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Resettlement Challenges for Refugees in the United States

Rebecca Joie Habeeb-Silva
California State University - San Bernardino

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RESETTLEMENT CHALLENGES FOR REFUGEES
IN THE UNITED STATES

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Rebecca Joie Habeeb-Silva

June 2016

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Approved by:

Dr. Janet C. Chang, Faculty Supervisor Social Work
My-Hanh Luu, Director of Refugee and Immigration Services, Catholic Charities
San Bernardino and Riverside Counties
Dr. Janet Chang, M.S.W. Research Coordinator

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the resettlement-related challenges that refugees encounter in the United States (U.S.). It utilized a qualitative research design with semi-structured interviews with three refugee families from different countries of origin: Afghanistan, Burma, and Iraq. The interviews were analyzed through a system of coding and categorization in order to develop themes of commonly reported challenges across participants. Six dominant themes of resettlement-related challenges were identified: employment, financial insecurities, bureaucracy, English language competency, family separation, and unfulfilled expectations and hope. The participants also reported that these challenges had negative effects on their mental health and described feeling worried and depressed. The data was conceptualized utilizing Berry's (2008) acculturation framework, and it was found that the families utilized the acculturation strategy of integration. Recommendations are provided for volunteer programs in which Americans assist newly resettled refugee families as well as for policies that are more adaptive to refugees' needs and that uphold the values of diversity and create a welcoming environment for refugees.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the numerous refugees who come to America to begin a new life. Your courage is commendable, and I hope that the knowledge gained from this project will enable service providers to better assist you during your resettlement.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter explores the process that individuals undergo in order to gain admission into the United States (U.S.) as a refugee. It describes the negative effects that difficult resettlement experiences can have on refugees' well-being. In view of these negative effects, the purpose of this research project was to explore the resettlement challenges that refugees encounter in order to better equip professionals to provide quality and culturally competent services to this population. This chapter provides a brief overview of the research method that was utilized for this project as well as a rationale for how this project will benefit social work practice, policy, and research.

Problem Statement

Refugees are individuals who flee their country of origin due to fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2015), in 2014 there were 19.5 million registered refugees globally. Of these refugees, 2.9 million were newly displaced in 2014. In 2014, the U.S. welcomed 69,986 refugees from various countries in Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America/Caribbean, and Near East/South Asia. Approximately 8.7%, or 6,108, of the refugees admitted into the

U.S. during the 2014 fiscal year were resettled in California (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). The U.S. Department of State (2014) has projected a modest increase in refugee admittance in 2015, and it expects to welcome 70,000 refugees during the fiscal year. The process of obtaining admission into the U.S. as a refugee involves many steps, and the average duration for the process is between 18 and 24 months (U.S. Department of State, n.d.c).

Although there may be slight variations in the overall admissions process depending on a particular refugee's case, the process usually begins when an individual leaves his or her home country and registers as a refugee with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR determines whether to grant refugee status to the applicant and then decides the best solution to assist those who are granted refugee status (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a). If it is determined that a refugee should be resettled in the U.S., his or her case is sent to a Resettlement Support Center (RSC) which processes the case and prepares the refugee for an adjudication hearing and for a security screening. The Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews the case, conducts an interview with the refugee, and determines whether to approve him or her for resettlement. If the refugee receives approval, he or she undergoes a health screening and U.S. cultural orientation (U.S. Department of State, n.d.c).

The Department of State has a Reception and Placement program in which it has cooperative agreements with nine domestic resettlement agencies. These agencies determine the best place within the U.S. to resettle the refugee based upon his or her needs, any relatives that he or she has in the U.S., and the community's resources. The particular resettlement agency that assumes responsibility for the refugee's case assigns the case to one of its local affiliated agencies, and this agency assists the refugee for the first 90 days after he or she arrives in the U.S. The agency aids the refugee by providing services specified in the cooperative agreement such as assistance in obtaining necessities, applying for a Social Security card, and arranging medical appointments. Refugees receive authorization for employment within the U.S. and are eligible to apply for residency after one year of arrival and for naturalization after five years of arrival (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b).

The process of migrating to and resettling in a new country can be challenging for refugees. The acculturation process may contribute to mental health problems such as depression, stress, and guilt (Morris, Popper, Rodwell, Brodine, & Brouwer, 2009). Among elderly Arab-Americans, refugees reported experiencing greater acculturative stress and depression in comparison to U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or holders of visas (Wrobel, Farrag, & Hymes, 2009). In a study on acculturative stress among Iraqi refugees, 61% of participants reported experiencing high acculturative stress (Yako & Biswas, 2014), and Phillimore (2011) found that refugees experienced a high level of

stress originating from both experiences in their country of origin and in their host country. In addition, acculturative stress may hinder refugees' ability to develop relationships with others and to acculturate into their host societies (Phillimore 2011). Due to the challenges that refugees encounter during the resettlement process and the effects of these challenges on their well-being, it is imperative for social workers to actively assist refugees in the resettlement process. In order to increase effectiveness in resettlement assistance, social workers must understand the resettlement process and the challenges that refugees encounter during the process.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the resettlement challenges that refugees encounter in order to better equip professionals to provide quality and culturally competent services to this population. The study utilized a qualitative design through semi-structured interviews with three refugee families from different countries of origin. The interviews were analyzed to explore the common resettlement-related challenges reported across the families.

The purpose of utilizing this particular research design was two-fold. First, current knowledge on diverse refugees' resettlement experiences is limited. A semi-structured interview design was ideal for navigating this dearth of knowledge because it allowed the research participants greater freedom to report in-depth details of their resettlement experience in comparison to other data collection instruments, such as questionnaires. This was beneficial because it

provided the researcher with both quantity and quality of data to examine in order to describe the resettlement process and the challenges that the research participants encountered during the process.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

Social work has a long history of involvement in international social welfare and in assisting populations displaced by war and civil unrest. During World War I, Jane Addams's used her settlement house, the Hull House, to welcome and assist immigrants in the U.S. (Abbott, 1947). The Hull house served "to welcome the stranger, to smooth the path of the immigrant, to help adjust the foreign-born generations to American life" (as cited in Abbott, 1947, p. 4). During and after World War I, social workers, working through the International Migration Services, provided assistance to people displaced by the war. In addition, after World War II, the devastation caused by the war created opportunities for social workers to serve in international relief and reconstruction work, specifically in the practice of refugee resettlement (Healy, 2008).

Due to the increasing unrest in many countries around the world, it is likely that the U.S. will continue to experience an influx of refugees fleeing harmful situations in their home countries. Social workers in particular are likely to encounter refugees in their practice. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) (2015) states that currently, social workers provide services to refugees through many roles. They may serve as policy advocates and carry out activities such as advocating for improved refugee resettlement services. They may also

serve as direct service providers and take on the role of a resettlement caseworker, or they may serve internationally and coordinate programs for refugees within refugee camps. These represent only a few of the roles that social workers have served in the past and may continue to serve in the future while providing services to refugees.

Because this study addressed a research area in which there is limited knowledge, it contributes to social work research and practice by expanding the scope of knowledge on this particular practice area and by providing social workers with resources to enable them to engage in evidence-based practice. Social workers who understand the resettlement-related challenges encountered by refugees will be able to strengthen their assistance and services at both the assessment and planning phase of the intervention process with this population. For example, during the assessment phase, social workers who have foreknowledge of the challenges that their refugee clients may encounter may be better prepared to assist their clients in expressing and exploring these difficulties. This is especially important for this particular population as many refugees have limited English proficiency and may struggle with verbalizing their difficulties. In addition, social workers who understand resettlement challenges may also be better equipped to assist their clients during the planning phase of the intervention process. They may better understand which resources and services their clients need and may be more prepared to equip them to manage

resettlement obstacles. Overall, understanding resettlement challenges will enable social workers to provide both quality and culturally competent services.

A greater understanding of resettlement difficulties will also benefit social work policies. Various policies guide resettlement agencies' work with refugees, such as the Department of State's cooperative agreement that requires resettlement agencies to provide particular services. Policy makers must understand resettlement challenges in order to create policies that adequately address refugees' needs. Last, refugees themselves will benefit from a greater understanding of the challenges that they will likely face during the resettlement process because they can better prepare themselves to manage them, which may decrease acculturative stress and other mental-health difficulties.

In view of the impact that resettlement challenges have on refugees' well-being, this study addressed one research question: "What challenges do refugees encounter during the resettlement process?"

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the current body of literature on refugees' resettlement experiences and on the challenges that refugees encounter during resettlement. It also reviews the model that past researchers have used to guide their conceptualizations of acculturation, which was also used in this study. Last, it describes the limitations in the current literature and posits how this study seeks to enhance the literature by expanding its scope.

Current Literature

Much of the current body of literature on refugee resettlement focuses on specific aspects of the resettlement process and seeks to understand the challenges that refugees encounter within these aspects. Two factors that researchers have studied are employment and financial difficulties. Refugees often wait months or years before receiving approval to migrate to the United States (U.S.), and during this waiting period, they may deplete their savings and other resources (Yako & Biswas, 2014). Thus, when they arrive in the U.S., they may already be in a state of financial crisis, and this hardship may be exasperated when they encounter difficulties in obtaining employment. Refugees are often unable to obtain the same career that they had in their country of origin because their professional skills, certifications, and degrees may not transfer and

align with U.S. standards for employment. As a result, many refugees are underemployed (Busch Nsonwu, Busch-Armendariz, Cook Heffron, Mahapatra, & Fong, 2013). Underemployment is damaging to refugees' self-image and emotional well-being (Warfa et al., 2012; Yako & Biswas, 2014); however, employment is related to greater community integration (Lee, Choi, Proulx, & Cornwell, 2015), ability to acculturate, ability to meet new people, and higher self-esteem (Phillimore, 2011).

