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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO IRAQI REFUGEES'
RESETTLEMENT EXPERIENCE IN CALIFORNIA'S
INLAND EMPIRE

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
Megan Elizabeth Justice

June 2013

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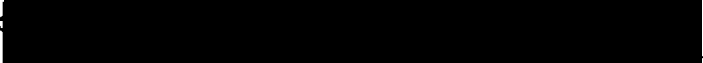
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June 2013

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ABSTRACT

Since the United States began assisting refugees with resettling in 1975, the refugee population has changed more than the policies governing resettlement. The ongoing war in Iraq has led to a significant increase in Iraqi refugees in the United States. Between the years 2007 and 2012 there have been 64,174 Iraqi refugees admitted into the United States, with 9,388 in 2011 and 2,501 between January 1st and March 31st 2012. Despite the significant increase in the Iraqi population in the United States, little is known about the quality or success of their resettlement. California has become home to 19,435 Iraqi refugees and comprises over 90% of the current refugee population of Catholic Charities of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties in California, a non-profit multi-service agency. The purpose of this study was to identify the services and variables that Iraqi refugees deem as helpful and unhelpful to a successful resettlement in the United States. This study used an exploratory quantitative design with a survey designed by the author and approved by Catholic Charities, and mailed to 20 Iraqi refugees with thirteen completed surveys returned for a 65% return rate. This study found what

previous studies have suggested, refugees require and request that resettlement services be provided longer than the current eight month time frame and that there be an extension to financial aid, medical services, mental health services, and assistance finding employment. This may suggest that there needs to be improvements in refugee resettlement services and policies in the United States.

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If not for the help of many individuals, this research project could not have been completed. I would like to thank each person who participated in this study and let us learn from his or her experiences. You are all very inspiring.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Before the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees created the formalized process of becoming a refugee, persecuted persons had been seeking refuge away from their home countries. Since that time formal entities have become involved with the intention of helping such oppressed populations. The United States is one nation that has such intentions though has had limited changes to its policies and procedures despite the ever changing needs of the refugee population. One especially vulnerable group is the Iraqi refugee population.

Problem Statement

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2009) defines a refugee as one who is forced to escape from his or her country due to a well-founded fear of persecution because of belonging to a racial or ethnic group, religion, or political opinion. Refugees are often not expected to be able to return to their home countries and therefore begin the process of "resettling". Resettlement begins once a stateless person is determined

by the UNHCR (2009) to be a refugee and in need of continued international protection. From that point on the person in exile may begin the process of starting life anew in a different country.

Some current trends in refugee resettlement are a result of issues of instability in the Middle East (Regeester, Parcels, & Levine, 2012). Consequently, many refugees are moving to the United States, more specifically to California, "from Iran, Vietnam, the former Soviet Union, Iraq, and Africa" (California Department of Social Services, 2011, p.1). This is a change from a few decades prior when refugees were mainly fleeing from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in relation to the Vietnam Conflict.

Of the over 10 million refugees in the world (Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, n.d.), the United States of America has welcomed between 73,293 (in 2010) and 122,066 (in 1990) refugees into its borders each year since resettlement began (Homeland Security, 2011) with 696,000 of these refugees having resettled in California (California Department of Social Services, 2011). Between 2007 and 2012 there have been 64,174 Iraqi

refugees alone admitted into the United States (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2012).

Though all refugees may experience many difficulties during the resettlement process, recent research indicates, "that relative to other recent refugee groups, Iraqis are having a significantly more difficult time establishing their lives..." during resettlement (Regester, Parcels, & Levine, 2012, p. 1). Issues of extreme vulnerability for the population in Iraq arises from ethnic persecution, affiliations with the United States, and difficulties obtaining legal status in other countries or surviving in refugee camps. Iraqi refugees continue to remain more vulnerable in the United States during resettlement due to the poor economic climate and racial attitudes towards the Iraqi ethnic group (Regester, Parcels, & Levine, 2012).

Purpose of the Study

Due to the tens of thousands of refugees moving to the United States annually, it has become more important to further understand the process of resettlement and related complications. When the Refugee Act of 1980 was established, the United States considered the primary

goal of resettlement to be economic independence (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009). During this period in time refugees were more adaptable to life in America because they had more job skills and education, preparing them for the workforce (Parkins, 1984).

As a result of recent world events, including the Iraqi war, those seeking refuge have experienced more time without a permanent home, often in a refugee camp, with few educational or work opportunities. With such a background there can only be a mere expectation for success in the American workplace. Furthermore, in the past few decades, the annual number of refugees admitted in the United States has rapidly increased. From 1975 through 1993 over 1.6 million refugees have resettled in the United States, all of which are eligible to receive assistance through refugee services unless they have become citizens. Despite having admitted over one million refugees into the country in an almost 20 year period, the level of funds for refugee services has remained unchanged from the previous era (Department of Health and Human Services, 1995).

In addition to outdated economic policies, other complications during the resettlement process need to be understood and re-evaluated. Such complications include racism and ignorance towards the refugee population by U.S. citizens (Husarska, 2008), perception of poor prospects of the future and perceived lack of post-resettlement services (Regeister, Parcells, & Levine, 2012), and insufficient services provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Glassman & Skolnik, 1984; Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009).

Though the ideal resettlement experience may vary by culture and from one refugee to another, for the purpose of this study, a successful resettlement is defined with multiple factors affecting the Iraqi refugee population. The "success" of Iraqi refugee resettlement was measured through the permanency of the resettlement, including economic independence, self-rated physical and mental health, transportation, and cultural dissonance (Khoo, 2012; Husarska, 2008). Success in resettlement even encompasses subjective feelings including personal happiness and a sense of being connected to one's community (Khoo, 2012).

This study explored the resettlement services and supports given to Iraqi refugees in California's Inland Empire and gave Iraqi refugees an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns related to resettlement, as well provides guidance for future policies and services offered by resettlement agencies. Iraqi refugees were surveyed because it is from the refugee population that the most accurate knowledge can be gained addressing resettlement issues.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

With this new era in refugee resettlement, it is important that social workers and resettlement staff acknowledge and understand specific issues affecting their target population. With this study, perceived challenges during resettlement and opinions on resettlement services were discovered. The findings have implications for social workers on micro and macro levels. Direct services may be impacted on the micro level and macro social workers may have policy and advocacy obligations based on the findings.

