



저작자표시-비영리-변경금지 2.0 대한민국

이용자는 아래의 조건을 따르는 경우에 한하여 자유롭게

- 이 저작물을 복제, 배포, 전송, 전시, 공연 및 방송할 수 있습니다.

다음과 같은 조건을 따라야 합니다:



저작자표시. 귀하는 원저작자를 표시하여야 합니다.



비영리. 귀하는 이 저작물을 영리 목적으로 이용할 수 없습니다.



변경금지. 귀하는 이 저작물을 개작, 변형 또는 가공할 수 없습니다.

- 귀하는, 이 저작물의 재이용이나 배포의 경우, 이 저작물에 적용된 이용허락조건을 명확하게 나타내어야 합니다.
- 저작권자로부터 별도의 허가를 받으면 이러한 조건들은 적용되지 않습니다.

저작권법에 따른 이용자의 권리는 위의 내용에 의하여 영향을 받지 않습니다.

이것은 [이용허락규약\(Legal Code\)](#)을 이해하기 쉽게 요약한 것입니다.

[Disclaimer](#)

Master's Thesis of International Studies

Labor Market Integration of Refugees in South Korea

한국 체류 난민의 노동시장 통합에 대한 연구

August 2023

Graduate School of International Studies
Seoul National University
International Cooperation Major

Yoolim Lee

Labor Market Integration of Refugees in South Korea

Submitting a master's thesis of
International Studies

August 2023

Graduate School of International Studies
Seoul National University
International Cooperation Major

Yoolim Lee

Confirming the master's thesis written by
Yoolim Lee
August 2023

Chair	<u>Kyungsup Chang</u>	(Seal)
Vice Chair	<u>Semee Yoon</u>	(Seal)
Examiner	<u>Jiyeon Song</u>	(Seal)

Abstract

Currently, the world hosts more than 103 million forced migrants, who flee from war, internal conflict, and persecution. Moreover, as enduring conflicts persist and new humanitarian crises arise, the number of refugees is projected to continue increasing. Following this global trend, South Korea, which was not a country traditionally recognized as a migrant/refugee-receiving country, is also seeing an increase in asylum seekers. In 2022, more than 11,000 asylum seekers applied for asylum in South Korea. While refugees are increasing in South Korea, not many previous studies have explored refugees, especially their integration and settlement in South Korean society. As economic integration is one of the most crucial elements of newcomers' integration into the host countries, the study aims to provide an in-depth overview of the labor market integration of refugees, on how refugees are finding work and being integrated at the local workplaces.

Based on the qualitative interviews of 9 refugees who have experience working at Korean workplaces, the thesis provides insights on the barriers and facilitators to their labor market integration, comprehensively exploring what difficulties and enablers there are in getting access to employment, socializing with their coworkers and adapting themselves at local workplaces. To this end, the thesis attempts to adopt a framework from diversity management studies, specifically the one discussed by Syed and Özbilgin (2009), to present the findings on individual, organizational, and national level factors.

The study reveals that refugees in South Korea demonstrate resilience, coping mechanisms, and a strong desire to integrate into the host community. Many refugees possess valuable skills, advanced academic achievements, and adaptability, indicating their potential to contribute to Korean society. However, the study also uncovers feelings of helplessness and low confidence among some refugees due to structural barriers

hindering their career prospects. Specifically, the study found a lack of social integration support on the national level, where most of the labor market integration programs for immigrants such as social integration support or job training exclude asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders. Furthermore, the study could find poor information distribution, not only to the refugees but also to the potential local employers.

To address these issues, the thesis emphasizes the need for South Korea to reevaluate its approach to refugee integration and to provide more national-level protection mechanisms. It suggests establishing comprehensive support programs and information distribution sessions not only directed at refugee workers but also more broadly encompassing other stakeholders including local employers. By creating a more inclusive and supportive environment, South Korea will be able to promote successful refugee integration, enabling refugees' active participation in the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the country. Ultimately, this will benefit both refugees and the broader South Korean society, contributing to its enrichment and diversity.

Keyword : Refugees. Refugee Integration. Labor Market Integration of Refugees. Right to Work.

Student Number : 2021-29627

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
List of Figures and Tables.....	v
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Literature Review	3
Chapter 2. Research Background.....	8
2.1 Refugees and South Korea.....	8
2.2 Refugee Status Determination	13
2.3 Labor Conditions by Refugee Stages.....	18
Chapter 3. Research Design	24
3.1 Research Aim and Questions	24
3.2 Theoretical Approach.....	25
3.3 Methods	28
3.3.1 Research Subject: Definition	29
3.3.2 Data Sampling and Collection.....	33
3.3.3 Data Analysis.....	36
Chapter 4. Refugees' Barriers and Facilitators in Labor Market Integration.....	38
4.1 National Level Barriers and Facilitators.....	41
4.1.1. Legislative and Administrative Hurdles	41
4.1.2. Downward Occupational Mobility	47
4.1.3. Lack of Knowledge of the Local Labor Conditions	51
4.1.4. Good and Safe Environment.....	57
4.2. Organizational Level Barriers and Facilitators	60
4.2.1. Exploitative Job Agencies	60
4.2.2. Bad and Dangerous working conditions.....	64
4.2.3. Discrimination	65
4.2.4. Company Networking Opportunities	68
4.2.5. Local Level Assistance	71
4.3. Individual Level Barriers and Facilitators	73
4.3.1. Bad Health Conditions	73
4.3.2. Challenging Host Language	75
4.3.3. Ethnic Network.....	79
4.3.4. Career Adaptability, Resilience, and Motivation.....	82

Chapter 5. Conclusion.....	86
5.1. Conclusion and Discussions	86
5.2. Limitations and Areas for Future Research	92
5.3. Academic Contributions	93
Bibliography	95
Abstract in Korean.....	103
Appendix A. Interview Question Guide	105
Appendix B. Instruction and Consent for a Research Participant	110

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Number of Asylum Seekers in South Korea (2010-2022)	10
Figure 2. Refugees and Refugee Applicants by Country of Origin (1994-2022).....	11
Figure 3. Refugee Recognition Rate after the Practice of Refugee Act (2013-2022)	12
Figure 4. Refugee Status Determination Process	18
Figure 5. Work Permit Guidelines for Asylum Seekers.....	22
Figure 6. Conceptual Starting Point.....	28
Figure 7. Refugees' Barriers and Facilitators in Labor Market Integration.	40
Figure 8. Permission for Employment of Refugee Status Applicants (Applicability and Required Documents).....	43
Figure 9. Work permit for asylum seekers (Eligibility and approved sectors to work)	49
Figure 10. Guideline on National Health Insurance of Foreigners.....	56
Figure 11. Eligible Participants of Korea Immigration & Integration Program (KIIP)	88
Figure 12. Eligible Participants of Initial Orientation Course for Immigrants	88
Figure 13. Employment Permit System (EPS) Distribution Guide for Local Employers	90
 Table 1. Treatment by Refugee Stages.....	 23
Table 2. Refugee classifications.....	31
Table 3. Overview of Research Participants	35

Chapter 1. Introduction

“Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment”

- Article 23, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The right to decent work is clearly articulated in many international covenants and legal documents as one of the most fundamental human rights. However, it is not actively protected in many domestic circumstances, especially for foreigners including immigrants and refugees. Employment for refugees is especially challenging, as many refugees struggle in the host countries' labor market. Previous studies document that the refugees have difficulties finding a stable source of employment (Beiser et al., 1993; Mikhael and Norman, 2018), overqualified for their jobs (Austin and Este, 2001; Krahn et al., 2000; Landesmann and Leitner, 2020) and are exploited in the host countries' job market (Lewis et al., 2014). They further find that refugees struggle more than other forms of migrants due to unexpected and sudden departures (Brell et al., 2020; Guliz, 2017). On the other hand, studies also find that refugees resiliently find coping mechanisms to survive in the labor market of the host countries where they find inclusion within the host society and benefit the local economy (Campbell, 2006; Grabska, 2006).

Understanding these dual experiences of refugees' employment in previous studies, the research attempts to find refugees' labor market

integration experiences in the South Korean context. More specifically, the study identifies barriers and facilitators for refugees in getting access to employment and participating in local workplaces. As the researcher understands that refugees' social integration is a dynamic and interactive process (Strang & Ager, 2010), which intersects with many different level variables, the thesis attempts to present the findings in individual (i.e., factors related to refugee individual characteristics such as demographics and individual capacity), organizational (i.e., organization or institution related factors that include organizational behaviors and employers' attitudes) and national (e.g., legislative measures or policy developments related to refugees' employment) level.

The research is expected to bring several key academic insights. First, despite the rapidly increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees in South Korean society, there has been a lack of studies on refugee social integration, especially related to their employment performances. Due to negative public attitudes against refugees, current academic debates on refugees are limitedly focused on the legal aspects of refugee determination and law (Ko, 2008; Park, 2007; Shin and Seo, 2020), public sentiment towards refugees (Lee, 2018; Paek and Koo, 2021; Song, 2019), or humanitarian aspects of refugee protection (Han and Hwang, 2019; Jeong, 2018), rather than on refugees' integration and settlement. In this regard, this thesis could bring a key takeaway from the previous studies on refugees in South Korea. Moreover, the study will be able to bring some meaningful

insights as the topic of refugees' labor market integration is under-studied, compared to refugees' integration on social, cultural, and educational dimensions. However, as economic integration, as well as newcomers' employment performances, is one of the most critical aspects of refugee integration into host countries (Ager & Strang, 2008; Kuhlman, 1991), labor market inclusion experiences of refugees should also receive more attention.

The thesis is structured as follows: First, previous literature on refugee integration, along with the studies on labor market integration of refugees both in the Korean context and globally, will be reviewed in-depth. In the following section, the institutional background of the research context of South Korea will be provided. Then, research methods, along with the theoretical approach of the research will be provided. The thesis will subsequently present the findings. Finally, the thesis will conclude with further discussions and contributions.

1.1. Literature Review

Many previous literatures have specifically explored the struggles and barriers that refugees go through in the host economy. Existing studies find that refugees go through challenges at different levels, including individual, organizational, and national (Lee et al., 2020; Knappert et al., 2018). Observed issues on the individual level include one's psychological trauma or depression caused by devastating experiences or difficulties in

adapting to a new culture (see e.g., Beiser et al., 1993; Cheung & Phillimore, 2014; Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018). On the organizational level, studies found that exploitative firm behaviors, discriminative attitudes of employers, and workplace harassment negatively affect refugees' inclusion at work (Afsharian et al., 2021; Lewis et al., 2014). And existing studies also report barriers on the structural level. Coates and Hayward (2005) argue that the unstable status of legal limbo, which refer to one's delayed decision on formal recognition, makes refugees more vulnerable and precarious in economic spheres. In this regard, Lee et al (2020) also found that refugees experience multiple structural barriers where they experience the so-called, "canvass ceiling", an extreme form of strain to participate and advance their professional career. They further explain the "canvass ceiling" as a "marginalization that results as an interplay between the complex combinations of barriers at those levels (Lee et al., 2020)". Finally, studies also document that refugees go through downward occupational mobility where they are working for lower-status jobs compared to their qualifications and are vulnerable to being overqualified for the jobs in the host countries (Landesmann & Leitner, 2020). Overall, scholars could find a "refugee gap", which denotes the situation where refugees suffer more than other forms of migrants in the host economy (Bakker et al., 2017; Brell et al., 2020).

On the other hand, many literatures also point out enabling aspects of refugees where they are self-sufficient and vibrantly participating in the

host economy. In this regard, many studies have observed refugees' unique coping and surviving mechanisms in the host community. Grabska (2006) finds that despite the social, economic, cultural, and political marginalization that refugees experience, Sudanese refugees can be understood as "social agents" who meaningfully participate in and contribute to the local economy of Cairo where they add vibrancy. She also highlights the role of locally organized refugee groups and associations in providing assistance and support to other refugees (Grabska, 2006). Campbell (2006) also observes that many of the urban refugees in Nairobi have already achieved self-sufficiency, despite hostile Kenyan national policies against them. She highlights the role of social networks, established through strong familial and kinship ties, which can greatly benefit refugees' self-sufficiency (Campbell, 2006). Some scholars also point out the exceptional resilience and personal agency exhibited among refugee populations, who have overcome devastating and traumatic events in their lives. In this regard, Obschonka et al (2018) find that career adaptability and entrepreneurialism, exhibited by some refugees, can positively affect labor market integration outcomes in the host countries. Furthermore, many studies emphasize structural-level factors in refugee integration, where government-level assistance should be provided to help refugees' labor market integration. In this regard, Brell et al (2020) explore diverging integration outcomes of refugees in many high-income countries including the United Kingdom, Australia, and Germany based on their policies on

refugees and immigrants.

Finally, under the Korean context, a dearth of literature has explored economic integration and settlement of refugees in-depth. Most of the studies on refugees' living status attempted to see refugees' settlement on a broader socio-economic level, encompassing their medical, educational, and cultural spheres, where they failed to more deeply explore the economic lives of refugees (Park, 2019; Kim, 2020; Sohn and Jung, 2018; Song et al., 2016). And most of these refugees' settlement and integration studies have been primarily conducted on a governmental or NGO level, rather than on an academic level (Kim et al, 2008; Kim et al., 2013; Song et al., 2015). Kim et al (2013), for instance, explored the lives and satisfaction of 395 refugees and asylum seekers in South Korea. They further found that most of the refugees in Korea resort to unstable forms of labor, with 34.6% of them employed on a part-time basis and 24.8% on day labor (Kim et al, 2013). Although Kim et al (2013) were successful in presenting the general picture of how refugees live in South Korea, the study failed to explore the economic lives of refugees in-depth. In academia, Park (2022) analyzed the current situation of refugee integration using Ager and Strang's integration model as a theoretical framework. Although Park was successful in presenting a general theoretical framework for analyzing refugee integration in the South Korean context, the study reviewed past literature and relevant policies, rather than exploring refugees' lives in depth. Kim et al (2016) also examined legal measures related to the economic integration of refugees in

South Korea and further explored specific challenges that refugees in Korea go through in accessing and participating in the local labor market. The findings are presented in three key timelines, including before employment, during employment, and after employment. This thesis will be similar to the study by Kim et al (2016) in the sense that it also explores refugees' employment status through interviews with the refugee participants. However, this study further adds to the current literature by presenting not only the difficulties or barriers that refugees go through in the labor market but also facilitators that help refugees better integrate into the workplace.

Chapter 2. Research Background

2.1. Refugees and South Korea

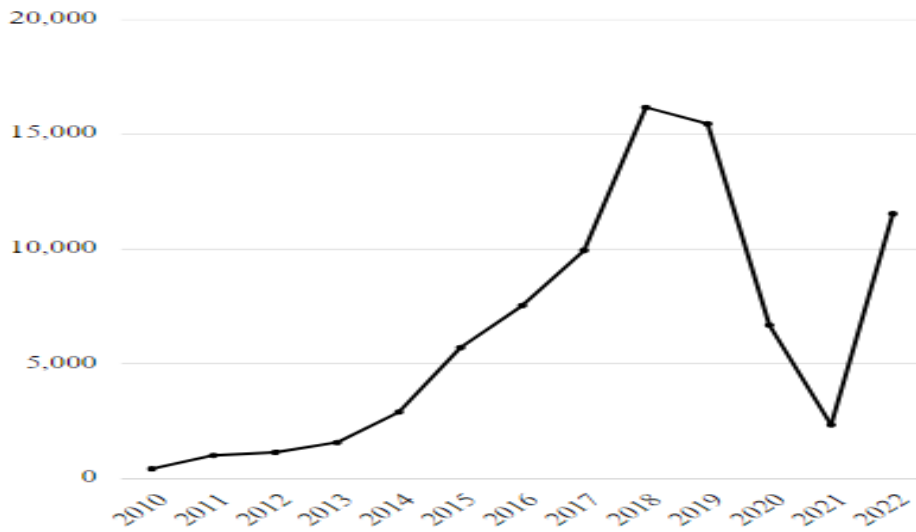
Currently, the world hosts more than 103 million forced migrants, who flee from war, internal conflict, and persecution (UNHCR, 2022). And the number of displaced people around the world is rapidly increasing. South Korea is one of the unique countries in the world, where it transformed from a refugee-producing country to a refugee-accepting country (Kim et al., 2010; Udor, 2019). South Korea has a dense experience of producing a massive number of refugees during the Japanese rule (1910-1945) and the succeeding Korean War (1950-1953). It has been documented that as much as a quarter of the entire South Korea population had left their homes during the Korean War (Kim, 2017; Kim et al., 2010). Refugee camps were set up in every province to assist internally displaced people and UNCACK was also established by the United Nations and the Korean government for Korean refugees (Kim, 2010). Also, an estimated number of 1.9 to 2 million Koreans seek refuge overseas during the 1950s, with many of them reaching Japan, China, and the Soviet Union (Kim, 2010).

From a war-devastated country, South Korea could quickly transform into a refugee-receiving country with its astonishing economic development and greater participation in the international community. During the 1970s to 1990s, South Korea rapidly recovered from the war and could miraculously rebuild its country, also widely known as a “Han

Miracle” (KOCIS, 2023). Turning from the least developed to one of the most advanced countries in the world, South Korea more actively tried to project itself as a cooperative member of the global community (World Bank, 2023). Being one of the Asian tiger members, it was able to participate in diverse multilateral networks including OECD, G-20, and Indo-Pacific Economic Prosperity Framework (Šerić, 2022). South Korea also conformed to the global order, ratifying international protocols and human rights instruments. In 2012, South Korea implemented its own domestic Refugee Law, becoming the first Asian country to do so (NANCEN, 2020). Having an image of a global, cooperative, and humanitarian country, South Korea became a more attractive destination to foreigners, immigrants, and also, to refugees.