When refugees find part-time or low-paying jobs, Social Services often reduces their aid. This creates greater financial hardships because they are unable to support themselves and their families on the income from their jobs (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Coughlan, Stam, & Kingston, 2016; Yako & Biswas, 2014). In order to provide for their families, they may work multiple jobs or long shifts, and their absence from their home limits the time that they are able to spend with their children (Lee et al., 2015) and contributes to familial difficulties (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Warfa et al., 2012). In addition, long work hours may inhibit community integration (Lee et al., 2015). Employment and income difficulties have also been associated with refugees' mental well-being. Hauck, Lo, Maxwell, and Reynolds (2014) found that refugees experience stress arising from the employment-search process and from their financial obligations; however, refugees who are employed and financially stable experience less stress. In addition, employment (Warfa et al., 2012) and income (Cummings, Sull, Davis, & Worley, 2011) correlate negatively with depression, and Coughlan

et al. (2016) found that refugees experience pervasive unhappiness due to financial concerns.

Refugees also encounter language difficulties during the resettlement process. Refugees may have limited English proficiency, and this may challenge them as they seek to acculturate. English proficiency is crucial in enabling refugees to utilize services and to achieve self-sufficiency (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013) because it is essential for employment, communicating with health care professionals, and making American friends (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Hauck et al., 2014; Phillimore, 2011). Lack of English proficiency may inhibit community integration (Lee et al., 2015) as well as foster feelings of isolation and vulnerability (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2014; Phillimore, 2011), and so it may negatively affect refugees' abilities to develop relationships. English proficiency is associated with acculturative stress as refugees with higher proficiency experience less stress than those with limited proficiency (Hauck et al., 2014). In addition, low English proficiency and pressure to learn English is also associated with depression (Cummings et al., 2011; Wrobel et al., 2009).

Another challenge that refugees encounter during the resettlement process is changes in family dynamics and roles. Children tend to learn English more quickly than their parents, and they become translators and service coordinators for their families. This often results in a significant strain on the children (Koh, Liamputtong, & Walker, 2013). Families also experience changes in gender roles as women gain more equality and take on economic roles. For

some families, these changing gender roles create stress, family conflict, and mental health instability (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Nilsson, Barazanji, Heintzelman, Siddiqi, & Shilla, 2012; Warfa et al., 2012); however, others embrace them as a positive change (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Nilsson et al., 2012).

Changes within family dynamics may also present challenges for parents. For example, refugee parents struggle with reconciling their cultural discipline practices with the forms of discipline considered acceptable in the U.S. They also express fear over interference from the legal system because of their discipline practices (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Nilsson et al., 2012). Although Busch Nsonwu et al. (2013) found that refugees struggle with reconciling their discipline methods with accepted U.S. practices, they also note that many refugees do not view this as a challenge and are able to adapt to the differences in discipline well. Within family dynamics, parents also find their children's acclimation to American life and their abandonment of some of their cultural practices challenging. For example, refugees report struggling with the increasing independence of their children, their children's loss of respect for authority, and the perception that they were losing their parental authority (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Nilsson et al., 2012).

When refugees migrate to the U.S., they often leave behind family in their country of origin, and this separation may be another difficulty that they must manage during the resettlement process. Many refugees come from collectivist

cultures that value both immediate and extended family, and so the loss of family may be especially difficult as it also challenges their cultural values. In addition, many refugees' countries of origin are in a state of unrest, and so they often leave their families in dangerous environments. Refugees may encounter challenges during resettlement related to the fear that they feel for their family left in their country of origin (Phillimore, 2011) as well as to their worries over their inability to assist them (Coughlan et al., 2016). Refugees' separation from family members and concerns about their family's safety is associated with their level of stress (Hauck et al., 2014) and anxiety (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013). Refugees demonstrate a desire for family reunification (Hauck et al., 2014); however, Bush Nsonwu et al. (2013) found that the family reunification process is often arduous, lasting months to years, and is a source of grief for refugees.

Before migration, refugees may develop an elevated ideal of their new lives in America from television and videos (Yako & Biswas, 2014) or from others in the refugee camps, such as other camp residents or workers from the International Organization of Migration (IOM) (Coughlan et al., 2016). However, these expectations are often unrealistic. For example, Hauck et al. (2014) and Yako and Biswas (2014) found that refugees did not expect to encounter certain hardships in the U.S., such as those related to finances, employment, and housing. Hauck et al. found that Iraqi refugees' had unfulfilled expectations of their lives in America; however, Burmese and Bhutanese refugees' expectations were fulfilled. They posited that this discrepancy may be because most Burmese

and Bhutanese refugees lived in refugee camps with a lower standard of living before migrating to the U.S. in comparison to Iraqis who had stable jobs and comfortable lives before the wars in Iraq. Thus, the socioeconomic downturn that Iraqis face in the U.S. may affect them more negatively than Burmese and Bhutanese peoples. Phillimore (2011) also found that asylum seekers who originated from high socioeconomic backgrounds were challenged when they experienced a socioeconomic downturn during resettlement. Unfulfilled expectations may contribute to pervasive sadness among refugees (Coughlan et al., 2016) and acculturative stress, and refugees may become vulnerable to breakdown under this stress (Warfa et al., 2012).

Another resettlement challenge found throughout the literature is health care access. Due to the trauma that refugees face in their countries of origin, it is likely that many of them have physical and mental health problems. However, they often face difficulties when accessing health care in the U.S. Refugees express concern over health insurance and over the fact that the duration of the Medicaid that they receive upon arrival is only eight months. Due to the high costs of health expenses, refugees may lack access to appropriate health care (Hauck et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Yako & Biswas, 2014). Refugees also struggle with receiving culturally competent mental health services in which they receive help for the specific traumas and stresses that they have endured (Phillimore, 2011).

Besides financial barriers, many other obstacles may also dissuade refugees from seeking health care. Limited English proficiency makes navigating many aspects of the health care system challenging such as interacting with doctors, making appointments, filling prescriptions, properly taking medicine, completing paperwork, and understanding written material, diagnoses, and treatment options. Lack of English proficiency may cause refugees to neglect their health care needs until they are very sick and may also affect the overall quality of care that they receive (Morris et al., 2009). Lee et al. (2015) found that refugees with limited English proficiency struggled with obtaining translation services at their health care appointments.

Differences in cultural beliefs may also prevent refugees from addressing their health care needs. For example, Morris et al. (2009) found that factors that prevented refugees from seeking health care included beliefs on the concept of preventative care, negative perspectives of western medicine, and lack of understanding of mental health conditions combined with stigma surrounding mental health. In addition to barriers to health care access, refugees report dissatisfaction with particular aspects of the American health care system including the high costs of health care, insurance, and medications as well as the lack of insurance coverage (Hauck et al., 2014). Both refugees and refugee services providers express concern over the lack of dental care coverage for refugees (Hauck et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015).

Limitations of Current Literature

Much of the literature on refugee resettlement focuses on specific aspects of the resettlement process, such as employment, health care, or family life, and explores the challenges that refugees encounter in these areas. There is limited research that examines the resettlement experience in its entirety in order to understand all of the challenges that confront refugees. By restricting studies to certain aspects of the resettlement process, researchers run the risk of overlooking significant challenges. Thus, professionals who work with refugees may be limited in their ability to understand all of the resettlement difficulties that their clients are possibly encountering, and as a result, their ability to help them navigate through resettlement may be restricted.

In addition, much of the current literature focuses on one particular ethnic group, such as Iraqis or Somalis. The findings from literature that are limited to one ethnic group may be impossible to generalize to other ethnic groups. Because the U.S. welcomes refugees from a variety of countries, it is important to understand the resettlement challenges experienced by various ethnic groups. This will prevent professionals from generalizing challenges inappropriately and will enable them to provide culturally competent services that best meet the needs of their particular clients.

This study sought to enhance the current body of literature on refugee resettlement by addressing these limitations. It explored the experiences of three refugee families from different countries of origin, Afghanistan, Burma, and Iraq,

in order to explore resettlement from diverse perspectives. It also examined the research participants' resettlement experiences in their entirety in hopes of discovering themes of encountered challenges.

Theory Guiding Conceptualization

Much of the published literature on resettlement challenges is exploratory and descriptive in nature, and most of the literature utilizes qualitative analysis. Because these types of studies tend to employ inductive reasoning, in which researchers examine variables and use their findings to develop theories or hypotheses, there is no consistent theory that has guided the current body of research. However, some of the literature references John W. Berry's models of acculturation (Hauck et al., 2014; Phillimore, 2011; Warfa et al., 2012; Wrobel et al., 2009; & Yako & Biswas, 2014) suggesting that Berry's work on acculturation has influenced research on the topic of refugee resettlement.

Acculturation is a process that occurs when cultural groups come into contact, resulting in changes in both groups. Berry (2008) presented an acculturation framework that models what he termed acculturation strategies. He posited that during the process of acculturation, the non-dominant group adopts one of four strategies. Assimilation takes place when the non-dominant group abandons its culture and seeks to develop relationships with the dominant group. Integration describes the process in which the non-dominant group maintains its culture while simultaneously embracing the dominant group. Separation occurs when the non-dominant group rejects interactions with the dominant group and

seeks to preserve its culture. Marginalization describes non-dominant groups who both abandon their culture and reject interactions with the dominant group.

In addition, Berry (2008) asserted that the dominant group also utilizes particular acculturation strategies when interacting with the non-dominant group. He re-conceptualized assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization as the melting pot, multiculturalism, segregation, and exclusion, respectively, when viewed from the dominant group's perspective. He asserted that differences in the dominant and non-dominant groups' acculturation strategies as well as within group strategy differences creates difficulties during acculturation. During resettlement, refugees experience a simultaneous acculturation process. It is likely that the particular acculturation strategy that refugees adopt will affect their overall experience, and thus, Berry's acculturation framework was utilized in this study in order to further understand the difficulties that the research participants' encountered.