Chapter 2 outlines resettlement challenges and reasons for refugee vulnerability. This includes

areas of focus such as economics, mental health, and cultural incoherence. This is followed by a discussion of theories guiding conceptualization of refugee resettlement.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Since the United States began implementing policy regarding refugee resettlement with the Refugee Act of 1980, "the time frame for eligibility [for assistance] has gradually been decreased from 36 months in 1981 to the present 8 month limit" (Potocky, 1996, p. 168-169). Such a time is not only insufficient to meet the manifest goals of economic self-sufficiency and decreased dependence on welfare, but it is not based on empirical data. Considering the lack of research supporting the time frame for services, lack of cultural sensitivity towards the Iraqi population and other ethnic minorities, and the lack of realistic expectations imposed on refugees upon arrival in the United States, the findings of this study may significantly impact contemplations for future policy and resettlement services offered to refugees (Potocky, 1996).

Available literature discussing refugee resettlement in the United States has a dominant focus on the economic factors of resettlement. Such an emphasis is reflective

of U.S. policies on resettlement services strongly encouraging refugees to become economically independent within eight months of resettlement (Potocky, 1996). Another literature concentration is that of common mental health issues impairing Iraqi refugees, including adjustment disorders, anxiety disorders and depression (Flaskerud & Anh, 1988). Iraqi refugees have the highest posttraumatic stress disorder and physical injury rates compared to any other resettled group in recent history (Regeester, Parcells, & Levine, 2012). This, along with cultural factors surrounding resettlement and increased vulnerability with having refugee status, are often neglected in policy formation. A comprehensive review of refugee resettlement in the U.S. and guiding theories can bridge the gap between policies surrounding resettlement and the actual experience of relocating to the United States.

A Focus on Economics

Social policy goals for refugees in the United States are narrowly focused. Within this perspective the primary goal is for those resettling in America to depend on welfare and economic aid as little as possible. This

viewpoint is expressed in the United States Refugee Program (Department of Health and Human Services, 1995). The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) states this is a main concern because the level of funding available to refugees has remained unchanged while the number of refugees migrating to America has continued to increase substantially since the 1980s. The DHHS continues to acknowledge the impact the refugee program has on those resettling and the vulnerability of refugees in their initial years in the United States. However, policy continues to state that current services remain intact for the purposes of increasing the likelihood of early employment (Department of Health and Human Services, 1995) and providing as little financial assistance as possible (Potocky-Tripodi, 2003). This is done despite goals for resettlement outlined in the Refugee Act and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stating that long-term self-sufficiency needs to be a primary goal of resettlement to fulfill moral and legal obligations related to resettlement (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009).

Increasing refugees' dependence on financial aid are non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are the

means by which refugees are connected to government assistance during resettlement. This process adds to the vulnerability of the refugee population by instilling dependency on public aid before finding meaningful employment (Nawyn, 2010). For refugees who have had no work experience and little education, this process is confusing and difficult to overcome.

With a focus on economic independence, there is little consideration for factors affecting workability of those moving to the United States. As a result of the experiences stemming from pre-migration stressors, new refugees may not have reached the necessary level of cultural understanding nor have they not come to a point where they have overcome mental health complications, inhibiting them to find and keep full-time work in a new country. Many Iraqi refugees are facing these very problems in addition to seeking employment in a poor economic climate, decreasing their chances for successful economic independence.

Mental Health and Resettlement

Among the many reasons that resettlement in the United States can be challenging are the mental health

crises faced by many refugees. Though mental health services are offered to refugees upon arrival in the United States, they are often underutilized due to cultural misunderstandings and stigmas attached to receiving such services. Chen, Sullivan, Lu, and Shibusawa (2003) explain how many refugees underutilize mental health services due to negative views of many diagnoses, shame, and the need to save face in their communities.

“Mental health” as a term has a different meaning for the Iraqi population. Mental health services in Iraq are generally composed of psychiatric hospitals where one would go for a severe, psychotic illness (Regester, Parcells, & Levine, 2012). This concept of treatment, along with a “tough military mentality” (Regester, Parcells, & Levine, 2012, p. 8) keeps many from receiving services, especially men. Despite the fact that one in five Iraqi refugees have been the victims of torture or violence, seventy-five percent have been affected by bombings, and eighty percent have witnessed a shooting, their cultural view continues to complicate the need to receive help during a difficult time of transition (Regester, Parcells, & Levine, 2012; Georgetown

University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009).

Furthermore, one particularly troubling aspect of mental health during resettlement is that being a victim of torture may be the qualifying criteria for a refugee to resettle in a new country, however, there is no system in place to pass information related to the trauma down to the resettling agency. The refugee may never actually receive any mental health services for their qualifying disability because of this lack of communication (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009).

In order to contribute to a more successful resettlement, these frequently occurring mental health issues need to be addressed in a way acceptable to the refugees who are experiencing them. Dhooper and Tran (1998) and Jamil et al. (2007) explain that the most common occurring mental health issues among Iraqi refugees are posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety. These studies also discuss three major "hurdles" preventing Iraqi refugees from obtaining clinical services. These include patient-related factors, social environmental factors, and health care system factors. In detail, these barriers include problems

associated with language barriers, lack of knowledge about resources, no desire to seek mental health resources from someone outside one's culture, fear of Western medicine, lack of funds and resources, and health-care providers who are ignorant of the complexities related to physical and mental health needs to refugees (Dhooper & Tran, 1998).

Shoeb, Weinstein, and Mollica (2007) further explain how inexperience with, or ignorance of, the refugee population impacts mental health treatment. It was found that some mental health questionnaires and instruments, particularly those used for posttraumatic stress disorder, are not culturally appropriate for the Iraqi population. For an inexperienced clinician, this could lead to poor treatment and misdiagnosis.

Linked to the idea of cultural incompetence in diagnostic testing is the research by Nickerson, Bryant, Steel, Silove, and Brooks (2010). They state the standard course of posttraumatic stress disorder is challenged in its common understanding with Iraqi refugees. Refugees have been found to display high occurrences of this disorder; however, those who have left family behind not only display posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms

rooted in past memories, but experience ongoing psychological distress related to the family members left behind. Having this experience essentially is a continual re-traumatization for the family member who has fled. This is a result of knowing and having experienced what their family members left behind may be experiencing. This concept may be challenging within the standard course of treatment in the United States for posttraumatic stress disorder and trauma, as it is currently understood.