As a result of this shift, South Korea is witnessing a rapidly increasing number of refugee applicants every year. The most recent figure showed that over 11,000 asylum seekers applied for refugee status in South Korea in 2022 and it is rapidly increasing (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of Asylum Seekers in South Korea (2010-2022)

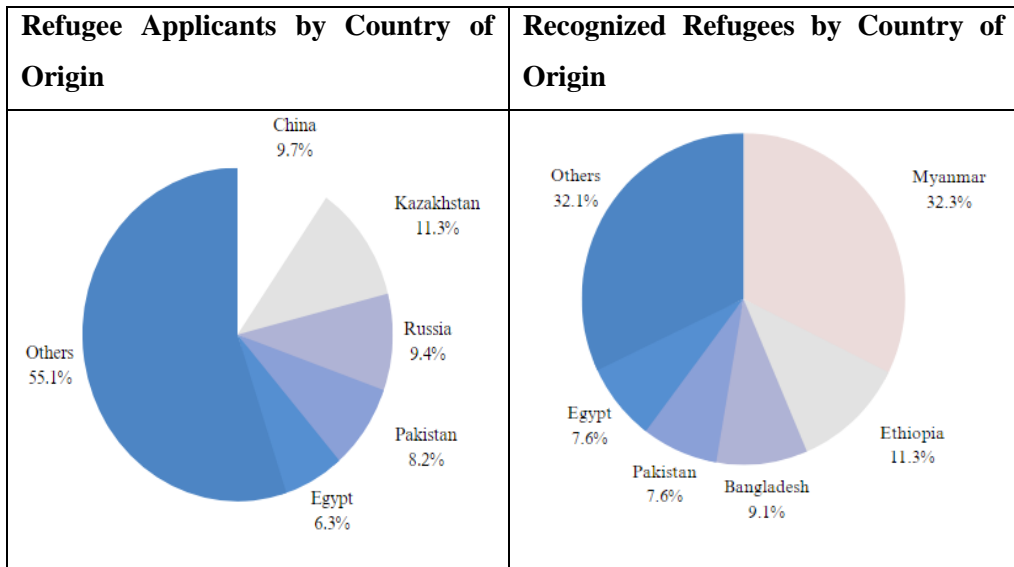


Source: Modified by the author from “Immigration Statistics (Ministry of Justice, 2023)”

Figure 1 shows that although the number of asylum seekers dropped temporarily during the COVID-19 pandemic, the number is increasing again. So, we can expect from this increasing trend that asylum seekers will increase further in the future.

In terms of refugees coming to South Korea, refugee applicants are of diverse backgrounds and countries of origin. Figure 2 summarizes the refugees and refugee applicants by country of origin from 1994 to 2022.

Figure 2. Refugees and Refugee Applicants by Country of Origin (1994-2022)

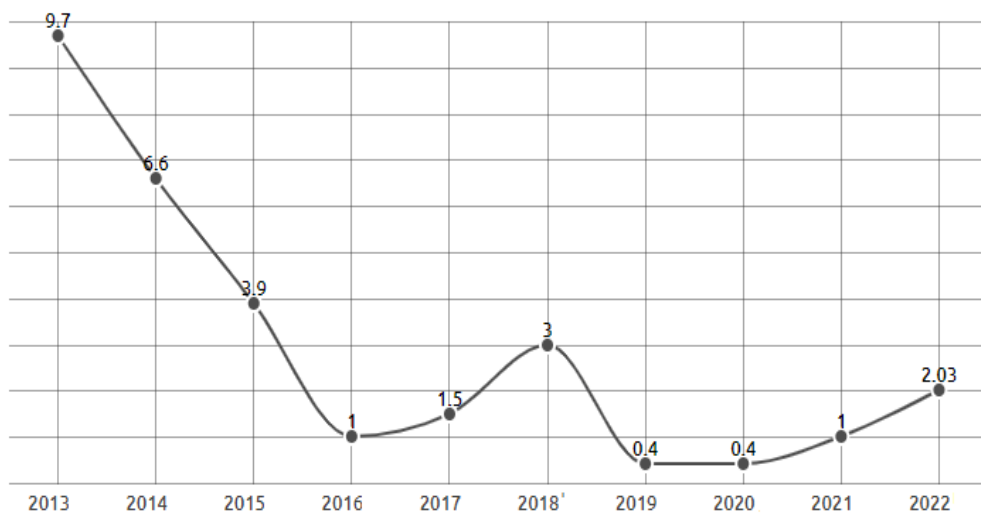


Source: Modified by the author from “[Statistics] Status of Refugees in Korea (as of December 31, 2022) (NANCEN, 2023)”

The graph on the left, “Refugee Applicants by Country of Origin” shows that some refugee applicants come from relatively closer countries like China, while some come from more distant countries including Egypt, traveling across the globe to reach the destination. Also, in the case of recognized refugees, as indicated in the graph on the right, the biggest portion of the recognized refugees were from Myanmar, followed by Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The number of refugees from Myanmar is particularly high as the Korean government participated in an initiative to resettle Myanmar refugees from 2015 (UNHCR, 2020).

Finally, the refugee recognition rate in South Korea is 2.03%, where the country has received only 1,338 refugees from 1994 to 2022 (NANCEN, 2023).

Figure 3. Refugee Recognition Rate after the Practice of Refugee Act (2013-2022)



Source: [Statistics] Status of Refugees in Korea (as of December 31, 2022) (NANCEN, 2023)

Figure 3 shows that the recognition rate was extremely low in recent years, where the recognition rate fell under 1% from 2019 to 2021 (NANCEN, 2023). Such recognition rate in South Korea is very low compared to the average refugee recognition rate among OECD countries which is close to 25% (SBS News, 2023). Also, in EU countries, 44% of the asylum seekers were granted refugee status in 2022 (Eurostat, 2023). In this aspect, the South Korean government is often criticized for opening such a

narrow and strict door to forced migrants (SBS News, 2023).

2.2. Refugee Status Determination

South Korean government started practicing its domestic Refugee Act in 2013 (NANCEN, 2020). In this regard, the South Korean government, rather than UNHCR, screens asylum seekers and accepts refugees. Following Article 2 of the Refugee Act of the Republic of Korea, "refugee" is defined as follows:

A foreigner who is unable or does not desire to receive protection from the nation of his or her nationality in well-grounded fear that he or she is likely to be persecuted **based on race, religion, nationality, the status of a member of a specific social group, or political opinion**, or a stateless foreigner who is unable or does not desire to return to the nation in which he or she resided before entering the Republic of Korea (hereinafter referred to as "nation of settlement") in such fear.

Source: Article 2 of Refugee Act, Ministry of Justice

According to this definition, one has to have a "well-grounded" fear of persecution based on five grounds, including "race, religion, nationality, the status of a member of a specific social group, or political opinion". Because of such restrictions on the refugee definition, South Korea additionally provides complementary humanitarian status to displaced individuals who

have rational grounds to fear persecution, even if their circumstances do not strictly align with the established refugee criteria.

"person granted a humanitarian stay permit (hereinafter referred to as "humanitarian sojourner") means a foreigner granted a stay permit from the Minister of Justice as prescribed by Presidential Decree as a person who has rational grounds for recognizing that his or her life, personal liberty, etc. is very likely to be infringed by torture, other inhumane treatment or punishment or other events.

Source: Article 2 of Refugee Act, Ministry of Justice

The general procedure of refugee determination proceeds as follows: First, a foreigner willing to apply for asylum can apply at the immigration office, immigration branch offices, or an immigration detention center in Korea (Ministry of Justice, 2015). After submitting one's application, the applicant is summoned to the Immigration Office for an interview. The focus of the interview is on the applicant's reasons for leaving their home country and why they cannot return. While the initial interview is the most crucial in the entire refugee recognition process, many studies document administrative and procedural issues in the interview phase, such as a poor interpretation, lack of gender sensitivity, lack of refugee personnel, and other legal and administrative barriers (Koh, 2008; Song et al., 2016; Shin and Seo, 2020; Lee, 2018). As a result, only 23% of the recognized refugees received refugee status after the first screening

(NANCEN, 2023), which denotes that recognized refugees generally have to go through much more complicated legal procedures to get their status.

Second, the rest of the failed refugee applicants in the first round of interviews can file an objection, also referred to as an “appeal”, within 30 days of notification. This is to challenge the denial of the Ministry of Justice. Once the Ministry of Justice receives an appeal from refugee applicants, it has to refer the case to the Refugee Committee without delay.

Article 21 (Objections)

(1) A person subject to a decision of non-recognition of refugee status under Article 18 (2) or 19 or a person whose refugee status is canceled or withdrawn under Article 22 **may raise an objection to the Minister of Justice within 30 days** from the date on which he or she is notified thereof. In such cases, he or she shall submit an objection accompanied by materials explaining the grounds therefor to the head of the local immigration office or foreigner-related office. <Amended by Act No. 12421, Mar. 18, 2014>

(2) Where an objection is raised under paragraph (1), no administrative appeal prescribed by the Administrative Appeals Act shall be filed.

(3) Where the Minister of Justice receives an objection under paragraph (1), **he or she shall refer to the Refugee Committee** prescribed in Article 25 therefor without delay.

Source: Refugee Act, Ministry of Justice

Refugee Recognition Committee consists of up to 15 members, including

lawyers, college/university professors, high officials having an experience in refugee-related tasks, and experts who have expertise and experience regarding refugee work, in accordance with Articles 25 and 26 of the Refugee Act. Upon the review of the appeal application by the committee members, the Ministry of Justice will make a final decision and notify the person.

Third, in case an appeal is rejected, the individual has a final option to file administrative litigation within 90 days of receiving the decision notification, or within a year of the dismissal being executed (Ministry of Justice, 2015). This is normally referred to as a “court process” in the refugee determination process. Throughout the litigation period, a person can apply for an extension of stay, like an asylum seeker. Finally, if the person is still not successful in persuading his or her case throughout the court processes, the refugee file becomes closed and the person receives a departure of order and is required to leave the country.

Finally, because of an extremely low refugee recognition in South Korea which is slightly over 2% in 2022, some failed refugees need to go through the refugee re-application process due to their inability to return to their countries of origin. These refugee re-applicants, however, are subject to a fast-track determination process in accordance with Article 8 of the Refugee Act, where it states that the Ministry of Justice “may omit part of the screening procedure” when a person “has failed to be recognized as a refugee” but applies for the screening again “without grave circumstantial

changes” (Article 8-5-2, Refugee Act). Thus, it becomes much more complicated for first-time failed refugee applicants to be admitted in their re-application.

Article 8 (Refugee Status Screening)

(5) The Minister of Justice may omit part of the screening procedure prescribed in paragraph (1) for refugee applicants in any of the following cases:

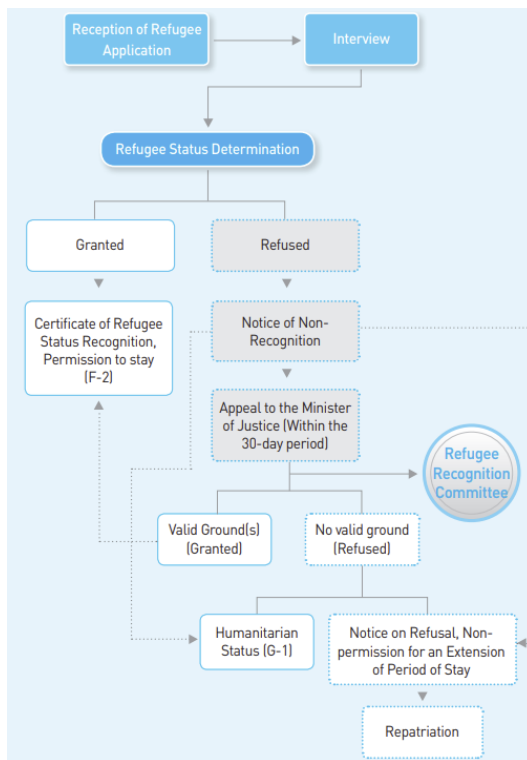
1. Where a refugee applicant applies for refugee status while concealing facts, such as submitting fabricated documents or making a false statement;
2. Where a person who has failed to be recognized as a refugee or a person whose refugee status has been canceled under Article 22 applies for refugee status again without grave circumstantial changes;
3. Where a foreigner who has resided in the Republic of Korea for at least one year applies for refugee status on the verge of the expiration of the period of stay or a foreigner subject to expulsion applies for refugee status for the purpose of postponing the execution thereof.

Source: Refugee Act, Republic of Korea

Overall, refugee status determination, in general, can be summarized as follows: (a) refugee application (b) refugee interview (c) result of the first interview (d) appeal (if rejected in the first interview) (e) court process (if rejected at the appeal process) (f) closed file (if rejected at the court process). The general process of refugee status determination can

be summarized in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Refugee Status Determination Process



Source: Handbook on RSD Procedures in Korea (Ministry of Justice, 2015)

2.3. Labor Conditions by Refugee Stages

Refugees in different stages are entitled to different degrees of rights. Recognized refugees are granted F-2 visas and the most extensive realm of social rights, including coverage of social security and basic living security, assurance of education and vocational training, to availability to bring their spouses and minors.^① And the rights become narrower to

^① Treatments for recognized refugees are stated from Article 30 to Article 38 of the Refugee Act, Republic of Korea.

humanitarian status holders, asylum seekers, and finally, refugee re-applicants.

Delving more specifically into employment conditions by refugee stages, Article 30 of the Refugee Act states that recognized refugees “shall be treated in accordance with the Refugee Convention”.

Article 30 (Treatment of Recognized Refugees)

(1) Notwithstanding other Acts, a recognized refugee residing in the Republic of Korea shall be treated in accordance with the Refugee Convention.

(2) The State and local governments shall formulate and implement policies, adjust relevant statutes, support relevant ministries and offices, and take necessary measures for the treatment of refugees.

Source: Refugee Act, Republic of Korea

In this regard, Article 17 (Wage-earning occupation) of the 1951 Refugee Convention states that refugees should be accorded the “most favorable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country”. Also, it further states in Article 17 (2) that restrictive measures imposed on foreigners should not apply to refugees. In accordance with these articles, South Korea allows for all general employment allowed for foreigners to be recognized refugees, without further restrictions nor further permission required (see also, Article 23-2 of the Enforcement Decree of the Immigration Act).

Article 17 (wage-earning employment)

1. The Contracting State shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the most favorable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment.
2. In any case, restrictive measures imposed on aliens or the employment of aliens for the protection of the national labor market shall not be applied to a refugee who was already exempt from them at the date of entry into force of this Convention for the Contracting State concerned.

Source: 1951 Refugee Convention, UNHCR

In regards to asylum seekers, G-1-5(Miscellaneous) visa is granted. In this regard, asylum seekers are eligible to get the work permit after 6 months of their application in accordance with Article 40 of the Refugee Act. And for the duration of the initial six months, they can receive subsidies from the government in principle. However, it was found that only 4% of the asylum seekers could receive the relevant financial support from the Korean government (Ministry of Justice, 2020).

Article 40 (Subsidization of Living Costs, etc.)

- (1) The Minister of Justice may subsidize the living costs, etc. of refugee applicants as prescribed by Presidential Decree.
- (2) Where six months have passed from the date on which refugee status is applied for, the Minister of Justice **may permit the refugee applicant to obtain a job** as prescribed by

Presidential Decree.

Source: Refugee Act, Republic of Korea

In the case of humanitarian status holders, G-1-6(Miscellaneous) visa is granted, where they have slightly greater entitlements compared to asylum seekers, but their rights are still very limited. As was the case with asylum seekers, humanitarian status holders can also receive work permits upon application to the Ministry of Justice, in accordance with Article 39 of the Refugee Act.

Article 39 (Treatment of Humanitarian Sojourners)

The Minister of Justice **may permit recruiting of humanitarian sojourners.**

Source: Refugee Act

Furthermore, as the Ministry of Justice views asylum seekers and humanitarian sojourners as temporary guests, rather than long-term residents, G-1(Miscellaneous) visa holders face various other labor restrictions including limitations on employment sectors and the ability to change workplaces (Ministry of Justice, 2019).

Figure 5. Work Permit Guidelines for Asylum Seekers

F. Things to consider

- Prior to working, an applicant must obtain a work permit from the Minister of Justice at an immigration office having jurisdiction over the place of stay.
- If a refugee status applicant wants to work, he or she must attain a work permit other than a stay permit within a given period for residence.
- Even if your previous work permit is valid, if there is any change in your contract employment such workplace change, you must re-obtain a work permit.
- It is impermissible to work as a dispatched worker or a day laborer, in a form of contracted worker of an agency.

Source: p. 83, “Guidebook for Refugee applicants in Korea (Ministry of Justice, 2019)”

Finally, refugee re-applicants, who have re-applied for refugee status after being rejected, are classified as “restricted persons” by the Ministry of Justice. In this regard, refugee re-applicants are just allowed to stay in the country until they complete the re-application process, but they are not eligible for the work permit (Ministry of Justice, 2020). In this regard, National Human Rights Commission, as well as civil societies, have argued that such treatment is a violation of human rights, where it is difficult for refugee re-applicants to maintain the minimum basic livelihoods until the screening process is over (The Hankyoreh, 2022; Labor Today, 2022; Seoul News, 2022). Table 1 summarizes the treatment of refugees by refugee status.

Table 1. Treatment by Refugee Stages

Category	Recognized refugees	Humanitarian status holders	Asylum applicants	Asylum re-applicants
Visa Type	Resident visa (F-2)	Miscellaneous visa (G-1-6) requires renewal every 6 months to 1 year	Miscellaneous visa (G-1-5) requires renewal every 3 to 6 months	Recommendation of Departure or Departure order Miscellaneous visa (G-1-5) to asylum re-applicants
Employment Availability	Employment for all general sectors	Employment for the unskilled sector	Employment for the unskilled sector	A work permit is not allowed
Employment Restrictions	No restrictions	Required to re-obtain the work permission when the workplace is changed	Required to re-obtain the work permission when the workplace is changed	
Relevant articles	Refugee Act (Article 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38) Enforcement Decree Of The Immigration Act (Article 23-2)	Refugee Act (Article 39)	Refugee Act (Article 40, 41, 42, 43) Enforcement Decree Of The Immigration Act (Article 23-1, 25) Immigration Act (Article 20)	Guidelines for Residence Status Management of Refugee Applicants (Ministry of Justice, April 2020)

Source: Modified by the author from Guidelines for Residence Status Management of Refugee Applicants (Ministry of Justice, 2020), Lee (2021) and Song (2021)

Chapter 3. Research Design

3.1. Research Aim and Questions

This research aims to examine the labor market integration experiences of refugees within the specific context of South Korea. The primary focus of the study is to investigate how refugees gain access to the labor market and perform at the local workplaces, specifically on what challenges and enablers exist. By considering the dynamic and interactive nature of social integration for refugees, the thesis organizes and presents the findings in three levels: individual (refugee-specific factors such as demographics and personal abilities), organizational (factors related to institutions and organizations, including employer attitudes and behaviors), and national (such as legislative measures and policy developments concerning refugee employment). The main questions of the research can be listed as follows:

- (a) **What are some barriers and facilitators for refugees in getting access to work in the South Korean context?**
- (b) **What are some barriers and facilitators for refugees in participating at the local workplaces in South Korea?**
- (c) **How can these barriers and facilitators be reorganized into individual, organizational, and national level factors?**

3.2. Theoretical Approach

Based on the extensive literature review, it was found that refugees encounter both barriers and facilitators in their labor market integration (Knappert et al., 2020). I refer to barriers as factors that hinder refugees' integration at workplaces, whereas facilitators are the factors that enable or help refugees' integration. To elaborate, existing studies found that social assets, such as an extensive ethnic network or one's social network, can greatly help refugees find jobs in the new community (Lamba & Krahn, 2003). Moreover, individual assets such as one's resilience or adaptability can further help their participation at work (see e.g., Campion, 2018; Li & Sah, 2019; Obschonka et al., 2018). On the other hand, disenabling factors discussed by the existing studies included language barriers (Li & Sah, 2019; Morrice et al., 2021; Udayar et al., 2021) or discrimination against refugees (Knappert et al., 2018).

