives. For example, Reza, an Iranian Baha'i refugee, felt a sense of inertia during his experience of waiting: 'We don't know our life. I don't know what to do… Will it take a year, a week? At least tell me so I know… My hair got white here' (Biehl 2015: 61).

Similarly, the Ezidis in Wagga describe the hardships they experienced in Turkey while waiting for third-country resettlement. Those who lived in the cities had to cover their own expenses, including healthcare, accommodation, transportation and other necessities. Others resided in refugee camps set up by the local Turkish municipality and led by the HDP, AFAD (*Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı,* Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of Turkey) or other humanitarian organisations such as *Kizilay* (Red Crescent) (IGAM 2015). At the camps, each person was provided around 50–80 Lira per month, not enough to purchase items such as nappies or comfortable shoes.

However, not many of my informants reflected on their conditions in Turkey with bitterness. Perdigon (2015) demonstrates that recognising one's poverty is not always projected through reactions of animosity. Instead, it can be translated as an embodied personal journey of patient endurance, *sabr*, during times of hardship. Poverty was never a topic brought up by my interlocutors. They did not perceive themselves to be poor, despite the extremely hard and *masrafli* (expensive) situations they had to negotiate. I ask Faruk how he maneuvered around such *masrafli* circumstances. He responds saying, 'It is hard Nur. I worked two to three jobs per week to feed my family. I was *sabirli* [patient], because I know *Qudeh* [God] has a plan for me. He has a plan for everyone'. In this instance, Faruk overcame his daily struggle through patience. Endurance permits individuals to have a sense of being-in-the-world, particularly when one lacks control over time and waiting seems endless (Procupez 2015: 61).

Hage (2009) indicates that 'stuckedness' is a test for endurance. All migrants want to feel existential mobility, a sense that 'one is going somewhere'. This is imagined as being better than their current position. However, existential immobility, or 'stuckedness', is experienced at all times in different contexts and places. It is treated as a normal experience that one needs to endure, rather than as a situation to get out of.

For the Ezidis, 'stuckedness' is expressed in Kurmanji as *berxwedan* and *dîyax.* It is defined as a circumstance where one suffers from alternative options to the conditions they are in. Yet a person is treated as a conqueror or a 'hero' through their act of 'waiting it out' passively and enduring crisis. So how can one feel a sense of being, or become a 'hero', when being stuck presumably means having a lack of agency? Hage (2009: 101) claims endurance to be at the core of having agency during stuckedness. The sense of dignity and the spirit that one is a 'free human' counteract the sense of lost agency in situations that appear to be stagnant.

Faruk also accepts his position in life wholeheartedly, no matter the outcome, as he believes that whatever happens is in the will of *Qudeh*. This attitude reflects Cordner's (2009) concept of

‘deep patience’, where acceptance of a situation is shown through the exercise of the will. Cordner uses John Keat’s analogy of negative capability to express how deep patience is embodied during times of calamity: ‘Negative capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason’ (2009: 170). It is a prior receptiveness that affects the judgments we make about the world. This impacts the reaction one has to their situation, encouraging the ‘open-ended, open-hearted, humble receptiveness that [Iris] Murdoch calls love’ (2009: 173). Similarly, Faruk’s acceptance of fate during calamities is reflected by his grace, demonstrated in an orientation that embraces a world of ambiguity and uncertainty. However, this grace exceeds the mere acceptance of the world. It involves transcending and affirming the world as a whole outside the ‘effects of time’. This deeper form of patience allows one to recover a sense of self, particularly in circumstances that are beyond one’s capacity to mend and improve.

Patience is also a disposition that emerges when there is an imagination of a future that provides better opportunities and situations for one’s self and family (Procupez 2015:63). Many Ezidi refugees regard their lives in Turkey as experiences that were to be dealt with through patience while waiting to be settled in a third country. Many Ezidis are appreciative of the assistance provided by Australia, but are waiting for ‘better’ opportunities. The adolescents believe things will get ‘better’ if they successfully learn English, as this will open doors to future job prospects and higher education. The families believe life is going to be ‘better’ in Australia’s major cities, since there are more employment opportunities and connections to communities from Middle Eastern backgrounds. Young Ezidi women wait to be reunited with their lovers in Iraq. The Ezidis optimistically wait for their journeys to lead them to their hopes and dreams.

‘What happens next?’ Waiting is an existential experience, since there is an ‘endless search for the meaning of life’ (Hage 2009: 5). Cash’s (2009) essay on Samuel Beckett’s play *Waiting for Godot* depicts the endless waiting for sociality in a meaningless world. The characters in the play aim to find a ‘form that accommodates the mess’, a mess that is symbolic of meaninglessness. They seek and create a cultural order to achieve a sense of time, place and identity, but that order constantly fails. Consequently, the characters play a waiting game to overcome the ‘mess’ and establish sociality and significance. The game signifies how sociality and its ‘patterns and rhythm of interaction’ recover senses of emptiness (2009: 32).

Similarly, the Ezidis aim to create a meaningful environment by waiting for situations to suit their ideals. What are their expectations? What are they waiting for? Some of the older Ezidis want their religious lifestyles to be continued by the next generation, and for the new environment to imitate old settings. Michael Humphrey (2002) conveys how important it is for

migrants to be connected to the past in their new society. This sense of loss is felt mainly in the domestic sphere, a place that aims to revitalise old habits in the new environment (2002: 209). The Ezidis are also waiting for their boredom in Wagga – where they are unemployed and dependent on social services – to end. They are waiting for employment opportunities to arise so they can purchase a property, a new car, or send money to relatives overseas. Their boredom alludes to the meaningless 'mess' illustrated by Cash and, like the characters in *Waiting for Godot*, the Ezidis wait to overcome their boredom through sociality.

Social interaction between Ezidis and locals in Wagga assists in defeating the sense of emptiness and motivates both communities to move forward in their journeys. When families get together, they optimistically discuss their future. For example, Shiban, a middle-aged Ezidi man, plans to move to Sydney. He shows me and other Ezidi peers an image of the living room in a modern house for lease, and begins to imagine. 'I will put my new white leather couches on this side of the wall, put up a plasma TV across, and watch sport holding a cold frosty beer.' He gently smiles at thoughts of the future. Heidegger's concept of building and dwelling is reflective of Shiban's vision of moving to Sydney, 'for building is not a… way toward dwelling – to build is in itself already to dwell' (1971: 146). In this sense, Shiban 'builds' in his mind, a future in Sydney, and 'dwells' through his optimistic imagination.

Similarly, the Sepo family also imagine a better future, albeit in Wagga. The parents hope their children's illnesses improve, and the children aspire to be someone significant in Australian society. Martini Sepo tells me why she wants to become a police officer. 'Nur, I want to become a police officer, because I want to protect all Ezidis and Australians from danger.' My informants' imaginations of the future empower them to confront challenges in their everyday life.

The Sepo family

During my journeys to Wagga, I visit the Sepo family five times. I ask the father, Idoo, to describe what he did in Iraq. During our conversation, Martini translates her parents' Kurmanji into Turkish, and I retranslate to English for the readers of my thesis. Idoo stirs his tea with a teaspoon, starts telling:

> I was a highly valued general commander for the Iraqi government. I worked in the army for over 15 years. I was earning very good money Nur. I had the best car, and the biggest house in my village in Sinjar. I looked after everybody, including our extended

families. My time in the army won me a lot of close friends, and I was always receiving presents from the other army officers.

Four years ago, we had to leave our big home and village, because Daesh[10] was coming. We didn't carry a lot, because we thought we would come back. Our Ezidi leaders had previously told us that Daesh were coming to our village, but that they wouldn't touch us. I knew deep down in my heart that they would do something bad. I couldn't risk staying, so I drove my family up to the mountains.

Idoo pauses, lights up a cigarette, and continues his story.

Barzani[11] betrayed us. He is a terrorist. His party sent 12,000 *peshmergas* [Kurdish soldiers] the day before Daesh arrived our village, but they left while we were sleeping. We had no guns or weapons to save our family against Daesh. Our only option was to run away. On the mountains it was very hard. We had to leave my two-year old son behind. He was very, very ill. We had no food, water or medicine that would help him.

Remembering the incident caused a moment of deep silence. The family gazed down, mourning their lost child. I also grieved, contemplating the horrific experiences the Ezidis endured on that mountain.

With the help of Kurdish guerillas, the Sepo family escaped the mountains. They travelled to a refugee camp in Zakho in northern Iraq, and remained there for two days. Smugglers then assisted them to a refugee camp in Nusaybin, across the border in Turkey's south-east. However, there the family continued to feel unsafe, since insurgents and Turkish soldiers constantly fought against each other. Eventually they were transferred to another refugee camp not too far away in the city of Midyat. After three years of waiting, they were finally accepted for resettlement in Australia.

Sickness, bodily pain & storytelling

Martini's 12-year-old sister, Elina, once stayed in a hospital in Sydney for two months. Her 22-year-old brother, Jacob, believes that it was because of the shock she experienced in Sinjar. Martini explains how she became sick. 'Elina watched Daesh. When my dad drove us to the

[10] Another name for ISIS.
[11] Masoud Barzani was the President of Iraqi Kurdistan from 2005–2017, and governed areas in North Iraq, including Sinjar, which is located in Ninevah province. Most Ezidis in Wagga perceive Barzani as a traitor because he broke his promise to protect and provide security for the Ezidis.

mountains, he told all of us to cover our eyes. Elina didn't close her eyes and watched everything.'

'If you don't mind me asking, what did you see?' I ask carefully, curious to find out.

'She saw neighbours being beheaded and friends being dragged away from their homes. When we reached the top of the mountain by foot, we also saw a bomb detonate five cars. One was ours, another was our uncle's. We constantly saw bombs explode and smoke flare up. Our feet were hurting, and I wasn't wearing proper shoes. This [she shows me a healed scar on her foot] is what happened to me.'

Martini's 8-year-old sister, Marya, also displays a scar on her elbow: 'Me too. I tripped over so many rocks, because I was so tired and hungry.'

According to Carel (2008: 27), illness is an 'abrupt, violent way of revealing the intimately bodily nature of our being'. This is in contrast to a healthy body, which is taken for granted in everyday life and performs actions smoothly without any major thought. However when the body is ill, attention is given to the malfunctioning body part, and the biological and lived body become detached from one another. Merleau-Ponty (cited in Carel 2008: 28) describes this detachment as the 'phantom limb', an expression used to convey the lived, subjective and habitual experience of a lost limb.

During my stay in Wagga, I could not find out what Elina's condition was. She treated her parents harshly, had difficulty sleeping at night, and was monitored by child protective services. A refugee doctor described her condition as a severe case of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), while the family's close Australian neighbour, Betty, described it as defiant behaviour. I asked Elina what she thought of her sickness. She responded saying, 'Nur, I can't help being naughty'. Despite the ambiguity regarding her illness, I noticed that there was a rift between how her biological body is objectively understood by those around her, and her body as it was experienced.

Biddle (1993: 190) expands on Merleau-Ponty's notion of illness, outlining how it 'engenders a confrontation with the implicit corporeal fact of our lived selves'. Normal, everyday, mundane life lacks a strong bodily consciousness, since there is harmony between the body and the activity performed. The body also forms habits through continuous practice, which allows individuals to acquire expertise and mastery over activities. For example, an Ezidi girl masters her cooking skills when she continuously prepares a certain kind of cuisine. However, when one

experiences a bodily disruption, the body remains out of tune with its surroundings and everyday activities.

I analysed this disjuncture between Elina and her attendance to school in an incident described by Betty, who had previously provided foster care for Elina:

> I once dropped Elina off to school, and she walked back to my house. So I dropped her off to school, again. And again, she walked back to my house. I was not giving up, and kept dropping her off. What Elina needs is consistency, structure and not a bloody choice. I couldn't believe Elina was asked whether she wants to go to school or not. The judge even concluded that she has to attend school – she should not be getting a choice.

