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Multiple Paths to Self-Sufficiency: A Phenomenological Study of South Florida Refugees' Lived Experience

Regina Bernadin

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Multiple Paths to Self-Sufficiency: A Phenomenological Study of South Florida
Refugees' Lived Experience

by

Regina Bernadin

A Dissertation Presented to the
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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Dedication

I dedicate this research to my mother, my husband, and our precious daughter Emilia. They sacrificed, cried and celebrated alongside me. The culmination of this journey is because of them. I owe this success to them.

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The writing of this dissertation has been one of the most significant academic challenges I have ever had to face. Without faith in God and the support, patience and guidance of the following people, this study would not have been completed. It is to them that I share my deepest appreciation.

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Acronyms

AOR:	Affidavit of Relationship
CAM:	Central American Minor
DOS:	Department of State
EAD:	Employment Authorization Document
FBI:	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FY:	Fiscal Year
GAO:	Government Accountability Office
HHS:	Department of Health and Human Services
IOM:	International Office for Migration
IRC:	International Rescue Committee
NGO:	Non-governmental Organization
ORR:	Office of Refugee Resettlement
PRM:	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
RAVU:	Refugee Access Verification Unit
RPC:	Refugee Processing Center
RSS:	Refugee Social Service
SNAP:	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TAG:	Targeted Assistance Formula Grant
TPA:	Transcendental Phenomenological Approach
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
U.S.:	United States
USCIS:	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

USRAP: United States Refugee Admissions Program

USSR: United Soviet Socialist Republic

VOLAG: Voluntary Agency

Abstract

The United States resettles more refugees within its borders than any other country. The federal government and its partners measure success by determining if the refugee has achieved self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency is achieved when a refugee becomes employed shortly after arrival. With a resettlement program that is almost forty years-old and unprecedented budget cuts, refugees themselves can aid in redefining the goals of the program. Using the theories of Human Needs and Social Identity to analyze the data, the aim of this study was to address the following questions: “What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?” and “How do refugees resettled in South Florida define self-sufficiency?” The goal was to capture the refugee perspective through the voice of those who lived the experience and now work in resettlement. Participants included nine refugees who offered a unique understanding of the successes and failures of this approach. Utilizing the qualitative tradition of Transcendental Phenomenology, the research found that among refugees, self-sufficiency has varying meanings. These findings signal that programming should create multiple paths to self-sufficiency, which would allow refugees different avenues to preserve their prior career, thus part of their identity; feel that they contribute to their new home from inception; as well as begin the process of integration. The implication of this impacts program design and will contribute to the field of conflict resolution. The results provide insight on a population that is impacting American society, particularly at a time where the discussion on immigration and border security is prevalent.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Study

Background and Research Problem

The United States (U.S.) has a history of providing immigrants and others seeking refuge a new home and opportunities to start anew. Volatile global situations have displaced millions of people who no longer have a home. Civil strife, political and economic instability, and blatant persecution of individual human rights have created refugees throughout the world. An example is the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis in Europe in which hundreds of thousands of individuals fled their homes looking for safety and security in neighboring countries and throughout the world leading to a mass influx of migrants to communities already overwhelmed by other socio-economic demands.

Since 2014, thousands of minors fleeing gang violence in the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, have been migrating to the United States through its Southern border. The U.S. government originally responded by funding the CAM (Central American Minor) initiative in 2015. The program allowed these youth to be paroled or given refugee status to enter the United States legally and escape the hostile region. With approximately 26 million refugees around the world, global worldwide are working to address this ongoing humanitarian crisis (UNHCR, 2019). One remaining option is the refugee resettlement process that is limited to a small percentage of people each year.

The United States, Australia and Canada have the largest refugee resettlement programs in the world (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2011).

Resettlement is an important tool of international protection for refugees at risk in the country where they sought asylum, or separated from family members by

conflict and flight. Where local integration is not an option, and voluntary repatriation is not viable or feasible in the near future, resettlement may be the only durable solution available, especially in protracted refugee situations (UNHCR, 2017).