Then, referring to studies on diversity management at firms, it was found that workplace integration is often shaped through the interplay of individual, organizational, and national factors (Syed, 2008; Syed & Özbilgin, 2009). Specifically, Syed & Özbilgin (2009) found that single-level conceptualization of diversity in the workplace does not capture a dynamic interplay of different contextual factors, where they suggest a relational framework to more comprehensively understand workplace inclusion. Syed & Özbilgin (2009) specifically defines each level as

follows:

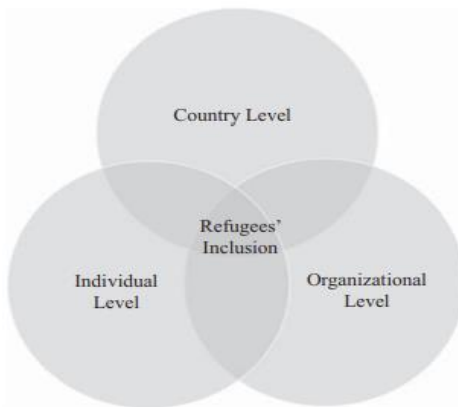
At the macro-national level, the relational framework takes into account the significance of national structures and institutions, e.g. laws, social organization, religious strictures, and gender and race relations. At the meso-organisational level, we consider the organisational processes, rituals and routinised behaviours at work that establish the rules of meso-level gender and race relations. (...) At the micro-individual level, we consider issues related to individual power, motivation, and agency to affect change, all of which are gendered and racialised phenomena (Syed & Özbilgin, 2009).

In alignment with the definition provided by Syed & Özbilgin (2009), the study attempts to organize the findings in three levels including individual, organizational, and national level factors. Individual level factors include issues on the individual level such as one's characteristics, demographics, and skill sets. Organizational factors refer to the firm's behaviors including the attitudes of the employers and coworkers, as well as workplace regulations and conduct. Finally, national-level factors include broader structures and institutions including law and socio-economic structures.

In regards to the relevance of adopting Syed & Özbilgin (2009)'s framework in this research, I was further motivated to use the framework because many migration and refugee scholars, studying the labor market performance of migrants, have adopted a relational framework in their

studies (Ariss and Syed, 2010; Bešić et al, 2022; Knappert et al, 2019; Lee et al., 2006; Syed, 2008). Knappert et al (2019) studied refugees' inclusion at work in the Netherlands with a relational approach. Through semi-structured interviews with diverse stakeholders related to refugee workplace inclusion including refugees, NGO workers, local employers, and governmental representatives, the study was able to bring meaningful insights on facilitators and barriers for refugee inclusion in Dutch workplaces under individual, organizational, and national level and the interplay of the three levels. Lee et al (2006) also analyzed previous literature on refugee employment through a relational framework, where the literature was categorized into institutional, organizational, and individual-level studies. Further delving into the interrelatedness of the three dimensions, the paper introduces the concept, of “canvas ceiling” to denote the multitude of obstacles faced by refugees at diverse levels of integration (Lee et al., 2006). Figure 5 proposed by Knappert et al (2020) introduces a conceptual starting point that this study adopts.

Figure 6. Conceptual Starting Point



Source: produced by Knappert et al (2020) based on Syed & Özbilgin (2009)'s relational framework

3.3. Methods

The research adopts a qualitative research methodology where 9 refugee interview participants participated in the study. The researcher deemed qualitative research methodology was the most appropriate for this research as there is a dearth of previous explorative studies on refugees' settlement and living status in the South Korean context. Semi-structured interviews of a total of 9 refugees residing in Korea were conducted from March to May of 2023, to more deeply explore their employment and settlement experiences in South Korea. Semi-structured methodology refers to an interview methodology where the basic themes and questions are prepared by the researcher in advance but they are semi-structured to listen to more in-depth experiences and stories of each research participant

(Adams, 2010; Galletta, 2013; Kallio et al., 2016). The semi-structured interview guide adopted in this research is attached in Appendix A.

Upon the voluntary consent of the participants, an in-depth one-on-one interview was conducted between the researcher and the research participant. The interview took place from 30 minutes to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Research participants were asked questions about one's working experiences in South Korea extensively, from job searching, familiarizing themselves at work, and getting along with their co-workers or employers, to their future career plans. All of the interviews were conducted in English and recorded and transcribed upon participants' consent. The interviews took place at cafes, participant's homes, researcher's home, or via zoom. After the in-depth interview, there were no additional interviews but in case a researcher needed further clarification or a follow-up, the participants were asked via text messages. General instructions and consent forms for research participants used in this research are attached in Appendix B. And finally, the research was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the Seoul National University.

3.3.1. Research Subject: Definition of a Refugee

The research subject of the study is a refugee adult over the age of 19, residing in South Korea who is currently working or has a working experience in South Korea. The thesis does not include North Korean

defectors as research subjects, as they are understood as Korean nationals under the Korean constitution (Song and Jo, 2020). Also, refugees are defined as “foreigner who is unable or does not desire to receive protection from the nation of his or her nationality in well-grounded fear that he or she is likely to be persecuted based on race, religion, nationality, the status of a member of a specific social group, or political opinion” by Refugee Act of Republic of Korea, Article 2 (1), the study adopts a broader definition of a refugee. In this broader definition, not only legally recognized refugees but also asylum seekers, humanitarian status holders, asylum seekers in the court process, and refugee re-applicants, in other words, persons that are in a “refugee-like” situation were also included. This definition of refugees is in alignment with previous studies including Kim et al (2013), Kim (2016), and Sohn et al (2018). Table 2 shows a categorization of refugees that this thesis adopts.

Table 2. Refugee classifications

Criteria	Explanations
Recognized refugee	Officially recognized refugees by the South Korean government. It also includes resettled refugees.
Humanitarian status	Persons holding humanitarian status. Humanitarian status holders refer to forced migrants who are rejected as refugees but are given complementary status due to humanitarian causes. Humanitarian status holders are given limited rights compared to recognized refugees.
Asylum applicant	Asylum applicants who are currently going through the process of refugee application. Refugee applicants are given temporary staying visas by the Korean government throughout the application process.
Court process	Asylum seekers are in the court process, where they were rejected after the first round of screening by the Ministry of Justice but are going through court processes to reverse their status.
Asylum re-applicants	Asylum re-applicants whose refugee application was rejected in the initial attempt but are going through the process of the re-application.

Source: Modified by the author from Kim et al. (2013)

The research was specifically motivated to use a broader definition of refugees for two primary reasons. First, South Korea recognizes only a small number of refugees, having a very strict and narrow door open to refugees. In 2022, the refugee recognition rate in South Korea was 2.03%, where the country received only 1,338 refugees from 1994 to 2022 (NANCEN, 2023). Also, during 2019-2021, the rate was lower than 1%. Opening such a narrow door, the South Korean government is often criticized as not accepting even asylum seekers having valid persecution reasons (SBS News, 2023).

Second, more importantly, increasing scholars began to

academically question the narrow definition of “refugee” under the 1951 Refugee Convention (Betts, 2010; Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Liisa H. Malkki, 1995). There has been an ongoing global trend to protect all those people in “refugee-like” situations. To elaborate, the 1951 Refugee Convention defines refugees as below, restricting only to five persecution factors including “race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”.

In other words, all the other forced migrants who are forced to leave but do not strictly align with the definition of a refugee, cannot be recognized as refugees. Such narrow definition limits the protection measures to forced migrants, who do not fit the refugee criteria. Some of the examples would include climate migrants or some economic migrants who voluntarily migrated out of the country due to severe hunger and famine that threatened their lives. Moreover, the international community recognizes that a refugee has “refugeness”, or a refugee character, from the moment the reason arises and becomes a refugee regardless of one’s legal status (Liisa H. Malkki, 1995; Zolberg et al., 1986; Park, 2019). According to UNHCR Chapter 1 General Principles, Article 28, “a person who meets the criteria for refugee status arises before a formal determination of refugee status is made. In other words, one is not a refugee because one is recognized as so, but one is recognized as a refugee because one is a refugee (UNHCR, 2014)”. In this regard, alternative terminology is often used to describe these individuals. For example, the term “persons in refugee-like situations” for

those individuals who are outside their country of origin, facing similar risks and vulnerabilities as refugees but do not meet the legal criteria for refugee status (CIS Declaration POA Regional Conference 1996).

3.3.2. Data Sampling and Collection

One of the core contributions of the thesis lies in the sampling methods of the research participants. While many studies on hard-to-reach populations, including refugees, recruit their initial research participants through NGOs or shelters (see e.g., Pak et al., 2023; Kim, 2020; Kim et al., 2016; Song et al., 2015), oversampling from these institutions may distort the representativeness of the population (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003; Parreñas, 2021). This is because individuals seeking NGOs for help are more likely to be those who are going through bigger difficulties and hardships than the general population of the same group. In this regard, the researcher attempted to diversify the source of seeking research participants. While the researcher did recruit some research participants through the referral of the NGO, many of the participants were recruited more randomly in refugee-crowded areas including the Seoul Immigration office, Itaewon in Seoul, or Dongducheon in Gyeonggi province. Moreover, the researcher attempted to recruit participants of diverse backgrounds, considering gender, demographic, country of origin, and refugee status.

To summarize the background of the interviewed refugees, 6 of

them were male and 3 were female. The interview participants were from diverse countries, including DR Congo, Haiti, Iraq, and Egypt. Also, participants were in different age groups, ranging from 20s to 50s. And most of the participants were working at factories or did other manual labor, and some participants worked at restaurants. Finally, to specify the recruitment source of each research participant, 3 participants were recruited through the referral of the NGO, 4 participants were recruited randomly (in front of the Seoul Immigration office, Itaewon, or Dongduccheon), and 2 participants were recruited through snowball sampling. Table 3 shows an overview of the research participants.

Table 3. Overview of Research Participants

	Refugee Status	Sex	Country of Origin	Year of arrival	Current Job	Work experience in Country of Origin	How did you get the job
1	Asylum	F	Nigeria	2019	Chicken Processing Factory	Unknown	SNS Friend
2	Court	M	Côte d'Ivoire	2002	Fish Market	Unknown	Ethnic Community
3	Re-applicant	M	Egypt	2015	Pipe factory	Interior Design	Foreign Friend
4	Re-applicant	M	Mali	2017	Irregular Part-time Work at the Logistics Factory	Unknown	Job Agency in Daerim
5	Asylum	M	DR Congo	2022	Irregular Part time Cleaning Work	Owned a Market	Ethnic Community
6	Humanitarian status	M	Haiti	2019	Not Working	International Badminton Coach	Ethnic Community; Job Agency
7	Asylum	M	Ethiopia	2019	Not Working	Government Official at the Ministry of Industry	Ethnic Community; Job Agency
8	Asylum	F	Iraq	2021	Restaurant (Hall)	Junior Accountant at the Presidential Office	Online Job Search Platform
9	Re-applicant	F	Uganda	2015	Candle Making Work	Data Analyst	Job Agency; Korean Friend from Church

* Names of the Participants are erased and codified in order to protect their

confidentiality.

3.3.3. Data Analysis

After the data collection, the research used a thematic analysis. The thematic analysis method is an analysis method widely used in qualitative studies, as well as migration scholars studying newcomers' integration (Knappert et al., 2020; Park, 2019). Thematic analysis refers to a methodology where the researcher organizes the raw data (e.g., interview scripts) after the interview, classifies some of the keywords that commonly appear throughout interview participants, and presents the findings by the topics that appeared. Due to the small number of research participants, it was difficult to use thematic analysis properly, but the researcher made sure that certain issues brought up by the interviewees were taken into account seriously if the same topic was repetitively addressed by different interviewees (more than 2 or 3 times).

The researcher specifically used 6 steps of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which proceeds as “Step1. Familiarizing yourself with your data” - “Step2. Generating initial codes” - “Step3. Searching for themes” - “Step4. Reviewing themes” - “Step5. Defining and naming themes” - “Step6. Producing the report” (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To elaborate, after the interview, the researcher gathered all the interview scripts and read them repeatedly, to “familiarize myself with the data”. In

the subsequent process, the researcher tried to identify some issues that commonly appeared throughout different interview contexts, such as “the boss yelled at the participant (#Refugee2)”, “the boss ignored the participant (#Refugee6)” or “difficulty is the bad approach of the employers (#Refugee7)”. And these initial codes, such as “being yelled at”, “ignored”, and “bad approach” were commonly grouped under a single theme called “Discrimination”. And then, this independent theme, “Discrimination”, is further placed under the organizational barrier.

Chapter 4. Refugees' Barriers and Facilitators in Labor Market Integration

Findings show that refugees are faced with diverse barriers and also facilitators in their attempts to integrate into the labor market in South Korea. At the national level, refugees face challenges related to their unstable visa status and administrative obstacles, which impede their inclusion in the workforce. Additionally, structural barriers prevent them from fully participating in the labor market, resulting in downward occupational mobility which refers to an acceptance of lower-status jobs compared to their qualifications. Lack of knowledge about local labor conditions and terms further hampers their possibility to secure appropriate insurance coverage and compensation. However, despite these challenges, positive and secure environment in South Korea motivates refugees to remain in the country.

On the organizational level, refugees often face exploitation by job agencies, paying excessive referral fees, or being unable to establish direct labor contracts with employers. They are also subject to poor and hazardous working conditions, leaving them vulnerable to various industrial injuries. Discriminatory attitudes from coworkers and employers further hinder their integration, although some participants do enjoy positive relationships with their colleagues and employers, which facilitate their integration. Moreover, local-level assistance, including support from local NGOs or other local-

based communities like church, were greatly helpful in providing relevant career assistance and guides to refugees.

At the individual level, many refugees suffer from poor physical and psychological health conditions, often due to trauma from past persecution experiences or guilt of leaving their family and friends behind when they left their countries of origin. Additionally, the challenges of learning the Korean language and culture, which largely differ from the cultures in their countries of origin, pose significant difficulties. However, ethnic communities and social networks play a crucial role in helping refugees secure employment and facilitate communication in the workplace. Finally, the personal agency of refugees, including their career adaptability, resilience, and motivation, significantly contribute to their meaningful integration into the new society. The summarized findings of the study are presented in Figure 7.

Figure7. Refugees' Barriers and Facilitators in Labor Market Integration



Source: produced by the author, based on Knappert et al (2020) and Syed & Özbilgin (2009)'s relational framework

4.1. National Level Barriers and Facilitators

4.1.1. Legislative and Administrative Hurdles

I submitted an appeal one year and a half ago and since then, they (Ministry of Justice) have not responded to my appeal(#Refugee8).

The study found that many participants found themselves to be trapped in a state of legal limbo, having to endure prolonged periods of uncertainty regarding their immigration status. Although the Ministry of Justice explains that the refugee status determination should be completed within 6 months, as outlined in Article 18 of the Refugee Act, the reality is that many refugee applicants have to endure significantly longer periods in this waiting period. Such administrative delay was also evident in many cases of the study, such as one participant (#Refugee7) who applied for refugee status in 2021 but only recently, in 2023, had the opportunity for his first interview. Another participant (#Refugee8) submitted an appeal and has been awaiting a response from the Ministry of Justice for over a year and a half. This kind of legal limbo puts refugees in a further vulnerable position where it prevents the refugees from planning for the future and preparing for more constructive career options.

Last week I had a (refugee) interview. I applied for almost two years in March of 2021 but only last week I had the first interview (with the Ministry of Justice) (...) So now, I just, try to

see another option, like going to another country or something like that (...) I was trying to go to Dubai last month - I tried to find some kind of expert job. Because in Korea, I think if you are a refugee applicant, you cannot work in export jobs (#Refugee7).

These findings confirm earlier studies by Coates and Hayward (2005), which point out how the prolonged delay in formal recognition may lead individuals to legal limbo, leaving refugees in a precarious position.

Furthermore, in the case of G-1 visa holders including asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders, many participants expressed difficulties in securing a stable job. Many coherently pointed out that employers are often reluctant to hire G-1 visa holders due to administrative difficulties. This is because G-1 visa, also known as a Miscellaneous visa, is not a formally acknowledged visa for work, in accordance with Article 23 (Employment and Status of Stay of Aliens) of the Enforcement Decree of the Immigration Act. But the visa holders can only work after obtaining a work permit from the Immigration Office, allowing them to work under exceptional circumstances. And in order to get a work permit, asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders need to bring not only their identification documents but also a written employment contract and a copy of their business license which should be provided by the employers (refer to Figure 8).

Figure 8. Permission for Employment of Refugee Status Applicants (Applicability and Required Documents)

5 Permission for Employment of Refugee Status Applicants

(1) Who can apply?

- If a refugee status applicant falls under the category below, he/she may work in the ROK as he/she wishes. To this end, the person shall find a workplace first within the permitted period of stay and then apply for permission for activities beyond his/her given status at the immigration office or branch office with jurisdiction over his/her place of stay (for up to maximum 6 months).

- ▶ 6 months have passed since the person applied for refugee status application; or
- ▶ The Office Chief, etc., deems it necessary for the applicant to work to support his/her dependant family members who do not have abilities to work due to disabilities, or other reasons.