Elina's constant refusal to go to school is linked to Carel's statement of illness, which is not only a constraint on the biological body, but a 'systematic shift in the way the body experiences, reacts and performs tasks as a whole' (Carel 2008: 29).

Elina's mother, Hannaf, is also ill and unable to attend English classes. While she pours black *kaçak çay* [smuggled tea] into tea glasses, I politely ask her, 'How's TAFE? Have you been able to learn English?'

Hannaf responds, 'Nur, my daughter Elina is sick, I am sick. I can't go to TAFE. At the moment, learning English is a waste of time'.

I also notice that some other Ezidi mothers in Wagga, particularly those who experienced the genocide by ISIS, had not attended English classes. I remember an Ezidi woman from another village in Sinjar taking medication for her psychological illness. Like Hannaf, she also reported that she was too ill to go to TAFE.

Time has to be dedicated to the process of learning English, but Hannaf and other Ezidi mothers continue to carry the scars from the past. Myerhoff (1992) states that time is obliterated by memories of the past, since they are 'rewoven into the present' (1992: 238). Hannaf's behaviour mirrors how Veena Das understands grief as being 'metonymically experienced as bodily pain' (Das 1996: 80). The mothers from Sinjar share the same pain, since the genocide has been inscribed onto their bodies. Not attending the English classes because of their own mental illnesses is a visible bodily action that displays their state of trauma and distress. Das uses imagery to illustrate how pain is embodied: 'language of pain could only be a kind of hysteria – the surface of the body becomes a carnival of images and the depth becomes the site for

hysterical pregnancies – the language having all the phonetic excess of hysteria that destroys apparent meanings' (1996: 86).

Das's analogy is related to the embodied traumas experienced by refugees who have come to Australia from war-torn and violent countries. Most Ezidi families had insomnia, because they remember the horrors of the Sinjar genocide and their loss of loved ones. The Sepo family has also suffered overwhelming tragedies. Elina's illness, which is connected to past horrific observations; her mother's silence and expressions of grief; and her father's supressed feelings are all scars of war, displayed as bodily pain.

An experience of pain requires healing. In the case of Ezidi refugees in Wagga, rehabilitation is not always found through programs such as HSP or other government support agencies. When I asked Joanne if the Ezidis were undergoing counselling or psychological assistance, she claimed that it rarely occurred. Instead, the MCCW conducts recreational activities for families to boost the Ezidis' morale.[12]

In Wagga, I observed how the Ezidis restored their sense of agency through the act of remembering the past and retelling their stories to others. Myerhoff (1992: 240) infers that such stories allow individuals to feel a sense of belonging to the world, since it is redemptive and meaning is made of one's life. The act of storytelling does not always have to be verbalised. For example, Hannaf shares her story with me through musical videos of Sinjar in her home in Wagga. She points to the TV screen of images of people that were in her life. 'Nur, this was my *komsu* [neighbour]… and this is my great-uncle's son. ISIS killed them.' Her gestures of pointing and the act of remembering testifies that these people are present today in her memory. Perhaps the images of loved ones allow her to make sense of the tragedies that took place. Similarly, Betty relates to Hannaf and tells me, 'Hannaf needs this. This is mum's time. It's like me listening to "He ain't heavy, he's my brother", which was played at my father's funeral. I need it to remember him'.

In contrast, Michael Jackson (2013: 72) suggests that telling one's story to a listener might not heal damage. However, it can bridge the divide between the private and public spheres, and revitalise social existence. Sharing our narrative with others allows us to have control over our experiences and to not be alone with our pain. In one incident, Hannaf took me to her room to show laminated photographs of Ezidi people on Mount Sinjar. One overwhelming photo

[12] I did not have access to the counselling services in Wagga due to privacy concerns and confidentiality. My short-term fieldwork also restricted me from gathering data about counselling services for Ezidis in Wagga. However the trauma that the Ezidis experienced was not neglected in this study and I realised that it influenced the process of their homemaking practices. Further study relating to the area of trauma counselling within the Ezidi community is encouraged.

captured the desperate conditions of elderly Ezidi ladies praying towards the sun. They were praying to *Qudeh* for the tragedy to be over for Ezidi people. Hannaf's sorrowful expression and tears were enough for me to realise her despair.

Das (1996: 70) cites Wittgenstein to specify how pain may be inhabited in another body: 'In this movement between bodies, the sentence "I am in pain" becomes the conduit through which I may move out of an inexpressible privacy and suffocation of pain'. Hence, when one expresses that they are in pain, they are also asking for acknowledgement and a response to their sense of loss. For example, as a listener to Hannaf's past, I share her grief, and lament in silence over the tragedy. I comfort her, reassuring that she and her family are safe: 'Shukur Hannaf, you and your family are safe now'. In response to my comforting words, she hugs me affectionately.

While the Sepo and Zoloha families tell their life histories to me, they have the power to control their stories; this allows them to articulate and make sense of past tragedies. As Das puts it,

> the transactions between body and language lead to an articulation of the world in which the strangeness of the world revealed by death, by its non-inhabitability, can be transformed into a world in which one can dwell again in full awareness of a life that has to be lived in loss. This is one path towards healing- women call such healing simply the power to endure. (1996: 68-69)

Healing can be recovered through the act of storytelling, as it empowers the teller to endure past sufferings and loss. For example, Faruk Zoloha uses the language of endurance and patience to explain his experience of waiting for third-country settlement. Similarly, Hannaf Sepo also endures through the very process of sharing her loss with others.

Chapter Three
Homemaking

‘Where do you feel most at home?’ I ask the Rama family, who before arriving to Australia had migrated from the Shekhan village in northern Iraq to Kirsehir, a city in central Anatolia.

‘Here,’ reply the three teenage brothers.

‘No, no, Turkey feels more at home. All our friends are there, and they have better clothes’, respond the two teenage daughters. Mum also nods to express that she, too, prefers Turkey.

‘Na, Na, Nur, Kirsehir and Australia are very nice, but my village is number one. I spent my whole life there’, offers the father, Jamal. He shakes his head, then sorrowfully gazes down to reflect on his past time in Iraq. He knows that returning to his village does not yet seem possible.

According to the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is a person who is ‘unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to’ the country of their nationality (Refugee Council of Australia 2016). The Ezidi refugees in Wagga know that if they were to visit their homeland, they would only be returning to the ruins of their villages, as their homes have been left derelict or have been bombed by ISIS. As Jamal says, ‘We have nothing left waiting for us there. Our *hayat* [life] continues here’.

Accordingly, the refugees’ experience is in ‘flight’ as their movement is imbued with fear, uncertainty and instability (Jackson 2002). The refugees’ consciousness is subject to ‘wild oscillations’ between ‘polar extremes – here and there, past and present, present and future, living and dead, immediate and imagined’ (2002: 90). Similarly, many Ezidis in Wagga reflect on the atrocities of the genocide, what they have lost, and what they had to endure. They remember also the stable lives and sense of ‘homeliness’ that they once had in their villages. However, in every place they migrated to in search of refuge, the Ezidis have also managed to establish ‘homely places’ in their new environments.

It is worth considering, then, the question ‘where is home?’ For Benjamin (1995: 158), home is a ‘spatially localised, temporally defined, significant, and autonomous physical frame’. Here he suggests that the physical quality of a place has a direct relationship to home. The problem with this view is that it assumes home to be singular, and at a fixed local point. As many studies of globalisation and migration have highlighted, home is not bound to a particular place, region or

time (Massey 1994). The idea of home must be conceived as being in multiple places, in both *here* and *there*, rather than in fixed spaces and settings (Hammond 2004: 42).

If home is experienced in multiple places across different international borders, then we are required to consider what home is, how one inhabits a place, and what effects transnational movements have on 'homemaking' individuals. Home might become a 'mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination' (Brah 1996: 192), or a 'fetish' for migrants (Ahmed 1999: 331). With this conception in mind, diasporic groups may imagine home as a particular dwelling, town or entire nation, since their desire is to feel 'back home' (Hage 1997:101).

Migrants also recreate their homes in their new environment to feel a sense of homeliness. This reconfiguration comprises a 'homemaking' process in which migrants might use familiar objects, such as holy instruments and food, engage with people who share similar practices and language(s), and reunite with individuals who live *here* and *there* in past homes through networking channels such as social media (Collins 2009: 840). Nor is the notion of 'home' limited to the private sphere; one's sense of home can be vested in a community, city or nation (Buitelaar & Stock 2010: 165).

This chapter addresses how the Ezidis develop homely belonging in their current home in Wagga Wagga. I analyse their 'homemaking' practices in both their private and public domains, and examine the Ezidi families' engagements with objects and interactions with other Ezidis and local residents in Wagga. I also discuss how settlement services, such as the MCWW, facilitate the Ezidis' homely experiences.

Homemaking at home: Nostalgia, objects and 'making do'

'The relation between home and food is an essential one.'

— Hage (1997: 100)

The homemaking practices of migrants involve the creative construction of spaces in their new home. In the words of Boym, '[o]rdinary exiles often become artists in life who remake themselves and their second homes with great ingenuity' (2007: 16). Similarly, Ezidi families have become artists in the ways they skillfully engage with the built – and natural – environment in Wagga. According to Duarte (2005: 323), migrants are often 'out of place' in their host country, and therefore in need of generating spaces that help them to feel connected to a perceived home. Boym's (2001: 41) interpretation of 'restorative nostalgia' is useful for understanding the reconfiguration of spaces in the home environment, as restorative nostalgia 'puts emphasis on *nostos* ['return home'] and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the

memory gaps… [It] manifests itself in total reconstruction of monuments of the past' (cited in Winkler 2014: 30).

It is worth considering what nostalgia means to scholars who focus on the concept of 'home' in their works. For example, Meah and Jackson (2016: 513) point out that nostalgia is attached to ideas of 'home', and a desire for places that are absent in the present. According to Rapport and Dawson (1998: 31), nostalgia produces 'the homeless mind', wherein homes of the past are reflected as being peaceful, and allows for feelings that give a sense of belonging. This may lead some individuals to 'shut out the present' and to live a life of solitude and confinement. However Hage's (1997) interpretation of nostalgia is different. For him, nostalgia is not necessarily something experienced negatively or in opposition to homemaking. The memories of past experiences imagined in the present can help people to confront a new place by forming a homely life within it.

Consequently, a positive experience of nostalgia would be the presence of someone or something that alludes to homely experiences of the past, such as food-making. During one of my stays with a family from Sinjar, I learn how to make the Ezidi flat bread. The following vignette describes the bread-making process.

> 'Khilas bring the dough and the tray. They are on the kitchen counter,' Hannaf calls out to her Ezidi friend, Khilas.
>
> They both gracefully use their palms to roll the dough into round balls. I have difficulty rolling as I try to imitate them. The dough becomes too dry and patchy, so Hannaf recommends I dip my fingers in some water to smooth it out. I've now saturated it with water, and the dough grips onto my palms and fingers. Hannaf offers to fix it and miraculously transforms my messy dough into a perfect round ball.
>
> We then take the tray with the dough balls outside to the shed in the garden. The shed in my own garden stores my father's tools and gardening equipment. This shed in Khilas's garden, as with many other Ezidi homes in Wagga, serves another purpose: bread-making.
>
> Khilas heats the tandoori oven using a gas cylinder, while Hannaf begins to flatten the round dough with her hands, using her palms, wrists and arms to flip the dough side to side. I watch with amusement as the dough stretches wider and wider. Hannaf then places it on a round cushion and bangs it against the oven's sidewalls.