Flaskerud and Anh (1988) contribute to the knowledge base of refugee mental health issues by noting that among this population there is an increase in psychiatric and psychosomatic problems. It is vastly more complex to address the psychological needs of a population in a country that has little understanding of emotional distress as experienced in other cultures. Strober (1994) explains that as the refugee population has grown in the United States, knowledge of problems experienced by refugees has not. This leads to a situation where these individuals are coming to a new country in very poor conditions with different languages and values, where they are simply not understood. This time of

transitioning may actually mask underlying symptomology, pushing back the appearance of symptoms to up to 12 months after resettling. Under current refugee policy, this is beyond the eight-month period of service provisions from NGOs, making the process of seeking help more challenging, if not impossible (Strober, 1994).

With consideration of the United States' strong emphasis on economic self-sufficiency and the frequent occurrence of mental health issues that affect refugees, it seems improbable that most refugees will meet the economic independence goal set for them in America without drastic policy changes. Similar to mental health concerns, cultural factors are often at work complicating refugees' attempts to start life anew in the United States.

Cultural Incoherence and Vulnerability

Forced migration is accompanied by more pragmatic challenges than psychological trauma. Iraqi refugees are vulnerable because of their legal status, exposure to traumatic events, as well as religious and political affiliations (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009). Cultural problems also abound

during the refugee resettlement process. Main themes that have arisen in research on culture and resettlement include isolation with lack of family and community support, criminal tendencies, differences in acculturation, racial attitudes in the United States, and a general absence of a schema for life in America.

A reoccurring situation for those resettling in the United States is that refugees have not previously experienced the social services provided to them in America. Since there have been no comparable human service offered previously, refugees may have difficulties understanding why another person is so intricately involved in their lives for several months (Nicholson & Kay, 1999). Likewise, the services offered by NGOs may take culture into account, but not to the extent where the services are unique to each ethnic group assisted by the agency (Parkins, 1984).

Additional cultural factors contributing to incoherence with refugees stem from the policies governing NGOs and resettlement agencies. At the time of entrance to the United States in the 1980s it was common practice based on policy to spread refugees out in different areas of the city, state, or country. The

rationale behind this practice was not based on empirical data and was implemented with the intention of encouraging refugees to assimilate to American culture quicker (Matsuoka, 1990; Parkins, 1984). Nicholson and Kay (1999) and Sossou, Craig, Oren, and Schank (2008) state that this practice instead results in isolation, lack of family support, and deprived many refugees of normal socialization with peer groups. The consequences of this population being subjected to prolonged isolation and lack of coherence in the community can be severe, including poverty and possible crime and gang associations. Casimiro, Hancock, and Northcote (2007) verify that isolation is a continual problem with Iraqi refugees. Due to ethnic and religious affiliations, further isolation can occur with Iraqi refugees in addition to simply having refugee status.

Additional cultural struggles result from many resettled refugees being over-represented in poverty and criminal reports involving financial gain. Not surprisingly many of these refugees who are struggling have become ineligible for further economic and resettlement services. Khoo (2012) found that refugees in their study generally believe that Americans have a

negative attitude towards refugees and are unwilling to assist foreigners in the United States. This opinion may have some support. In 2007 the Department of Homeland Security implemented enhanced background and security checks for refugees from Iraq wanting to resettle in the U.S. (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2012). This increase in security for the Iraqi population has sent an unwelcoming message.

Such negative attitudes are also reflected in a study done by Matsuoka (1990) where refugees reported feeling racially discriminated against in the United States. Such discrimination can be directly reflected in acts of systemic racism. A common occurrence of this is employers that are often skeptical about hiring refugees in their businesses (Glassman & Skolnik, 1984).

Outside of employment and economic difficulties, generational differences are prevalent in refugee families. School-age children are found to acculturate more quickly than their parents due to opportunities to learn American customs at school and during after-school programs. This is often troubling to parents and grandparents as they may have a more limited

understanding of their children's new behaviors and habits (Nicholson & Kay, 1999).

Acculturation is also often easier for women than men. This becomes problematic when women enter the workplace. A husband may feel shame over his wife and children adopting American ways before he can understand them and may feel as though he must "save face" for his family by maintaining a traditional lifestyle (Matsuoka, 1990). A growing fear among many Iraqi refugees is that of losing their culture and religion as the younger generation accepts and adapts to the new environment where the family has resettled (Nickerson, Bryant, Brooks, Steel, & Silove, 2009).

Cultural incoherence may be experienced by refugee women entering the workforce for the first time. Depending on the culture, it may be the family's view that women belong in the home raising children or doing domestic tasks. This could also create a power imbalance in the family if a woman must work to support the family and earns as much money as her husband (Matsuoka, 1990). Moore (1982) states that, often, without the proper attention paid to cultural factors such as these, life

may not seem to improve any from the point prior to arrival in the United States.

A change from a traditional way of living will also includes new responsibilities and stressors. Tasks such as managing money, choices about health care, and attending to children's school issues are also factors adding stress to newly resettled refugees. Also, for those who were fortunate to have previous work experience or degrees, these are often not transferable to the United States causing role loss and depression (Hilado, Aydt, du Mont, & Hanley, 2009).

Though many solutions have been contemplated and occasionally implemented by NGOs, resettlement continues to be a challenge. Services are often not provided by a culturally competent person and end too quickly. Therapeutic interventions need to be refined, and non-Western views could be considered (Nicholson & Kay, 1999; Hilado, Aydt, du Mont, & Hanley, 2009).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Three theories give insight on refugee adaptation in the United States. The first theory is described by Potoky-Tripodi (2008) as the six factors that affect

successful economic adaptation. The six factors, which may determine either a negative or positive resettlement, are essentially demographic characteristics. Two primary factors are age and gender. As mentioned previously, both can impact the acculturation process of refugees and, therefore, affect the resettlement experience.

Systems theory also includes plight-related characteristics that help to conceptualize resettlement. These characteristics affect mental health status and attitudes towards displacement. Host country related characteristics, policies related to resettlement, residency characteristics, and noneconomic aspects of adaptation are also important factors to consider when examining resettlement. Situations in which a refugee's journey was terrorizing and fearful, for example, could adversely impact one's mental health, leading towards a negative attitude during the replacement process (Turner, 2011).

The third theory conceptualizes "four common roles of the voluntary sector" (Law & Hasenfeld, 1989, p. 17) which contribute to effective resettlement services. The first role is "Vanguard"; this refers to smaller voluntary agencies, which are more flexible and

innovative than larger ones, providing newer projects or services. Such an agency may have the capacity to provide more individualized and culturally specific services to their clients. The second role for the voluntary sector is "Particularistic". This role is to protect the interests of unique groups and for the agency to act as an advocate and works in more of a macro setting than the Vanguard. Meanwhile, "Value Guardian" is the third role and promotes volunteerism from citizens, which creates community awareness and reduces the stigma of having refugee status. The final role is "Supplementary Function". This means that volunteer agencies should meet the needs of refugees not met by governmental entities.