(2) Required documents

- A written application (Annex. No. 34), passport, alien registration card, written employment contract, a copy of business license, no fee.

Source: p.25, Refugee Status Determination Procedures in Korea (Ministry of Justice, 2015)

As a result, there is often a lack of comprehensive information available to potential employers regarding the hiring of these visa holders. In this regard, many of the participants explained that employers are not familiar with the G-1 visa and are often reluctant to hire people with G-1 visas.

The worst thing (about the G-1 visa) is that the company doesn't know about G-1 visa. They don't know about this visa and they don't want to hire people with G-1 visa. They only ask you if you

have F-1 or F-2 visa or E-7 something like that. They do not know anything about G-1 visa. So people think G-1 visa is bad, compared to other visas like E-7 or F-2 (#Refugee6).

Also, another issue with the G-1 visa holders is that they need to renew their visa every 3 months to a year, which may deter individuals from securing stable employment in South Korea. One of the participants described her experience where she applied to over 200 job openings, the participant was unable to secure any employment, resulting in an extended period of unemployment. Her experience confirms how difficult it is for unstable G-1 visa holders to secure employment in the Korean context.

Interviewee: I intended to take a break for only 3 months after I quit the work, but it lengthened (to six months) because no one was responding to my job applications.

Researcher: Why do you think they didn't reply?

Interviewee: One of the reasons I think is G-1 visa. Because G-1 visa is for 6 months and every 6 months, you have to get it renewed - so they want someone long term like someone who can stay at least one year with them (#Refugee8).

This confirms earlier studies on immigrants' employment status in South Korea that employment is relatively higher and more stable for those who can stay in Korea with a legitimate visa status under the Immigration Control Act, while the proportion of non-regular and unemployment is higher for groups with an unstable status, including refugees.

Furthermore, failed asylum seekers often have to re-apply for refugee status due to the inability to return to their country of origin, facing additional challenges. Despite the need to sustain themselves economically during the re-application process, these refugee re-applicants are restricted from seeking employment. These re-applicants are not granted work permits throughout the entire refugee re-application process. Instead, they are provided with recommendations of departure or departure orders, with the sole purpose of extending the deadline for departure. One research participant in the study shared his concerns and difficulties in not being able to work while going through the re-application process, expressing a strong desire to continue working in Korea.

I used to work at factories for more than 2 years. But now, I do not have an ID and only a paper (departure order). For this, I am not allowed to work in Korea. So, I am currently not working (...) In the future, my dream is to have a good visa and be able to work in Korea (#Refugee4).

In this regard, the National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea, along with other civil societies, has contended that the denial of work permits to refugee re-applicants constitutes a violation of fundamental human rights. On March 13, 2023, the National Human Rights Commission emphasized the need to issue identity verification documents for refugee re-applicants and provide work permits in case the examination process is unavoidably prolonged (Yeon, 2022). This highlights a need for improved

support and protection of the re-applicants.

Finally, regarding the newly arrived refugees, asylum seekers in South Korea are unable to receive a work permit for the initial 6 months of application, as outlined in Article 40 of, the Refugee Act. Although article 40-(1) states that the Ministry of Justice may subsidize the living costs of asylum seekers, asylum seekers receiving livelihood subsidies from the government are very rare. In 2019, only 4% of asylum seekers could receive subsidies from the Korean government (Ministry of Justice, 2020). One of the research participants, who arrived in Korea in the winter of 2022, also expressed financial difficulties he was going through as he does not have a work permit yet (#Refugee5). He responded that he has to pay rent and all the living expenses while being prevented to work. And thus, the research participant had no other choice but to work part-time jobs illegally, to sustain a living. If caught by the authorities, he was at risk of being deported, as the first-time offenders are fined 900 USD and if it is the second time, the offender is automatically deported (Udor, 2019). In other words, the research participant had to commit illegality due to his precarious position. This is in line with the previous findings that the unstable status of minorities itself produces illegality, leading to further precariousness and marginalization of vulnerable people (Menjívar, 2006; Udor, 2019).

4.1.2. Downward Occupational Mobility

I used to work at the presidential office, as a junior accountant, and now I am a hall server at a dumpling restaurant (#Refugee8).

Previous literature explored the downward occupational mobility experienced by refugees (Baldwin-Edwards & Arango, 2014; Castles, 2014; Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006). Downward occupational mobility refers to a situation where the workers are working for lower-status jobs, compared to their prior educational and career experiences in their countries of origin (Oxford University Press). In alignment with these studies, the researcher found such downward mobility was also observed among the refugee participants.

Indeed, some of the participants had high skills and had occupied higher status employment in their countries of origin. For instance, one of the research participants worked for the government department, the Ministry of Industry, for 8 years in the country of origin before coming to South Korea (#Refugee7). He explained that he worked in the government's subsidies field, where he was in charge of mobilizing resources to help children and women. And the participant also completed a master's degree in one of the renowned universities in Korea, through the KOICA program that promotes the relationship with developing countries' government officials by inviting them to complete a master's degree in South Korea.

Another participant worked at the presidential office in her country of origin, where she worked as a promising junior accountant (#Refugee8). Despite their past educational and career experiences, these refugee participants were predominantly engaging in low-skilled jobs in South Korea, such as manual labor at factories (#Refugee7) or hall serving in restaurants (#Refugee8).

The study further found that the downward occupational mobility, exhibited by many refugee participants, can be attributed to two main factors. First, in South Korea, there are legal restrictions that confine asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders to engage in simple labor. According to the Ministry of Justice's Handbook on Refugee Status Determination Procedures in Korea (2019), asylum seekers are limited to working in areas designated only for unskilled workers, while those seeking professional roles must apply for an additional permit (refer to Figure 9). However, even when asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders apply for a professional permit, their applications are frequently rejected without clear explanations, undermining their prospects for professional employment (Cho, 2022).

Figure 9. Work permit for asylum seekers (Eligibility and approved sectors to work)

(4) Permitted areas of employment

- You may work in areas for unskilled workers where your employment activity is not prohibited. However, if you wish to work in an area which requires professional skills, you must meet the criteria regulated by the Immigration Control Act and its regulations, and obtain permission for activities beyond your given status of stay.
- When your workplace is changed, you must re-obtain permission to activities beyond your given status of stay prior to the start the work.

Source: p. 25, Handbook on Refugee Status Determination Procedures in Korea (Ministry of Justice, 2019)”

Moreover, South Korea lacks specific measures or guidelines to facilitate the recognition of refugees' past experiences. Although educational and career experiences are recognized under Article 35 and Article 36 of the Refugee Act, it applies very narrowly, only to the formally recognized refugees.

Article 35 (Recognition of School Career)

A **recognized refugee** may obtain the recognition of a school career equivalent to the degree of school education he or she has completed in foreign nations as prescribed by the Presidential Decree.

Article 36 (Recognition of Qualifications)

A **recognized refugee** may obtain recognition of a qualification

equivalent to or part of the qualification he or she acquired in a foreign nation as prescribed by the relevant statutes.

Source: Refugee Act, Republic of Korea

This is in stark contrast to the policies on recognizing refugees' qualifications by international standards. For instance, Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), adopted in Lisbon in 1997 and currently ratified by more than 50 states, serves as a legal instrument for signatories to recognize the qualifications of refugees, including not only formally recognized refugees but also persons in refugee-like situations including asylum seekers (Council of Europe). In this regard, European Commission distributes guidelines to countries in recognizing refugees', including asylum seekers', past qualifications in a fair and just process (Central European University, 2022; ENIC-NARIC, 2020). Also, the Netherlands supports asylum seekers to create their career portfolio once they arrive in the host country, with the aid of The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), to enhance one's possibility of securing a more decent job that aligns one's career experiences (International Organization for Migration, 2013).

To conclude, refugees are often overqualified for their jobs in South Korea mainly due to structural issues, including legal restrictions of work areas that confine asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders in South Korea to simple labor and a lack of formal mechanisms to recognize asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders' past experiences. These findings stand in contrast to international standards and practices, which aim to

recognize the qualifications of all refugee-like populations and support their integration into the workforce.

4.1.3. Lack of Knowledge of the Local Labor Conditions

Researcher: I think there are some types of insurance that G-1 holders can get. You never got insurance when you were working?

Interviewee; Maybe it exists. But we do not have any information about it (#Refugee6).

The thesis also sheds light on the vulnerability of refugee workers due to their lack of knowledge of local labor conditions including their entitlements and rights. Two issues will be explored respectively: Industrial Accident Compensation and National Health Insurance. First, despite the existence of legislation covering all foreign workers, including refugees, to industrial accident compensation, many refugees of the study that had industrial accidents were unable to receive the compensation they are entitled to. Under Article 6 of the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act, “every business or workplace that hires an employee” applies to industrial accident compensation and in this regard, all foreigners including refugees, asylum seekers, humanitarian status holders, and even illegal immigrants can get insured in case of an industrial accident (Lee et al., 2009).

Article 6 (Scope of Application)

This Act shall apply to every business or workplace that employs employees (hereinafter referred to as "business"): Provided, That this Act shall not apply to businesses prescribed by Presidential Decree in consideration of their risk rates, sizes, places, etc.

Source: Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act, Republic of Korea

However, many participants could not receive compensation due to their lack of knowledge and the complicated administrative process to file the injury case. For instance, one of the participants developed a severe shoulder injury at work where he had to take sick leave. While not knowing that he could receive compensation for his hospital pay, the participant paid for his hospital pay and after the sick leave, when he tried to go back to work, the participant was fired without a notice in advance.

Interviewee: When I had some pain, I asked my doctor to have sick leave so he gave me two weeks of sick leave. After I finished (the sick leave), when I tried to go back, they said you cannot work. If you have some pain, it is very hard to continue. So I just quit my contract.

Researcher: So you wanted to keep the work but did they fire you because of your pain?

Interviewee: Yes, they fired me because of my pain, because if I

have some pain, my production will become very slow
(#Refugee7).

Also, another participant was injured at work due to the burning oil that accidentally spread all over her leg. However, this participant could not get compensation for the industrial accident due to the complicated administrative procedures. Rather than assisting the participant throughout the compensation process, her employer simply threw her a contact number for the service where the participant was not able to communicate and file a case due to the language barrier. She further confessed that when she contacted the number, she was forwarded to different governmental departments, where she was told that they were not in charge of an industrial accident. Mentally exhausted, the participant gave up receiving the compensation at last.

Interviewee: One of the coworkers unintentionally he was cooking and then he was using the sizzling oil and that oil all spread over my leg. And I guess what? I was disabled for three days. And then I found out later that this type of incident is called industrial injury and should be insured by the government.

Researcher: Did you get the insurance at the time?

Interviewee: I could not, it was a language barrier. No one helped me, not even the Korean employer. She said, like, why should I help you? She just gave me a phone number and then, I tried to call and they did not speak English at all. I called that

institution they said, “no, no sorry it is not here, we do not do this call someone else”. Then I called another institution but they also said it is not their job. And I did not have anyone around me to help me and it got very complicated. So, I just gave up (#Refugee8).

Moreover, the participant further explained that she was deducted from the three days’ salary that she spent at the hospital.

I was not able to walk on my leg, disabled for three days. When I came back to work, when I received my salary at the end of the month, I found that they deducted three days - and I asked the boss, hey what is going on here? My salary is deducted for three days. Why? They say, oh, well you do not work, you do not get paid (#Refugee8).

Second, participants of the study frequently encountered issues in getting health insurance. While refugees, even asylum seekers, and humanitarian status holders, can get insured “through the employment” that they are working for in accordance with Article 109-2 of the National Health Insurance Act and Article 14 of the Act On The Employment Of Foreign Workers^②, most participants did not have insurance. Many refugees could not get insured because they did not know about the existence of the system

^② Article 109-2 of the National Health Insurance Act states that “(“foreigner, etc. residing in Korea”) who is an employee, public official, or school employee of a workplace of eligible persons shall become the employee insured” and furthermore, Article 14 of the Act On The Employment Of Foreign Workers states that the National Health Insurance Act applies to “employers and foreign workers employed by them” without putting restrictions on foreigners’ visa status.

and also due to exploitative employers who rejected insuring their employees. First, multiple participants mentioned that they did not know that they could be insured.

Interviewee: Here, I am legal to work but I cannot have insurance.

Researcher: I think there are some types of insurance that G-1 holders can get. You never got insurance when you were working?

Interviewee; Maybe it exists. But we do not have any information about it (#Refugee6).

Also, even if refugees are aware, employers would sometimes reject insuring their employees. One of the participants explained that she tried to get National Health Insurance her employer, but was rejected.

Interviewee: And they did not give me health insurance. I worked 8 hours, five days a week and they did not give me insurance.

Researcher: Did you talk to the employer?

Interviewee: Yes, from the first day, I asked for health insurance - they said that you are G-1 visa and you are not entitled to health insurance. They also said that they do not give health insurance to any employee (#Refugee8).

And she was further misguided by the government official that G-1 visa holders cannot get National Health Insurance.

I got this misinformation from one of the offices that I am not entitled to health insurance so I thought that it is because of my G-1 visa (#Refugee8).

In this regard, unclear government instructions often lead to confusion. For instance, the guidelines on foreigners' insurance provided by the Ministry of Government Legislation, only mentions Non-professional Employment (E-9) and Working Visit (H-2) status holders, leading to the confusion that G-1 visa holders are not entitled to insurance. It shows that the lack of knowledge of the local labor conditions may put refugees in a marginalized and lower social status, as was also documented by Yonhap News (Oh, 2019).

Figure 10. Guideline on National Health Insurance of Foreigners

■ National Health Insurance (Mandatory)

- Foreign workers under either Non-professional Employment (E-9) or Working Visit (H-2) status who have filed for alien registration are subject to be insured under the National Health Insurance Act (Article 109 Section 2 of the National Health Insurance Act, Article 76 Section 1 of the Enforcement Decree of the National Health Insurance Act, and Article 14 of the Act on the Employment, Etc. of Foreign Workers).
- An employer of the relevant foreign worker shall report the acquisition of the eligibility of the employee insurance under the National Health Insurance Service within 14 days from the date the foreign worker's employment has commenced (Article 8 Section 2 of the National Health Insurance Act).

Source: Ministry of Government Legislation

In conclusion, refugees' lack of knowledge about local labor conditions exposes them to various forms of exploitation and denies them their rightful compensation for their entitlements including industrial accident

compensation and health insurance. The complex administrative procedures and language barriers further hinder their access to such governmental services. This marginalized position of refugee workers underscores the need for concerted efforts to address this issue on a national level. It is crucial to organize information dissemination sessions not only for refugees but also for employers and government officials, to increase awareness and protect the rights of these vulnerable individuals.

4.1.4. Good and Safe Environment

My country is always fighting and it is so dangerous with so many gangs. In Korea, there is no gang or fighting. So, I prefer working in Korea
(#Refugee4).

Indeed, despite various structural challenges in South Korea, the majority of the research participants firmly expressed a strong desire to continue working and living in the country, primarily due to its secure environment. Also, despite being overqualified for their jobs in South Korea, many of the participants responded that they still prefer working in South Korea, compared to working in their countries of origin, due to the safe work environment. One participant expressed a preference for working in Korea due to the absence of fighting and gangs. He emphasized that the constant danger and presence of gangs made his home country an undesirable place to work, whereas, in Korea, such issues were virtually

nonexistent (#Refugee4). For refugees, the absence of persecution or threats to their lives at work is a crucial determinant in defining what constitutes a "good" job. In this regard, another participant also highlighted the well-functioning legal system and highlighted the importance of being under the legal umbrella, stating that in Korea, people cannot harm others without legal consequences. This sense of safety and the belief in the rule of law fostered a feeling of security, enabling the participant to feel protected (#Refugee6).

I like Korea so much. It is a safe country. I know people cannot do something bad to me. You know, you can do it, but you know, you are going to pay for it for that. I feel safe. I can go anytime, anywhere (#Refugee6).

The significance of the legal environment in South Korea was likely emphasized by this participant because the participant came from Haiti, a country that has been experiencing a breakdown in governance following the assassination of its president, Jovenel Moïse, in July 2021. Consequently, Haiti descended into a state of anarchy, where gangs and illegal groups took over the country (Taylor, 2023).

Many participants also felt fortunate to be able to escape from life-threatening situations and oppressive surroundings, where freedom to control their own lives and engage in everyday activities held immense value in their experience of living in South Korea. One of the participants shared her experience of escaping from a repressive environment in her

country of origin, where adherence to strict Muslim doctrines led to severe consequences for women who did not conform. The participant explained that women could get killed by their family members if one has lost one's virginity before marriage and women were unable to go outside without being accompanied by male family members. For this participant, the freedom to own one's life and engage in daily activities like going to the gym, socializing with friends, and staying out at night constituted the important and valued aspects of living in South Korea (#Refugee8).

The good thing is that I own my life, like I can go out, I can go to the gym, I can have good friends, I can stay out all night, I have my own place I sleep (#Refugee8).

In conclusion, the participants of the research study expressed a strong desire to continue working and residing in South Korea due to the country's safe environment. Despite facing various challenges, they favored working in Korea over their home countries, primarily due to the absence of violence, gangs, and persecution. Overall, the presence of a secure and safe environment, coupled with the ability to live without fear, made South Korea an appealing destination for both work and residence.

4.2. Organizational Level Barriers and Facilitators

4.2.1. Exploitative Job Agencies

As a newcomer, refugees have difficulties securing employment due to their limited access to information and resources. Consequently, many refugees turn to job agencies for assistance. However, the research found exploitative practices by these job agencies, which aligns with prior studies (Kim et al., 2016). These exploitative behaviors by job agencies involve demanding referral fees exceeding the legally prescribed limits or impeding the direct labor contracts between workers and employers. To elaborate, first, it was found that job agencies often request more referral fees than the legally designated amount.

It is prescribed under Article 19-(3) of the Employment Security Act that “fee-charging job placement services cannot receive more money or valuables, other than the fee determined by the Ministry of Justice” (Article 19, Employment Security Act). Also, “Notice on Domestic Paid Employment Agency Fees, etc.,” published by the Ministry of Employment and Labor in 2017, stipulates that for employment periods of less than three months, the referral fee should not exceed one-hundredth of the wages to be paid during the whole employment period. And for employment periods of three months or more, the referral fee should not exceed one-hundredth of the wages to be paid during the three months. The regulations aim to set limits on the referral fees charged by employment agencies based on the

duration of the employment period (Ministry of Employment and Labor, 2017).