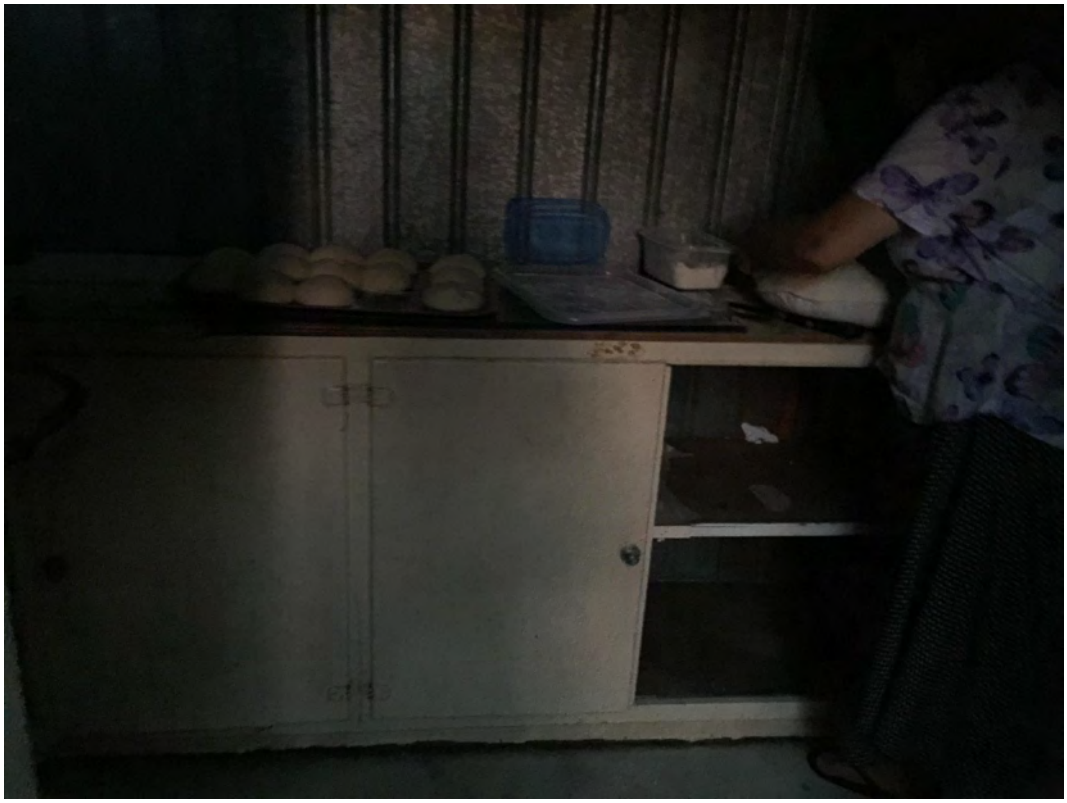

Figure 1 The Shed (photo by author)

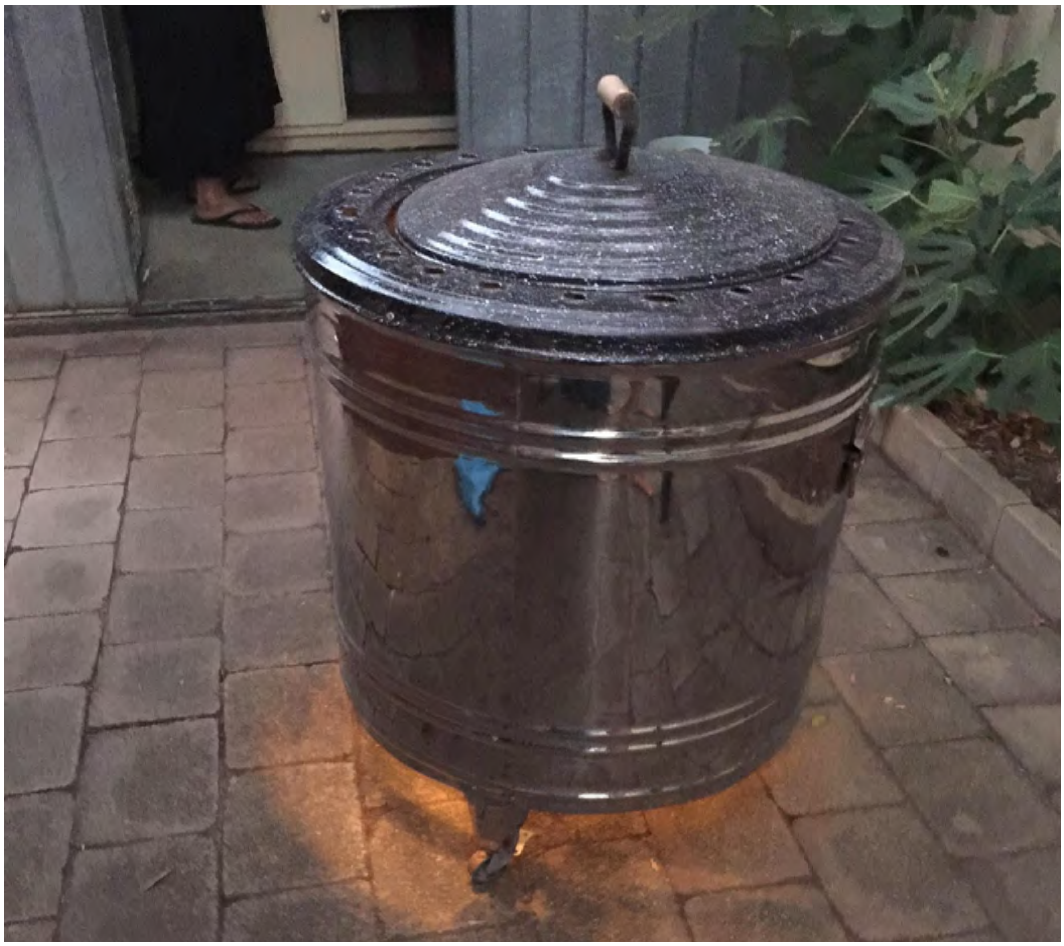

Figure 2 Tandoori oven (photo by author)

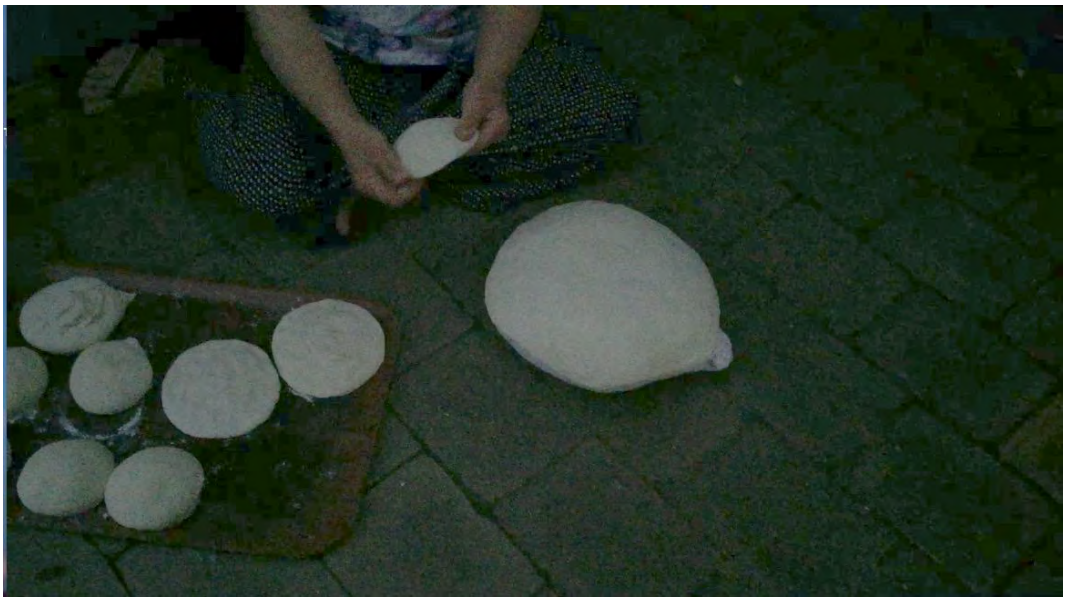

Figure 3 Hannaf stretches dough (photo by author)

Figure 4 Hannaf positions dough on round cushion (photo by author)

Figure 5 Ezidi flat bread baking (photo by author)

Figure 6 (photo by author)

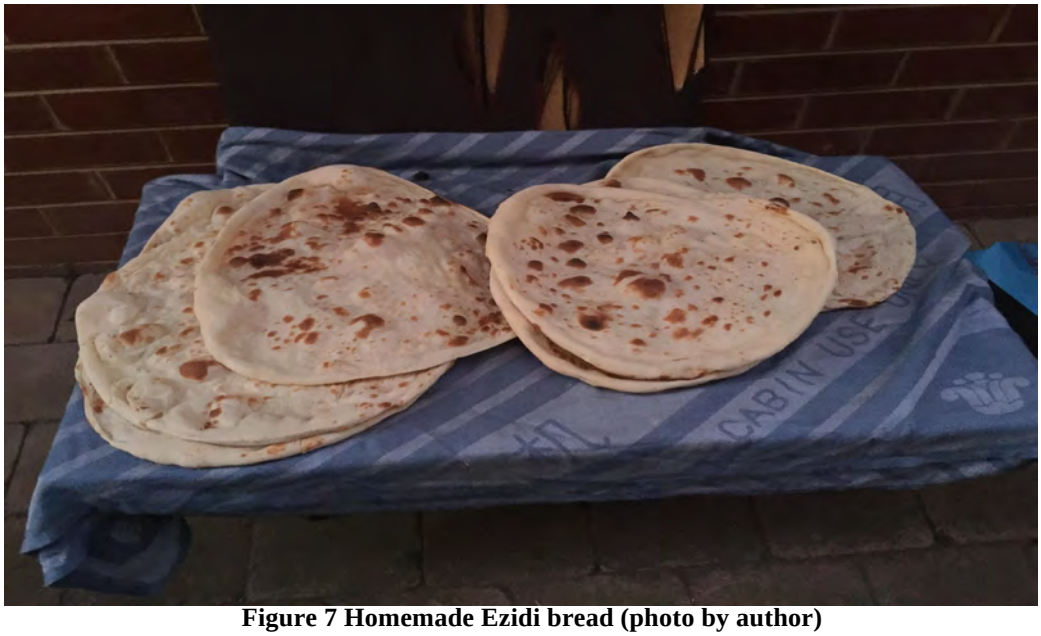

Figure 7 Homemade Ezidi bread (photo by author)

> A flatbread burns during the bread-making process, so I ask if they will be throwing it away. Hannaf's daughters Elina and Maria direct me to the laundry to demonstrate what happens. 'Us Ezidis don't throw away bread', says Elina, 'we believe that it isn't good to do so. Instead we keep them in a place like here, and feed it to the birds that fly by our house.' I observe a large pile of burnt and stale flat bread ripped into pieces on top of the laundry bench. Maria collects some and releases them in the garden bed for birds and other animals to eat.

As Hage (1997:106–109) points out, home food has the power to create positive nostalgic feelings by providing a strong sense of familiarity. The feeling of familiarity is produced in environments where our bodily dispositions are at work the most. Bourdieu describes this as 'habitus', that which gives actors the ability to have practical control over situations, and 'knowing what everything is used for and when it ought to be used' (Hage 1997: 103). Taking up this concept, subjects create spaces in the home to achieve a 'maximal practical know-how'. Accordingly, spaces that remind migrants of their homeland help them 'fulfill the important function of maximizing their habitus, and make them feel a sense of home in the present' (Duarte 2005: 323). Similarly, positive nostalgic feelings about the homeland guide the Ezidis' home-building practices, as they pursue the type of homely feeling they know from the past.

Materials and objects also contribute a great deal to positive nostalgic feelings, playing a crucial role in the process of creating homely places. The accumulation of certain objects, especially cherished possessions, can act as mnemonic aid for recalling the past (Noble 2004: 238). According to Noble (2002: 62), the ontological function of the new home is customising it with familiar objects in order to avoid a sense of alienation. In Wagga, I observed the significance of objects and materials in the Ezidi homes, as these are connected to other valuable relationships and places. For example, the Ezidis transform the daily spaces in the bedroom and living room into sacred places by of decorating them with holy objects from Lalish, an Ezidi pilgrimage site in northern Iraq. The following vignette explores how the Sepo family establishes a homely space. This is observed in the arrangement of homeland objects in their new home.