Since 1980, more than three million refugees have arrived to the United States and that number has been steadily increasing (Report to Congress, 2010). “In 2013, the United States, with the largest resettlement program in the world, accepted two-thirds (66,000) of the 98,000 refugees who were permanently resettled that year” (Capps and Newland, 2015, p.1). It is important to note that the United States has the largest resettlement program based on pure numbers, and Australia has the largest number of refugees per capita (UNHCR Global Resettlement Statistical Report 2014).

Table 1

Worldwide Refugee Programs in Order of Ranking of the Number of Refugees Resettled

<u>State</u>	<u>Ranking in the Number of Refugees Resettled</u>	<u>Year Founded</u>
United States	1	1980
Canada	2	1978
Australia	3	Unknown
Norway	4	Unknown
Sweden	5	1959
New Zealand	6	1979
Finland	7	1979
Denmark	8	1989
Netherland	9	1985

Note. Adapted from UNHCR (2011). Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c125.html>.

The United Nations Refugee Agency or UNHCR, first defined the term refugee in the 1951 Refugee Convention to determine eligibility when resettling this population (UNHCR, 2011). A refugee is someone who:

owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR, 2011).

Additionally, the U.S expands on this definition by adding that a refugee is someone who:

1. is located outside of the United States,
2. is of special humanitarian concern to the United States,
3. demonstrates that they were persecuted or fear persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group,
4. is not firmly resettled in another country and
5. is admissible to the United States (USCIS, Refugees).

The United States did not distinguish the difference between an immigrant and a refugee until after the Second World War (Akner, 1981). The first policy created to address this population was the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, followed by the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, and the Refugee-Escapee Act of 1957 (Akner, 1982). However, it was not until 1979 that Edward Kennedy led the effort to draft and pass the main piece of legislation that focused on defining the aid for refugees and their place within U.S. immigration law. The Refugee Act of 1980 remains the most comprehensive legal framework for refugee aid in the United States. It:

1. provides some basis for resettlement planning by requiring set quotas for both the number and source of refugee admissions at the beginning of each fiscal year;
2. establishes an overall U.S. Coordinator of Refugee Affairs as well as a Director of Refugee Assistance in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS);
3. authorizes funds for needed assistance and services to refugees for specific periods of time;
4. requires as a condition for reimbursement of expenditures;
5. enunciates a resettlement philosophy of economic self-sufficiency through employment, consistent with the Voluntary Agency (VOLAG) philosophy; mandates the equal availability of public assistance as well as language and other training and social services to all refugees;
6. allows the federal agencies a great deal of flexibility, including the utilization of the private sector in meeting all of the needs of the refugees;
7. clarifies legal responsibilities and procedures for handling unaccompanied refugee minors and authorizes support for them through their majorities (Wright, 1981, pp. 173-174).

The Refugee Act established two key government agencies within the federal government, which handle the programming and funding mandated by the law. The first agency was the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This agency focuses on the resettlement of refugees in the U.S (Report to Congress, 2010). In 2004, the government created the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) in the U.S. Department of State which

focuses on refugee affairs at home and abroad and works in conjunction with ORR (Report to Congress, 2010).

In addition, the Department of State and HHS partner with social service providers to deliver services to refugees. Table 2 lists these nine private non-governmental organizations, with hundreds of affiliate offices across the country. They provide help for refugees to become self-sufficient after their arrival in the United States (HHS website, 2012). This fulfills the fifth goal of the Refugee Act of 1980 as stated above.

Table 2

List of Refugee Resettlement Agencies in the United States

Church World Service
Episcopal Migration Ministries
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
International Rescue Committee
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
World Relief
<i>Note.</i> Adapted from Robert Wright (1981). <i>Voluntary agencies and the resettlement of refugees</i> . <i>International Migration Review</i> , 15(1/2), 158.

In nearly all of the fifteen to twenty countries in the world which give permanent resettlement to refugees, resettlement is accomplished through some combination of the efforts of government and voluntary agencies. The methods used in

resettlement vary as widely as the combinations of government and private activity, ranging from long periods in hostels in such countries as Norway, Australia and Switzerland, to direct immersion into the general population in the United States and Canada (Wright, 1981, p. 157).