Notice on Domestic Paid Employment Agency Fees, etc.

[Enforced 2017. 7. 1.].

I. Referral fee for job seekers

1) If the employment period is less than three months: not more than one-hundredth of the wages to be paid during the employment period (but not more than one-third of the wages to be paid from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019).

2) If the employment period is 3 months or more: Not more than one hundredth of the wages to be paid during the 3-month period (but not more than one hundredth of one percent for the period from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2019).

Source: Employment Security Act, Notice on Domestic Paid Employment Agency Fees

Thus, based on the legal restrictions on the referral fee, the calculation of the referral fee, determined based on the assumption that an individual works 40 hours a week at the minimum wage rate of 9,620 won by South Korean standard in 2023, is as follows:

Monthly Pay: 2,010,580 won (minimum wage in 2023)

$$2,010,580 \text{ won} * 3 \text{ months} * 0.01 = 60,317 \text{ won}$$

For a person working stably for more than three months, job agencies are prohibited from requesting these employees to pay more than 60,317 won as a referral fee. However, some of the participants were overpaying to the job

agencies, ranging from 100,000 won to 250,000 won.

Further, another issue observed by our participants is that many refugee workers were only able to receive payment indirectly, through a job agency rather than from an employer. This hinders them from engaging in a direct employer-employee relationship, with a formal labor contract. One of the participants responded that he could be only paid through the job agency and whenever he got paid, 3.3% of his salary was deducted as tax (#Refugee6). Also, other participants mentioned that employers often did not want to make a contract directly with the refugees, and they only preferred to work with the job agency (#Refugee4). These circumstances give rise to numerous problems, such as the inability of participants to report workplace injuries directly to their employers due to the lack of a direct labor contract. One of the participants mentioned that he could not report his injury that started at work, as he was working with the job agent and did not have a direct labor contract with the employer. And it was more complicated to make reports even to the job agent, as he got the job through his ethnic friend that was having a contract with the job agency.

Researcher: So, have you tried to talk about this injury with your employer?

Participant: Actually, when I worked for the furniture company, I did not have a contract.

Researcher: why didn't you have a contract?

Participant: The company did not want to make a contract. They

only wanted to work with the agent. And they (the job agency) made contracts with only two employees.

Researcher: But who is the agent here that you are talking about?

Interviewee: That is, the payment was paid by the agent at the time. It goes like this – one person goes to the agent first, he works in the furniture company (with the agent) and when the company wants to add more employees, they contact that person. Like if you are Ethiopian, the company asks “can you bring another Ethiopian” or something like that. So all the Ethiopians working in the company work with the same agent (#Refugee7).

In conclusion, refugees who do not know the local regulations and conditions are often easily exploited by job agencies where they pay more than the legally designated fee as a referral fee or are blocked from engaging in a direct employment relationship with their employers. It should also be noted, however, that issue often goes beyond exploitative job agencies. Instead, there are underlying structural challenges at play, where local employers face difficulties in hiring refugee workers due to the complex administrative visa procedures and refugees have difficulties searching for jobs on their own. In this regard, it calls for urgent attention to more formal mechanisms to safeguard the rights of refugee workers and to promote and distribute easier and more transparent guides to the local employers.

4.2.2. Bad and Dangerous working conditions

Many of the participants also complained about the bad working conditions at work, including long work hours, physically straining work, and lack of rest. It was common for refugees to work more than 12-13 hours a day and also work on the weekends. Participants described the challenging work schedule, involving long working hours and lack of rest.

The work is very difficult because you have to work in the morning. You work from 7 in the morning, you finish at 1 pm. And then you start again at 4 pm. Like you have three hours of rest. And sometimes, you will finish at seven in the morning the next day. And you continue for the morning work. Also, because the work was so far, it takes almost one hour to go there. You just have two hours to sleep to go back to work again. And then you know, you give your all energy, everything. You know it is crazy (#Refugee6).

Also, multiple participants mentioned the challenging and stressful nature of work which requires speed and strength, where the workers are often forced to work like “machines”.

The work was very, very, very hard work. I just pack in the box. But you have to work very fast because the machine pushes so fast. And You have to work at the same time with the machine so it's very difficult very stressful. Yeah. stressful and difficult. You

have to be strong to do the job (#Refugee3).

As a result, harsh working conditions contribute to the heightened risk of industrial injuries among refugee workers. One of the participants developed a shoulder injury while working in South Korea.

Researcher: Did you have your shoulder injury back in your home country? when did it exactly start?

Interviewee: Actually, before I came to Korea, I didn't have any problem with my shoulder.

Researcher: Do you think the shoulder pain started because of your work at the furniture factory?

Interviewee: Yes I think so because I had to work very fast and also, the part of the wood is very strong. I worked very fast and I worked just in only one place, doing the same job repetitively, like a machine (#Refugee7).

4.2.3. Discrimination

They (employers) do not think like you are a human being or a machine This kind of bad approach of the boss is difficult (#Refugee7).

Many refugee workers reported employers' or coworkers' negative and discriminative attitudes towards refugee workers, where they are disrespected and mistreated. One of the participants explained that he was

badly treated by his former employer, who would often shout or even swear at him to get the task done quickly. Confirming these findings, many participants chose employers' negative attitudes, as well as coworkers' discrimination, as the biggest difficulties at work.

I have experience working at a plastic injection factory, where I had a very bad relationship with the boss. The boss would often swear or shout at me “Pali Pali (faster, faster)” (#Refugee4).

Researcher: What are the biggest difficulties that you had at work?

Interviewee: The approach of the employer - especially if you do not know the language or if you work slowly, they will treat you like a machine. They do not think like you are a human being or a machine This kind of bad approach of the boss is difficult (#Refugee7).

Refugee workers are further vulnerable to exploitation by employers because they are not well aware of the local circumstances and labor conditions. One of the participants shared his experience with the previous employer, where the employer often lied about the wage he should be receiving (#Refugee6). Confirming this, another participant also explained the same (employers lying about the wage) happened to him too (#Refugee3).

The first company that I worked for – they did not pay me money.

Sometimes, you can work for 20 days and then they decide to give you 15 or 18 days (#Refugee6).

Also, many participants mentioned instances of discriminatory practices in their workplaces. One participant shared an experience where he got into a conflict with a Korean coworker due to discriminatory remarks.

Participant: They fired me because I got in trouble with the man, a Korean man. He talked to me badly so I got into a fight. I still do not want to talk about this one (...) The guy talked to me badly, you know, bad words in Korean and he pushed me.

Researcher: Did they also fire the Native man? The Korean man?

Participant: No, they fired only me(#Refugee6).

As a result, the participant was fired from the workplace, while the Korean worker could retain the job.

Another participant highlighted the unfairness they experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, as only foreign workers were fired from their manufacturing job based on unfounded accusations of spreading COVID-19.

Interviewee: That was a manufacture work. I had a job for one month, and then they fired all of the African people in the company. Because it was during the COVID-19 time. They said that they got COVID-19 because of us.

Researcher: Did they also fire the Korean workers?

Interviewee: No, only us. Only foreigners. They fired all foreigners. They thought that we (African workers) were bringing COVID-19 to the company (#Refugee4).

Although the exact reasons for the participant's termination cannot be definitively attributed to anti-foreigner sentiment, studies indicate an increase in hostility and criminal activities targeting foreigners in Korea during the pandemic. Furthermore, post-pandemic employment data demonstrates a 2.1% rise in the unemployment rate among foreign workers in South Korea (Kim, 2021).

4.2.4. Company Networking Opportunities and Friendly Coworkers

The manager was the nicest person and she made sure I stay on the job. She never let anyone disrespect me, despite my color, and where I come from (#Refugee9).

Although many participants suffered from bad relationships with their employers, there were still many other participants who were in good relationships with their employers and coworkers. Indeed, to these refugee individuals, the workplace often functioned as a place that helps their social integration in South Korea. Many responded that they liked having company networking opportunities such as “Hoisik” in Korean or eating out with the

employers (#Refugee1; #Refugee2). One of the participants shared her experience at the previous work at the restaurant where employers and coworkers were very nice to her.

Then I joined a restaurant - I was washing dishes for 4 years. And I was the only foreigner in the restaurant. That experience was good. People never treated me like bad. No, they liked me, especially the young ones. There were those young girls between the age of 20 to 24. And I always had a special meal every day. The general manager told me to eat anything I want in that kitchen (#Refugee9).

In this regard, another participant also explained a cordial relationship with her coworkers, whom the participant referred to as her “Korean mom”.

People in the current work are very nice. I like Korean workers – one of the workers, I call her “Korean mom”. She is so lovely and nice (#Refugee1).

Also, the researcher further found that the relationship within the workplace helps refugees’ social integration in South Korea, through teaching the refugees Korean language and culture. The participant further elaborated on her experience when her coworkers taught her Korean.

So, she kept on training me (on my Korean) she would even and she would like, “okay now I’ve got these memos in Korean and I want you to read these and then you get the ingredients and make sure you put them correctly in the measurements”. I

already knew the measurements so I was like okay, but because most of the things she wrote were in Korean. When it reaches to where I don't understand, or if I did anything wrong, she would say, "okay we are going to do it again together". And do everything again together.

Researcher: They are very nice to teach you everything.

Interviewee: Yes, she was the nicest person and she made sure I stay on the job. She never let anyone disrespect me, despite my color, and where I come from (#Refugee9).

Confirming this, another participant also explained how she could improve her Korean, through the help of coworkers.

The best thing about this dumpling restaurant is that I can improve my Korean. The boss helps with my Korean too (#Refugee8).

The researcher realized that the workplace itself can also work as a facilitator to refugees' integration into the host society in general, where they meet Korean native people and feel included. In this regard, the study found the role of the workplace in providing belongingness and inclusion to newcomers.

In conclusion, many participants enjoyed positive connections with both employers and coworkers, highlighting the workplace as a platform for social integration among refugees in South Korea. These findings underscore the significant role of the workplace as a facilitator of refugees'

integration into the host society, providing opportunities to interact with native Koreans and fostering a sense of inclusion in Korean society.

4.2.5. Local Level Assistance

It was discovered that many refugees seek assistance from informal local resources such as NGOs and community organizations, including churches, concerning labor issues. While some refugees secure employment through their networks or paid job agencies, many participants reported turning to NGOs when facing labor-related issues or conflicts with their employers. Examples include seeking help from NGOs for compensation related to industrial injuries (#Refugee6) or resolving disputes over deducted pay (#Refugee7). Some of the NGOs providing direct support for refugee integration and settlement in Korea include PNAN and EcoFemme. PNAN offers legal consultations and livelihood support, organizing programs like "Happy Blooming Days" to foster social inclusion (PNAN, 2023). EcoFemme focuses on refugee women, providing art schools for self-expression and confidence-building, as well as emergency support and labor/employment assistance (EcoFemme).

Additionally, local communities including churches were mentioned as valuable sources of support, with one participant finding a Korean mentor through a mentor-mentee program, who offers spiritual guidance and career advice (#Refugee6). Another participant found employment opportunities

through a church (#Refugee9). Despite her visa limitations, restricting her to work as she was a refugee re-applicant, she could still secure a part-time job as a candle maker.

Researcher: How did you get the part-time work?

Participant: I got it from a church. There's a church lady who connected me to that job. She is Korean (#Refugee9).

These findings align with previous studies that emphasized the role of local-level assistance in helping refugees' integration (see e.g., Gebhardt, 2016; Nordling et al., 2017; Scholten et al., 2016).

4.3. Individual Level Barriers and Facilitators

4.3.1. Bad Health Conditions

On the individual level, the bad health conditions of refugees, including both mental and physical, often work as a main barrier to refugees' access and participation at work. First, in the case of mental distress, numerous studies have highlighted the adverse effects of psychological stress and PTSD on refugees' performance at work and integration within the host communities (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014; George, 2010; Phillimore, 2011). These mental health conditions are often a result of the traumatic events that refugees experience before and during their displacement. In line with the previous findings, the study further found that refugees often experience emotional distress due to the challenging circumstances they face, including separation from their loved ones, uncertainty about their future, and constant exposure to distressing news from their home countries.

Now my country is fighting hard, I cannot go to my country. I hear bad news about people getting killed every day (#Refugee4).

Interviewee: The last time, I felt that I cannot focus on work. I just felt devastated all day.

Researcher: Why?

Interviewee: It was about my country, there are a lot of things happening in my country. So I think a lot about my family. People die in my country so easily. I think the government of Korea is supposed to give all Haitian people papers here (#Refugee6).

Furthermore, concerning physical health, many of the participants experienced physical pain and injuries resulting from the hazardous nature of their work in South Korea. One participant shared his experience of sustaining a shoulder injury while performing strenuous tasks in a furniture company, leading to multiple extensive surgeries (#Refugee7). As a consequence, the participant could no longer work for manual labor that requires strength, which threatened his livelihood. In this regard, the researcher could observe a vicious cycle, where the refugees got injured doing the physically demanding jobs in South Korea but due to their injury, they are no longer able to work and sustain a living.

I am not working now because I have some injury in my shoulder. Because of that, I just stopped (work) almost one year now I just cannot work because there is some problem with my shoulder tinder. If I work more, it will become more complicated. (...) I think one of the main causes of my injury is because I had to carry the furniture and it is very heavy. Also, you should be screwing something very fast for a very long time - it almost takes 10, up to 11 hours every day and you should be very fast -

for that reason, I think I developed some injury with my shoulder
(#Refugee7).

The findings show that the detrimental impacts of bad health conditions, including both mental and physical aspects, serve as a significant barrier for refugees in accessing and participating in the workforce. The effects of psychological stress, PTSD, and the emotional burden resulting from challenging circumstances and distressing news further hinder their ability to focus on job-seeking and perform effectively in the workplace. This underscores the urgent need for support and intervention in facilitating their integration and well-being.

4.3.2. Challenging Host Language

Many of the interviewees mentioned the language barrier as one of their biggest difficulties at work. Participants often mentioned that the local employers or supervisors at work did not speak English (#Refugee6, #Refugee7, #Refugee9). In this regard, given that the majority of participants had limited proficiency in Korean, they heavily relied on assistance from coworkers who were either foreign workers fluent in Korean or Korean workers fluent in English to facilitate communication with their employers. It often leads to miscommunication or bad treatment from employers. One of the participants confessed that "employers are more likely to mistreat employees who do not speak the language" (#Refugee7).

These findings align with previous findings that the host language skills are one of the most crucial factors in refugees' successful integration into the host countries (see e.g., Li & Sah, 2019; Morrice et al., 2021; Phillimore, 2011; Tollefson, 1985).

However, expanding on previous literature, the study further found that the importance of host language proficiency often depends on the nature of one's work. To elaborate, participants engaging in production sites or factories were less inclined to emphasize the importance of learning the Korean language, whereas those employed in the restaurant industry were more likely to highlight the presence of a language barrier. For instance, one of the participants who was primarily employed in various factory settings such as woodwork, logistics, and plastic injection expressed that communication with their employer posed no significant issue.

Researcher: How did you communicate with your employers and other coworkers?

Interviewee: The boss and other workers talked Korean to me and I just understood by body language, no big problem (#Refugee4).

Confirming the finding, another participant did not know how to speak Korean nor English, and only spoke French, but he told the researcher he usually goes to work with his ethnic friends, where they help him communicate with the Korean employers.

Researcher: How did you communicate with your employers and

other coworkers?

Interviewee: I go to work together with my friends and they (his ethnic friends) tell me what to do (#Refugee5).

On the other hand, participants who worked at the restaurants were more likely to bring up the issue of language. For instance, one of the participants, who previously worked in a kitchen of a German restaurant and currently works as a server in a dumpling restaurant, told the researcher that language is the biggest barrier in South Korea.

Language barrier. It is very challenging. I mean, if I'm going to learn Korean, that takes a lot of time (#Refugee8).

Furthermore, another participant employed in the restaurant industry reiterated the significance of language proficiency in the workplace (#Refugee9).

Researcher: Do you think language matters at work?

Interviewee: Yes it matters, because if the young girls (who could speak English) were not there, then that job would not have been easier for me. It is because people in higher roles, managing director (Isanim) never knew how to speak English. The manager(Jibaein-nim) also did not speak English (#Refugee9).

Two primary factors could be identified regarding such differences. First, the simplicity of tasks in factory settings may allow employers to guide workers primarily through body language, minimizing the need for

extensive verbal communication. However, in the case of restaurant workers, the nature of the work is more fast-paced and dynamic, which requires more communication with other workers.

Second, it was also found that the local employers, when they do not speak English, often hire a group of foreign workers, fostering a supportive environment where the foreign workers assist each other in communication. In this regard, one of the participants mentioned that employers often recruit workers of the same ethnicity to minimize the communication barrier (#Refugee7). To elaborate, the participant mentioned that when employers want to add new workers to the work site, they simply ask the existing workers to bring their ethnic friends, in order to communicate more easily with the foreign workers.

Most of the time when the company recruits a new person, they will contact the employee like - if I am Ethiopian, I need to bring another Ethiopian because they know there is some communication gap. So, for that reason, they try to minimize the communication barriers because most of the company employers, don't speak English and only speak Korean. So, in the company, there were other Ethiopians (who speak Korean) so when I needed anything, I communicated with my other colleagues like Ethiopians - so they will translate for me (#Refugee7).

Also, confirming this, many refugee participants who engaged in manual

labor mentioned that there was a group of foreign workers at the worksite, whereas the participants who primarily worked at restaurants mentioned they were often the only foreigner at the workplace. Thus, it can be concluded that the host language does matter in workplaces, but the importance of language proficiency depends on the nature of the work. In other words, the study found that the significance of the host language in the workplace is more pronounced for participants working at restaurants, whose roles involve greater interaction with supervisors or where the presence of foreign workers is relatively limited.

4.3.3. Ethnic Network

Confirming earlier studies on refugees and immigrants (see e.g., Gold & Kibria, 1993; Hein, 1993; Lamba, 2003), the study could find that the role of an ethnic community is very influential to refugees, where it was one of the major mechanisms for refugees to find jobs and help them in the initial stage of integration. One of the participants mentioned the advantages of using an ethnic community, where they have options in choosing the workplace. The participant said that he prefers using ethnic communities to job agencies, as he can inquire about the labor conditions of a company by consulting his ethnic friends before starting work and reject the job offer if the labor condition is too dangerous or bad. In this regard, the ethnic community provides refugees an option, although a highly limited one, but

still an option, of choosing the right company for them among many potential companies.