Summary

The current body of literature on refugee resettlement has focused on specific aspects of the resettlement process and has discovered a variety of challenges that refugees encounter including difficulties in employment, finances, language, family dynamics and roles, family separation, unfulfilled expectations, and health care. By limiting its focus on particular aspects of resettlement, however, it is possible that the literature has overlooked significant resettlement challenges. In addition, most studies are limited in generalizability because they

focus on one particular ethnic group. This study sought to address these limitations and to enhance the literature by exploring the entirety of refugees' resettlement experiences and by comparing the experiences of refugees from different countries of origin. The study was guided by Berry's (2008) framework of acculturation strategies.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study design. It describes the study's purpose and sampling procedures. It also describes the data-collection instrument and procedures and explores the strengths and limitations of the instrument. Last, the way in which the data was analyzed and the way in which the confidentiality of research participants was maintained is covered.

Study Design

This study utilized an exploratory design to study one research question: "What challenges do refugees encounter during the resettlement process?" The parents of three families from different countries of origin were interviewed utilizing a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A). Their responses were analyzed through a system of coding and categorization in order to develop themes of commonly reported challenges across families. The purpose of using this particular research design was to provide participants with flexibility in describing their resettlement experience in hopes of obtaining a greater depth of data. The research can be classified as a phenomenology study due to its emphasis on refugees' resettlement experiences and the personal meaning that their experiences had for them.

Sampling

This study obtained its sample from Catholic Charities of San Bernardino and Riverside County's Refugee Resettlement program. The parents of three families who were former Refugee Resettlement clients and who had lived in the United States (U.S.) for a minimum of one year were interviewed. The purpose of placing restrictions on the length of time that participants had lived in the U.S. was to ensure that they had completed the 90-day duration that the Department of State defines as the resettlement period length (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b). In addition, one of the goals of the study was to examine refugees' reflections of their overall resettlement experience. It was hypothesized that refugees who had lived in the U.S. for a minimum of one year would have already encountered significant resettlement challenges and would be able to describe these challenges. In order to increase the diversity of the participants, one of the requirements of the research design was that the families originated from different countries.

The Refugee Resettlement program's director and case manager identified and referred three families who were former clients with proficient English language competency and whom they believed would be able to thoroughly describe their resettlement experience. The participating families originated from Afghanistan, Burma, and Iraq. The research design was limited in its generalizability based on the small sample size and the lack of random sampling. However, utilizing random sampling with this population is challenging

due to limited access to potential research participants (Cummings et al., 2011; Warfa et al., 2012). Although the study's design limits its generalizability, including families from three different ethnicities increases its representativeness.

Data Collection and Instruments

The researcher interviewed the parents of the referred families utilizing a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix A). The guide included demographic information: age of each family member, length of time in the U.S., and country of origin. It also included information regarding the situation in their country of origin and the reasons they chose to leave, their experience in applying for refugee status and for resettlement in the U.S., their experience during the overall resettlement process, and their acculturation strategies. The goal of the interview was to allow the participants to describe their resettlement experience in its entirety in hopes that themes of encountered difficulties would emerge. The interview also included specific questions about the resettlement challenges that current literature has reported: employment, finances, language, family dynamics and roles, family separation, unfulfilled expectations, and health care. The data on age and on length of time in the U.S. were measured at interval measurement levels. The remaining data on demographics, pre-resettlement experiences, and resettlement experiences were measured at nominal measurement levels.

The interview guide was created for this study due to an unavailability of an appropriate standardized measuring instrument. The interview guide was

pretested for face validity with the Refugee Resettlement case manager from Catholic Charities, who is a former refugee from Iraq. The strength of the semi-structured interview guide laid in the fact that it was tailored specifically for the research population and for the purposes of the study. In addition, it was developed based on relevant literature on refugees' resettlement experiences and on the challenges that refugees encounter during resettlement. Thus, the interview guide assessed the variables of interest to the study, resettlement related challenges encountered by refugees and their acculturation strategies. In addition, the interview guide's semi-structured nature provided the researcher with flexibility to alter the interview in order to probe for greater depth and clarity in responses. One weakness in the interview guide was its lack of established validity, reliability, and cultural sensitivity. The study attempted to correct for this lack of standardization by pretesting the interview guide with a member of the sample population, Catholic Charity's Refugee Resettlement case manager.

Procedures

Prior to the recruitment of research participants, the researcher pretested the interview guide with Catholic Charity's Refugee Resettlement case manager. After completing an interview with the case manager and receiving her feedback, minor adjustments were made to the interview guide to increase question clarity and comprehension. The Refugee Resettlement director and case manager then contacted various refugee families who were former clients and who met the criteria for qualification in the study by email and telephone, explained the study

and purpose, and invited them to participate. They then referred three families who agreed to participate. The researcher contacted these potential participants by telephone, re-explained the study and purpose, and invited their participation. Each family agreed to participate, and the researcher scheduled the date, time, and location of the interview.

Each family requested that the interview be held in their home, and the researcher conducted the interview. The duration of the interviews were between 40 minutes and one hour. Because cultural norms indicate that a small gift be presented when being welcomed into a host's home, the researcher provided each family with a box of cookies. For the family originating from Afghanistan, the father, mother, and eldest daughter were present for the interview. However, due to the mother's limited English-language proficiency, the father was the only parent who participated in the interview. For the family originating from Burma, the father had limited English language proficiency, and so the mother was the only family member who was present for and participated in the interview. For the family originating from Iraq, both the father and mother participated in the interview. Their daughter was also present, and although the researcher aimed to only interview parents, she served as a translator, when necessary, and she also answered some interview questions.

Protection of Human Subjects

In order to protect the confidentiality of the research participants, all participants' names were excluded in both the transcriptions of the interviews and

in the final report and were replaced with a letter representing their country of origin. The audio recordings of the interviews and the transcriptions were stored in a password-protected computer. The physical audio recordings were destroyed after the completion of the final report.

In addition, participants were provided with an informed consent form (see Appendix B) that explained the purpose of the study, the procedures of the interview, how confidentiality would be maintained, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the potential benefits and risks associated with their participation. The informed consent form also included the researcher's faculty advisor's contact information for the participants to contact should they have had any questions or concerns.

Due to the potential psychological discomfort that participants could have incurred by recalling events that occurred before their resettlement and by recalling challenges that they encountered during resettlement, they were also provided with the contact information for the two Medi-Cal insurance providers, Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP) and Molina Healthcare, and the researcher explained that they could contact them to obtain information on counseling services should they desire to speak further with someone about the topics discussed during the interview (see Appendix C).

Data Analysis

First, the researcher listened to the audio recordings of the interviews and utilized Microsoft Word Dictation to transcribe them into a Microsoft Word

document. The researcher then re-listened to the interviews while checking the transcriptions for accuracy and made any necessary corrections. Then, in order to become more familiar with the data, the researcher pre-viewed the data by reading the transcribed interviews in their entirety.

In order to process and understand the various ideas and themes presented in the data, the data analysis included first level coding followed by second level coding as described by Grinnell and Unrau (2014). First level coding focuses on the concrete details of the data, while second level coding studies the implicit, abstract meanings present in the data (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014). First, the various concepts presented in the participants' answers to each question were identified and labeled. For example, employment, mental health, and identity loss were some concepts that were identified during first level coding. If an answer contained more than one concept, all applicable concepts were labelled. The unit(s) of data that encompass one concept, whether the unit is one line of data or multiple lines of data, are referred to as meaning units (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014).

Next, categories that represented the concepts underlying the meaning units were created. Separate Microsoft Word documents were created for each category, and the meaning units that fit within the definition of a particular category were cut and pasted into the respective Word document. Meaning units with similar concepts were placed into the same Word document. If there was no category that adequately encompassed a meaning unit(s)' concept, then another

category and another Word document was created for the unit(s) of data. In order to track which family's interview a particular meaning unit came from, the units of data from each family were grouped together within each category and were labelled with the family's respective country.

After the meaning units were organized into categories, the process of second level coding began. The categories were analyzed by comparing each families' responses within the category in order to determine which resettlement-related themes were prevalent across all three families. At times, categories that contained limited units of data aligned with the concepts represented in another category and were combined with the other category. For example, there were limited units of data in the category "identity loss;" however, the concept underlying "identity loss" aligned with the concept underlying "employment experiences." Therefore, the identity loss category was combined into the employment category.

Throughout the entirety of the data analysis process, the researcher documented the analysis procedures (see above paragraph) and the rules and definitions that determined which category a meaning unit was placed in (see Appendix D). This enables replication of the study. It also enhances the study's credibility and ensures consistency throughout the data analysis process, which increases its overall trustworthiness (Grinnell & Unrau, 2014).

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore one research question: “What challenges do refugees encounter during the resettlement process?” The study examined this question by interviewing the parents of three families from different countries of origin who were former clients of Catholic Charities of San Bernardino and Riverside County’s Refugee Resettlement program. The interviews were conducted utilizing a semi-structured interview guide, and the results were analyzed through a system of first and second level coding. The goal of the analysis was to discover the prevalent challenges that diverse refugees encounter during the resettlement process. The research participants’ confidentiality was maintained by using non-identifying letters instead of names and by storing the interview data on a password-protected computer.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter describes the results of the data analysis. It presents the demographics of the study participants and their pre-resettlement experiences. It then describes the major themes of resettlement-related challenges that were identified in the families' accounts of their resettlement experiences. It also describes the impact that the resettlement-related challenges had on the participants' mental health as this was discussed by every family in their account of their resettlement experiences and developed into a dominant theme. Last, this chapter describes the participants' acculturation process and positive experiences that they reported encountering in the United States (U.S.).