> During my stay with the Sepo family, I ask Hannaf how she and other Ezidis pray. 'Come Nur, I will show you', Hannaf responds, and directs me to her bedroom. Up on the wall next to her bed, I notice a red silk bag (*bohja*) containing holy threads, stones and raisins from Lalish. The bag is embroidered with an image of the Ezidi temple, and *Ya Taus Melek* (the Peacock Angel) is threaded with black string in Arabic calligraphy. She tells me that they pray towards the *bohja* three times a day, and ask God to provide her family protection and peace. In the beginning of prayer, Hannaf lifts her palms and

utters certain prayers in Kurmanji: '*Ya Qudeh u Tawusi Melek*' (O God, and Taus Melek). After she finishes reciting, we kiss the stones that were inside the silk bag three times, and end the prayer by saying '*amin*'.

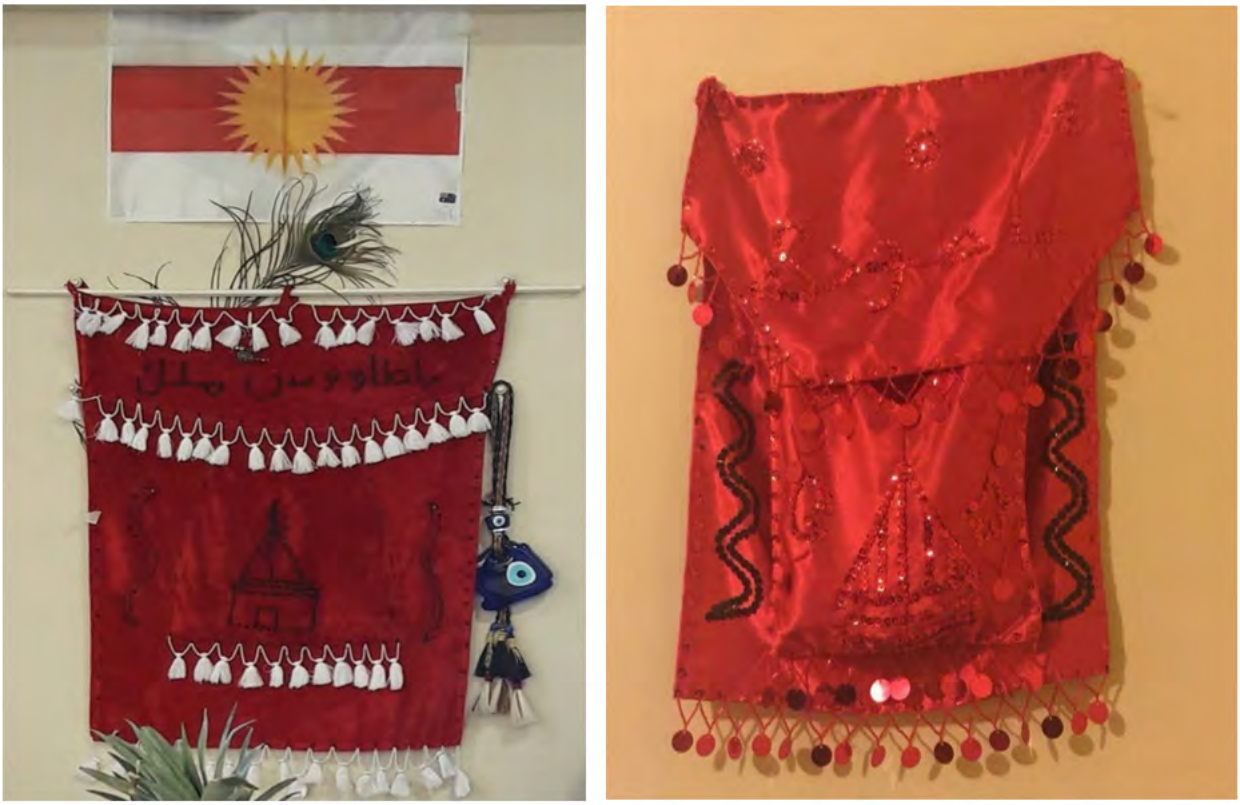

Figure 8 (L) *Bohja* in Rama's House (R) Figure 8 *Bohja* in Sepo's House (photos by author)

Objects such as family albums were also part of many conversations my interlocutors shared with me. One of my informants explains to me: 'Nur, these photos are proof of my marriage with my husband. It contains memories of my friends and family. My mother and sister also died in the attacks, but I will always remember their faces through these photos.' These objects offer individuals an 'ontological proof' and self-recognition for one's self and valued others (Noble 2004: 250-1). The accumulation of objects produces a sense of being-in-the-world (2004: 253).

The process and experience of making a home for migrants is also an ongoing process charged with affective and physical qualities. This process is never fully complete as their sense of home changes continuously and hence is constantly adjusted, transformed, negotiated and redefined in order to produce a sense of stability (Ahmed et al. 2003: 101). Thus, migrants have to utilise innovative practices to reproduce senses of homely belonging. Michel De Certeau emphasises this point in his analogy of tactics, which 'light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift-creativity of groups and individuals already caught in the nets of "discipline"' (1984: xiv–xv). Similarly, forming a home requires individuals to use creative tactics by 'making do' with the resources available in their situation. Individuals can transform

their experience of their present situation by using innovation and creativity to imitate memories from the past.

On one cooking occasion, I observe how the Rama family have to 'make do' with what there is available in Wagga. In fact, the family replaces certain ingredients used in a dish called *bexun* made during the holy Ezidi celebration, *Xidir Ilyas.* For example, they replace grape molasses with the Australian sugar cane, since grape molasses is not available at the shops in Wagga. The family complains that the dish is bitter, but remind themselves that it is meaningful to make it during the holy occasion: 'Nur, *niyet* [intention] is more important than the taste', says Jamal. This demonstrates how individuals have to skillfully engage with limited resources, and 'make do' with what is accessible. It also discloses that practices of the past have to be readjusted to new and present conditions.

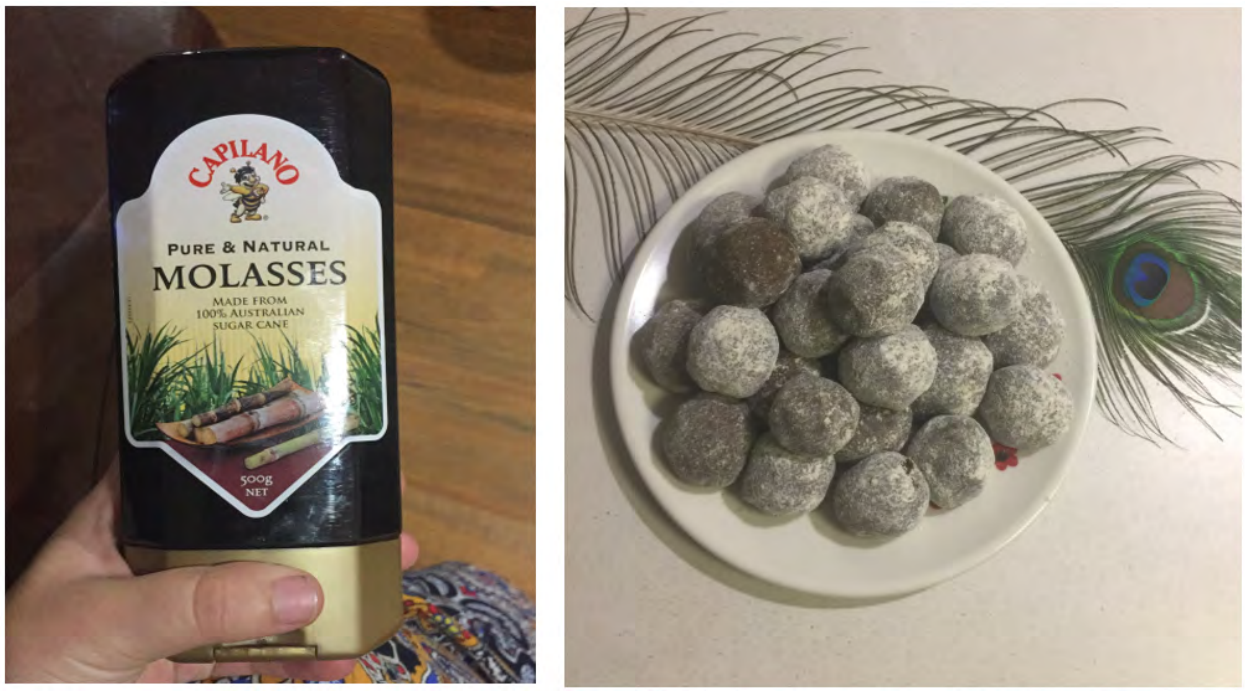

Figure 9 (L) Australian sugar cane molasses (R) Ezidi dish- *Bexun* (photo by author)

In this section, I have outlined how the Ezidis practices of homemaking in their domestic lives. As seen in these various vignettes, the Ezidis have made all sorts of negotiations and arrangements in order to have a sense of homeliness. It involved the reconstruction of spaces in the home, remaking of 'home' cuisines, the accumulation of objects, and the reproduction of past practices through creative processes. The following section of this chapter zooms out to the Ezidis' lives in the public sphere and their everyday encounters with other Ezidis, locals and neighbours in Wagga. It reveals how these refugees' senses of belonging are affected by their engagement with others in Wagga.

Homemaking in the public sphere: Community, neighbours and intercultural relationships

The first part of this section focuses on how the Ezidis might feel a sense of belonging within the Ezidi community in Wagga. It then offers insights into the relationships between the Ezidis and their neighbours. The final section focuses on how settlement services such as the MCWW help the Ezidis feel 'at home' in Wagga, particularly in their organisation of intercultural settings for the refugees.

Before exploring these themes, let me unpack the concept of community, as it is an important theme in my analysis. I sketch out insights from various scholarly perspectives of how community is understood, and then reflect on how these ideas relate to my fieldwork observations. Addressing the notion of community in relation to immigrant communities, McAuliffe (2007) points out that diasporic communities are not homogenous entities: 'Religious identities, like national identities, are neither coherent nor dominant in many individuals. They are complex and manifest differently in individuals and groups' (2007: 313). McAuliffe's Iranian interlocutors do not constitute a homogeneous group. Despite sharing the same national origin, and despite identifying themselves with the 'Iranian community in Australia', when interviewed by McAuliffe, these migrants' responses displayed considerable variety, and even tensions, where their religious or political orientation was concerned. In a similar vein, the Ezidis in Wagga do not associate themselves with an 'Iraqi' or 'Kurdish' ethno-national imaginary, even if their homeland was within the territory of Iraq and they spoke Kurdish. For many Ezidis, an 'Iraqi' or 'Kurdish' identity connotes being a Muslim, a religious affiliation that they do not share. This demonstrates that migrant 'communities' are not singular social entities.

There would undoubtedly be conflicting perspectives among members of the so-called Ezidi 'community' in Wagga. However, the short duration of the fieldwork limited my exploration of the formation and variation of identities. Instead, I approach here a different conception of community, one that can be described as a sociality, which is a 'product of affective connections' (McAuliffe 2007: 314). I discuss in particular how the Ezidi migrants come together in communal spaces, and how these experiences contribute to a sense of home and homely belonging in Australia.

Further, I ask what a sense of community can potentially offer to newly arrived migrant and refugee groups like the Ezidis? Hage claims that the 'feeling of community is also crucial for feeling at home', as it is conducive to a sense of belonging and unity (1997: 103). According to him, community is a space that allows individuals to acknowledge others as their 'own' and, in turn, to also feel recognised by them. In these community spaces, individuals share similar

values, morals, rituals and language(s); and, hence, know how to speak and act appropriately in certain situations. They also recognise that there are people in this space that can offer moral support to one another.