If these features could be considered more and were more prevalent in NGOs, resettled refugees could face fewer challenges and could consider their experience more successful. Each of these theories guides conceptualization of Iraqi refugee challenges with resettlement. It can be explained and even predicted what challenges may be faced and the roles of helping organization upon resettlement.

Summary

Resettlement is an economically, emotionally, and culturally taxing journey for Iraqi refugees looking for a new life. In the United States many factors contribute to the process that could be detrimental for newcomers in the country. Literature has shown that resettlement is complicated by many factors and refugees are often confused and hurt in the process. Further studies need to be done to examine what changes in policy and service delivery can contribute to a more positive resettlement process. However, it is certain if the resettlement process could be more individually tailored and expanded beyond the current eight month time for assistance and if the barriers to independence were addressed, the United States' goal of economic self-sufficiency could be more obtainable (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009). Although many Iraqis are wary of perceived lack of post-resettlement services and refugee assistance programs often fail to ensure a fair chance at economic self-sufficiency, resettlement continues to be a viable option (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

To create a more successful and culturally sensitive resettlement experience for Iraqi refugees resettling in the United States, this study was designed to survey a sample of the refugee population who has experienced this process firsthand. Details of the surveys administered and procedures for which are covered as well as what information was asked and gathered. An analysis was completed on this data to provide information for future use.

Study Design

The method used to conduct this study was survey research. Surveys were mailed directly to participating refugees who have experienced the process of resettling in the United States. This study was aimed at surveying Iraqi refugees directly due to the insight they may give on their own personal experiences related to resettling.

Fewer cultural barriers were presented during this research than expected because the participants who were surveyed had an appropriate understanding of English and

no translation was necessary. However, the study itself is done in hope of confronting such limitations. The questions asked answered what were support systems and services lead to a more successful resettlement experience for refugees coming to the United States.

Sampling

Invitations to participate in this study were presented to Iraqi refugees resettled through Catholic Charities in San Bernardino, CA; an agency offering resettlement services in San Bernardino and surrounding cities. Though twenty invitations were sent, only thirteen responses were collected. Selection criteria for the subjects included adult refugees of Iraqi descent, who have been resettled in the San Bernardino area through Catholic Charities between six to eleven months prior to the survey being administered; though four of the participants reported having been in the United States longer. This was to ensure the participants were able to recall their resettlement experience and feel they have lived in the United States long enough to express their feelings about the resettlement process. Only twenty refugees were selected to participate due to

availability of clients at Catholic Charities matched the criteria. The alternative to surveying this population would be to interview social workers in resettlement agencies about what services they would see as beneficial to refugees. However, the refugee population is chosen because they can provide the most accurate information regarding the resettlement process.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data collected from the surveys included demographic information, information on economic independence, how engaged the subjects were in their communities, degree of self-rated happiness and physical health, the subjects' availability of transportation, and degree of cultural dissonance. Qualitative data collected explored what the Iraqi refugee subjects defined as a successful resettlement in terms of what they found difficult as they resettled in the United States and what was less difficult than expected.

Strengths of this collection method include asking the refugees directly about their experiences as opposed to using secondary data or surveying social workers about their experiences with refugee clients. Limitations

included the limited geographic area of refugees being surveyed and the time frame of the subjects living in the United States, along with the limited responses from the participants. Since refugees currently receiving services were the primary respondents, refugees who have been resettled longer and may have more reflective input were left out.

Procedures

Catholic Charities, a non-profit social service agency that provides resettlement services, offered opportunities for individuals who have experienced resettling in the United States to participate in this study. The participants in this study are of Iraqi descent and have been declared refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and moved to the United States with refugee status. All participants were voluntary and were informed that their services would not be affected by participating or not participating in this study. The director of Refugee and Immigration Services at Catholic Charities also included a cover letter from the agency stating their support of the research project; this is listed in Appendix D. After subjects were

selected, surveys were mailed to willing participants. The surveys asked the questions listed in Appendix A.

On January 18th, 2013, the surveys were mailed to the selected subjects along with an informed consent form and a debriefing statement, Appendix B and C, respectively. The director was able to personally call six of the subjects to inform them that the surveys were in the mail, prior to them being received, to increase the rate of the surveys being returned. Within two weeks thirteen surveys were returned to Catholic Charities and no more were received after that time. Of the seven potential participants that did not return a survey, one stated that he was too busy, one survey came back in the mail having been sent to an incorrect address as the refugee may have moved, and there is no information on the other five. It was initially planned that the director and her staff would conduct in person interviews instead of mailing surveys; however, there was a lack of available staff to complete the research in this manner.

Protection of Human Subjects

Throughout the process of information gathering, the privacy and anonymity of each participant was protected.

Before each survey was given, informed consent was obtained, and after the interview the participants were supplied with a debriefing statement about the study. All information was protected and kept private at Catholic Charities until the surveys were collected.

Data Analysis

The qualitative procedure used to address this research question was an in-depth survey related to participants' resettlement in the United States. Open-ended and closed-ended questions were used to explore variations in refugees' experiences and their reflections on the process. As information was gathered, constructs emerged demonstrating similarities in experiences, complaints, and levels of understanding about American culture among the refugees.

Through data gathered in this study, some services and resources were identified as helpful and necessary, and additional needs were identified. This data was used to analyze how effective the subjects' resettlement services were and how they could be altered to better meet the needs of the refugees utilizing them.

Summary

To determine how to improve refugee resettlement services, refugees themselves were interviewed. The sample population was from Catholic Charities in the San Bernardino. Information gathered from the interviews was strictly protected for privacy. Factors contributing to resettlement were addressed in the interviews and analyzed for relationships between variables.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

The results of this study are outlined first with quantitative data discussed in sections, starting with sociodemographic information followed by economic independence, belonging to the community, level of happiness, self-rated health, transportation, and cultural dissonance. The final results include a summarization of qualitative data categorized by the respondents.