Demographics

Three families from different countries of origin, Afghanistan, Burma, and Iraq, were interviewed for this study. The Afghan participant had four children between the ages of 11 and 19. Out of the three families, they had lived in the U.S. the least amount of time; at the time of the interview, they had lived in the U.S. for approximately one-and-a-half years. The Iraqi participants also had four children between the ages of 25 to 31. They had lived in the U.S. for approximately two-and-a-half years. The Burmese participant had three children

between the ages of 22 and 26, and out of the three families they had lived in the U.S. the longest, approximately 8 years.

Pre-Resettlement Experiences

All three families reported that the primary reason they had sought resettlement as refugees in the U.S. was violence in their countries of origin. However, the nature of the violence varied between the families. The process that they undertook to obtain their refugee visas also varied slightly. The Burmese family experienced violence related to the civil war between the Burmese government and the ethnic groups in Burma. They fled from their village and lived in a refugee camp on the border of Burma and Thailand.

According to the participant:

The ethnic groups and the Burmese government, they were fighting. So we cannot stay. If we are at the border area we cannot stay because when they come, they attacked the village. They burn down your farm or your barn, everything, so we have to flee to the Thai side. (personal communication, July, 2015)

Because the family is of the Karen ethnic group, neither the Burmese nor Thai governments recognized their nationality, which led to further challenges. They received the opportunity to apply for refugee visas and for resettlement in the U.S. while living in the refugee camp, and they both received their visas and migrated within approximately ten months.

The Iraqi participants reported that they experienced various forms of persecution in Iraq. Specifically, they described being persecuted for their adherence to the Christian religion and stated that the homes of Christians were explicitly targeted for violence. According to one family member, “There was special charges on the houses of Christians the last year of time that we exit” (personal communication, September, 2015). The family fled from Iraq and went to Jordan where they began the application process for refugee visas and for resettlement in the U.S. The process was long and arduous involving two appointments with the United Nations (UN), one appointment with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and a security clearance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The process took approximately two years; however, because the children in this family were over 21 years of age, they filed separate applications from their parents, and so the length of time varied between each family member.

For the Afghan family, the process of applying for refugee visas and for resettlement in the U.S. differed from the other families because they received their visas through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program. This is a program created by the U.S. to grant visas to people in Iraq and Afghanistan who assisted the U.S. armed forces and whose lives are in danger due to their work. The participant worked with the U.S. within various positions in Afghanistan. He assisted NBC news and worked with U.S. reporters, and he also worked with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on the Afghan

Energy Assistance Program. He explained that because this program was associated with the U.S. and because some people within the government had an anti-American ideology, his life was at risk. According to the participant:

Because if I had been in Afghanistan, I had been killed now. Because I have been with Americans shoulder by shoulder in anti-terrorist combat...And since we used to work on sensitive energy information system, then our life was at risk. (personal communication, August, 2015)

The participant stated that it took two-and-a-half years to receive his visa.

Resettlement Challenges

Employment

All three families reported that employment was a significant challenge that they encountered during the resettlement process. They stated that finding employment was one worry that they had when they first came to the U.S. This quickly proved to be a valid worry; participants stressed the difficulties that they encountered while attempting to find employment. They reported feeling unsupported during their job search efforts, and they applied to a vast number of job positions with no success. This was particularly difficult for the Afghan participant who felt that his employment history and the years that he had spent serving the U.S. government in Afghanistan were disregarded by potential employers. He stated:

There is no employment for us....I have a bunch of management skills, leadership skills; I'm a geographical information mapping expert....And

level of experience? I bring 13/14 years experience of working directly with the U.S. government on each management field....But I never heard from them. I never heard. (personal communication, August, 2015)

The participants expressed frustration and discouragement within the pre-employment stage over a lack of recognition of their competence and of their employment and educational accomplishments. The Iraqi family's sons were unable to transfer their degrees or their completed college courses, and they had to re-complete their courses in the U.S. The Afghan participant's discouragement over his employment situation revealed feelings of identity loss. He stressed the difficulty of transitioning from serving as the director of a U.S. government-funded project in Afghanistan to a nighttime security guard in the U.S. He explained that his fellow SIV holders who he had worked with in Afghanistan encountered the same difficulties when attempting to find employment in the U.S., and he stated:

They're asking me, "[States his name], what's happened? Where are you working?" I never told them that I am a street guard because my emotional, my credibility, my credit, and my personality. It's not a matter that I'm working a low position, doesn't matter, I mean it's a little bit affecting our hope. (personal communication, August, 2015)

The jobs that the participants were able to obtain included factory worker, dishwasher, cook, security guard, and nursing assistant. Once they had jobs, they were presented with further job-related challenges, such as those related to scheduling. For example, one of the Iraqi participants' sons and the Afghan

participant were scheduled to work late hours at their jobs. The Iraqi participants' son had to quit this position because the hours prevented him from attending school in the morning. The Iraqi participants' sons had multiple job-related challenges that forced them to leave their jobs, and they reported that this constant instability in employment was a further challenge encountered by the family. While describing the challenges that they encountered during resettlement one family member stated, "For the son, finding the job....And till now problems with the job. Till now. Change work from time to time because not stable in their job" (personal communication, September, 2015).

The Burmese and Iraqi participants encountered a challenge unique from the Afghan participant. They experienced a delay in receiving their green cards and social security cards, which further prevented them from being able to work. The Burmese participant was delayed four months while the Iraqi participants stated that their sons were delayed one year. According to the Burmese participant, "And then I couldn't find a job. I want to go to school to start something; I cannot do because they said 'You have no paper, no document. With your I-94 you cannot do anything.' So depressed" (personal communication, July, 2015).

In response to the question about which resettlement challenge caused the greatest difficulty for him and his family, the Afghan participant identified employment as one of the most difficult aspects of resettlement. The families' persistence in searching for employment despite the challenges that they

encountered highlighted their desire for self-sufficiency. As stated by the Burmese participant when she described her interaction with a representative from the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), “But I told her that I will not stay long with the help because I want to do on my own, earn my own money, and pay for my rent” (personal communication, July, 2015). The value of employment was also underlined in the Burmese participant’s claim that finding a job made her feel like she could finally begin her life in the U.S., and she identified this as the most positive thing that happened to her during resettlement.

Financial Insecurity

Throughout the interviews, the participants emphasized experiencing financial insecurities and the difficulties that these insecurities caused for their families. The Afghan and Iraqi participants stated that during resettlement they were financially stable because they received financial support from the resettlement agency and from DPSS. However, once this support ceased, they struggled with paying their bills as they were either unemployed or had a job that paid minimum wage. According to the Afghan participant:

And this three months, because they give us some money, that was good. And after that, everything came on my shoulders, and I just remain on the street in the United States. Come on [states his first name], where you have to go and find money. Where is it? How can you pay for the house

rent? How every minute the bill is coming? (personal communication, August, 2015)

The Burmese participant had a slightly different experience and reported that the financial support her family received during resettlement was not sufficient, and they were unable to provide for themselves. She stated:

When we first arrived we get for five people \$2,250 something. Because \$425 each. That money. And then, we don't have anything in the house. No mattress, nothing. No fridge, nothing. So really hard with that money to manage. First we have to deposit for the rent. One month, like two months rent. So it's half of the money already gone. (personal communication, July, 2015)

The participants emphasized experiencing difficulties in their ability to pay their rent and their bills. The Iraqi participants specifically identified difficulties with repaying their travel loan, the loan that refugees are granted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to pay for their transportation costs to the U.S. The families also described being unable to provide their children with what they needed and/or wanted. They were constantly worried about finances, and they developed depression. According to the Burmese participant:

The children want to get this and that; I cannot do. I say "You better quiet now; we cannot do." [Mimics Children] "Why you take us here? We better stay in the refugee camp. Even though we have nothing, it's easier." Now

you have to travel, and go around, and you have nothing. So we have a lot of depression for the four months. (personal communication, July, 2015)

The Afghan and Burmese participants both stated that financial insecurity was the greatest resettlement challenge for them and their families, and the Afghan participant specified financial insecurity in regards to housing and paying rent. In addition, when asked what challenges he believed refugees from his home country would experience during resettlement in the U.S., the Afghan participant identified paying rent as a significant difficulty.

Bureaucracy

The category Bureaucracy was defined by the researcher as challenges that stemmed from the various agencies that the participants interacted with during resettlement and from the policies and procedures of those agencies. Bureaucracy was a dominant theme as each family repeatedly mentioned throughout the interviews that they struggled with various agencies. One particular agency that the participants discussed was DPSS. The Burmese participant stated that she had difficulty with obtaining the social services benefits that refugees are entitled to receive, and she explained that she had to “fight” to receive them. The Iraqi participants described being denied disability benefits by DPSS multiple times. At the time of the interview, they had not received the benefits, and they stated that they desired to appeal the decision. In addition, they stated that their sons lost some of their social services benefits because

they were not working; however, the reason they were not working was because they were focused on attending school. According to the Iraqi participants:

But [states two sons' names] they are cut it from them. They told them, "I am in the community college." They don't have jobs. They told him, "You must have job." 20 hours, but they don't have jobs, so they cut the welfare, cash money, food stamps. (personal communication, September, 2015)

They expressed their worries about the possibility of the mother and daughter losing their social services benefits.