Further community spaces trigger collective nostalgic feelings (Hage 1997: 105). These feelings cause them to collectively imitate acts and rituals of the past in their new country. Individuals can feel at home in the spaces they inhabit when others from their community know how to dance to dances from the homeland, when they eat and cook similar recipes for each other, speak the same language or, to use Bourdieu's phrase, share similar bodily dispositions, i.e., a common *habitus* (1977: 82). Bourdieu defines *habitus* as 'a system of durable transposable dispositions' internalised by individuals; a product of past experiences that shapes present and future thoughts, perceptions and actions (1990: 53). The habitus comprises dispositions that are socially given and, consequently these dispositions can foster shared worldviews within particular groups (Chandler 2013: 473). Bourdieu describes how the homogenisation of a community happens:

> One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of habitus is the production of a commonsense world endowed with the *objectivity* secured by *consensus* of the meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world… The homogeneity of the habitus is what- within the limits of the group and agents possessing the schemes (of production and interpretation) implied in their production- causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted. (Bourdieu 1977: 80)

With this in mind, a community can be depicted as a collective mobilisation of individuals that possess a similar habitus, within which they are familiar with the codes and practices of their community's social system. In other words, it is a 'shared repertoire of ways of doing things' (Wenger 1998, cited in Jawitz 2009: 604).

Furthermore, migrant community spaces assist individuals to maximise their habitus and 'feel at home' by facilitating occasions where people can engage in practices that they are familiar with collectively (Duarte 2005: 323). The celebration of *Carsamba Sor* (the Ezidi New Year) is an example of a collective 'homemaking' practice, providing the Ezidis the opportunity to engage in 'practices of communality' (Hage 1997: 109). This ritual is celebrated every year on the third Wednesday of April. During fieldwork, I attended a celebration hosted by the MCWW. Held at an outdoor entertainment area in Wagga's botanical gardens, the event was open to all Ezidi and non-Ezidi residents of the town. A variety of homemade Ezidi dishes were on display, from marinated chicken, rice, salads, cooked lamb to more popular homeland cuisines like *dolma*

(made of minced meat and rice stuffing wrapped in either cabbage or vine leaves) and *kubbeh* (made with jarish wheat and minced meat filling).

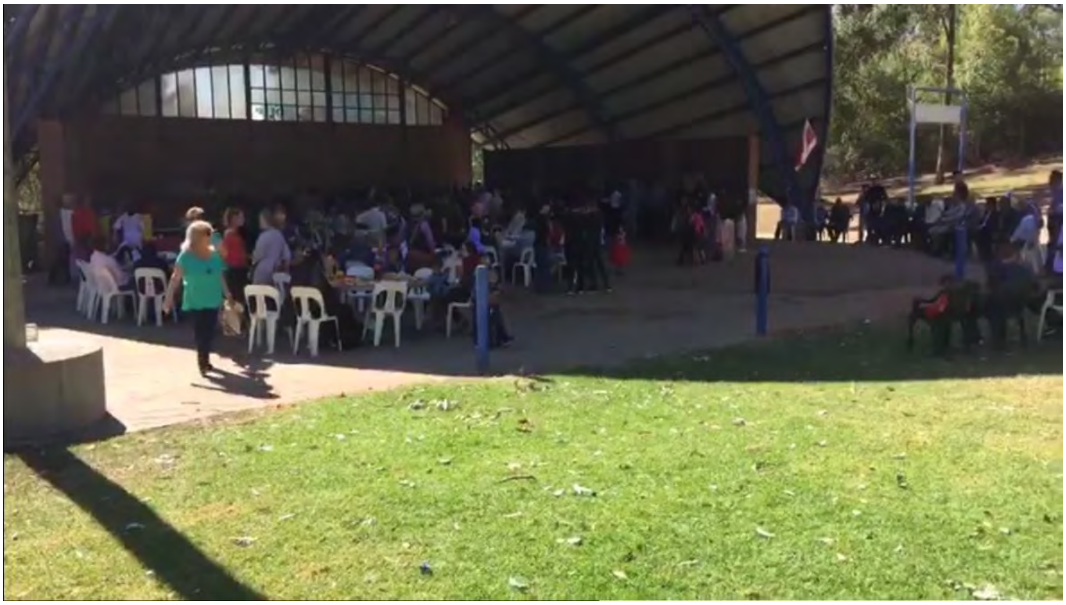

Figure 10 *Carsamba Sor* at Wagga's Botanical Gardens (photo by author)

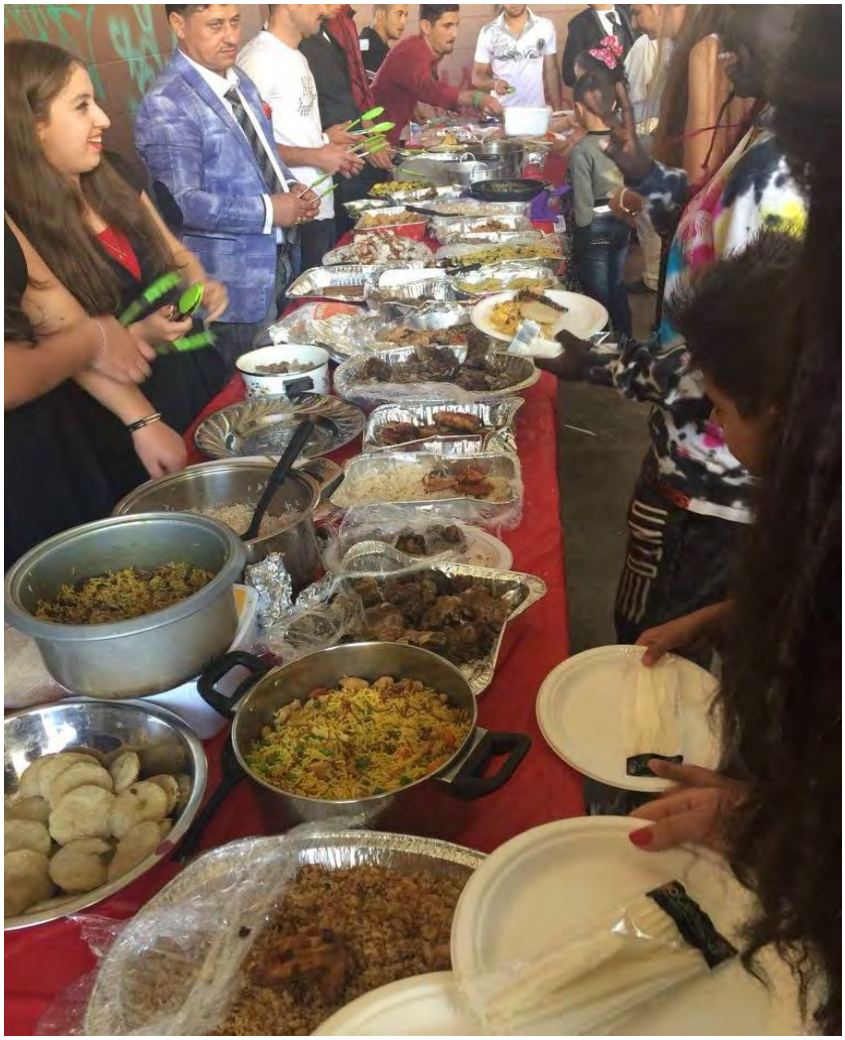

Figure 11 Homemade Ezidi dishes at *Carsamba Sor* (photo by author)

Meanwhile, the MCWW had hired two Kurdish musicians for the day. As soon as they started playing and singing to popular tunes, the Ezidis began to join hands to dance to their folk dance, the *Govend*, a Kurdish circle dance. I also joined in given my familiarity with the moves from my previous experiences at Kurdish social events. We moved three steps forward, then three steps back, and vibrated our shoulders up and down as we moved counter-clockwise. During the dance, Australian volunteers and locals foolishly disrupted the circle's rhythm as they tried to imitate the Ezidi dancers. At the same time, relatives and friends challenged each other by cracking each other's coloured (boiled) eggs. The person won the duel if their egg was cracked the least. At the end of the day, everyone took home leftover food, and Ezidis told other families that they would be visiting each other that night. Spaces like this foster a sense of unity and belonging, since individuals collectively come together to practice homeland rituals.

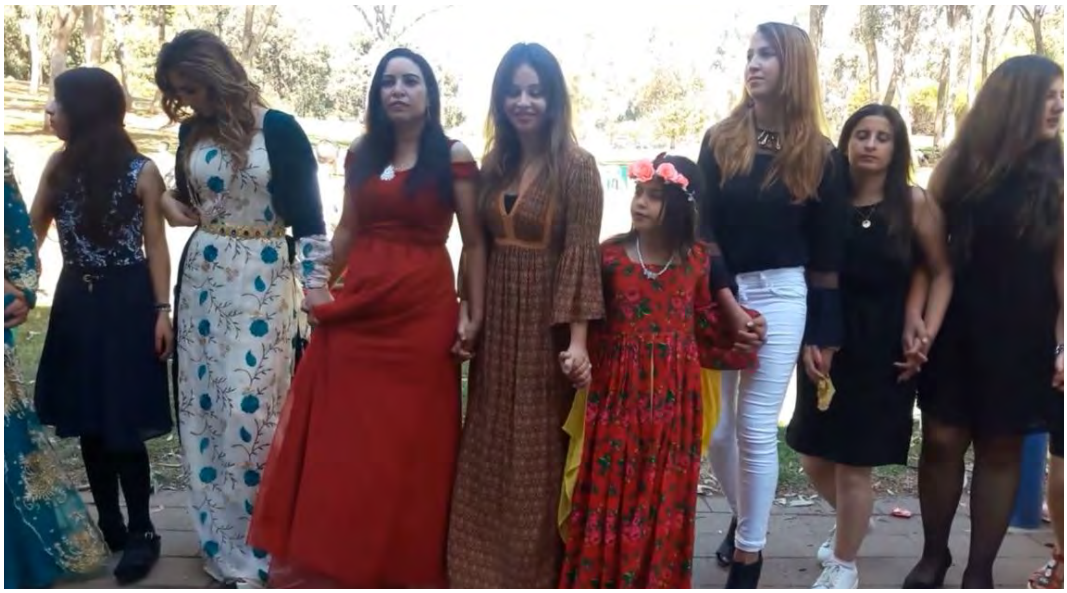

Figure 12 *Govend* dance at *Carsamba Sor* (photo by author)

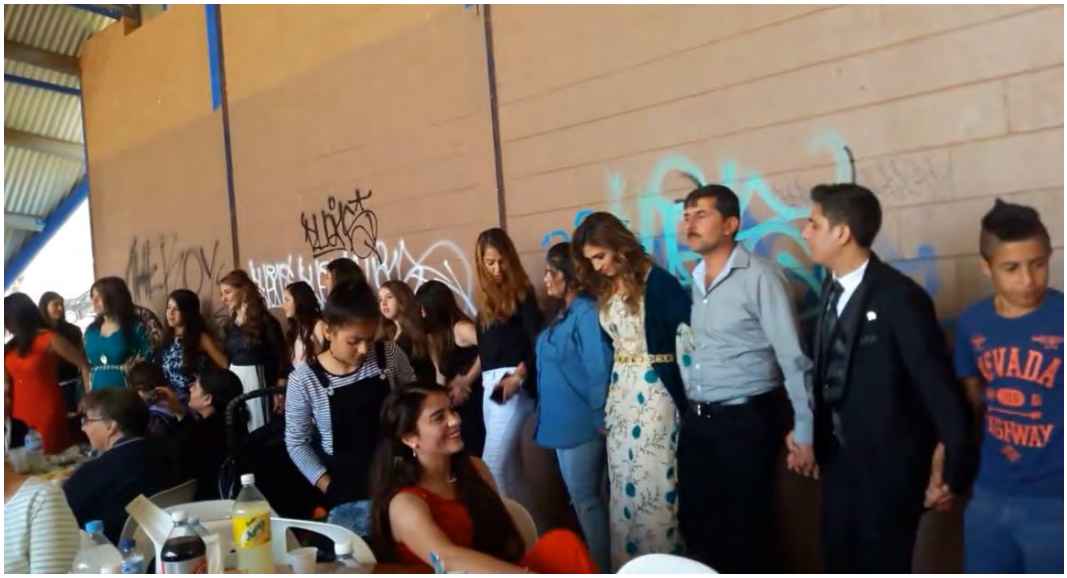

Figure 13 *Govend* (photo by author)