Researcher: So you mostly got jobs from your Ethiopian friends?

Interviewee: Yes, mostly when we find a job, I communicate with my other friends because if you go to the agents, there are different jobs – some are very strong jobs and some are a little bit okay jobs – something different – but the payment is the same. So, if someone is working for the company, I will ask him about the work if it is okay with everything. If they tell me the job is okay, I will go there.

Researcher: So you have referrals from other friends and you know about the company before you work?

Interviewee: Yes because if you go to one of the way to find a job is to go to the agent, they just give you the company address and you have to pay the service fee for that. But after you take the job, when you check the company, it can be some kind of a risky job like pressing. This kind of job, I cannot work. So, every time when I want to work, I just try to contact other friends (#Refugee7).

However, interestingly, the study could also find that the ethnic network benefits only certain types of refugees. Through the interviews, it was found that certain ethnic communities, especially the ones from African

countries, were very active and large. Many participants said that they had a specific country's ethnic community, which worked as a platform for newcomers to jobs, share local information, and socialize.

We have a Uganda community, so we normally post jobs on the group chat. Once someone is available, someone can call you and you just sent them (the employer) the contact of the person (#Refugee9).

My friend in the Côte d'Ivoire community introduced (the work to) me. I have known him for a long time. In South Korea, there are about 200 Côte d'Ivoire people and there is a big community in Itaewon. We usually meet (#Refugee2).

On the other hand, refugees of certain ethnicities where they are less active ethnic communities in Korea, could benefit less from their ethnic communities. Moreover, there was one participant from Iraq but she was compelled to flee from gender-based violence in a very repressive Muslim culture. Thus, although the participant is from Iraq, she does not practice Muslim anymore and does not get along with her Muslim friends. This participant confessed that the ethnic network was not very useful to her.

The network was very useless for me. I tried to use this type of ethnic network but they were not helpful (...) So first of all, I came from Iraq, I speak Arabic, and I am Muslim, like I used to be a Muslim. So the Muslims, they would think that I am a

Muslim like them but I'm not practicing at all. I have different beliefs now (#Refugee8).

So based on these observations, the researcher found that refugee individuals who have a small ethnic network in South Korea or do not get along with people in that ethnic community due to other personal reasons, cannot benefit from such networks. Therefore, it is imperative to establish more formal mechanisms on a national level to help refugees in seeking employment.

4.3.4. Career Adaptability, Resilience, and Motivation

Finally, the study found that refugees are mostly willing and ready to do any jobs available to them, struggle to adapt themselves to the host environment, and resiliently find their ways forward in a new community. They differ in their coping mechanisms, where some more actively fight for and achieve their rights and others stay more passive. But the study found that all refugee individuals work very hard in order to keep their lives in South Korea. And also, many participants showed career adaptability, which refers to psychological and social assets necessary for effectively dealing with shifts in employment and job-related circumstances (Savickas, 2004). In this context, several participants engaged in multiple jobs to sustain their livelihoods. For instance, #Refugee2 worked at a fish market during weekdays while pursuing a side job as an African dancer. Similarly,

#Refugee4, employed in factories, also ventured into car export and delivery services to his home country. Interestingly, some participants, despite transitioning from different occupational backgrounds in their home countries, successfully adapted to new roles in South Korea. For example, one participant, who previously worked as a data analyst, excelled in a restaurant setting, completing tasks swiftly and earning recognition from the manager, who even offered a salary increase upon her return from maternity leave.

On my day off, that means they will have to bring two people to do my work. And I always did my work on time I always finished on time, but when they bring two old women to do my work, they would not finish it on time. (...) So, I reached that point where I would lead my section - when I became a full staff, I was earning more money than the Koreans. (...) And the last time they called me (after I quit) she called me and told me the owner of the restaurant wants to pay you three million won, can you come back? (#Refugee9)

Furthermore, a significant number of refugees demonstrated a strong motivation to integrate into Korean society. An illustrative example is a participant (#Refugee8) who previously held a junior accountant position at the presidential office in her home country but currently works in a restaurant. Despite experiencing downward mobility in occupational status, she exhibited great resilience and made diligent efforts to adjust to her new

role while maintaining a positive outlook.

I think the most important thing is to learn Korean, learn the culture, and then engage in the society, to assimilate and be part of the system. Otherwise, you would end up being isolated. (...) I mean, I love Korean culture I love Korean food I'm open to everything. So it is the bad thing is that it is very challenging to learn Korean (#Refugee8).

There were many bad things about the German restaurant, such as not giving me severance pay and not properly insuring me. But the good thing about the restaurant is that I learned how to cook all kinds of soups. Now I know how to cook potato soups tomato soup mushroom soup mental soup beef soup. So, I was like, okay I'm learning here so it is okay not to have health insurance, at least they are benefiting me. That is what I thought (#Refugee8).

In conclusion, the majority of participants exhibited high levels of satisfaction and a strong commitment to pursue their careers in Korea, despite being employed in low-paying and low-status jobs that are typically avoided by native Koreans. These findings align with prior research on refugees, emphasizing their strong motivation to integrate into host communities as a result of their inability to return to their countries of origin (Borjas, 1982; Peisker & Tilbury, 2003). Overall, these insights shed light

on the resilience and aspirations of refugees as they navigate their paths in their new homes, showing the potential that these refugee individuals could become invaluable assets in the host country.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion and Discussions

In conclusion, while the right to decent work is widely accepted as one of the most fundamental human rights by international standards, the study was an attempt to find how whether such right is actively protected under the domestic circumstances, in South Korea, to one of the most marginalized population, refugees. In this regard, the study could find some positive and enabling aspects, fostering refugees' inclusion in the labor market. Many refugees are resiliently finding coping mechanisms and actively attempting to integrate into the host community. Also, many of them possessed high levels of skill, advanced academic achievements, and remarkable adaptability to the new environment. These findings show refugees have the potential to benefit the Korean society, as invaluable assets who have extensive experiences and expertise.

However, on the other hand, the study could also find helplessness and low confidence, exhibited by some refugee participants, due to diverse structural barriers keeping them from expanding their career potential in South Korea.

I don't feel valued here at all. So as a person, you are limited about everything (#Refugee6).

Specifically, the study found that most of the refugees in Korea were struggling to keep their lives in South Korea, without systematic support on

a national level. Support programs for refugees could be found only on the NGO or local level, leaving only a fortunate few refugees with the opportunity to come across relevant assistance from these organizations or encounter compassionate employers and local individuals.

To elaborate, on the national level, while social integration program does exist for other forms of long-term residents, most of the social integration programs are not designed for and are thus inaccessible to asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders. For instance, the Ministry of Justice runs a Korea Immigration & Integration Program (KIIP), designed to provide basic knowledge and information on living and integration into Korean society, and also Initial Orientation Course for Immigrants, designed to provide initial integration support to immigrants. However, neither of the courses, in the guideline, mentions asylum seekers' and humanitarian status holders' eligibility in taking the course, as these social integration courses are designed for more long-term residents in the country. Thus, while formally recognized refugees, in accordance with Article 34 (Social Adaptation Education, etc.), are eligible to take these courses, asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders are not a target of the program.

Figure 11. Eligible Participants of the Korea Immigration & Integration Program (KIIP)

Korea Immigration & Integration Program (KIIP)

Korea Immigration & Integration Program (KIIP)

The program aims to support foreigners acquire basic knowledge and information (Korean language and culture) so that they can become self-reliant members of Korean society

Who can participate?

Foreigners residing in Korea who want to acquire status of sojourn such as nationality and permanent residency, and those within 3 years of acquiring nationality

④ Benefits : exemption from naturalization written test and interview

Source:Online (https://www.immigration.go.kr/immigration_eng/1868/subview.do)

Figure 12. Eligible Participants of Initial Orientation Course for Immigrants

Initial Orientation Course for Immigrants

Initial Orientation Course for Immigrants

The program aims to provide newly arrived foreigners with necessary information such as useful everyday information and basic law to help them adapt smoothly to Korean society

Who can participate?

Newly arrived foreigners

- Mandatory
 - working visit visa holders, foreign entertainers working in hotels - entertainment industry
- Voluntary
 - marriage migrants, immigrated children of multicultural families, international students, foreigners living in ethnic enclaves

④ Benefits : marriage migrants are granted 2 years of stay

Source:Online (https://www.immigration.go.kr/immigration_eng/1869/subview.do)

Also, in regards to job training, South Korea does have some job training sessions and job placement services designed to help marriage migrants and labor migrants. In the case of marriage migrants, in accordance

with Article 6 of the Multicultural Families Support Act (Korea Ministry of Government Legislation), marriage migrants can receive various job-related services including job training, internship support, and labor consultation. Also, in the case of labor migrants, South Korea has an Employment Permit System (EPS) where it determines the annual quarter and brings in foreign workers. Foreign workers through this Employment Permit System (EPS) are entitled to further protection and support from the government where they can receive pre- and post-departure job training and are guided more comprehensively about their labor rights and conditions (Ministry of Employment and Labor). However, all these services were inaccessible to refugees, and many refugees were observed struggling in getting access to the most basic information about the local labor conditions.

Finally, another issue observed is poor information distribution, not only to the refugees but also to the native Koreans. The study found that it was challenging not only for refugee individuals but local Koreans to get access to information on refugees' labor conditions and entitled rights. To elaborate, many refugee participants mentioned that local employers do not know about their G-1(Miscellaneous) visa, granted to asylum seekers and humanitarian status holders, and are reluctant to hire people with the Miscellaneous visa. Confirming this, the researcher could find it very difficult to access information on hiring G-1 visa holders, as compared to E-9 or H-2 visa holders who are under the Employment Permit System (EPS). Most of the information available on the internet on hiring foreign workers

was focused on foreign workers under the Employment Permit System (EPS). For instance, specific guidelines for hiring foreign workers under the EPS system are widely promoted and distributed to local employers.

Figure 13. Employment Permit System (EPS) Distribution Guide for Local Employers



Source: Employment System for Foreign Workers of the Republic of Korea (Ministry Employment and Labor, 2010)

Moreover in regards to health insurance, although G-1 visa holders can also get insured through the employment that they are working for, one of the participants argued that she was misguided by the government official that she was not entitled to health insurance. This incident shows that not only the local employers but also government officials are not familiar with the G-1 visa.

Such findings are in stark contrast to policies and protection measures abroad where many countries have established departments that work for refugees' reception and integration. For instance, in the

Netherlands, asylum seekers are systematically supported by The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), which is a government agency designed to provide basic needs, and various support and integration services to refugee-like individuals upon arrival. Similarly in Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), which operates independently from the Immigration Office, also conducts various integration programs for asylum seekers, ranging from job training, and language courses to providing internship opportunities (Government of Canada).

To summarize, while some positive aspects of refugees' settlement and their labor market integration were observed throughout the study, many refugee participants also struggled with structural barriers and a lack of governmental assistance. Specifically, the study wants to highlight the lack of social integration programs available to refugees, where most of the integration programs designed for immigrants were inaccessible to asylum seekers and complementary status holders. As a result, refugees' labor market integration performance is left to something akin to luck, where fortunate refugee individuals come across nice coworkers or benevolent NGO groups that can receive relevant support. Such findings are in contrast to foreign practices where many countries including Netherlands and Canada have established independent departments solely to support refugees' and asylum seekers' reception and settlement.

In this regard, South Korea should reevaluate its approach to

refugee integration. For instance, the establishment of an independent government agency, similar to those in the Netherlands and Canada, could play a vital role in providing comprehensive support programs, accessible information, and fostering a supportive environment. By implementing more active protection and integration measures, South Korea can promote the successful integration of refugees, enabling refugees to more actively participate in the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the country. Ultimately, such efforts will benefit not only refugees themselves but also enrich and diversify South Korean society as a whole.

5.2. Limitations and Areas for Future Research

This section explores some of the limitations of this thesis and suggests areas of future research to complement present findings. First, a low number of research participants (n=9) makes it challenging to generalize the findings, which has the possibility to lead to distorted findings. To address the issue of representativeness, the researcher made deliberate efforts to recruit participants from diverse backgrounds, considering factors such as one's gender, age, ethnicity, arrival in Korea, and occupation. Also, the recruitment process aimed to diversify the participants, by reaching out to participants not only through NGOs but also through random selection near the Immigration Office or Itaewon. However, despite these efforts, ensuring representativeness was difficult due to the small

number of participants. Additionally, while this research focused solely on refugee workers due to the limited time frame, future research should also involve other stakeholders in refugees' labor market integration to deepen the understanding, including local employers, NGO workers, and policymakers.

Second, while it is important to note that the primary goal of the thesis was to provide a comprehensive review of refugees' labor market integration, the findings may appear descriptive or fragmented, as they encompass barriers and facilitators at various levels. While the research successfully offers general and comprehensive insights into how refugees are performing in the workplace, it may lack a coherent argument on the overall integration of refugees. To address this issue, future studies could focus on the specific elements of refugees' integration, such as the role of ethnic communities in their labor market integration or the impact of different refugee statuses on their workplace performance. Such studies would contribute to a deeper understanding of refugee settlement and integration.

5.3. Academic Contributions

However, despite such limitations, this thesis sheds light on one of the most vulnerable and least cared-for populations in South Korea, refugees. In this regard, the core contributions of the study can be analyzed as follows.

First, it offers an in-depth exploration of refugees' labor market and economic integration, which was understudied in the Korean context. While asylum seekers and refugees are rapidly increasing, South Korea does not have well-established policies nor profound comprehension of the refugees' settlement. Moreover, while economic integration is a critical aspect of refugee integration into the host countries (Ager & Strang, 2008; Kuhlman, 1991), existing literature on refugee integration has predominantly focused on social, cultural, and educational dimensions, neglecting the labor market inclusion experiences of refugees. By filling this research gap, this study enriches the existing literature and provides a comprehensive understanding of the labor market integration of refugees in South Korea.

Second, previous literature, especially in the Korean context, focus on refugees' challenges and portrays them as individuals lacking capabilities and reliant on assistance (Cha, 2023; Lim, 2022). However, the thesis goes beyond describing refugees just as desperate individuals in need of help. The thesis examines refugees' barriers, but also found significant potential within this population, highlighting their high skills and the capacity to make positive contributions to society as a valuable resource pool.

Bibliography

- Adams, E. (2010). The joys and challenges of semi-structured interviewing. *Community practitioner : the journal of the Community Practitioners' & Health Visitors' Association*, 83(7), 18.
- Akkaymak, G. (2017). A Bourdieuan analysis of job search experiences of immigrants in Canada. *Journal of international migration and integration*, 18(2), 657-674.
- Asylum decisions up by 40% in 2022. Asylum decisions up by 40% in 2022 - Products Eurostat News - Eurostat. (2023, April 27). <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20230427-1>
- Austin, C., & Este, D. (2001). The working experiences of underemployed immigrant and refugee men. *Canadian Social Work Review/Revue canadienne de service social*, 213-229.
- Aydar, Z. (2022). The Life Opportunities of Young Refugees: Understanding the Role, Function and Perceptions of Local Stakeholders. *Social Sciences*, 11(11), 527.
- Baban, F., Ilcan, S., & Rygiel, K. (2017). Syrian refugees in Turkey: pathways to precarity, differential inclusion, and negotiated citizenship rights. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 43(1), 41-57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1192996>
- Baldwin-Edwards, M., & Arango, J. n. (2014). Immigrants and the informal economy in Southern Europe / editors, Martin Baldwin-Edwards, Joaquin Arango.
- Baranik, L. E., Hurst, C. S., & Eby, L. T. (2018). The stigma of being a refugee: A mixed-method study of refugees' experiences of vocational stress. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 105, 116-130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.09.006>
- Beiser, M., Johnson, P. J., & Turner, R. J. (1993). Unemployment, underemployment and depressive affect among Southeast Asian refugees. *Psychol. Med*, 23(3), 731-743. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291700025502>
- Betts, A. (2010). Survival Migration: A New Protection Framework. *Global governance*, 16(3), 361-382. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-01603006>
- Bešić, A., Fóti, K., & Vasileva, V. (2022). The role and challenges of public service organisations in the labour market integration of refugees: A relational perspective analysing integration measures in Austria, Finland, Germany and Sweden. *European Management Review*.
- Borjas, G. J. (1982). The Earnings of Male Hispanic Immigrants in the United States. *Industrial & labor relations review*, 35(3), 343. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2522814>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Brell, C., Dustmann, C., & Preston, I. (2020). The labor market integration of refugee migrants in high-income countries. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 34(1), 94-121.
- Brücker, H., Glitz, A., Lerche, A., & Romiti, A. (2021). Occupational Recognition and Immigrant Labor Market Outcomes. *Journal of labor economics*, 39(2), 497-525. <https://doi.org/10.1086/710702>
- Campbell, E. H. (2006). Urban Refugees in Nairobi: Problems of Protection, Mechanisms of Survival, and Possibilities for Integration. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 19(3), 396-413. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fel011>
- Campion, E. D. (2018). The career adaptive refugee: Exploring the structural and personal barriers to refugee resettlement. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 105, 6-16.
- Castles, S. (2014). The age of migration : international population movements in the modern world / Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, and Mark J. Miller.
- Cheung, S. Y., & Phillimore, J. (2014). Refugees, social capital, and labour market integration in the UK. *Sociology*, 48(3), 518-536.
- Coates, T., & Hayward, C. (2005). The Costs of Legal Limbo for Refugees in Canada: A Preliminary Study. *Refuge (Toronto. English edition)*, 22(2), 77-87.