Presentation of the Findings

This study consisted of thirteen participants. The sociodemographic information of the study was asked first and presented first, with the exception of two questions that are discussed with qualitative data. Of the participants in this study ages ranged from 23 to 71 years old with a mean of 47.62 and a standard deviance of 17.46 ($M = 47.62$ and $SD = 17.46$). One participant was 23 years of age (7.7%), one was 27 (7.7%), one was 28 (7.7%), and one was 33 (7.7%). Two individuals were 36 years old (15.4%). There were no participants between the

ages of 37 and 53. However, there were some older adults represented, one was 54 (7.7%), one was 56 (7.7%), and one was 59 (7.7%). Of the remaining individuals two were 63 (15.4%), one was 70 (7.7%), and one was 71 (7.7%). There were nine males (69.2%) and three females (23.1%). One subject did not disclose this answer (7.7%). Ages and gender are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics Age and Gender

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age (N = 13)		
23	1	7.7
27	1	7.7
28	1	7.7
33	1	7.7
36	2	15.4
54	1	7.7
56	1	7.7
59	1	7.7
63	2	15.4
70	1	7.7
71	1	7.7
Gender		
Male	9	69.22
Female	3	23.1
Missing	1	7.7

Subjects were then asked about their families and people living in their homes. Answers to current marital status included two single, never married individuals (15.4%), nine married subjects (69.2%), one divorced individual (7.7%), and one person who was widowed (7.7%). Subjects were next asked how many individuals over the age of 18 lived in their home with the mean answer being three and a standard deviation of 1.78 ($M = 3.00$ and $SD = 1.78$). Three participants disclosed only one person over 18 lived in their home (23.1%), three stated two people over 18 lived in their home (23.1%), and three stated there were three people over 18 living in their home (23.1%). Participants were also asked how many individuals under the age of 18 lived in the participant's home. The mean to these responses was 0.38 and the standard deviation was .768 ($M = 0.38$ and $SD = .768$). Ten individuals reported there was no one under 18 in the home (76.9%), one reported there was one person under 18 in the home (7.7%), and two people (15.4%) reported there were two individuals under 18 living in the home. Marital status and family member frequencies and percentages are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Marital Status and Family Living in the Home

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Marital Status (N = 13)		
Single, never married	2	15.4
Married	9	69.2
Divorced	1	7.7
Separated	0	0.0
Widowed	1	7.7
Family Over 18 In Home		
1 Person	3	23.1
2 People	3	23.1
3 People	3	23.1
4 People	1	7.7
5 People	1	7.7
6 People	2	15.4
Family Under 18 In Home		
0 People	10	76.9
1 Person	1	7.7
2 People	2	15.4

Participants were also asked to state their level of education. Three individuals (23.1%) reported completing some high school. Two subjects (15.4%) stated they had a high school degree or equivalent. Two participants (15.4%) had completed some college or technical school, while four (30.8%) had completed a college degree. The final two individuals (15.4%) had achieved a graduate

degree. Education frequencies and percentages are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Education

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Education (N = 13)		
Completed some high school	3	23.1
Completed high school	2	15.4
Completed some college	2	15.4
Completed a college degree	4	30.8
Completed some grad work	0	0.0
Completed a graduate degree	2	15.4

When asked how long each subject had lived in a refugee camp before resettling in the United States, one individual (7.7%) stated that he had not stayed in a refugee camp. One person (7.7%) had stayed in a refugee camp 10 months and two people (15.4%) were in a camp for 11 months. One person each had lived in a refugee camp for one year and six months (7.7%), one year and ten months (7.7%), two years and two months (7.7%), and three years and five months (7.7%). Two subjects (15.4%) had lived in a refugee camp for four years and two (15.4%) had lived in a camp for four years and six months. One

individual (7.7%) had lived in a refugee camp for seven years and eight months. The mean for these responses was 33.46 and the standard deviation was 25.59 ($M = 33.46$ and $SD = 25.59$).

The survey then asked participants to report the length of time they had lived in the United States at the time of the survey. The mean among these responses was 17.46 and the standard deviation was 16.91 ($M = 17.46$, and $SD = 16.91$). One individual (7.7%) had lived in the United States five months and another one (7.7%) had lived in the United States six months. Three subjects (23.1%) had lived in the United States seven months at the time of the survey. One person (7.7%) had lived in the United States ten months and three (23.1%) people had for eleven months. One individual each had lived in the United States one year and three months (7.7%) and two years and nine months (7.7%). The final two participants (15.4%) reported having lived in the United States for four years and four months. Table 4 outlines times spent in refugee camps and time spent in the United States at the time of the survey.

Table 4. Time Spent in Refugee Camp and United States

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Time Spent in Refugee Camp		
None	1	7.7
10 months	1	7.7
11 months	2	15.4
1 year, 6 months	1	7.7
1 year, 10 months	1	7.7
2 years, 2 months	1	7.7
3 years, 2 months	1	7.7
4 years	2	15.4
4 years, 6 months	2	15.4
7 years, 8 months	1	7.7
Time Spent in United States		
5 months	1	7.7
6 months	1	7.7
7 months	3	23.1
10 months	1	7.7
11 months	3	23.1
1 year, 3 months	1	7.7
2 years, 9 months	1	7.7
4 years, 4 months	2	15.4

The next section examined in this study was economic independence. Participants were asked how well they were taught to manage money and use the bank after resettling in the United States. Six (46.2%) of the individuals responded by stating they were taught very well how to manage money and use the bank. Seven (53.8%) stated they were taught a little how to manage money and use the

bank. No one answered saying they were not taught at all how to manage money and use the bank.

The subjects were then asked to describe their employment situation at the time of the survey. Two people (15.4%) stated they had a full time job. One (7.7%) had a part time job. Five (38.5%) were looking for a job and five (38.5%) were unable to work due to a disability. Participants who had found employment were asked if the job their resettlement program helped them find matched their education or training in Iraq. Four (30.8%) said their job did not match their education or training in Iraq while three (23.1%) said their job did match their education and training. Six (46.2%) did not answer this question.