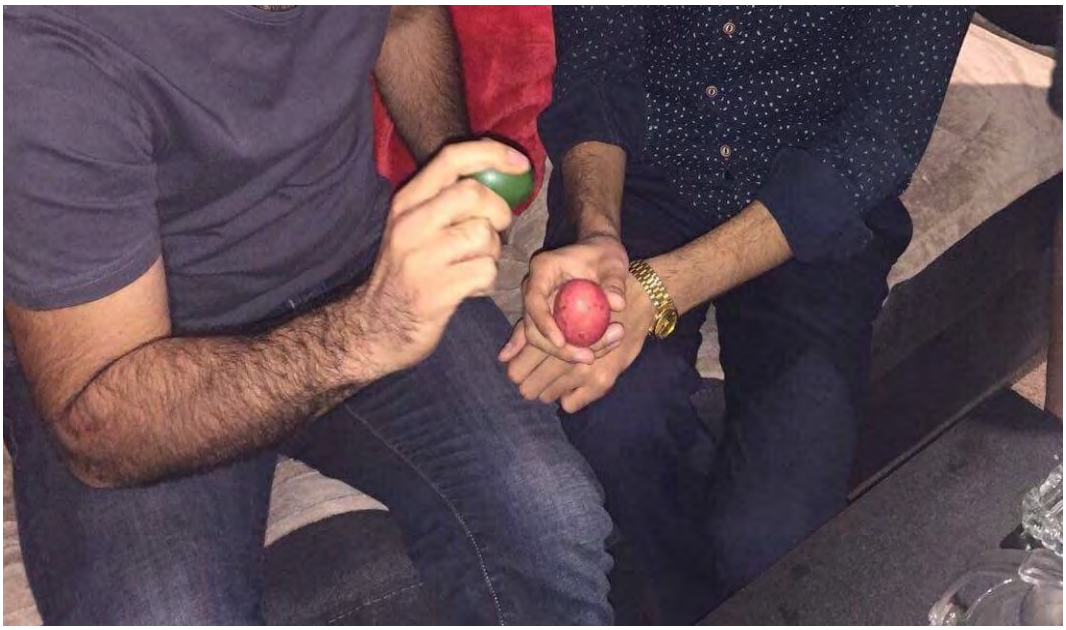

Figure 14 Two Ezidi boys cracking eggs (photo by author)

Figure 15 Coloured eggs for *Carsamba Sor* (photo by author)

In this next part, I want to reflect on the relationships between Ezidis and non-Ezidi locals in Wagga. During my stay, I recognised that the Ezidis had intercultural interactions with many people at shops, schools, pools and other services. After observing how these Ezidis engaged with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, I was eager to find out what the experiences of the refugees with the locals comprised.

For a long time, the mainstream population in Australia has pointed out that migrants often seclude themselves from others and fail to assimilate (Noble 2009: 47). However, migrant societies are extremely complex and should not be addressed in terms of integration or segregation. As Noble discusses, cultural diversity not only causes long-term Australian residents to engage with cultural goods, but migrants and their children also 'take up elements of the prevailing Australian ways of life and maintain the diverse traditions and practices they have brought with them, and create new traditions and associations' (2009: 48). This is a result of people's openness and willingness to engage with others from different cultures in everyday encounters. Such negotiations of difference in the everyday life produce 'local liveability' (Amin 2002: 595), potentially fostering a sense of solidarity and 'local belonging' (Noble 2009: 52). According to some studies, ethnically diverse neighbourhoods generate negative effects on trust and, as a result, limit neighbourly contact (see Putnam 2007; Leigh 2006; Letki 2008). The loss of trust can lead to insecurity and disrupt homely feelings (Hage 1997: 102). On the other hand, Lancee and Dronkers (2011: 598) note that 'ethnically different neighbours increases inter-ethnic trust.'

Let me first discuss the neighbourly bonds between the Ezidis and non-Ezidi locals, something I closely observed in many Ezidi homes. When I met an Anglo-Australian neighbour, Betty, I asked her how she became close to the Sepo family.

> Well Noor, me and Hannaf have so much in common. We both understand each other so well. You see, we have the same style of mothering. If I didn't have my 12-year-old daughter, Daisy, who was a difficult child, I wouldn't know how to help Hannaf with Elina. We might not communicate much in English, but I feel as though we are sisters. Martini once took a photo of Hannaf and me on the couch, and we both laid our arms and legs in the exact same position. It is fate for us to meet each other.

Hannaf also expressed her heartfelt love for Betty: 'Nur, Betty is my *hosxamin,* my *dilamin* [my sister, my love].'

Benson (1990: 363), invoking poet Robert Frost, states that ‘good neighbours’ may be created by ‘good fences’. In other words, social relations are managed by not disturbing the neighbour’s privacy. However, this is not the case for the Sepo family and Betty, who are ‘good’ neighbours without ‘fences’. Their private worlds are revealed to each other through trust and care for one another.

Then how do neighbours of different cultural and social backgrounds come to trust and care for each other? In research conducted on intercultural relationships in Ashfield, a suburb in inner-west Sydney, Wise emphasises that *hope* ‘preconditions for forms of open, intercultural belonging at the neighbourhood level’ (2005: 177). In this sense, hope assists one to discover new possibilities for relationships. Homely experiences are linked to possibilities, since individuals aspire to better opportunities and more joy (Hage 1997: 104). Hage argues that greater joy is obtained when we ‘combine communally with others’ and build a sense of community (Zournazi & Hage 2002:152) – that is, ‘the feeling of connection, of sharing, or recognition’, which is a vital aspect of homely feelings (2002: 162). For Wise, ‘joyful hope’ is a precondition for establishing a sense of community, which is made possible through ‘a sense of belonging, trust and security of the outward looking kind’ (2005: 178). In other terms, hope facilitates a sense of belonging and trust between individuals and the community. This in turn influences individuals to form meaningful relationships that overcome each other’s differences. Through hope, intercultural neighbours such as Hannaf and Betty have relationships grounded on friendship. In Hatch and Trent’s (1984) renowned song words, ‘That's when good neighbours become good friends’.

On the other hand, Noble (2009: 53) emphasises that hard work is required to produce intercultural connections. This production involves individuals facilitating cross-cultural interactions and organising intercultural practices. During my fieldwork in Wagga, I noted that members of the MCWW fostered positive intercultural engagements by organising events for multicultural practices. In one incident, I observed a positive intercultural engagement at a sporting program organised by the MCWW for refugee children. The following vignette describes an after-school cricket game for primary school-aged refugee kids from many religious and ethnic backgrounds, including Sierre Leone, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Republic of Congo.

> During the program, Ryan, the Australian cricket coach initially asked the kids to throw and catch a ball. I observed the expressions of the children who concentrated on the ball landing into the palms of their hands. Muusa, an Ezidi boy aged around six, tried to imitate the other children, but his amputated right arm prevented him from catching the ball. After practice, he chose to be a batter in the cricket game. Although Muusa

> constantly missed hitting the ball, his determination was outstanding to those who watched him play. When he was out of the game, his young teammates applauded his perseverance.

Positive settings like this help prevent migrants from feeling socially separated or vilified by the local community. We should bear in mind that the consequences of acts of vilification include 'the sense of one's humanity being taken away, or reduced to a social category, which has consequences for the capacity for effective social participation' (Noble 2009: 62). Multicultural events and practices allow migrants and refugees to be recognised in 'the fullness of humanity' (2009: 62) – that is, through their efforts, capacities and achievements, rather than their differences or as 'representatives of a particular category' (Wise & Velayathum 2009: 6). Hence, positive intercultural relationships enhance the sense of belonging to the local community, since these relations facilitate 'togetherness in difference' or a 'homeliness within difference' (Wise 2005: 172, 181).

To conclude, my research reveals that intercultural relationships and community-building impact on the ways in which the Ezidis experience a sense of home in Wagga. As the vignettes in this chapter reveal, positive intercultural relationships are formed through hope (Wise 2005) and hard work (Noble 2009), producing a sense of belonging to Wagga. Similarly, migrant community practices and spaces contribute to senses of commonality and unity among the Ezidis in Wagga.

Conclusion

Imagine Wagga Wagga in late 1940s, when thousands of migrants from continental Europe had settled in this provincial town, not as 'humanitarian migrants' – despite enduring tragedies and sufferings in war-torn Europe – but as so-called 'post-war immigrants'. Many worked in harsh conditions under the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme, building dams and power stations so that the water could be used for irrigation purposes.In the absence of any vision for a 'multicultural' Australian society, it was assumed that these migrants would gradually leave their 'ethnic cultures' behind and 'assimilate' into the growing nation (NGH Environmental 2013: 8-9).

Now imagine Wagga Wagga some eighty years later, a culturally and linguistically diverse city that is home to migrants from places as diverse as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Rwanda, Burma, Iraq, Iran, Bhutan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga 2017). These migrants – officially 'refugees' – have been provided humanitarian assistance by Wagga's settlement services, and, unlike the post-war immigrants, they found themselves in a social milieu in which assimilation is no longer the goal of Australian immigration and citizenship policy. The evolving history of Wagga reveals that this regional town has come a long way in embracing diversity.

This research project set out to investigate the resettlement experiences of the recently arrived Ezidi refugees from northern Iraq in Wagga Wagga. The study initially sought to explore the role that Australian government-funded services play in the settlement experiences of this refugee community. Fieldwork in Wagga allowed insights and first-hand knowledge on another aspect of the resettlement issue to emerge, with the home-building practices undertaken by the Ezidi refugees themselves, involving both the domestic and public spaces they inhabit.

As noted in the Introduction, migrant settlement and home-making are topics that should never become outdated (Boese & Phillips 2017; Mungai 2014; Collins 2013; Ramsay 2017; Johnston et al. 2009). At a time of war and genocide in their villages and homelands, people are left with little choice but to make their way to other places to survive and establish new lives for themselves and their families. My thesis contributes to the knowledge of this crucial human phenomenon by describing and analysing what it was like for the Ezidis to leave behind their own homes in northern Iraq and to start lives anew in a new country.

The thesis first sketched out the policy content of the Humanitarian Settlement Program directed at the newly arrived Ezidi refugees. The HSP program is delivered by government-funded settlement services, namely, the MCWW and the Red Cross. The majority of my informants reported that they generally found the MCWW to be accommodating and supportive, as they transitioned to live in Wagga. However when the Red Cross won the tender for the HSP program in August 2017, some Ezidi families were dissatisfied with the services they received, particularly in relation to daily needs such as shopping assistance. My informants felt that the service was unable to meet their needs due to a lack of volunteers and shortage of caseworkers. The experiences of the Ezidi refugees demonstrate, in this sense, that the Australian government needs to carefully assess the institutional and human resource capacity required for providing sufficient services to refugees, making sure that outsourced institutions deliver effective support and assistance, especially to newly arrived refugee groups.

Further, the case study I examined here adds to the knowledge on the existing 'trend' on the part of the Australian Government to settle newly arrived humanitarian entrants with no established social ties into rural and regional areas (Boese 2015; Schech 2014: 606). A small body of scholarly work has already pointed out the problematic aspects of this policy as well as its potential benefits for migrant groups (see Boese & Phillips 2017; Wilding & Nunn 2017). My research findings contribute to this body of knowledge by demonstrating that the experiences of the Ezidi refugees in Wagga have been fairly positive. Many have reported being welcomed and supported by Wagga's existing residents. The MCWW's efforts to inform the local residents about the arrival of the Ezidis might have contributed to this. Yet it is also important to recall, based on other studies, that not all refugees enjoy such positive attitudes in Australia. This is particularly true for the temporary protection visa (TPV)-classified refugee groups, who often experience stigmatisation and are considered 'illegitimate' (see Mansouri et al. 2006).

