Iraqi Refugee Women: The Trade-Offs Of Feeling Safe in the United States

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Bio: Angie Galal is an international student from Cairo, Egypt. Her background in journalism and passion for social justice are the main forces that drive the topics of her research interests. She is specifically interested in bringing out the voices of marginalized groups, which include, and are not limited to, gender, religion, and ethnicity. She is passionate about understanding how the marginalized voices construct their reality, identity and navigate the structures through the use of bottom-up approaches to her research.

Abstract:
Since 2007, and four years after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, the United States has been accepting an annual average of 15,000 refugees which today amount to 140,000 newcomers as of September 2016. Most of the research on refugees in general focuses on the psychological and mental factors before, during and after the process of forced migration. However, there is scarce literature on Iraqi refugees and, more particularly on Iraqi women adapting to a new life in the United States. This paper explores the challenges faced by five newly arrived Iraqi mothers during the resettlement and adaptation process to life in a major city in Southwest Texas. Using a critical lenses guided by the acculturation theory, the authors seek to understand how Iraqi women, and by extension, their families, make sense of their forced migration experience, their integration to the new community in Texas and the relationship with other Iraqis’ in their daily lives interactions.