Additionally, participants were asked about their financial situation at the time of the survey. Five individuals (38.5%) said they were in need of much more money to provide for themselves and their family. Another five (38.5%) said they needed a little more money to provide for themselves and their family. No one (0%) stated that they had just enough to provide for themselves, while one person (7.7%) stated that he or she had more than needed, and two people (15.4%) did not

answer this question. Elements of economic independence, including money management, employment, how well the job matched a previous job, and the participants' financial situation are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Economic Independence

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Manage Money, Use Bank (N = 13)		
Taught very well	6	46.2
Taught a little	7	53.8
Was not taught	0	0.0
Employment		
Has a full-time job	2	15.4
Has a part-time job	1	7.7
Looking for a job	5	38.5
Disabled	5	38.5
Job Match Up		
No	4	30.8
Yes	3	23.1
Missing	6	46.2
Financial situation		
Need much more money	5	38.5
Need a little more money	5	38.5
Have enough money	0	0.0
Have more than enough money	1	7.7
Missing	2	15.4

The survey then asked participants to rate their level of belonging to their community in the United States. One individual (7.7%) reported not feeling at all a sense of belonging to the community. Eight participants (61.5%) felt a little sense of belonging and four (30.8%) felt a great sense of belonging to their community in the United States. Frequencies and percentages for the individuals' sense of belonging and feeling engaged in the community are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Belonging to Community, Social Engagement

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Sense of Belonging (N = 13)		
Do not feel a sense of belonging	1	7.7
A little sense of belonging	8	61.5
Great sense of belonging	4	30.8

Participants were asked to describe their level of happiness in the United States since resettling. Two participants (15.4%) reported feeling much more happiness than sadness at the time of the survey. Four (30.8%) reported feeling a little more happiness than sadness

now. The remaining seven (53.8%) stated they felt equally happy and sad at the time of the survey. Happiness after resettlement is outlined in Table 7.

Table 7. Happiness After Resettlement

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Happiness (N = 13)		
Much more happiness	2	15.4
A little more happiness	4	30.8
Equally happy and sad	7	53.8
A little more sadness	0	0.0
Much more sadness	0	0.0

Self-rated health was the next section on the survey. Participants were first asked, right now, how much medical or health services their families needed. Five (38.5%) of individuals stated that they and their families needed a great deal more health care and services. Another five (38.5%) stated they needed a little more health care and services. Three individuals (23.1%) reported having enough.

Participants were also asked to describe how much emotional help and services their families needed. Three

individuals (23.1%) stated they needed a great deal more emotional help right now. Four participants (30.8%) stated they needed a little more emotional help and four (30.8%) stated that right now they had enough emotional help. Two subjects (15.4%) did not answer this question. Table 8 shows the frequencies and percentages of answers related to self-rated health and mental health.

Table 8. Self-Rated Health

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Medical Needs (N = 13)		
Need a great deal more	5	38.5
Need a little more	5	38.5
Have enough	3	23.1
Emotional Help and Services		
Need a great deal more	3	23.1
Need a little more	4	30.8
Have enough	4	30.8
Missing	2	15.4

Transportation was another subject on the survey and participants were asked if they had a means of transportation. Four people (30.8%) said no, they did not have transportation. Nine individuals (69.2%) stated that they did have transportation. Table 9 shows the

frequencies and percentages for the question about transportation.

Table 9. Transportation

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Have Transportation (N = 13)		
No	4	30.8
Yes	9	69.2

The final area of interest on the survey was cultural dissonance. Subjects were asked how familiar they were with American culture through what they had learned about it through family, friends, or the media before resettling. Two participants (15.4%) were a little unfamiliar with American culture before resettlement. Nine subjects (69.2%) said they were a little familiar with American culture before resettlement. The final two individuals (15.4%) said they were very familiar with American culture prior to coming to the United States.

Subjects were next asked if they felt like there is respect and understanding for their culture and beliefs in the United States. Eight individuals (61.5%) said yes,

they felt a great deal of respect and understanding was present in the United States. Two people (15.4%) said they felt a little respect and three people (23.1%) said no, they felt very little respect in the United States.

The final cultural dissonance question asked to the participants was if they felt that refugees were treated fairly by Americans in general. Thirteen of the participants (100%) stated that yes, they felt that refugees are treated very fairly by Americans in general. Frequencies and percentages for answers to questions about cultural dissonance are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Cultural Dissonance

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Familiarity with American Culture		
Very unfamiliar	2	15.4
A little unfamiliar	0	0.0
A little familiar	9	69.2
Very familiar	2	15.4
Respect and Understanding in the U.S.		
Yes, great deal of respect	8	61.5
Yes, little respect	2	15.4
No, very little respect	3	23.1
No, great deal of disrespect	0	0.0
Feel Refugees are Treated Fairly		
Yes, treated very fair	13	100.0
Yes, treated a little fair	0	0.0
No, treated little unfairly	0	0.0
No, treated very unfairly	0	0.0

Qualitative data provided by the participants was also collected and reviewed. When asked what job the subjects had prior to moving to the refugee camp answers included jobs that required training to education, such as nurse, officer, and manager (4); sales jobs (2); working as a soldier (1); unemployed (2); and no answer (1).

Another question asked of the participants was in what country was their refugee camp? Syria was a common answer by six (6) subjects, though one said he or she had stayed in Syria outside of a refugee camp. Other responses included Turkey (2), Lebanon (2), Jordan (1), one (1) that never had to stay in a camp, and (1) one didn't answer.

Participants were then asked what was more difficult about resettling than expected. Some individuals gave more than one answer. Themes among the responses included finding a job (4), high cost of rent and transportation (3), learning English (2), and getting used to the fast paced American life (1). Two (2) participants gave complex answers stating that they needed much longer than eight months of assistance; two years would have been sufficient. These two individuals also stated that they did not receive enough financial assistance and that school should have teachers that speak languages other than English and Spanish, such as Arabic. Five (5) subjects did not answer this question.

The final question explored what aspects of resettling seemed easier than expected. One primary theme was that no one thing in particular was easier, but the

whole process was less difficult than expected (6). One (1) individual stated that having food provided made the process less stressful; as did having family members close by. Another one (1) reported not having any idea about what was easier and the same five (5) that did not answer the previous question about what was difficult did not answer this question

Summary

Detailed results of this study were described and followed by tables with frequencies and percentages. Survey topics explored and discussed included sociodemographic information, economic independence, belonging to the community, level of happiness, self-rated health, transportation, and cultural dissonance. Qualitative data was also discussed and categorized based on similarities and themes in responses from the participants.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The significant results of this study are outlined beginning with quantitative then qualitative. Some of the findings of this study match those of previous studies in this area. Limitations and strengths of this study are discussed next, followed by recommendations for further social work regarding resettled refugees.

Discussion

This study on refugee resettlement services explored the elements of a successful resettlement as outlined by Khoo (2012) and Husarska (2008) and opinions on resettlement services through surveys given to resettled Iraqi refugees. Thirteen participants responded to the self-administered survey that inquired about sociodemographic characteristics, economic independence, belonging to the community and being socially engaged, happiness post resettlement, self-rated health and mental health, transportation, cultural dissonance, and open ended questions regarding what made resettlement more difficult or easier than expected. There was not

sufficient data to find correlations between quantitative items on this survey asked of the thirteen participants. Many items asked on the survey resulted in up to eleven different answers, resulting in few similarities. Though some answers were related to findings in the literature review.