Refugees and asylum seekers are forced to flee their homes when there is war, violence and persecution in their homeland (UN Refugee Agency n.d.). As poet Warsan Shire (2015) puts it, 'No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark'. Similarly, the Ezidi refugees left their volatile homeland in search of security and safety for themselves and their families. Chapter Two provided a narrative account of two Ezidi families, giving a detailed description of their stories about the suffering they experienced during the genocide in Sinjar and their displacement from their villages, first to Turkey, and from there to Australia. In recounting their stories, my intention has been to show how these families coped with past calamities and struggles. I have explored the act of storytelling as one means for such coping.

In this thesis, the exploration of experiences of settlement expanded also to the Ezidi refugees' building of homely spaces in Wagga. This theme often receives little attention in studies on refugee resettlement (see, for example, Schech 2014; Cooper et al. 2017; Wilding & Nunn 2017). Throughout this thesis I have sought to provide knowledge on my informants' home-making experiences in their homes. By analysing how the Ezidis engage in homeland practices and creatively utilise limited resources (such as ingredients and domestic utensils), I tried to show how my Ezidi informants negotiate the intricacies of setting up homely spaces in a not-so-familiar place.

My analysis of home-making has also taken into account the socially shared experiences in community spaces in the host country. Research focusing on community spaces addresses them either as a source of a sense of belonging or as a domain of tension wherein political or other kinds of fragmentations among diasporic subjects are manifested. The limited duration of my fieldwork prevented me from getting a better sense of such potential dynamics as they configure an 'Ezidi community' in Wagga. Instead, I approached community events as a source of sociality and affective connection. My observations reveal that the celebration of rituals and key social events on the Ezidi calendar ensures feelings of belonging and emotional well-being. Similar feelings also emerge out of positive intercultural interactions taking place between Ezidis and non-Ezidi locals.

In retrospect, insights grounded in this fieldwork-based study point to the existence of relatively positive experiences of settlement amongst the Ezidi refugees in Wagga. Access to supportive institutions and effective policy services contribute to a heightened sense of belonging in the host country. The MCWW's engagement with the Ezidi families through activities such as sport and homework clubs is an example of this. Another crucial initiative undertaken by the MCWW has been the institution's response to the demand of Wagga's Ezidis to have their own cemetery. Just recently, the Wagga Council approved the MCWW's proposal for an Ezidi burial site (Kordy Khalil 2018). Supportive policy practices like these, sympathetic to the needs and the traumatic experiences of Ezidi migrants play a significant role in preventing alienation and estrangement, to which refugee groups are often subject in their country of resettlement.

However despite the 'successful' steps undertaken by the government services, and the positive experience reported by many Ezidi families, violence-triggered distress continues to be a key issue with which many Ezidis struggle. Most remain traumatised by the horrific acts of violence and destruction against their villages and immediate kin during the war in Sinjar. As I have noted, some of my informants are reluctant to utilise services such as free English language

lessons as a result of the emotional distress they continue to experience. In the short span of three months, my research could offer only a glimpse of the greater complexities at play in this social context. The scope to explore other salient issues in this field – such as the experience of trauma, religious views, health problems, gender roles, and economic and financial situations – was limited. In addition, because my research involved a very recently arrived refugee group, what I have documented here reflects only the early stages of their settlement experience, and their needs and relationships with others (i.e. institutions, non-Ezidis, other Ezidis, etc.) will continue to evolve. I am unable to examine such lived experiences here. Nevertheless, I hope that I have succeeded in demonstrating some of the outcomes of resettlement for the Ezidi refugees in Wagga, and that lessons from this case study can contribute to devising more effective policies addressing the needs of other refugee groups in Australia.

References

Ahmed, S. (1999). 'Home and away: Narratives of migration and estrangement'. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2(3), pp. 329–347.

Ahmed, S., Fortier, A.M., Castañeda, C. & Sheller, M. (2003). *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*. New York: Berg.

Amin, A. (2002). 'Ethnicity and the multicultural city: Living with diversity'. *Environment and Planning A*, 34(6), pp. 959–980.

Amnesty International (2016a). 'Australia's regime of cruelty has turned Nauru into an open-air prison'. Retrieved from https://www.amnesty.org.au/island-of-despair-nauru-refugee-report-2016/

Amnesty International (2016b). 'Close the offshore detention centres'. Retrieved from https://www.amnesty.org.au/close-the-offshore-detention-centres/

Anderson, Z. (2013). 'Reading "Multiculturalism": A historiography of policy and ideal in Australia'. *History Compass*, 11(11), p. 905-917.

Baldassar, L. (2001). *Visits home: Migration experiences between Italy and Australia.* Melbourne University Press: Victoria.

Benjamin, D. (1995). 'Afterword'. In Benjamin, D.N., Stea, D. and Arén, E. (eds), *The Home: Words, Interpretations, Meanings and Environments*. Avebury: Aldershot.

Benson, J.E. (1990). 'Good neighbors: Ethnic relations in Garden City trailer courts'. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, 19(4), pp. 361–386.

Biddle, J.L. (1993). 'The anthropologist's body, or, What it means to break your neck in the field'. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 4(3), pp. 184–197.

Biehl, K.S. (2015). 'Governing through uncertainty: Experiences of being a refugee in Turkey as a country for temporary asylum'. *Social Analysis*, 59(1), pp. 57–75.

Boese, M., (2015). 'The roles of employers in the regional settlement of recently arrived migrants and refugees'. *Journal of Sociology*, 51(2), pp.401-416.

Boese, M. & Phillips, M., (2017). ''Half of myself belongs to this town': conditional belongings of temporary migrants in regional Australia'. *Migration, Mobility, & Displacement*, 3(1), pp.51-69.

Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (translated by R. Nice). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice* (translated by R. Nice). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Boym, S. (2001). *The future of nostalgia.*New York: Basic Books.

Boym, S. (2007). 'Nostalgia and its discontents'. *The Hedgehog Review*, 9(2), pp. 7–19.

Brah, A. (1996). *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge.

Briskman, L. (2012). ‘Integrating migrants and refugees in rural settings’. In J. Maidment & U. Bay (eds), *Social Work in Rural Australia: Enabling Practice*, pp. 146–160. Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Buitelaar, M. & Stock, F. (2010). ‘Making homes in turbulent times: Moroccan-Dutch Muslims contesting dominant discourses of belonging’. In H. Moghissi & H. Ghorashi (eds), *Muslim Diaspora in the West. Negotiating Gender, Home and Belonging*, pp. 163–180. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.

Carel, H. (2008). *Illness. The Cry of the Flesh*. Stocksfeld: Acumen.

Cash, J. (2009). ‘Waiting for Sociality: The (Re)birth, Astride a Grave, of the Social’. In G. Hage (ed.), *Waiting*, pp. 27–38. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press.

Chandler, B. (2013). ‘The subjectivity of habitus’. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 43(4), pp.469-491.

Coghlan, J. (2011). ‘The criminalisation of asylum seekers’. *Alternative Law Journal*, 36(2), pp. 119-120.

Collins, F.L. (2009). ‘Connecting “home” with “here”: Personal homepages in everyday transnational lives’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(6), pp. 839–859.

Collins, J. (2013). ‘Rethinking Australian immigration and immigrant settlement policy’. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 34(2), pp. 160–177.

Collins, J., Reid, C., Groutsis, D., Ozkul, D. & Watson, K. (2018) *Report: Syrian-Conflict Refugee Settlement in Australia. Public Seminar on Responses to Syrian-Conflict Refugee Settlement in Australia, Germany, Sweden, Finland, UK, Canada and New Zealand.* University of Technology Sydney, 14 March 2018.

Cooper, S., Olejniczak, E., Lenette, C. & Smedley, C. (2017). ‘Media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers in regional Australia: a critical discourse analysis’. *Media International Australia*, 162(1), pp. 78–89

Cordner, C. (2009). ‘Waiting, Patience and Love’. In G. Hage (ed.) *Waiting*, pp. 169–183. Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press.

Correa-Velez, I. & Onsando, G. (2009). ‘Educational and occupational outcomes amongst African men from refugee backgrounds living in urban and regional Southeast Queensland’. *Australasian Review of African Studies, The*, 30(2), pp. 114-127.

Crewther, The Hon Chris MP (2018). Notice of Motion by the Hon Chris Crewther MP, House of Representatives, 26 February 2018. Retrieved from https://parlwork.aph.gov.au/motions/02c87efb-580a-e811-8261-005056a40008

Dabbagh, O. (2017). ‘Yazidi refugees rejoice in first New Year in Australia.’ *SBS*, 20 April. Retrieved from https://www.sbs.com.au/news/yazidi-refugees-rejoice-in-first-new-year-in-australia

Das, V. (1996). ‘Language and body: Transactions in the construction of pain’. *Daedalus*, 125(1), pp. 67–91.

De Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley CA: University of California Press.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2015). *The Syrian and Iraqi humanitarian crisis*. Retrieved from https://dfat.gov.au/news/news/Pages/syrian-and-iraqi-humanitarian-crisis.aspx

Department of Home Affairs (2018). *Australia's Humanitarian Program 2018–19: Discussion Paper*. Retrieved from https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/ReportsandPublications/Documents/discussion-papers/2018-19-discussion-paper.pdf

Department of Home Affairs (n.d.). *Fact sheet - Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian program*. Accessed 6 August 2018. https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/corporate/information/fact-sheets/60refugee

Department of Social Services (2018a). *Settlement Services*. Retrieved from https://www.dss.gov.au/settlement-services/programs-policy/settlement-services/humanitarian-settlement-program

Department of Social Services (2018b). *Settlement Services: About Settlement Grants*. Retrieved from https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-services/programs-policy/settlement-services/settlement-grants/what-is-settlement-grants/about-settlement-grants

Duarte, F. (2005). 'Living in "the Betweens": Diaspora consciousness formation and identity among Brazilians in Australia'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 26(4), pp. 315–335.

Ellicott, J. (2018). 'Two NSW regional cities nominated as the next big thing(s)'. *The Land*, 23 March. Retrieved from https://www.theland.com.au/story/5301613/wagga-wagga-tamworth-on-100000-population-growth-target/

Hage, G. (1997). 'At home in the entrails of the west: Multiculturalism, ethnic food and migrant home-building'. In H. Grace, G. Hage , L. Johnson , J. Langsworth and M. Symonds (eds), *Home/World: Space, Community and Marginality in Sydney's West*. Sydney: Pluto Press.

Hage, G. (ed.) (2009). *Waiting*. Carlton Vic: Melbourne University Press.

Hammond, L. (2004). 'Tigrayan Returnees Notions of Home: Five Variations on a Theme'. In F. Markowitz and A.H. Stefansson (eds), *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*, pp.36-53. Oxford: Lexington Books.

Hatch, T. & Trent, J. (1984). 'Neighbours' Theme Song. Sony.

Heidegger, M. (1971). 'Building dwelling thinking'. In M. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (trans. A. Hofstadter), p. 154. New York NY: HarperCollins.

Hugo, G. (2001). 'From compassion to compliance? Trends in refugee and humanitarian migration in Australia'. *GeoJournal*, 55, pp. 27–37.

Humphrey, M. (2002). 'Injuries and identities: Authorising Arab diasporic difference in crisis'. In G. Hage (ed.), *Arab-Australians Today: Citizenship and Belonging*, pp. 206–224. Carlton VIC: Melbourne University Press.