The participants also described challenges with the resettlement agency's limited abilities to assist them. They recognized that the resettlement agency provided them with the best services that they could, but they also acknowledged that the agency had limited helping abilities due to the system in which it operated. The Afghan participant also expressed frustration with unfairness in the hiring practices of businesses and stated:

Very tough system. Very bureaucratic system. I realize one issue. I thought that nepotism and relationship, dependencies, never work in the United States. But I find out in my mind that there is something inside departments that they're hiring only those people that belong to their tribes, that belong to their systems, and that's it. (personal communication, August, 2015)

In addition, the Afghan participant described his frustrations with the limited support that he received from U.S. agencies. He was especially disheartened

because he had previously believed that as an SIV holder, he would receive greater assistance due to his service with the U.S. government in Afghanistan.

He stated:

When you see the situation, why they never look on SIV holders? What's happened? They helped us up to the border, the US border. And as soon as we arrive here, we melted like the snow here on the street, and that's it. (personal communication, August, 2015)

Both the Burmese and Iraqi participants had difficulties receiving their identification documents. The Burmese participant described a delay in receiving her family's social security cards. When the family inquired about the delay, they discovered that their paperwork was never processed because they had applied too early, and their information had not yet been inputted into the system. The delay lasted four months, and during those four months, they were unable to work. The participant also stated that the delay prevented her from beginning a career training program. She stated:

We waited for two or three months, at least two months, we don't hear anything....And then we asked, and they said that nobody sent out our paper. The reason was because when we first arrived, we should wait at least one week or two weeks before we go to apply that one...Because when we get into the country our name is not regulated in the system yet, so it took so long. And then I couldn't find a job. (personal communication, July, 2015)

The Iraqi participants did not receive their green cards until one year after arrival in the U.S., and they also stated that this prevented them from working.

Last, the participants stated that when they received their identification documents from the different U.S. agencies, the documents contained incorrect information. For example, the Afghan family's names were incorrect on their green cards. This is a common error rooted in the Afghan custom of only using one name, which creates difficulty when completing U.S. paperwork that requests two names, a first name and a last name. The mother and daughter were assigned the abbreviation FNU, First Name Unknown, to use as their first name, and the other family members had their names inverted. The participant stated that this caused difficulties for the family, such as when the mother needed medical care and the name on her identification card and the name on her insurance card did not coincide. Some of the members of the Iraqi family's names were also incorrect on their green cards; however, they stated that it did not cause any challenges for them. The Burmese participant stated that her family did not have any difficulties with getting their correct information on their identification documents because they had appropriate records of their identity information. However, she explained that if families do not have records with their date of birth, they will be assigned January 1st as their date of birth, regardless of its authenticity.

English Language Competency

Each participant discussed challenges that their families encountered with developing their English language competency as well as difficulties related to their lack of competency. They expressed having concerns during resettlement about their family's ability to be successful in the U.S. with limited English competency. According to the Afghan participant:

And then later on I realized how can I run the life here? It will be problem. For example, wife, she doesn't speak English. And she was at the seventh grade at the school when the fighting and war came to Afghanistan. And she's not able even to work outside. (personal communication, August, 2015)

The Iraqi participants' inability to communicate with Americans led to isolation for the family. They stated:

[Mother] I am old, so I am very worried how I can continue in this country. I can't contact with the people. I can't do anything....So it's very worried for me. [Father] I don't make contact with any people. I stay in the home. (personal communication, September, 2015)

In addition, the participants described employment difficulties that their families encountered due to their limited English competency, and the Iraqi participants also stated that their sons' limited English abilities created significant difficulties in college and caused them to stop attending. The families explained that their children developed competence in the English language more quickly,

and so the children acquired new roles as linguistic interpreters for their parents.

According to the Afghan participant:

As soon as the kids enrolled at the school, they also learned very quickly; they're copying everything in a minute. And especially now when I am out of home working, my small daughter, the seventh-grade, she's the translator for the mom. Whenever she's going outside, she's there and she's translating. (personal communication, August, 2015)

Last, when asked what challenges refugees from their home country would experience during resettlement in the U.S., both the Burmese and Iraqi participants identified English-language competency as a significant challenge.

Family Separation

The participants reported leaving family members in their country of origin when they migrated to the U.S. The Afghan and Iraqi participants expressed feeling worried about their family members living in the midst of continual violence in their countries of origin. According to the Afghan participant:

And I never complain for them because it's affecting badly on them and negatively. Still there is a lot of suicide attacks, a lot of explosions, a lot of killings, and murdering on the streets....Their lives are always in danger as our life was in danger. (personal communication, August, 2015)

The Burmese participant left her family when her immediate family moved to the refugee camp. Her family members did not have legal documents; and thus, they

could not go with them. She expressed missing her family, as she has not seen them since she left.

The Iraqi participants experienced separation within their immediate family during the resettlement process. Because the children within this family were all over 21 years of age when they applied for refugee visas, they were required to submit separate applications from their parents. Their visas were approved and received separately, causing them to travel to the U.S. separately. When the parents migrated to the U.S., two of their sons were still living alone in Jordan. When describing their experience during the resettlement process, they expressed challenges related to their continual worries about their sons as well as their uncertainty of when their sons would be able to join them in the U.S.

According to the Iraqi participants:

[Husband] From the first day arrived there in the United States I am worried because two sons live in Jordan...There is a problem; every time say "When they came to the United States? Why they are alone?" Live alone. Problem. [Daughter] Because we don't know when they can come. Depends on their security check, when it finish. So, we don't know.

(personal communication, September, 2015)

Unfulfilled Expectations and Hopes

The participants described unfulfilled pre-resettlement expectations of their new lives in the U.S. as well as unfulfilled hopes that they had for their lives.

A common hope among all three families was the hope that they would be able to continue their education in the U.S. According to the Afghan participant:

For example, I had a thought that if I go to U.S., first of all I'm going to finish my bachelor, and later on, I will get my masters degree....I thought that if I go there, it's a good opportunity for me. But now, when I look on the situation, I never even find the time even to think about a notebook.

(personal communication, August, 2015)

The Burmese participant stated:

But first, my plan, I want to go to school. But with the children and my husband, I had to pull everything, do everything, so until now I cannot go....And also with everything you have to do the payment and whatever.

(personal communication, July, 2015)

The Afghan and Iraqi participants also explained that they thought they would receive more support than they did during resettlement. This was especially difficult for the Afghan participant who viewed the U.S. as the "land of opportunity" and believed that because of his service to the U.S. government in Afghanistan, the government would show its appreciation by providing his family with help and support. He also had the expectation that he would be able to obtain a stable job and that he would be financially stable and able to provide for his family. He stated:

Even I mentioned for my wife, I said at the time that we got our visas we had a house, everything, all of the stuff, everything. And I asked her to sell

everything because we are going to a secure country, to the U.S. And she said, "Can you provide me again these things in the state?" I said, "100%. Because with this experience that I am going, I will make another life for you there." And still I have not reached my dream. (personal communication, August, 2015)

Mental Health

Throughout the interviews, every participant discussed ways in which various aspects of the resettlement process had a negative impact on their mental health. They described experiencing depression and constant worries. For example, the Afghan participant discussed the negative impact that his job and financial insecurity had on his mental health. He stated that he often cries most of the night while working late nights, revealing a sense of despair and hopelessness over his employment situation. In addition, he stated that he constantly worries about finances:

But in matters of economy, of course it affects my personality that I am afraid that I am going on psychological problems now. Because I am thinking a lot. All the night I am thinking about house rent. Oh God. It's a big challenge....Every minute my mind is changing and problems coming. And now, if someone pushed me, I am crying. It's a psychological disorder. (personal communication, August, 2015)

When describing her experience, the Burmese participant stated that she was depressed during resettlement. She described experiencing depression over

her financial instability, lack of employment, and inability to provide her children with things that they desired. The Iraqi participants also stated that they experienced depression stemming from unfulfilled hopes and expectations for their children's education and employment. They described being constantly worried about their children's futures and stated that this led to depression.

According to one family member:

I told you, I go to the doctor, depression, because I am very worried. Always I feel worried. Sometimes I don't sleep in the evening because I am thinking too much....So I think a lot about their future, for [states daughter's name] when she is finished, when she is have job. It's not easy. (personal communication, September, 2015)

The Iraqi participants also described feeling worried over their limited English language competency and their inability to communicate with people in the U.S.

In response to the question about which resettlement challenge caused the greatest difficulty for their family, the Iraqi participants stated that the challenge they struggled the most with was their constant worries about their children's future due to their instability. They also specified that they worry not only about their children's future, but about their own future as well. They stated:

The difficult things, is my idea, their future. I worry about their future too much. I worry too much for their future because yet now I don't know what's the future for them....Because I don't see them have anything and

continue with the same thing. They are go from job to university to job. I am worried for this. (personal communication, September, 2015)

Acculturation

The category Acculturation was defined as statements that participants made regarding their family's adjustment to life and to the culture in the U.S. as well as their responses to the questions in the interview guide assessing which of Berry's (2008) acculturation strategies they used (see section of Interview Guide in Appendix A labeled Berry's (2008) Framework of Acculturation). When describing their families' adjustment to U.S. culture, the Afghan and Iraqi participants stated that their families have maintained aspects of their ethnic culture while adopting aspects of the American culture. They also explained that it would be difficult to completely forget their ethnic culture. According to the Afghan participant:

A real person, I mean a real personality, they will never forget their old culture. Because the old culture is the past. Without that culture, they cannot adapt with the new culture....When you do not take experience from your past culture, you never reached to the new culture. Past and present is always together, which that makes the future. (personal communication, August, 2015)

The Burmese participant described her family's difficulties with the acculturation process. She explained that it is sometimes difficult to integrate with Americans because of differences in culture, language, and food preferences.