- <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.21333>
- Colic-Peisker, V., & Tilbury, F. (2006). Employment niches for recent refugees: segmented labour market in twenty-first Century Australia. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 19(2), 203-229. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fej016>
- Crawley, H., & Skleparis, D. (2018). Refugees, migrants, neither, both: categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's 'migration crisis'. *Journal of ethnic and migration studies*, 44(1), 48-64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1348224>
- Council of Europe. (n.d.). Lisbon recognition convention - higher education and research - www.coe.int. Higher education and research. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/higher-education-and-research/lisbon-recognition-convention>
- Dharod, J. M. P., Croom, J. E. M. S., & Sady, C. G. M. S. R. D. (2013). Food Insecurity: Its Relationship to Dietary Intake and Body Weight among Somali Refugee Women in the United States. *J Nutr Educ Behav*, 45(1), 47-53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2012.03.006>
- Eggenhofer-Rehart, P. M., Latzke, M., Pernkopf, K., Zellhofer, D., Mayrhofer, W., & Steyrer, J. (2018). Refugees' career capital welcome? Afghan and Syrian refugee job seekers in Austria. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 105, 31-45.
- ENIC-NARIC. (2020). The European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions - ENIC-NARIC. *third edition*.
- Freeman, G. P. (1995). Modes of immigration politics in liberal democratic states. *The International migration review*, 29(4), 881-913. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547729>
- Galletta, A. (2013). Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond : From Research Design to Analysis and Publication / Anne Galletta.
- Gebhardt, D. (2016). Re-thinking urban citizenship for immigrants from a policy perspective: the case of Barcelona. *Citizenship studies*, 20(6-7), 846-866. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2016.1191431>
- Gericke, D., Burmeister, A., Löwe, J., Deller, J., & Pundt, L. (2018). How do refugees use their social capital for successful labor market integration? An exploratory analysis in Germany. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 105, 46-61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.12.002>
- Gold, S., & Kibria, N. (1993). Vietnamese refugees and blocked mobility. *Asian and Pacific migration journal : APMJ*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/011719689300200102>
- Grabska, K. (2006). Marginalization in Urban Spaces of the Global South: Urban Refugees in Cairo. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 19(3), 287-307. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fel014>
- Hanley, J., Mhamied, A. A., Cleveland, J., Hajjar, O., Hassan, G., Ives, N., . . . Hynie, M. (2018). The Social Networks, Social Support and Social Capital of Syrian Refugees Privately Sponsored to Settle in Montreal: Indications for Employment and Housing During Their Early Experiences of Integration. *Canadian ethnic studies*, 50(2), 123-148. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2018.0018>
- Hein, J. (1993). Refugees, Immigrants, and the State. *Annual review of sociology*, 19(1), 43-59. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.19.080193.000355>
- Hirst, G., Curtis, S., Nielsen, I., Smyth, R., Newman, A., & Xiao, N. (2021). Refugee recruitment and workplace integration: An opportunity for human resource management scholarship and impact. *Human resource management journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12349>
- Huysmans, J. (2000). The European Union and the Securitization of Migration. *Journal of common market studies*, 38(5), 751-777. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5965.00263>
- Immigration, R. and C. C. (2023, May 11). Government of Canada. Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/careers.html>
- Jacobsen, K., & Landau, L. B. (2003). The Dual Imperative in Refugee Research: Some Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Social Science Research on Forced Migration. *Disasters*, 27(3), 185-206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7717.00228>

- Justice, M. o. (2019). *Guidebook for Refugee Applicants in Korea*.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A.-M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *J Adv Nurs*, 72(12), 2954-2965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>
- Knappert, L., Kornau, A., & Figengül, M. (2018). Refugees' exclusion at work and the intersection with gender: Insights from the Turkish-Syrian border. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 105, 62-82.
- Knappert, L., van Dijk, H., & Ross, V. (2020). Refugees' inclusion at work: a qualitative cross-level analysis. *Career Development International*.
- Korea Legislation Research Institute. Act On The Employment Of Foreign Workers [Act No. 18929, jun. 10, 2022]. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=60984&lang=ENG (Accessed on May 1)
- Korea Legislation Research Institute. Employment Security Act [Act No. 16413, Apr. 30, 2019]. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=52125&lang=ENG (Accessed on May 1)
- Korea Legislation Research Institute. Enforcement Decree Of The Immigration Act [Presidential Decree No. 32871, Aug. 16, 2022]. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=61257&lang=ENG (Accessed on May 1)
- Korea Legislation Research Institute. Enforcement Decree Of The Refugee Act [Presidential Decree No. 31907, Jul. 27, 2021]. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=57504&lang=ENG (Accessed on May 1)
- Korea Legislation Research Institute. Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act [Act No. 18753, Jan. 11, 2022]. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=60257&lang=ENG (Accessed on May 1)
- Korea Legislation Research Institute. National Health Insurance Act [Act No. 18895, jun. 10, 2022]. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/kor_service/lawView.do?hseq=60933&lang=ENG (Accessed on May 1)
- Korea Legislation Research Institute. Refugee Act [Act No. 14408, Dec. 20, 2016]. https://elaw.klri.re.kr/eng_service/lawView.do?hseq=43622&lang=ENG (Accessed on May 1)
- Krahn, H., Derwing, T., Mulder, M., & Wilkinson, L. (2000). Educated and underemployed: Refugee integration into the Canadian labour market. *Journal of international migration and integration*, 1(1), 59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-000-1008-2>
- Lamba, N. K. (2003). The Employment Experiences of Canadian Refugees: Measuring the Impact of Human and Social Capital on Quality of Employment. *The Canadian review of sociology*, 40(1), 45-64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-618X.2003.tb00235.x>
- Lamba, N. K., & Krahn, H. (2003). Social capital and refugee resettlement: The social networks of refugees in Canada. *Journal of international migration and integration*, 4(3), 335-360. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-003-1025-z>
- Landesmann, M., & Leitner, S. M. (2020). *Refugees' Integration into the Austrian Labour Market: Dynamics of Occupational Mobility and Job-Skills Mismatch*.
- Lange, T. d., Berntsen, L., Hanoeman, R., & Haidar, O. (2021). Highly skilled entrepreneurial refugees: Legal and practical barriers and enablers to start up in the Netherlands. *International migration*, 59(4), 74-87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12745>
- Legislation, M. o. G. Employment of Foreign Workers [Obligation to Purchase Insurance].
- Lewis, H., Dwyer, P., Hodkinson, S., & Waite, L. (2014). *Precarious Lives: Forced labour, exploitation and asylum*. Policy Press.

- <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781447306900.001.0001>
- Li, G., & Sah, P. K. (2019). Immigrant and refugee language policies, programs, and practices in an era of change: Promises, contradictions, and possibilities. 325-338. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315458298-33>
- Malkki, L. H. (1995). Refugees and exile: From "refugee studies" to the national order of things. *Annual review of anthropology*, 495-523.
- Menjívar, C. (2006). Liminal legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrants' lives in the United States. *The American journal of sociology*, 111(4), 999-1037. <https://doi.org/10.1086/499509>
- Menjívar, C. (2014). Immigration Law Beyond Borders: Externalizing and Internalizing Border Controls in an Era of Securitization. *Annual review of law and social science*, 10(1), 353-369. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-110413-030842>
- Miller, E., Ziaian, T., Baak, M., & de Anstiss, H. (2021). Recognition of refugee students' cultural wealth and social capital in resettlement. *International journal of inclusive education, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print)*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1946723>
- Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism / Korean Culture and Information Service. (2023). The Korean Economy – the Miracle on the Hangang River : Korea.net : The official website of the Republic of Korea.
- Ministry of Justice, R. D. (2015). *Handbook for Refugee Status Determination Procedures in Korea*.
- Morrice, L., Tip, L. K., Collyer, M., & Brown, R. (2021). 'You can't have a good integration when you don't have a good communication': English-language Learning Among Resettled Refugees in England. *Journal of refugee studies*, 34(1), 681-699. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez023>
- NANCEN. (2020). The Progress of the Refugee Law in South Korea.
- Nations, U. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
- Newman, A., Bimrose, J., Nielsen, I., & Zacher, H. (2018). Vocational behavior of refugees: How do refugees seek employment, overcome work-related challenges, and navigate their careers? In (Vol. 105, pp. 1-5): Elsevier.
- Norman, J., & Mikhael, A. (2018). Refugee youth, unemployment and extremism: countering the myth. *Forced Migration Review*, 57, 57-58.
- Obschonka, M., Hahn, E., & Bajwa, N. u. H. (2018). Personal agency in newly arrived refugees: The role of personality, entrepreneurial cognitions and intentions, and career adaptability. *Journal of vocational behavior*, 105, 173-184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.01.003>
- Oliver, C., Dekker, R., Geuijen, K., & Broadhead, J. (2020). Innovative strategies for the reception of asylum seekers and refugees in European cities: multi-level governance, multi-sector urban networks and local engagement. *Comparative migration studies*, 8(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-020-00189-y>
- Pak, Ş., Yurtbakan, T., & Acarturk, C. (2023). Social Support and Resilience among Syrian Refugees: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy. *Journal of aggression, maltreatment & trauma*, 32(3), 382-398. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2022.2061882>
- Parreñas, R. S. (2021). Unfree : Migrant Domestic Work in Arab States / Rhacel Salazar Parreñas.
- Peisker, V. C., & Tilbury, F. (2003). "Active" and "Passive" Resettlement: The Influence of Support Services and Refugees' own Resources on Resettlement Style. *International migration*, 41(5), 61-91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0020-7985.2003.00261.x>
- Pinto, S. M. (2016). Social Networks and Economic Outcomes: Evidence from Refugee Resettlement Programs. *Econ Focus*, 21(3/4), 32.
- Press, O. U. (2023). Downward occupational mobility - Oxford Reference. In

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095729542>

- Republic of Korea Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank. (2023).
- Savickas, M. L. (2004). Vocational Psychology, Overview. 3, 655-667.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-12-657410-3/00610-3>
- Scherschel, K. (2014). Who is a refugee? Reflections on social classifications and individual consequences. *Migration letters*, 8(1), 67-76.
<https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v8i1.155>
- Scholten, P., Penninx, R., & Garcés-Masareñas, B. (2016). The multilevel governance of migration and integration. *Integration Processes and Policies in Europe*, 91-108.
- Schuster, A., Desiderio, M., & Urso, G. (2013). RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCES OF MIGRANTS.
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/recognition_qualifications_competencesofmigrants.pdf
- Shore, L. M., Randel, A. E., Chung, B. G., Dean, M. A., Holcombe Ehrhart, K., & Singh, G. (2011). Inclusion and Diversity in Work Groups: A Review and Model for Future Research. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1262-1289.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310385943>
- Spring, M., Westermeyer, J., Halcon, L., Savik, K., Robertson, C., Johnson, D. R., . . . Jaranson, J. (2003). Sampling in Difficult to Access Refugee and Immigrant Communities. *J Nerv Ment Dis*, 191(12), 813-819.
<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.nmd.0000100925.24561.8f>
- Strang, A., & Ager, A. (2010). Refugee integration: Emerging trends and remaining agendas. *Journal of refugee studies*, 23(4), 589-607.
- Syed, J., & Özbilgin, M. (2009). A relational framework for international transfer of diversity management practices. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 20(12), 2435-2453.
- Taylor, L. (2023, 2023-01-10). Haiti left with no elected government officials as it spirals towards anarchy. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/10/haiti-no-elected-officials-anarchy-failed-state>
- Udayar, S., Fedrigo, L., Durante, F., Clot-Siegrist, E., & Masdonati, J. (2021). Labour market integration of young refugees and asylum seekers: a look at perceived barriers and resources. *British journal of guidance & counselling*, 49(2), 287-303.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2020.1858023>
- Udor, R. (2019). Institutionalization of Precarious Legal Status: The Case of Ghanaian Refugee Applicants in Korea. *Journal of Asian sociology*, 48(2), 199-230.
<https://doi.org/10.21588/jas/2019.48.2.003>
- UNHCR. *What is a refugee?*
- UNHCR. (2022). *Refugee Population Statistics Database*
- United Nations. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights> (Accessed on May 1)
- United Nations. Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> (Accessed on May 1)
- University, C. E. (2022). *Policy on Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees and Asylum-seekers with a legal right to live and study in Austria | Official Documents*. Central European University. <https://documents.ceu.edu/documents/p-1705v2201>
- Vermette, D., Shetgiri, R., Al Zuheiri, H., & Flores, G. (2015). Healthcare Access for Iraqi Refugee Children in Texas: Persistent Barriers, Potential Solutions, and Policy Implications. *Journal of immigrant and minority health*, 17(5), 1526.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-014-0110-z>
- Zolberg, A. R., Suhrke, A., & Aguayo, S. (1986). International factors in the formation of refugee movements. *International migration review*, 20(2), 151-169.

- Šerić, M. (2022). *Miracle On The Han River: How South Korea Turned From A Backward Country Into An Economic Giant Of Asia*. Eurasia Review.
<https://www.eurasiareview.com/26112022-miracle-on-the-han-river-how-south-korea-turned-from-a-backward-country-into-an-economic-giant-of-asia-oped/>
- 고문현. 2008. 「한국에서의 난민의 현황과 난민인정절차의 개선방안」. 『세계헌법연구』 14권 3호. pp.1-24.
- 김귀옥. 2010. 「분단과 전쟁의 디아스포라」. 『역사비평』 91호. pp.53-93.
- 김새봄. 2021. 「코로나19 확산과 외국인 노동시장의 변화」. 『고용동향브리프』 2021년 9호.
- 김시정 · 김지은 · 신주영 · 이병호 · 전효빈 · 최보경. 2016. 「대한민국 체류 난민의 취업 실태 연구」. 『공익과 인권』 16호. pp.3-43.
- 김아람. 2017. 「한국전쟁기 난민정착사업의 실시와 구호의 성격」. 『한국민족운동사연구』 91호. pp.245-285.
- 김현미 · 이호택 · 이해진 · 신정희 · 이연주. 2013. 한국 거주 난민아동 생활 실태 조사 및 지원 방안 연구.
https://www.sc.or.kr/upload/attach/report/news0201_1361501015_2.pdf (검색일: 2022.7.17).
- 김현미 · 이호택 · 최원근 · 박준규. 2010. 한국 체류 난민 등의 실태조사 및 사회적 처우 개선을 위한 정책 방안. 법무부 용역 보고서.
<https://library.humanrights.go.kr/search/detail/CATTOT000000031640> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 김희주. 2020. 「국내 난민 인정자의 정착과 사회적 배제경험」. 『한국사회복지정책학회 춘계학술대회자료집』 2020년. pp.45-76.
- 국가법령정보센터. 국내유료직업소개요금 등 고시 [시행 2017. 7. 1.] [고용노동부고시 제2017-22호, 2017. 4. 3., 일부개정].
<https://www.law.go.kr/LSW/admRulInfoP.do?admRulSeq=2100000081610> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 난민정책과. 2020. 난민인정 심사 · 처우 · 체류 지침.
- 대한민국 법제처. 다문화가족 > 다문화가족 생활 > 국내정착 > 취업 지원 (본문): 찾기쉬운 생활법령정보. 다문화가족 > 다문화가족 생활 > 국내정착 > 취업 지원 (본문) | 찾기쉬운 생활법령정보.
<https://easylaw.go.kr/CSP/CnpClsMain.laf?popMenu=ov&csmSeq=638&ccfNo=3&cciNo=1&cnpClsNo=3> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 박병도. 2007. 「우리나라 난민인정절차(難民認定節次)의 개선방안(改善方案)」. 『중앙법학』 9권2호. pp.169-194.
- 박상희. 2019. 『난민과 탈북민의 경험을 통해 본 한국 시민권의 변용과 확장』 서울대학교 대학원 박사학위논문.
- 박수진. 2018. 「제주도에 온 예멘 난민 500명, 무슬림 혐오에 내몰리다」. 『한겨레』, 6월 18일.
- 박현도. 2018. 「'제주 난민' 사태 불러온 예멘은 어떤 나라인가」. 『월간조선 뉴스』
- 백일순 · 구기연. 2021. 「국내 신문 기사로 살펴본 한국의 난민 이슈의 변동」. 『대한지리학회지』 56권 2호. pp.129-147.
- 법무법인 소명 · 김중철. 2008. 국내 난민 등 인권실태조사. 국가인권위원회.
<https://library.humanrights.go.kr/search/detail/CATTOT000000024735> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 법무부. 2020. 난민신청자 생계비와 참전용사 명예수당, 단순 비교 적절치 않아
<https://www.korea.kr/news/policyNewsView.do?newsId=14886812>

- 0 (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 법무부. 2023. 출입국통계-난. <https://www.moj.go.kr/moj/2417/subview.do> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 사업주를 위한 고용허가제 안내 - 외국인근로자 고용절차. 2010. <https://eps.hrdkorea.or.kr/e9/user/employment/employment.do?method=employProcessCompany> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 손주희·정하나. 2018. 「한국 체류 난민의 사회적응을 위한 정책적 방향 탐색: 집단 간 차이를 중심으로」. 『다문화와 평화』 12권 2호. pp.1-22.
- 송영훈. 2019. 「제주 예멘 난민신청과 갈등적 난민담론」. 『국제이해교육연구』 14권 2호. pp.9-38.
- 송인호·조장현. 2020. 헌법상 북한주민의 국적에 대한 고찰. 법학논총, 44(4), 35-62.
- 송효진·김소영·이인선·한지영. 2016. 「한국 체류 난민여성의 인권 실태에 관한 연구」 한국 여성 정책 연구원. <https://www.kwdi.re.kr/inc/download.do?ut=A&upIdx=115065&no=2> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 송하성. 2022. 재정착 난민, 한국 입국 후 정서 지원과 생활 교육 꼭 필요해요! <https://www.papayastory.com/immigration/view/%EC%9E%AC%EC%A0%95%EC%B0%A9-%EB%82%9C%EB%AF%BC-%ED%95%9C%EA%B5%AD-%EC%9E%85%EA%B5%AD-%ED%9B%84-%EC%A0%95%EC%84%9C-%EC%A7%80%EC%9B%90%EA%B3%BC-%EC%83%9D%ED%99%9C-%EA%B5%90%EC%9C%A1-%EA%BC%AD-%ED%95%84%EC%9A%94%ED%95%B4%EC%9A%94> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 신성식·서봉성. 2020. 「난민인정 절차의 실태와 개선방안」. 『한국범죄심리연구』 16권 4호. pp. 137-148.
- 신용아. 2022. 「"10년째 난민 신청자...3~6개월씩 체류 연장하며 지내" ...인권 없는 난민 재신청자」. 『서울신문』, 6월 20일.
- 심영구·김학휘·안혜민·김그리나·윤현영. 2023. 「'난민 문제, 이것부터 보고 보자' 최초공개 대한민국 난민 보고서」. 『SBS 마부작침』
- 연운정. 2022. 「인권위 “난민재신청자 취업허가 필요”」. 『매일노동뉴스』, 6월 21일.
- 오수진. 2019. 「"난민, 韓 근로빈곤층 가능성 높아...노동 재교육 필수”」. 『연합뉴스』, 11월 11일.
- 유엔난민기구. 2014. 난민 지위의 인정기준 및 절차 편람과 지침 (Handbook and Guidelines on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status under the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugee) <https://www.unhcr.or.kr/unhcr/program/board/detail.jsp?mode=detail&boardTypeID=16&boardID=4945&boardTypeDivision=0&menuID=&boardCategory=> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 이노미. 2011. 「국내 외국인 소수집단 거주지의 갈등과 연대 -이태원 무슬림 거주지를 중심으로」. 『한국문화연구』 21호. pp. 237-263.
- 이병하. 2018. 「한국 난민 이슈의 정치화」. 『문화와 정치』 5권 4호. pp.33-68.
- 이상서. 2021. 「[난민유입 20년] ① 국내 1호 에티오피아인 "한국서 받은 사랑