.idcommunity (n.d.) *Wagga Wagga City Council: Economic Profile.* Retrieved from https://economy.id.com.au/wagga-wagga/about

IGAM (İltica ve Göç Araştırma Merkezi) (2015): *Şirnak, Siirt, Batman ve Diyarbakir'da yaşayan Ezidi mültecilerraporu ve Bulgaristan sinirina yiğilma nedenleri, İltica ve Göç Araştırmaları Merkezi*. Retrieved from IGAM http://www.igamder.org/wp-content/uploads/2015c/Ezidi.pdf

Ingold, T. (2009). 'Against space: Place, movement, knowledge'. In P. Kirby (ed.), *Boundless Worlds: An Anthropological Approach to Movement*, pp.29-43. Oxford UK: Berghan Books.

Jackson, M. (1995). *At Home in the World.* Durham: Duke University Press.

Jackson, M. (2002). *The Politics of Storytelling: Violence, Transgression, and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.

Jackson, M. (2013). *The Politics of Storytelling: Variations on a Theme by Hannah Arendt.* Copenhagen: Museum Musculanum Press.

Jawitz, J. (2009). 'Learning in the academic workplace: The harmonization of the collective and the individual habitus'. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(6), pp. 601–614.

Johnston V., Vasey K. & Markovic, M. (2009). 'Social policies and refugee resettlement: Iraqis in Australia'. *Critical Social Policy*, 29(2), pp. 191–215.

Jupp, J. (2007). *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration*. Melbourne Vic: Cambridge University Press.

Kizilhan, J.I. (2017). 'The Yazidi—Religion, Culture and Trauma'. *Advances in Anthropology*, 7(4), p.333-339.

Koleth, E. (2010). *Multiculturalism: A Review of Australian Policy Statements and Recent Debates in Australia and Overseas*. Australian Parliamentary Library Research Paper No. 6 2010–11. Retrieved from https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1011/11rp06

Kordy Khalil, M. (2018). 'Wagga Wagga home to Australia's first Yazidi burial site'. *SBS*, 26 September. Retrieved from https://www.sbs.com.au/yourlanguage/kurdish/en/audiotrack/first-yezidi-burial-site-australia

Lancee, B. & Dronkers, J. (2011). 'Ethnic, religious and economic diversity in Dutch neighbourhoods: Explaining quality of contact with neighbours, trust in the neighbourhood and inter-ethnic trust'. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(4), pp. 597-618.

Leigh, A. (2006). 'Trust, inequality and ethnic heterogeneity'. *The Economic Record*, 82(258), pp. 268–280.

Letki, N. (2008). 'Does diversity erode social cohesion? Social capital and race in British neighbourhoods'. *Political Studies*, 56(1), pp. 99–126.

Levin, I. (2015). *Migration, settlement, and the concepts of house and home*. Routledge: New York.

Loff, B, Snell, B., Creati, M. & Mohan, M. (2002). '"Inside" Australia's Woomera detention centre'. *The Lancet*, 389, p. 683.

Lloyd, J. and Vasta, E. (2017). *Reimagining Home in the 21st Century*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Mansouri, F. & Leach, M. (2008). ‘The evolution of the Temporary Protection Visa regime in Australia’. *International Migration*, 47(2), pp.101-126.

Mansouri, F., Leach, M. & Traies, S. (2006). ‘Acculturation experiences of Iraqi refugees in Australia: The impact of visa category’. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 27(4), pp. 393–412.

Massey (1994). ‘A Place Called Home?’. In D. Massey (ed.), *Space, Place and Gender*, pp. 157-173. London: Polity Press.

McAuliffe, C. (2007). ‘A home far away? Religious identity and transnational relations in the Iranian diaspora’. *Global Networks*, 7(3), pp. 307–327.

MCWW (2017). *Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga: Report to the Annual General Meeting 2017*. Retrieved from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ad7f37ef407b465edbcb75d/t/5b058e3f2b6a287c58f887b3/1527090772923/Annual+Report.pdf

MCCW (n.d.). *Multicultural Council of Wagga Wagga: About*. Retrieved from https://www.mcww.org.au/about

Meah, A. & Jackson, P. (2016). ‘Re-imagining the kitchen as a site of memory’. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 17(4), pp. 511–532.

Mungai, N. W. (2014). ‘Resettling refugees in rural areas: Africans, Burmese, Bhutanese and Afghans in the Riverina NSW, Australia’. In R. T. Ragusa (ed.), *Rural lifestyles, Community Wellbeing and Social Change*, pp. 145–205. New York NY: Bentham Science.

Myerhoff, B. (1992). ‘Life history among the elderly: Performance, visibility, and re-membering’. In M. Kaminsky (ed.), *Remembered Lives: The Work of Ritual, Storytelling, and Growing Older*, pp. 231–247. Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press.

Neal, S. (2002). ‘Rural landscapes, representations and racism: Examining multicultural citizenship and policy-making in the English countryside’. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25(3), pp. 442–461.

NGH Environmental (2013). *Wagga Wagga Community Heritage Study. Vol. 2: Thematic History*. Retrieved from https://www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/34257/Wagga-Wagga-HS_Final-Report_Vol_2.pdf

Noble, G. (2004). ‘Accumulating being’. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 7(2), pp. 233–256.

Noble, G. (2009). ‘Everyday cosmopolitanism and the labour of intercultural community’. In A. Wise & S. Velayathum (eds), *Everyday Multiculturalism*, pp. 46–65. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pelletier, I.R., Lundmark, L., Gardner, R., Ligon, G.S. & Kilinc, R. (2016). ‘Why ISIS's message resonates: Leveraging Islam, sociopolitical catalysts, and adaptive messaging’. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 39(10), pp.871-899.

Perdigon, S. (2015). ‘“For Us It Is Otherwise”: Three Sketches on Making Poverty Sensible in the Palestinian Refugee Camps of Lebanon’. *Current Anthropology*, 56(S11), pp. S88–S96.

Phillips, J. (2005). *Australia's Humanitarian Program.* Australian Parliamentary Library Research Note No. 9 2005–06. Retrieved from https://www.aph.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/rn/2005-06/06rn09.pdf

Phillips, J. (2017). A*ustralia's Humanitarian Program: A Quick Guide to the Statistics Since 1947*. Australian Parliamentary Library Research paper. Retrieved from https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick_Guides/HumanitarianProg

Piper, M. (2017). *Refugee Settlement in Regional Areas: Evidence-based good practice.* Retrieved from: https://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/about_us/publications/other/m/other_publications/1354

Procupez, V. (2015). 'The need for patience: the politics of housing emergency in Buenos Aires'. *Current Anthropology*, 56(S11), pp. S55–S65.

Putnam, R.D. (2007). '"E Pluribus Unum": diversity and community in the twenty-first century. The 2006 Johan Skytte prize lecture'. *Scandinavian Political Studies,* 30(2), pp. 137-174.

Radford, D. (2017). 'Space, Place and Identity: Intercultural Encounters, Affect and Belonging in Rural Australian Spaces'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies,* 38(5), pp. 495-513.

Ramsay, G (2017). 'Central African refugee women resettled in Australia: Colonial legacies and the civilising process'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 38(2), pp. 170-188.

Rapport, N. & Dawson, A. (1998). *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*. London: Berg Publishers.

Refugee Council of Australia (2010). *Economic, civic and social contributions of refugees and humanitarian entrants.* Retrieved from https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/resources/Contributions_of_refugees.pdf

Refugee Council of Austalia (2015). *Review of the Humanitarian Settlement Services and Complex Case Support Programs*. Retrieved from https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/1411-HSS-CCS.pdf

Refugee Council of Australia (2016). *Who is a Refugee?* Retrieved from https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getfacts/international/definitions/who-is-a-refugee/

Refugee Council of Australia (2017). *The Department Reports: The Annual Report of the Department of Immigration 2016–2017*. Retrieved from https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/getfacts/statistics/aust/dibp-2016-2017/

Renzaho & Dhingra (2017). *Addressing the Needs of Syrian and Iraqi Refugees in the Nepean Blue Mountains Region: A Formative Assessment of Health and Community Service Needs*. Penrith: Wentworth Healthcare Limited. Retrieved from http://www.nbmphn.com.au/Resources/About/169_0517-Refugee-Report_F_WEB.aspx

Roumeliotis, V. & Paschalidis-Chilas, E. (2013). 'Settlement and Community Development: Moving and Shaping our Civil Society'. In A. Jakubowicz and C. Ho (eds), '*For those who've come across the seas...': Australian multicultural theory, policy and practice*, pp 83-93. North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing.

Rushton, G. (2018). ‘This mother just wants to bury the body of her son who killed himself on Nauru’. Retrieved from https://www.buzzfeed.com/ginarushton/nauru-death-mother-letter?utm_term=.ktMrJDdb18#.fiOlKdEb54

Schech, S. (2014). ‘Silent bargain or rural cosmopolitanism? Refugee settlement in regional Australia’. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40(4), pp. 601–618.

Settlement Services International (2017). *Humanitarian Settlement Program*. Retrieved from https://www.ssi.org.au/images/stories/documents/Refugee_Support_Services/HSP_4ppA5_oct17_screen.pdf

Shire, W. (2015). ‘Home’. *Black Renaissance/Renaissance Noire*, 15(2), pp. 102–103.

STARTTS (2016). *STARTTS’ Client Group*. Retrieved from http://www.refugeehealthnetworkqld.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Yazidi-factsheet-final-STARTTS.pdf

Tay, N. (2016). ‘A long way from Mount Sinjar: Wagga Wagga welcomes Yazidi refugees.’ *SBS*, 24 November. Retrieved from https://www.sbs.com.au/news/a-long-way-from-mount-sinjar-wagga-wagga-welcomes-yazidi-refugees

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (n.d.). *Refugee Facts*. Retrieved from https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2017). *Global Trends for Displacement in 2017*.Retrieved from http://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2017/

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilding, R. & Nunn, C. (2017). ‘Non-metropolitan productions of multiculturalism: refugee settlement in rural Australia’. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41(14), pp.1-19.

Winkler, A. (2011). ‘Not everything was good, but many things were better’. In T. Davidson, O. Park & R. Shields (eds), *Ecologies of Affect: Placing Nostalgia, Desire, and Hope*, pp.19–42. Waterloo Ont: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Wise, A. (2005). ‘Hope and belonging in a multicultural suburb’. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 26(1-2), pp.171–186.

Wise, A. & Velayathum, S. (eds) (2009). *Everyday Multiculturalism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zournazi, M. & Hage, G. (2002). ‘On the side of life—Joy and the capacity of being: A conversation with Ghassan Hage’. In M Zournazi (ed.), *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*, pp.150-172. London: Routledge.

Appendix

Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor
(Research)
Research Services
Research Hub, Building C5C East
Macquarie University
NSW 2109 Australia
T: +61 (2) 9850 4459
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/
ABN 90 952 801 237

03 January 2018

Dear Dr Senay,

Reference No: 5201700905

Title: Transnational spaces and diasporic identities: a study of Kurdish and Ezidi identity

Student Co-investigator: Ms Fatmanur (Noor) Boz

Thank you for submitting the above application for ethical and scientific review. Your application was considered by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities)).

I am pleased to advise that ethical and scientific approval has been granted for this project to be conducted by:

- Macquarie University

This research meets the requirements set out in the ***National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*** (2007 – Updated May 2015) (the ***National Statement***).

Standard Conditions of Approval:

1. Continuing compliance with the requirements of the ***National Statement***, which is available at the following website:
http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research

2. This approval is valid for five (5) years, subject to the submission of annual reports.

Please submit your reports on the anniversary of the approval for this protocol.

3. All adverse events, including events which might affect the continued ethical and scientific acceptability of the project, must be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.

4. Proposed changes to the protocol and associated documents must be submitted to the Committee for approval before implementation.

It is the responsibility of the Chief investigator to retain a copy of all documentation related to this project and to forward a copy of this approval letter to all personnel listed on the project.

Should you have any queries regarding your project, please contact the Ethics Secretariat on 9850 4194 or by email ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedures are available from the Research Office website at:
http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics

The HREC (Human Sciences and Humanities) wishes you every success in your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Karolyn White
Director, Research Ethics & Integrity,
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee (Human Sciences and Humanities)