After leaving their country of origin and being aided by the International Office of Migration, (IOM) through their journey, the resettlement agencies assist in meeting the refugee at the airport of their host community and assume the role of a mentor. Mincin provides a more detailed account of the process:

After a refugee has cleared the security checks and interview process, a biodata sheet is developed that provides basic biographical information about the refugee. The biodata sheet is sent to the U.S-based Resettlement Processing Center (RPC) for allocation to one of the nine resettlement agencies (referred to as —allocations). The RPC is located in Washington, D.C. Once a voluntary agency is allocated a case, it then needs to —assure the case, meaning they indicate they will accept the case and place the person in one of its resettlement offices; this process is referred to as —assurance (IRC, 2011). Once the case has been assured, the refugee must pass a medical check and attend a cultural orientation training (IRC, 2011). Travel arrangements are made by the International Organization on Migration (IOM) and must be repaid by the refugee, interest free, to IOM. IOM informs the State Department and resettlement agency at a minimum of six days before departure, giving the resettlement agency little less than a week to prepare for the arrival of a refugee case. Every Wednesday, cases

are handed out at an —allocations meeting‖ to which the ten agencies send representatives (2012, p. 7).

After arrival, the resettlement agency, which until 2015 were known as voluntary agencies or VOLAGs, provides refugees with housing and assistance in accessing public benefits (i.e. SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, and Medicaid) and social security and employment authorization documents (EAD). The refugee is informed of schooling opportunities, as well as child care and employment (Wright, 2011). The United States Refugee Admissions Program flowchart (see Appendix C) details the resettlement process that refugees must undergo in order to gain admission into the United States.

If the refugee is able to work, they may be eligible for enrollment into a federal employment program called Matching Grant. This program assists newly arrived refugees in developing interview skills, provides job training, helps with resume building, and ultimately job placement. Being able to work or being “employable” is defined as “any wage earner between the ages of 18-64, who is not already self-sufficient, not receiving cash assistance from a local, state or federal program, not elderly or receiving social security income for a disability (Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement” (FY 2016 ORR Voluntary Agencies Matching Grant Program Guidelines, 2016).The goal at this point of the resettlement process is for the refugee and their family, if they migrated as a unit, to focus on self-sufficiency through work (Wright, 2011). Matching Grant is only one of several initiatives focused on refugee employment. Both the federal and state governments allocate funds towards refugee workforce development. Programs like Wilson-Fish and eligibility for refugee cash assistance vary by state.

“Economic self-sufficiency drives refugee programming, which [ORR] defines as ‘earning a total family income at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant’” (Smith, 2013, p.24). In other words, self-sufficiency in this context is defined as having been placed in part-time or full-time employment where income exceeds expenses (Report to Congress, 2010). This measurement of success is inadequate in showing if a refugee has become self-sufficient and integrated in their new home country (Smith, 2013).

Part of the problem may be that refugees have high expectations about their life in the United States (Stein, 1981). They have either heard stories from family members or seen television, read, or heard the radio about life in America. Self-sufficiency becomes a challenge when expectations do not match the reality of their new life.

In focus groups, many talked about the stark reality that greeted them when they first came to the United States — and the understanding that, without hard work, their dream of America as the land of plenty would not come true. In the survey, eight in 10 (81 percent) say, "a person has to work very hard in this country to make it — nobody gives you anything for free (Farkas, 2003).

Some refugees do find it difficult when they are placed in employment where they are not using their skills or knowledge and are living in safe but low-socioeconomic areas. This does appear to differ depending on where the refugee is originally from. An Iraqi engineer will probably not have the same experience as a Bhutanese man who had been living in a refugee camp. They would want to use their skill set and tend to have certain expectations regarding their first job after resettlement. Nonetheless, success for both men will involve more than being economically self-sufficient.

Additionally, in *The Commitment to Refugee Resettlement*, the author states that the nature of the refugee resettlement field is changing because the demographics of refugees have changed. “Many resettlement practices that worked with European refugees have proved to be inappropriate with third-world refugees.” (Stein, 1983, p.197).