- 못잊어요”」. 『연합뉴스』, 1월 25일.
- 이재덕·이유진. 2018. 「젊은 무슬림, 잠재적 범죄자 취급…근거 없는 ‘예멘 난민 혐오’」. 『경향신문』, 6월 19일.
- 이재연. 2018. 「‘예멘 난민’ 향해 혐오 폭발… 주말 첫 반난민 시위 예고」. 『국민일보』, 6월 25일.
- 이호택·김종철·형수진·김지원. 2009. [난민신청자에 대한 각국의 지원시설과 사회통합제도 연구]. 법무부 연구용역 보고서.
<https://www.korea.kr/common/download.do?tblKey=EDN&fileId=200549> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 임준형. 2022. 「입국 그 후: 아프가니스탄 난민들이 털어놓는 한국살이 1년」. 『노동자 연대』, 10월 4일.
- 장예지. 2022. 「“한국에서 삶이 생겼는데” …난민 재신청자 사란이 애태우는 이유」. 『한겨레』, 6월 20일.
- 정금심. 2018. 「난민 인권 보호를 위한 난민법 개정 방향 연구 - 난민 심사 및 난민 처우를 중심으로」. 『법조』 67권 3호. pp.645-698.
- 조해람. 2022. 「[단독]베일 벗은 “난민 지침” 뜯어보니...이유도 모른 채 감내 해온 “편견의 장벽.”」. 『경향신문』, 5월 1일.
- 차민주. 2023. 「“한국 친구들과 사소한 대화라도” ...한국말 못 배우는 난민 청소년들」. 『서울경제』, 6월 19일.
- 피난처. 2023. [공지] 난민들의 피난처 2023년 봄 소식지.
<https://blog.naver.com/pnan/223091665722> (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 한국고용노동부. 외국인 고용 관리시스템. <https://www.eps.go.kr/index.jsp>
 (검색일: 2023.5.1.)
- 한중현·황승중. 2019. 「우리 난민법제상 인도적 체류 허가에 관한 연구」. 『서울대학교 법학』, 60권 2호, pp.43-91.
- 허진무. 2018. 「청와대 국민청원 “예멘 난민 거부해주세요” 20만명 돌파」. 『경향신문』, 6월18일.
- 홍현기. 2019. 「한국 온 미얀마 난민들 어디에 살까?...“전원 부평에 정착”」. 『연합뉴스』, 12월2일.

국문 요약

현재 전 세계에는 전쟁, 내전, 박해를 피해 떠도는 1억 3천만 명 이상의 강제 이주민이 있다. 또한 지속적인 분쟁이 지속되고 새로운 인도주의적 위기가 발생함에 따라 난민의 수는 계속 증가할 것으로 예상된다. 이러한 전 세계적 추세에 따라 전통적으로 이주민/난민 수용 국가가 아니었던 한국에서도 망명 신청자가 증가하고 있다. 2022년에는 11,000명 이상의 망명 신청자가 한국에 난민 신청을 하였다. 이렇듯, 한국에는 난민이 증가하고 있지만, 난민에 대한 연구, 특히 난민들이 한국 사회에 어떻게 통합되고 정착하고 있는지에 대한 연구는 부족한 실정이다. 경제적 통합은 이민자 및 난민의 수용국 통합에 있어 가장 중요한 요소 중 하나로, 본 연구는 난민들이 현지에서 어떻게 일자리를 찾고 통합되고 있는지, 난민의 노동시장 통합에 대해 심층적으로 살펴보는 것을 목표로 하고 있다.

본 논문은 국내 사업장에서 근무한 경험이 있는 난민 9명을 대상으로 한 질적 인터뷰를 바탕으로 난민들이 일자리를 구하고, 동료들과 어울리며, 현지 사업장에서 적응하는 과정을 종합적으로 살펴보면서 노동시장 통합의 현재 실태와 미래 과제에 대한 통찰을 제공하는 것을 목표로 한다. 이를 위해 이 논문은 경영 다양성 관리 연구, 특히 사이드와 오즈빌긴 (Syed &Özbilgin)이 논의한 다양성 관리 연구 프레임워크를 채택하여 개인, 조직 및 국가 수준의 요인에 대한 연구 결과를 제시하고자 한다.

본 연구에 따르면 한국의 난민들은 회복탄력성, 대처 메커니즘 등이 뛰어나고 수용국에 통합하고자 하는 강한 열망이 있다. 많은 난민들은 높은 학력과 전문적 기술 등을 보유하고 있어 한국 사회에 기여할 수 있는 잠재력을 지니고 있다. 그러나 일부 난민은 그들을 가로막는 구조적 장벽으로 인해 무력감을 느끼고 자신감이 낮은 것으로 나타났다. 또한 국내 난민들이 자립할 수 있는 지원은 제한적이며 주로 비정부기구(NGO)나 지역 커뮤니티 등에 의해서만 한정적으로 제공되고 있다는 점도 발견할 수 있었다.

본 논문은 이러한 문제를 해결하기 위해 한국이 난민 통합에 대한 접근 방식을 재평가하고 국가 차원의 보호 메커니즘을 강화할 필요가 있다고 강조한다. 난민 근로자뿐만 아니라 현지 고용주를 포함한 다른 이해관계자를 대상으로 한 종합적인 지원 프로그램과 정보 안내 세션을 마련하여 지원 환경을 조성할 것을 제안하고 있다. 한국은 이러한 적극적인 보호 및 통합 조치를 시행함으로써

난민의 성공적인 사회 통합을 촉진하고, 난민들이 한국의 사회, 경제, 문화에 적극적으로 참여할 수 있도록 장려할 수 있다. 이는 궁극적으로 난민과 한국 사회 모두에게 이익이 되며, 한국 사회의 풍요로움과 다양성에 기여하게 될 것으로 예상된다.

주제어: 난민 사회 통합, 난민의 체류, 난민의 노동시장 통합, 근로의 권리, 난민의 지역 통합

학번: 2021-29627

Appendix A. Interview Question Guide

심층 면담 조사 가이드

가. 면담을 통해 얻고자 하는 정보의 목록

- (1) 난민 개인 배경
- (2) 구직 경험
- (3) 회사에서의 경험
- (4) 노동 경험 전반
- (5) 미래 계획

○ 연구자는 연구참여자를 대상으로 공통 주제 5가지에 대한 개별적 질문 2-4개, 총 최대 20가지의 질문을 통해 정보를 얻는다 (면접시간은 30분~1시간 내외 소요 예정)

나. 질문 예시

질문 주제	질문 예시
연구 참여자의 기본 정보 및 채용관련 경험 Personal information of the research participant and the employment experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 본인 소개를 부탁한다. Please introduce yourself.- 피난 이전 본국에서 했던 일은 무엇인지? What was your job in your country of origin before migration?- 현재 일을 하고 있다면 담당 업무가 무엇이고 현 회사에서 일한 기간이 어떻게 되는지? Are you currently working in Korea? If you are, what is your current job? How long have you been working for the current employer?- 현재 일을 하지 않고 있다면 과거에 취업 경험이 있

	<p>는지? 있었다면 어떤 일을 담당하였고 왜 그만 두었는지?</p> <p>If you are not working in Korea, do you have an experience of working in Korea? If you do, what was your job in the past? Why did you quit the job?</p> <p>- 현재 구직 중이라면 어떤 일을 하고 싶은 지?</p> <p>If you are currently looking for a job, what kind of jobs are you looking for?</p>
<p>구직 경험</p> <p>Job searching experiences</p>	<p>- 한국에서 일을 구할 때 누가 소개해주었는지?</p> <p>Who introduced you the job?</p> <p>- 서류제출 또는 인터뷰 등 회사가 본인을 채용할 때 어떤 과정이 진행되었는지?</p> <p>Could you briefly explain the process of getting hired in Korea? From job application to the interview etc.</p> <p>- 한국에서 첫 직장을 구할 때 어느정도의 시간이 소요되었는지?</p> <p>How long did it take for you to get your first job in Korea?</p> <p>- 한국에서 일을 구할 때 본국에서의 커리어가 도움이 되었는지?</p> <p>Was your career at the country of origin helpful when you were finding work in Korea?</p> <p>- 구직 시 본인이 난민이라는 것을 알리는지? 또는 숨기는지? 그 이유는?</p> <p>In job searching, do you reveal yourself as a “refugee” to the potential employer?</p> <p>- 한국에서 일을 구하는 것이 얼마나 어렵다고 생각되는지? 1부터 10까지의 점수 중 점수를 준다면?</p>

	<p>How do you evaluate the overall job searching experience in Korea? How would you rate the difficulty of job searching from the scale of 1 to 10?</p>
<p>회사에서의 경험 Experiences at work</p>	<p>- 일이 어떤가? 어떤점이 힘들고 어떤점이 쉽다고 생각되는지?</p> <p>How is your work? What is difficult or easy about your work?</p> <p>- 회사 동료들과의 관계가 어떤지? 업무시간 이외에도 시간을 함께 보내는지?</p> <p>How do you get along with your co-workers? Do you hang out with them after work? How often?</p> <p>- 회사에 난민을 포함한 다른 외국인 직원이 있는지?</p> <p>Are there any other foreign workers, including refugees, at your work?</p> <p>- 취업 이후 다른 직원과 동등한 대우를 받았는지? 부당한 경험은 없었는지?</p> <p>While working, were you equally treated as compared to other local workers? Did you have any unfair experiences at work that you remember?</p> <p>- 본국에서 맡았던 직업과 한국에서 하고 있는 일 중 어떤 일이 더 좋은지?</p> <p>Comparing the job you had in your country of origin and the one you have right now in Korea, which work do you prefer and why?</p> <p>- 회사를 다니며 본국과의 문화와 다르다고 느꼈거나 신기한 경험이 있었는지? 어떤점이 다르다고 생각되는지?</p> <p>Have you experienced any culture shocks at work?</p> <p>- 직업 만족도를 1에서 10까지의 점수 중 몇 점을 줄</p>

	<p>수 있는지?</p> <p>How would you rate your job satisfaction from the scale of 1 to 10?</p>
<p>노동 경험 전반</p> <p>Work experiences in general</p>	<p>- 회사에서 문제가 생기면 어떻게 해결하는지?</p> <p>How do you solve problems at work?</p> <p>- 한국에서 직업 훈련을 받은 경험이 있는지?</p> <p>Have you received any kind of job training either at work, from NGO institutions, or from the government?</p> <p>- 난민이 한국 노동시장에서 활동하는데 다양한 장애물이 있을 것이라고 생각되는데, 본인이 생각하기에 법적, 경제적, 사회적, 문화적 문제 중 가장 큰 장애물은 무엇이라고 생각되는지?</p> <p>Considering that you are a refugee employee, I understand there are a lot of difficulties at different levels. Among legal, economic, societal, and cultural barriers, what do you think is the biggest barrier for you to work in Korea?</p>
<p>미래 전망과 바람</p> <p>Prospects</p>	<p>- 앞으로 한국에서 어떤 일을 하고 싶은가?</p> <p>What is your career goal in Korea?</p> <p>- 본인의 꿈을 위해서 어떤 부분이 개선되면 좋겠는가?</p> <p>In order to achieve your career goals, what could be improved?</p>

Appendix B. Instruction and Consent for a Research Participant

Instruction and Consent for a Research Participant

Title of the research: **Labor Market Integration of Refugees in South Korea**

Principal Investigator: **Yoolim (Lia) Lee** (*Seoul National University, Graduate School of International Studies, Master Student*)

This research is about the labor market integration of refugees residing in South Korea. You are being asked to participate in the research because you are a refugee currently residing in South Korea that has experience working or is willing to work in the local labor market. A researcher at Seoul National University [*Yoolim (Lia) Lee*] will explain the research to you. The research will be conducted only with the voluntary consent of the participants, so before your decision is made it is important to understand the content and purpose of the research. Please read the content below carefully and thoroughly, and please let us know if you consent to be involved. If necessary, ask your family members or friends. If you have any questions, the investigator will explain in detail.

1. Why is this research being conducted?

The purpose of the study is to map out different challenges and issues that refugees face when accessing or participating in the labor market of South Korea. Further, it attempts to explore refugees' coping mechanisms in response to difficulties. You will be asked questions about your **working experiences in South Korea extensively, from job searching, familiarizing yourself at work, getting along with co-workers or your employer, and your future career plans.**

2. How many people will participate in the research?

50 refugees currently residing in South Korea that have experience working or are willing to work in Korea will participate in the research. Referring to the report by Save The Children, **legally recognized refugees, refugee applicants, asylum seekers in the court process, failed asylum seekers, and humanitarian status holders** are all included in the definition of "refugee".

3. How will the research proceed?

The research will be conducted as follows. Upon your consent, you will be conducting a one-on-one in-depth interview with the researcher. The in-depth interview will take between 30 minutes to an hour, and it will be recorded upon your consent. If you do not wish to be recorded, the researcher will proceed with the interview without recording. The main contents of the interview are as follows. If you wish, you can receive the main questionnaires before the interview.

- (1) Your background
- (2) Job-searching experiences
- (3) Experiences at work
- (4) Work experiences in general
- (5) Future prospects

After the in-depth interview, there will be no additional interviews but if the researcher deems further explanation is needed on certain contents of the interview, you may be asked via phone call or text message.

4. What is the duration of participation in the research?

It will take about 30 minutes to one hour

5. Once participation in the research has begun, is it possible to stop participating?

Yes. You can stop participating in the research whenever you want with no disadvantage. Any time you want to stop, please tell the investigator immediately. In case of a dropout, the collected data will be destroyed immediately if you wish to discard it. However, if you do not wish to discard it, we inform you that the data collected before the dropout can be used as research data.

6. Are there any side effects or risks involved in participation in this research?

Due to the nature of the interview, there will be no physical side effects or risk factors, but if certain questions or contents in the interview cause discomfort to you, you have the right to refuse to answer the question or may stop participating in the interview at any time. In addition, fully understanding your vulnerable status in South Korea, the researcher will take utmost care and effort into keeping your identity from being exposed. This includes anonymously conducting the interview and collecting the minimum required personal information for the research. If you have any further questions about any side effects or risks involved in participating in

the research, please ask the researcher immediately.

7. Are there any advantages to participating in the research?

You will not receive any direct advantage. However, the information you provide will help promote a general understanding of the status of refugee employment and integration in South Korea. Your contribution to the research that promotes understanding of refugees will be the first vital step in helping build a more inclusive society for all minority groups including refugees.

8. Are there any disadvantages to participating in the research?

You are free to agree or decline to participate in the research. There will be no disadvantage if you decide not to participate.

9. Is the information gathered during the participation secure?

The person in charge of managing the personal information collected for this research is a Master's student, Yoolim Lee (dldbfla303@snu.ac.kr), and her academic adviser, Professor. Jiyeon Song (jiyeoun.song@snu.ac.kr) at Seoul National University. The personal information collected in this study is name (pseudonym, if you wish), sex, age, contact number, period of stay in South Korea, legal status, educational background, current job, and ex-job at the country of origin. The types of personal information collected can be discussed with the researcher during the interview. In the case of your name, if you want to stay anonymous, you can use a pseudonym. In the thesis, your name will be codified and not exposed. In case of your contact information, it is collected in order to arrange time and meeting venue for the interview and for expressing gratitude at the end of the research. After the research is completed, the contact information will be deleted. Such personal information is only allowed to be accessed by Master student, Yoolim Lee and her academic adviser, Professor. Jiyeon Song and all the research data will be safely stored in the encrypted file within the researcher's hard disc and further, the files will not be shared via internet mail, google drive, or USB, in any form that might lead to a data breach. The consent form will be stored for three years in accordance with the relevant laws and then discarded. The research data will be kept as permanent as possible by the Seoul National University Research Ethics Guidelines. All possible measures will be taken to secure and protect all personal information gathered while proceeding with this research. When the

research is reported in an academic journal or presented at a conference, your name and other personal information will not be presented. However, if required by law, your personal information may be provided. In addition, the Seoul National University Institutional Review Board may directly access the research results within the scope of the relevant regulations to inspect whether the research has been conducted without the participant's personal information security and verify the reliability of the research data. By signing this consent form, you acknowledge that you have been informed of all necessary information related to the research in advance and will be deemed to have consented to it.

10. How much will participants be paid for participation?

You will be paid 10,000 won, for transportation and gratitude of participating.

Consent Form (for Participants)

Title of the research: **Labor Market Integration of Refugees in South Korea**

Principal Investigator: **Yoolim (Lia) Lee** (*Seoul National University, Graduate School of International Studies, Master Student*)

1. I have read the instructions above thoroughly and discussed them with the investigator.
2. I have been made aware of the potential risks and benefits of participating in the research, and I have received satisfactory answers to all my queries.
3. I voluntarily agree to participate in the research.
4. I agree to the collection and processing of any personal information gathered during the research within the bounds of the existing legislation and regulations of the Institutional Review Board.
5. I agree that my personal information, which will be otherwise kept secured by the investigator(s), is accessed by government institutions prescribed by laws and regulations and the SNU Institutional Review Board for auditing purposes.
6. I understand that I can withdraw participation in the research whenever I want without any risk to me.
7. After agreeing to the above, I will receive a copy of the consent form, and I promise to keep the copy until the end of the research.
8. I agree to the audio recording while participating in the research.

Agree ☐

Disagree ☐

Name of Participant

Signature

Date (year/month/day)

Name of Principal Investigator

Signature

Date (year/month/day)