Questions related to employment found that only three of the eight participants that were able to work were currently employed at the time of the survey, though at one time seven of the eight had held a job. However, only three of these individuals had found a job that matched their training or education when living in Iraq. Additionally, ten of the thirteen respondents stated they needed either a little more or much more money to provide for themselves and their families. Though there were few responses, these findings match the research done by Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute (2009) stating why refugees have limited success becoming financially independent.

Another section of the survey that was aligned with the literature was the self-rated health and mental health questions. Five participants reported needing a great deal more health care and five reported needing a

little more. Similarly, three individuals needed a great deal more care for mental health and four needed a little more. Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute (2009) reported that this is a continuing problem with resettling refugees, especially as they near the end of the eight months of post-resettlement services and still require more assistance.

Survey questions related to cultural dissonance revealed an interesting finding. All thirteen subjects agreed in their responses that refugees were treated very fairly by Americans in general. This outcome contradicts current research stating that many Iraqi refugees have a poor perception of their treatment in the United States (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009). However, one open-ended question asked of the participants matched the findings of the Georgetown study (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009; Khoo, 2012). Participants were asked in this survey what they thought was more difficult about resettlement than expected. Two similar, lengthy answers included statements regarding the time frame of services provided and how assistance should be extended from eight months to two years. This very answer

supported previous research indicating that eight months is not long enough for refugees to become independent. Other answers included thoughts on how finding a job was more difficult than expected, rent was higher than expected, and it is difficult to become accustomed to the fast-paced American life. Similarly, when asked what was easier than expected, six responses stated that there wasn't one thing that was particularly easy, but the entire process was less difficult than expected. These types of statements are also in alignment with the Georgetown study (Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute, 2009) where it was found that many Iraqi refugees have a perception of a difficult resettlement in the United States before having moved to the country.

Limitations and Strengths

Thirteen individuals participated in this study, preventing many statistical analyzes from being done. This number of participants also is not a representative sample for the Iraqi refugee population in California's Inland Empire. A larger sample size covering a larger

geographic area would have positively affected the outcomes of this study.

However, there were some strengths of this study. First Iraqi refugees themselves were surveyed for this information. An alternative would have been interviewing or surveying social workers who have worked with this population. Since there were some individuals available and willing to participate in this survey, the target population was researched directly. Mailing surveys to the participants was also beneficial. It was questionable if the subjects would have internet access and would be able to complete an online survey. However, because the surveys were mailed, it was insured that the individuals eligible to participate would have access to complete them and could do so in their own home. One final strength was that of the qualitative questions. These gave an opportunity for the participating Iraqi refugees to answer the questions freely and provide rich information for the study.

Recommendations for Social Work
Practice, Policy and Research

The Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights
Institute (2009) and Regester, Parcells, and Levine

(2012) both found that the limit of eight months for resettlement services is insufficient to promote economic self-sufficiency for adult refugees. Furthermore, this vulnerable population has a poor perception of what their lives may be like once they move to the United States. This concept is disempowering to many who may benefit from resettling in America.

The findings of this study would suggest and support the need for policy changes related to the limited time for resettlement services. The Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute (2009) suggests that services be extended to eighteen months while participants in this study suggest two years of assistance. In any case, eight months of services limits the support of resettled refugees before they are ready.

The findings may also suggest that refugees need more assistance in finding jobs that match their prior training if it is possible. Since the goal of resettlement in the United States is economic independence, finding employment that the refugees can easily engage in will streamline this goal and promote a more positive perception of the resettlement process.

Medical and mental health services might also need to be extended beyond the eight month mark, as several participants reported needing more of this type of help. It will remain difficult for one who is ill to support themselves without first addressing their mental and physical health needs.

Furthermore, if additional research is to be done with the refugee population that is newly resettled, it is recommended that the researcher utilize the assistance of a resettlement agency or other social service agency that provides services to this population. Without the assistance of Catholic Charities, not only would this population be difficult to gain the trust of, but would be nearly impossible to find.

Conclusions

This study on resettled Iraqi refugees had few conclusive findings because of limited responses to the survey. Of the answers given, however, some responses from the participants matched those found in research by Georgetown University Law Center, Human Rights Institute (2009) and Regester, Parcells, and Levine (2012) regarding extended time frames for resettlement services,

perceptions of resettlement in the United States, further assistance with finding desirable employment, and extended physical and mental health services.

Implications and recommendations for direct social work practice can be made from these findings, as well as social work on a macro level including policy work and advocacy.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

The Resettlement Experience of Iraqi Americans
A Study by Megan Justice, MSW Student
California State University, San Bernardino
School of Social Work

This study seeks to understand the resettlement experiences of Iraqi Americans to help identify both positive and less positive aspects of the resettlement experience for future improvement. We appreciate you answering each and every question to the best of your ability. This survey should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. After you have completed this survey, please *(instructions for returning completed surveys)*.

Demographic Information

1. How old are you?
_____ (years)
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
3. What is your current marital status?
 - a. Single, never married
 - b. Married
 - c. Divorced
 - d. Separated
 - e. Widowed
4. How many family members aged 18 or older live in your home? _____
5. How many family members under the age of 18 live in your home?

6. What is your level of education?
 - a. Completed some high school
 - b. Completed high school degree or equivalent
 - c. Completed some college or technical school
 - d. Completed a college degree
 - e. Completed some graduate coursework
 - f. Completed a graduate degree
7. If you were working in Iraq before you left for the refugee camp, what kind of job did you have in Iraq?

-
8. In what country was the refugee camp that you stayed in before resettling in the United States?

(refugee camp country) _____

9. For about how many months or years did you live in the refugee camp before resettling in the United States?

_____ (months) _____ (years)

10. For about how many months or years have you now been living in the United States?

_____ (months) _____ (years)

Economic independence

11. While in the United States, how well were you taught to manage your money and use the bank?

- a. I was taught very well how to manage my money and use the bank.
- b. I was taught a little how to manage my money and use the bank.
- c. I was not taught at all how to manage my money and use the bank.