She also described the contradictions between what is considered acceptable in U.S. society with what is considered acceptable in her family's religion. She explained that it was difficult for her when her children chose to follow the socially accepted norms in the U.S. rather than what she and her husband had taught them. She stated:

Here the culture is different. So sometimes for us, hard for us to take. When we were in the refugee camp...we just try to talk to them according to the Bible, 'You have to live, and you have to follow.'...For us, we don't accept the living together without marriage, this one we don't accept, but we saw many people. Even my son now doing....He catch up with the culture here very fast. (personal communication, July, 2015)

All of the participants described their desire for their family to integrate their ethnic cultures with American culture and to practice various aspects of both cultures. They identified aspects of their ethnic cultures that they would like to maintain in their families including religion, language, cooking, and family relationships. They also described aspects of American culture that they would like their families to adopt including language and respect for women. According to the Afghan participant:

And here I learned more courtesy for womens. That my kids have to learn that one. They must have a lot of respect for womens. They must have a lot of respect for social life here. This is the kind of culture-wise that I

prefer for my kids to learn it for their future. (personal communication, August, 2015)

In addition, all of the participants described a desire for friends from their ethnic cultures as well as for American friends, and they reported that they have friends in the U.S. from both groups of people. They especially desired strong friendships with Americans because they recognized that connections with Americans are helpful with the acculturation process. The participants also believed that Americans are open to developing friendships with people from their ethnic cultures as well as to experiencing various aspects of their culture, such as food or language.

Positive Experiences in the United States

Despite the challenges that the families encountered during resettlement, throughout the interviews they expressed their satisfaction with various aspects of their new lives in the U.S. First, the families expressed their appreciation for the safety and security in the U.S. They recounted their constant fears for their safety as well as for the safety of their family members while they were living in their countries of origin. They compared these fears to the safety, freedom, and stability that they have experienced in the U.S. as they expressed their satisfaction and appreciation for their security. When describing the most positive thing that happened to their family when coming to the U.S., the Iraqi participants stated:

In the beginning, the safety. And now to be more relaxed because my children here, and because in our country when my children leave in the evening I worry and I think a lot too much things. In the principal, safety is very good here. (personal communication, September, 2015)

The families also identified sources that supported and helped them during resettlement. They stated that the resettlement agency and DPSS greatly assisted them financially. The Iraqi participants also described receiving assistance from their church, family members, and sponsor. They stated that their sponsor was particularly helpful as she served as a translator and helped their sons find employment. They stated: “And in the beginning, our sponsor, she come with us and help us in translation in the social security and in the welfare....She is help us very much in the beginning” (personal communication, September, 2015).

The families also reported satisfaction with the U.S. healthcare system. They stated that they received medical insurance through DPSS and have had positive experiences when they needed medical care. According to the Afghan participant:

As soon as we got here, we got medical insurance through the welfare program with DPSS, the Department of Social Services. And so far it's good. Whenever the kids are sick, we have those cards...Everything is perfect on the healthcare system so far. (personal communication, August, 2015)

Summary

The three families interviewed for this study originated from Afghanistan, Burma, and Iraq, and they received status as refugees due to violence in their countries of origin. The dominant resettlement-related challenges that they reported were employment, financial insecurity, bureaucracy, English language competency, family separation, and unfulfilled expectations and hopes. These challenges had adverse affects on their mental health, and they reported experiencing constant worries and depression because of them. The families' description of their acculturation process revealed that they desire to maintain their ethnic culture while simultaneously embracing American culture. Despite the challenges that the participants encountered during resettlement, they recounted positive experiences that they also had and are thankful for the safety and security in the U.S.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the research results and describes the way in which the main resettlement related challenges, as reported by the research participants, are interconnected. It also describes the limitations of the research. Last, it presents recommendations for Social Work practice, policy, and research developed from the study's findings.

Discussion

This study sought to explore one research question: "What challenges do refugees encounter during the resettlement process?" Three refugee families from different countries of origin, Afghanistan, Burma, and Iraq, were interviewed. Each family sought resettlement as refugees in the United States (U.S.) due to violence in their home countries; however, the nature of the violence varied and included political, religious, and ethnic violence.

The results of this study support growing research on the dominant factors that challenge refugees during the resettlement process. Six themes of resettlement-related challenges were identified in the families' accounts of their resettlement experiences: employment, financial insecurities, bureaucracy, English language competency, family separation, and unfulfilled expectations and hope. Many of these themes were directly related to each other. In the area

of employment, the families expressed pre-resettlement worries about finding employment, and they struggled with securing employment during resettlement. They felt that their employment history and educational accomplishments were unrecognized by potential employers, which was also related to feelings of identity loss. This is consistent with Busch Nsonwu et al.'s (2013) findings that refugees are often underemployed because their professional skills, certifications, and degrees are not recognized in the U.S. as well as with Yako and Biswas's (2014) findings that underemployment is damaging to refugees' self-image. Phillimore (2011) found that among refugees, employment was related to better ability to acculturate and higher self-esteem, and employment may also facilitate refugees' community integration (Lee et al., 2015).

Related to employment was the theme of financial insecurity. When the families arrived in the United States, they received financial support from both the resettlement agency and from the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) for a period. However, once these benefits ceased, they were unprepared to provide for themselves because they were either unemployed or had jobs that paid minimum wage. This supports research that has found that once refugees find part-time or low-paying jobs, Social Services often reduces their benefits, and this creates financial hardships as they are unable to provide for themselves on their income (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Coughlan et al., 2016; Yako & Biswas, 2014). The families expressed difficulties with paying their rent, bills,

travel loans, and with providing their children with what they needed and/or wanted.

Bureaucracy, which as defined as challenges that stemmed from the various agencies that the families interacted with and from the agencies' policies and procedures, also created difficulties for the families as they sought to secure employment and to become financially stable. The bureaucracy in businesses' hiring practices posed challenges, and the Afghan participant identified that he was disadvantaged when searching for employment because employers frequently hire people who they have previous relationships and connections with. Employment-related challenges were especially difficult for the Afghan participant who had received his visa through the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Program because he had held high-ranking positions on U.S. government projects within Afghanistan, and he felt that his years of service to the U.S. government were disregarded by potential employers. He stated that his fellow SIV holders encountered the same employment difficulties. Fang and MacVicar (2015) found that Afghan SIV refugees struggle to obtain employment with adequate wages once resettled in the U.S., and as a result, many decide to return to Afghanistan, despite the inevitable dangers.

In addition, the families who experienced delays in receiving their identification documents were prevented from working during the period of time in which they did not have the documents. The lack of stable employment further led to financial difficulties. The families also experienced challenges within the

Department of Social Services (DPSS), which caused delays and difficulties in receiving their social services benefits and resulted in further financial difficulties. Last, the participants recognized that their resettlement agency provided them with the best services that they could, but they also acknowledged that the agency had limited helping abilities due to the system in which it operated. This supports Fang and MacVicar (2015)'s assertion that resettlement-related challenges may stem from resettlement agencies being overburdened and underfunded as well as from insufficient State Department aid. Phillimore (2011) also identified a lack of support services to assist refugees in obtaining resources and other needs.

The families experienced difficulties with developing their English language competency. Their limited English competency created additional challenges when attempting to secure employment, which corresponds with research indicating that English proficiency facilitates the availability of more employment opportunities (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Hauck et al., 2014). In addition, their limited ability to communicate with others led to feelings of isolation. Research indicates that refugees have difficulties integrating into the community (Lee et al., 2015) and with developing friendships with others due to a lack of English language proficiency (Hauck et al., 2014; Phillimore, 2011), and they also feel isolated due to their limited competency (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Phillimore, 2011).

Because the children in the families often developed proficiency in English more quickly than their parents, they developed new roles as linguistic interpreters for their parents. This is consistent with Koh et al.'s (2013) research findings that children in refugee families acquire linguistic brokering roles for their parents. The participants in Koh et al.'s study reported a significant strain due to this new role; however, the families in the current study did not report similar challenges. This may be due to the fact that within Koh et al.'s study, the participants were the children themselves; whereas, in the current study, the participants were the parents. The parents may not understand the strain that their children may feel due to their linguistic interpreter roles.

In addition, separation from family members in their country of origin posed difficulties for the participants, and they expressed missing their family members and feeling worried about their safety. Research indicates that refugees experience worries over the safety of their loved ones still living in the midst of instability and violence in their country of origin (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013; Hauck et al., 2014; Phillimore, 2011) and over their inability to assist them (Coughlan, 2016). Last, the families, described expectations and hopes for their new lives in the U.S. that have gone unfulfilled. They hoped to be able to continue their education; however, due to employment and financial constraints, they have been unable to do this. In addition, they expressed pre-resettlement expectations for receiving greater support, finding a stable job, and becoming financially stable. This is consistent with research indicating that refugees'

expectations regarding finances, housing, employment, and education upon resettlement in the U.S. differ from reality (Coughlan et al., 2016; Hauck et al., 2014; Yako & Biswas, 2014).

Underlining each of the six dominant themes was the negative impact that the encountered challenges had on the families' mental health. Within each theme, the families described being constantly worried and experiencing depression over the challenges. The families described feeling worried and depressed because of their employment and financial situations. For example, the Afghan participant stated that when he works late nights, he often cries most of the night, revealing feelings of despair and hopelessness. Research indicates that refugees experience stress associated with efforts to find employment and to fulfill financial obligations (Hauck et al., 2014). In addition, research has found associations between depression, employment (Warfa et al., 2012), and income (Cummings et al., 2011) among refugees. The Iraqi participants specifically described being constantly worried over their unfulfilled expectations for their children's education and employment as well as for their future, and they stated that this led to depression. This supports research indicating that refugees who hold a pre-migration elevated ideal of their resettlement may suffer from pervasive unhappiness (Coughlan et al., 2016) as well as from greater acculturative stress and are vulnerable to breakdown under this stress (Warfa et al., 2012).

The families also experienced worries and depression over their lack of English language competency, and they described being worried about their ability to be successful in the U.S. with limited English language skills and about their isolation stemming from their limited ability to communicate. Hauck et al. (2014) suggested that English-language proficiency is associated with acculturative stress, and Cummings et al. (2011) and Wrobel et al. (2009) posited that it is associated with depression. Last, participants described feeling worried about their family members' left in their country of origin safety. Research indicates that refugees' separation from and worries for the safety of their family members in their country of origin is related to stress (Hauck et al., 2014) and anxiety (Busch Nsonwu et al., 2013).

Although the families experienced many challenges during resettlement, they also had many positive experiences. They remembered their constant fears for their safety in their country of origin and stressed their appreciation for the safety and security in the U.S. In addition, although the participants encountered difficulties with some agencies, they recognized and were thankful for the assistance that they received from them and from other sources such as the resettlement agency, DPSS, church, family members, and their sponsors. Research indicates that the support that refugees receive from family members, communities, and institutional programs reduces stress (Hauck et al., 2014; Yako & Biswas, 2014) and depression (Cummings et al., 2011). Also, the families reported positive experiences and satisfaction with the U.S. healthcare system.

This contradicts research that suggests that due to the high costs of health expenses, refugees may lack access to appropriate healthcare (Hauck et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2015; Yako & Biswas, 2014) and that refugees are unsatisfied with various aspects of the American healthcare system including the cost of insurance and the lack of insurance coverage (Hauck et al., 2014). The families in the current study did not report dissatisfaction with the healthcare system or any difficulties with accessing health care.

Berry (2008)'s acculturation framework can be used to conceptualize the families' resettlement experiences. The families' responses to the acculturation-related questions revealed that they adopted Berry's acculturation strategy of integration. Integration describes the process in which the non-dominant group maintains its culture while simultaneously embracing the dominant group. The participants expressed their desire for their families to maintain their ethnic culture while simultaneously adopting the American culture. They stressed that they would always maintain their ethnic culture with them as they integrated the American culture into their lives. In addition, the families have developed friendships with both Americans and with people from their ethnic culture. Although the participants practiced integration of cultures, the Burmese participants explained that it is sometimes difficult to integrate with Americans because of differences in preferences and customs. Phillimore (2011) also found that refugees struggle with developing relationships with local people due to differences in cultural customs.

Berry's (2008) framework posits that the acculturation strategy adopted by the dominant group parallels in significance to the non-dominant group's strategy as it directly impacts that latter's acculturation process. The dominant group's strategy was assessed through the participants' perceptions of American's receptiveness towards people from their ethnic culture and towards their cultural customs. The participants expressed their belief that Americans are receptive to developing friendships with people from their ethnic culture as well as to experiencing various aspects of their cultural customs. This group attitude aligns with Berry's acculturation strategy of the melting pot, which describes the dominant group as valuing and accepting diversity. The melting pot strategy is the direct correlate of the integration strategy.

Phillimore (2011) examined Berry's (2008) acculturation framework, and more specifically the acculturation strategy of integration, among asylum seekers and refugees in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and found that refugees were aware of the negative social and political climate towards refugees as well as of the negative attitudes of members of the dominant group. This negative climate towards refugees decreased their confidence to seek relationships with members of the dominant group and resulted in social isolation. This demonstrates that refugees' host environments may have a significant impact on their overall resettlement experience; therefore, it is essential that refugees enter into environments that are welcoming and adaptive. In the current study, the refugees' perceptions of the Americans' receptiveness towards them may have

facilitated their ability to pursue integration into the community. For example, the Iraqi family described their involvement in a church community and the relationships that they have developed with members of the dominant group through their involvement.

Berry (2008) asserted that differences in the dominant and non-dominant groups' acculturation strategies as well as within group strategy differences creates difficulties during the acculturation process. Analyzing the within group acculturation strategies was beyond the scope of this study; however, the data revealed similarities between the families' strategies and their perceptions of society's strategy. The families' valued and maintained their ethnic culture, but they also embraced the American culture and felt that the people they have interacted with in the U.S. have embraced them. The consistencies between the strategies did not prevent the families from experiencing resettlement-related challenges; however, they may have mitigated the effects of these challenges and may account for the families' happiness with their lives in the U.S. and with their ability to recognize their positive experiences despite the various difficulties they have encountered.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the small sample size and the geographic homogeneity of the participants. The sample consisted of three families from different cities in Southern California. Thus, the results may be skewed and may be limited in their generalizability to refugees located in other areas of the U.S.

However, it is significant that although the families originated from different countries and were in different stages of human development, assumed from their diverse ages, each one reported similar resettlement-related challenges. Another limitation was that the interviews were conducted in the families' non-primary language, and so they may have been limited in expressing themselves. In addition, the researcher was unfamiliar with cultural idioms and had to rely on her interpretations of the refugees' statements, which may have created a bias when interpreting the results. Lastly, as is common in research, the families may have responded to the interview questions in ways that they believed would be viewed favorably by the researcher, who is a member of the dominant group in society, thus creating a social desirability bias in the results. However, because they were transparent about their resettlement-related challenges, it is likely that any social desirability bias did not prevent the researcher from discovering significant challenges to address the research question.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, various recommendations for Social Work practice, policy, and research can be posited to enhance refugees' resettlement experiences. This study has demonstrated that refugees' resettlement experiences may be impacted by the climate of the host society as well as by the dominant group's acculturation strategy. Refugees who attempt to resettle into communities with a negative climate and attitude towards refugees

may have difficulty in developing relationships with community members, which may then hinder integration (Phillimore, 2011). Resettlement agencies and other agencies that serve refugees can enhance the community climate and attitude by educating the community about the realities that refugees encounter in their countries of origin and during the resettlement process as well as about the benefits that they bring to their host communities. Distrust and fear may be fueled by a lack of knowledge and understanding; thus, by educating the community, these agencies may be able to dispel these negative dispositions towards refugees.

In addition, this research has demonstrated that refugees desire to develop relationships with Americans and that these relationships may be beneficial to their integration and overall resettlement experiences. The research also suggests that a common resettlement-related obstacle among refugees is the bureaucracy that they encounter in various agencies and the lack of resources available from resettlement agencies. Resettlement agencies may be able to facilitate the development of relationships with Americans as well as supplement their work by creating volunteer programs in which volunteers from the community are partnered with newly resettled refugee families to assist them during the resettlement process.

Sawtell, Dickson-Swift, and Verrinder (2010) examined a volunteer program for refugee resettlement in Australia, The Friends and Tutors of the Sudanese and Burundi, and found that the volunteers were able to fill in the gaps

left by under-resourced agencies. In addition, the volunteers identified that their relationships with the refugees developed into friendships through their involvement in the program. Coughlan et al. (2016) also advocated for the creation of mentorship programs for refugees and posited that the relationships built through such programs may help refugees network with potential employers, integrate into the culture and community, and expand their social circles as they develop friendships. Phillimore (2011) found that refugees who were unable to interact with community members were more likely to become marginalized than integrated into the community, and she posited that it is essential that agencies facilitate opportunities for these interactions and inter-cultural relationships.

Volunteers can assist refugees in acclimating to their new environments and cultures as well as in navigating the various agencies that they must interact with during resettlement. Volunteers may also be able to aid refugees in addressing many of the other resettlement challenges that that families in this study reported. Lee et al. (2015) identified English language competency and employment as barriers to community integration, and so these areas may especially benefit from volunteers' assistance. Volunteers may help refugees strengthen their English language literacy by practicing conversational English with them, or they may be able to assist refugees in the employment search process. In addition, volunteers can support refugees by being available to answer questions that they develop as they seek to adapt to and understand their host societies. The volunteers in The Friends and Tutors of the Sudanese

and Burundi program provided assistance to refugees with various tasks and resources including driver education, tutoring, and housing (Sawtell et al., 2010).

Because many of the challenges reported in this study were interconnected, as volunteers assist refugees in addressing specific difficulties, the refugees may experience alleviation of connected difficulties, such as mental health challenges. Resettlement agencies may find local universities, faith-based organizations, and other non-profit organizations to be especially receptive to their efforts to mobilize volunteers. Volunteer programs may provide dual benefits as volunteers may find that their involvement with diverse cultures enriches both their lives and their communities (Sawtell et al., 2010).

The refugee resettlement process in the U.S. is largely controlled by various policies that dictate the type of resources and assistance that refugees receive as well as the timeline for their distribution. It is difficult for refugees to find stable employment and to become self-sufficient during this limited timeframe, and so social workers can advocate for policies that extend the assistance or for programs that are more adaptive to refugees' needs and assist them in developing the skills to become self-sufficient. Coughlan et al. (2016) found that support services for refugees were insufficient and posited that the U.S. government must collaborate with resettlement agencies to extend support services in areas including literacy, job training, and employment services. Lee et al. (2015) also found that from the perspective of service providers, extended federal benefits would facilitate better community integration for refugees. As

suggested by Phillimore (2011), the political climate towards refugees in their host environments can negatively impact their integration, and thus, in order to improve this climate, social workers can also advocate for policies that uphold the values of diversity and create a welcoming environment for refugees.

Due to the limited generalizability of this study, further research can expand upon its results by exploring the resettlement-related challenges identified in the participants' accounts of their resettlement experiences with other diverse populations. In addition, this study examined the dominant group's acculturation strategy by assessing it through the refugees' perspectives. Due to the possibility that social desirability bias may have influenced the participants' responses, further research should examine the dominant group's acculturation strategy from the dominant group's perspective.