12. Which statement best describes your employment situation right now?

- a. I have a full-time job
- b. I have a part-time job
- c. I am looking for a job (answer then skip to Question 14)
- d. I am unable to work due to a disability (answer then skip to Question 14)

13. Did the job that your resettlement program helped you get match the education and training you used in Iraq?

- a. Yes
- b. No

14. Which statement best describes your financial situation right now?

- a. *I need much more money to provide for myself or my family's basic needs such as housing, utility bills, food, clothing, transportation, and health care.*

- b. *I need a little more money* to provide for myself or my family's basic needs such as housing, utility bills, food, clothing, transportation, and health care.
- c. *I have enough money* to provide for myself or my family's basic needs such as housing, utility bills, food, clothing, transportation, and health care.
- d. *I have more money than I need* to provide for myself or my family's basic needs such as housing, utility bills, food, clothing, transportation, and health care.

Belonging to community, social engagement

15. How much do you now feel a sense of belonging to your community in the United States?

- a. I do not at all feel a sense of belonging to my community in the United States.
- b. I feel a little sense of belonging to my community in the United States.
- c. I feel a great sense of belonging to my community in the United States.

Happiness after resettlement

16. After resettling in the United States, how much happiness do you now feel?

- a. I feel much more happiness than sadness now.
- b. I feel a little more happiness than sadness now.
- c. I feel equally happy and sad now.
- d. I feel a little more sadness than happiness now.
- e. I feel much more sadness than happiness now.

Self-rated health

We would like you two questions about your health. For these two questions, please select the answer that best describes how you feel or think.

17. Right now, how much medical or health care and services do you and your family need?

- a. My family and I need a great deal more of health care and service right now.
- b. My family and I need a little more health care and services right now.
- c. My family and I have enough health care and services right now.

18. Right now, how much emotional help and services do you and your family need?

- a. My family and I need a great deal more emotional help and service right now.
- b. My family and I need a little more emotional help and services right now.
- c. My family and I have enough emotional help and services right now.

Transportation

19. Do you have a means of transportation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Cultural dissonance

20. How familiar were you with American culture through what you had learned about it through family, friends, or the media before resettling?

- a. I was very unfamiliar with American culture before resettlement.
- b. I was a little unfamiliar with American culture before resettlement.
- c. I was a little familiar with American culture before resettlement.
- d. I was very familiar with American culture before resettlement.

21. Do you feel like there is respect and understanding for your culture and your beliefs in the United States?

- a. Yes, there is a great deal of respect and understanding of my culture and my beliefs in the United States.
- b. Yes, there is a little respect and understanding of my culture and my beliefs in the United States.
- c. No, there is very little respect and understanding of my culture and my beliefs in the United States.
- d. No, there is a great deal of disrespect and misunderstanding of my culture and my beliefs in the United States.

22. Do you feel that refugees are treated fairly by Americans in general?

- a. Yes, refugees are treated very fairly by Americans in general.
- b. Yes, refugees are treated a little fairly by Americans in general.
- c. No, refugees are treated a little unfairly by Americans in general.
- d. No, refugees are treated very unfairly by Americans in general.

23. In your opinion, what made your resettlement more difficult than you expected?
(Please write in your opinions)

24. Did anything about the resettlement process seem easier or less difficult than you expected? (Please write in your opinions)

Thank you very much for completing our survey. Your answers will help us better understand what went well, and less than well, during your resettlement experience in the United States, and how we might be able to make improvements for future Iraqi refugees.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to study how resettlement services for refugees in the United States can be improved and include more sensitivity to cultural factors, as well as possibly affecting policy issues for resettlement in the future. This study is being conducted by Megan Justice, an MSW student at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB) under the supervision of Professor Herbert Shon, Ph.d., Assistant Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the School of Social Work Sub-Committee of the CSUSB Institutional Review Board.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to gain insight from the views of refugees on what services were helpful during resettlement, how mental health issues impacted the resettlement experiences, and what could improve resettlement services in the United States.

DESCRIPTION: If you choose to be in this research study, you will be asked to answer the questions of the interviewer about your opinion on refugee resettlement services in the United States.

PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you are free to refuse to answer any questions about your feelings on resettlement. You may discontinue participation in this study at any time without penalty or loss of services.

CONFIDENTIALITY OR ANONYMITY: Any information you share will remain confidential and anonymous and there will be no record made of you name or other identifying information. The data gathered from this interview will be seen only by the researcher and results will be conveyed to others only in a coded form.

DURATION: Completing this interview is expected to take no more than 20 minutes.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks involved with this study. Neither are personal benefits foreseen.

BENEFITS: The information you share during this interview will help social workers provide better, more necessary services during the resettlement process for refugees resettling in the United States. This data may also provide insight for future policy efforts related to improving refugee services.

CONTACT: If you have any questions or concerns related to this study, you can contact Dr. Shon at (909) 537-5532.

RESULTS: The results will be available after December 2013 at the Pfau Library at California State University San Bernardino.

CONSENT: Your consent to participate in this study is implied in your completion of the survey.

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

STUDY OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SERVICES

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Thank you for participating in this study conducted by Megan Justice, MSW student at California State University, San Bernardino. The interview in which you just took part was designed to explore the opinions of resettled refugees in the United States as to what constitutes a successful resettlement. This is done for the purpose of improving resettlement services and possibly the policies affecting how the services are offered.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact my faculty supervisor, Dr. Herbert Shon at (909) 537-5532. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, please contact the Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino in or after December 2013.

Thank you again for your participation in this research project.

APPENDIX D
AGENCY LETTER



Catholic Charities San Bernardino/Riverside

Main Administration: 1450 North D Street, San Bernardino, CA 92405 (909)388-1239 www.ccsbrlv.org

January 18, 2013

Dear

Greetings once again from Catholic Charities! By this time, you should be well settled at home, working, and/or enrolled in school, and also receiving all of the benefits that you are entitled to. We are writing to let you know that Catholic Charities is partnering with researchers at California State University San Bernardino in order to help inform and develop United States refugee resettlement practices.

The enclosed anonymous and confidential survey will help us gain insight from refugees like yourself, about which services were helpful to you in the resettlement process, the status of your physical and emotional health, the accessibility of services, and how resettlement services in the United States may be improved. Your involvement in this study is completely voluntary, and your decision to complete this survey will not affect any benefits or services that you receive or are entitled to. Please review, complete, and return the enclosed survey at your earliest convenience in the enclosed pre-paid and addressed envelope.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to learning more about how we can improve the resettlement experience for all new refugees who come to the United States.

Sincerely,

My-Hanh Luu, Director
Catholic Charities Refugee & Immigration Services

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