Summary

This study identified six resettlement-related challenges for refugees: employment, financial insecurities, bureaucracy, English language competency, family separation, and unfulfilled expectations and hope. These challenges had significant negative impacts on the families' mental health and were related to depression and worries. In addition, this study discovered that the refugee participants adopted Berry's (2008) acculturation strategy of integration and perceived that their host society utilized the acculturation strategy of the melting pot. The researcher posits that society's climate towards refugees and the alignment of the two groups acculturation strategies facilitated the refugees'

ability to pursue integration into the community and enabled them to maintain their happiness and recognition of positive experiences in the midst of their various challenges. Based on the results of this study, the researcher recommends that social workers enhance the host society's climate towards refugees by educating the community about the challenges that refugees encounter as well as about the benefits that they bring to their host communities. In addition, it is recommended that resettlement agencies facilitate the development of relationships between refugees and Americans as well as supplement their work by creating volunteer programs in which volunteers from the community are partnered with newly resettled refugee families to assist them during the resettlement process. Last, the researcher recommends that social workers advocate for policies that are more adaptive to refugees' needs and that improve the social climate towards refugees.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide

Demographics

What are your ages?
How many children do you have/What are their ages?
What country are you from?
How many months have you lived in the U.S.?
How many people are in your family?
What is each person's age?

Pre-Resettlement

Can you tell me about the situation in your home country and what led you to seek refugee status?
Did you apply for refugee status in your home country, or did you apply in another country? **(If applied in home country, then skip next 2 questions)**
What country(s) did you go to once you left _____ (insert home country)?
Why did you choose to go to that particular country(s)?
When did you apply for refugee status?
What was the process of applying for refugee status like?
If SIV case, skip next 2 questions. SIV cases automatically get resettled in the U.S.
When did you apply for resettlement in the U.S.?
What was the application process for resettlement in the U.S. like?

Resettlement

What were some thoughts and feelings that you had about coming to the U.S.?
What were some worries that you had?
Tell me about your first three months in the U.S.
What were some challenges that you encountered during these months?
Tell me about your experience when trying to find a job in the U.S.
What was your financial situation like during resettlement?
Tell me about your experience with the language differences in the U.S.
How do you see your family changing since resettlement?
What were some ideas that you had of what your life would be like in the U.S. before you came?
Did these ideas come true?
If they did not come true- How did that affect you when _____ (insert particular idea) did not come true?
Tell me about your experience with the American healthcare system.
Did you experience difficulties with getting your official name on documents (First Name Unknown)?
If yes- How did that affect you during resettlement?
Did you leave any family in your home country when you migrated to the United States?

If yes- How did this separation affect you during resettlement?
During resettlement, where did you receive help when you needed it?
What was the most positive thing that happened to you and your family during resettlement?
Of all of the topics that we have talked about, which ones would you say caused you the most difficulty during resettlement?

Berry's (2008) Framework of Acculturation

Are there any parts of your _____ (insert nationality) culture that you would like to keep in your family? **If yes-** which ones? (if they ask, give examples such as language, marriage traditions, roles of men and women within the family, clothing, food.)

Are there any parts of American culture that you like and have made a part of your life? **If yes-** which ones? (e.g. language, clothing, food).

Do you have _____ (insert nationality) friends?

If no, ask why

If yes, where did you meet these friends?

Would you like more _____ (insert nationality) friends?

Do you have American friends?

If no, ask why

If yes, where did you meet your friends?

Would you like more American friends?

In your opinion, are Americans eager to be friends with people from _____ (insert nationality)?

In your opinion, are Americans eager to experience or eager to learn about parts of _____ (insert nationality) culture? (e.g. food, clothing, language, roles of men and women)

Additional Questions

What are some challenges that you believe other _____ (insert nationality) encounter during the first three months of life to the U.S.?

Is there anything else that we should have talked about, but did not?

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT



College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Social Work

INFORMED CONSENT

The interview in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate the challenges that refugees encounter during the resettlement process. This study is being conducted by Rebecca Habeeb-Silva under the supervision of Dr. Janet Chang, Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB). This study has been approved by the School of Social Work Subcommittee of CSUSB's Institutional Review Board.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research is to learn about your experience during your resettlement process in the United States. Specifically, its purpose is to learn about challenges and difficulties that you encountered during resettlement. The goal of the study is to help professionals who work with refugees better understand the challenges that refugees encounter when they first come to America. By doing this, the study aims to prepare professionals to better help refugees during the resettlement process.

DESCRIPTION: I will ask you a series of questions about your experience in your home country, your experience during the application process for refugee status and for resettlement in the United States, and your experience during resettlement. When discussing your resettlement experience, I will ask you questions about multiple subjects including, but not limited to, employment, family relationships, and language.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation is voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You may skip or not answer any questions and can withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Although I received your contact information from Catholic Charities, this study is independent from Catholic Charities, and your participation will not affect any assistance or services that you may be receiving from Catholic Charities.

CONFIDENTIAL: The information that you provide in your interview will remain confidential. I will label your interview with a non-identifying letter, and I am the only person who will know which letter corresponds to which family.

DURATION: The expected duration of the interview will be between 45 minutes and 1 hour. If more information is needed, I may contact you and ask you to answer more questions. Your participation in answering these follow-up questions is also voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

RISKS: This study involves the following risk

- Possible discomfort at recalling events that occurred before your resettlement and at recalling challenges that you encountered during resettlement.

BENEFITS: This study involves the following benefits

- Assisting in the knowledge development of professionals who work with refugees so that they can provide better help and services to refugees.

VIDEO/AUDIO/PHOTOGRAPH: I understand this research will be audio recorded Initials _____

CONTACT: You may call Dr. Janet Chang, Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino at (909) 537-5184 or email at jchang@csusb.edu for answers about the research and about your rights as a participant as well as in the event of a research-related injury.

California State University, San Bernardino
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee
APPROVED 5/12/16 VOID AFTER 5/25/16
IRB CHAIR

909.537.5501

5500 UNIVERSITY PARKWAY, SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92407-2393

The California State University • Bakersfield • Channel Islands • Chico • Dominguez Hills • East Bay • Fresno • Fullerton • Humboldt • Long Beach • Los Angeles Maritime Academy • Monterey Bay • Northridge • Pomona • Sacramento • San Bernardino • San Diego • San Francisco • San Jose • San Luis Obispo • San Marcos • Sonoma • Stanislaus

RESULTS: After June 2016 you may obtain a copy of the completed study from Catholic Charities of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties at 1450 N. D. Street San Bernardino, CA 92405 or by emailing My-Hanh Luu at mluu@ccsbriv.org.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT:

I have read and understand the consent document and agree to participate in your study.

_____ (Date)
_____ (Place an X mark here)

California State University, San Bernardino
Social Work Institutional Review Board Sub-Committee
APPROVED 2/12/16 VOID AFTER 5/12/16
IRB# 201544 CHAIR [Signature]

APPENDIX C
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Mental Health Providers that Accept Medi-Cal

Inland Empire Health Plan (IEHP)

If you have IEHP and would like to talk further with someone about your refugee experience, you can find mental health providers on IEHP.org or by calling 1-800-440-IEHP (4347) 8:00am-5:00pm Monday-Friday or by emailing MemberServices@IEHP.org. Your primary care physician can also assist you in finding a mental health provider.

Molina Healthcare

If you have Molina Healthcare and would like to talk further with someone about your refugee experience, you can find providers on Molinahealthcare.com or by calling 888-665-4621 7:00am-7:00pm Monday-Friday. Your primary care physician can also assist you in finding a mental health provider.

APPENDIX D
CATEGORY RULES AND DEFINITIONS

Category Rules and Definitions

Biographical Data

This category included biographical information including country of origin, family size, family members ages, and length of time lived in the U.S. It also included the participants' process of seeking a refugee visa including reason for needing the visa, application process, and application timeline

Employment

This category included any statements in which participants discuss challenges and frustrations that they encountered when trying to find a job. The category Identity Loss was combined with Employment, and Identity Loss included any statements in which participants expressed loss related to their identities including loss of education status and employment status. The category Self-Sufficiency was combined with Employment, and Self-Sufficiency included statements in which participants expressed a desire to be self-sufficient.

Financial Insecurities

This category included challenges that were related to finances.

Bureaucracy

This category included challenges that stemmed from the various agencies that the families interacted with and from the agencies' policies and procedures, including difficulties in receiving support from agencies and difficulties with getting their correct information on their identity documents.

English Language Competency

This category included challenges related to participants' limited English-language competency. The category Isolation was combined with English Language Competency and included statements in which participants expressed feeling distanced from people in society due to their limited ability to communicate. The category Parenting was combined with English Language Competency, and Parenting included statements in which participants described their children developing new roles within the family due to their English-language proficiency.

Family Separation

This category included challenges that arose from the participants being separated from their immediate family during the refugee visa application process and from their extended family who still live in their country of origin.

Unfulfilled Expectations

This category included challenges related to the contrast between participants' pre-resettlement expectations of their lives in the U.S. and their realities during resettlement.

Mental Health

This category included statements in which the participants described ways in which their resettlement experiences negatively impacted their mental health.

Acculturation

This category included statements that participants made regarding their family's adjustment to life and to the culture in the U.S. as well as their responses to the questions in the interview guide assessing which of Berry's (2008) acculturation strategies they used.

Positive Experiences

This category included any statements in which participants expressed receiving support and help during resettlement. The category Satisfaction was combined with Positive Experiences, and Satisfaction included any statements in which the participants expressed satisfaction with the resettlement process and with their new lives in the U.S. The category Differences Between Country of Origin and the U.S. was combined with Positive Experiences and included statements in which participants expressed satisfaction with the safety and security in the U.S. in comparison to the fears they experienced in their country of origin. The category Healthcare was combined with Positive Experiences, and Healthcare included the participants' experiences with and perceptions of the American healthcare system. Healthcare was combined with Positive Experiences because the participants reported positive perceptions of the American healthcare system

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