In the book *Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Policy and Problems* (1983), Norman Zucker states that policymakers have tended to treat all resettlement the same, despite an increase in diversity in the populations resettled. “The nationalities represented among new arrivals rose from 11 in 1980 to 64 in 2013. Greater diversity also means that refugees resettled today have a wider range of education levels and linguistic backgrounds, potentially complicating service delivery for resettlement providers” (Capps, 2015, p. 1).

Diversity among the refugees resettled also means that they are not representative of the host country, in race, language and culture. Each refugee population and ethnicity has different needs which are shaped by their reality in the country of origin as well as the community awaiting them after resettlement. The experience of urban refugees is different than those coming from an agrarian background or living in a camp. Those welcomed by an established refugee community will receive more support from the private sector as well making them less dependent on federal programs (Zucker, 1983). Nonetheless, integration into the mainstream might be more challenging particularly if language proficiency and literacy are limited (Capps, 2015). “Resettlement agencies, such as the IRC, are now beginning to initiate other program areas aside from early employment such as health and wellness, children and youth, and other concepts of

financial literacy and economic empowerment (Mincin, 2012, p. 10).” However, these programs are complementary and not the main drivers to self-sufficiency.

Government refugee employment records show that refugees’ adjustment to the labor market is quick and successful (Report to Congress, 2010). “The 2010 Annual Survey of Refugees who have been in the U.S. less than five years indicated that 58 percent of refugees age 16 or over were employed as of December 2010, as compared with 47 percent for the U.S. population”(Report to Congress, 2010, p. iii). However, the recession that hit the United States during that time period, and the change in the demographics of newly resettled refugees in this country has affected other outcomes. The change in demographics refers to “the increase in the proportion of refugees with lower levels of education and literacy” (Report to Congress, 2010, p.38).

Additionally, because the United States has admitted an increased number of refugees who have spent many years living in difficult conditions, such as refugee camps, a larger proportion of recently arrived refugees have health and other issues that make it difficult for them to work and achieve self-sufficiency (GOA, 2011, p.2).

Sadako Ogata, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, stated in April 2000 that “resettlement can no longer be seen as the least-preferred durable solution; in many cases it is the *only* solution for refugees” (Understanding Resettlement to the UK: A Guide to the Gateway Protection Programme, 2004). With the visibility of global terrorist attacks, refugees, particularly as the newest arrivals include a large Muslim majority, have been the focus of national security conversations.

In 2018, the U.S. federal government challenged Ogata's viewpoint with the passing of a travel ban and a reduction in the admissions of refugees to the lowest numbers recorded in the history of the United States refugee program. This led to a various organizations closing their refugee resettlement programming affecting the availability of services nationally. With changes to the national landscape and a program that's moving to a new decade, it is essential to conduct an assessment on the needs of the current population being served, what are their goals and expectations and do they align with the existing measurements of success.

Purpose Statement and Questions

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to answer what is self-sufficiency according to formerly resettled refugees in the United States by seeking to address the following research questions: "What is the lived experienced of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?" and "How do refugees resettled in the United States define self-sufficiency?" The goal is to capture the refugee perspective through the voice of those who lived the migration experience and now work in refugee resettlement. They can offer a unique understanding of the successes and failures of the resettlement process in the United States because of their dual lived experience. "Previous research conducted with refugee paraprofessionals has identified that this bridge-building role can provide...an empowering opportunity to contribute" (Shaw, 2014, p. 285).

If we are to move toward a comprehensive professional refugee assistance system then research must be encouraged and supported. The research should not focus only on the most recent arrivals or specific policy questions but general research, looking at refugees everywhere from a broad historical perspective that views

them as recurring phenomena with identifiable and often identical patterns of behavior and sets of causalities. Most often, by the time the policymaker asks the question, it is too late to gather the data and provide an answer. We must investigate broadly all of the stages of the refugee experience. We must encourage governments and agencies to assist the active recording of the refugee experience by gathering and making available data of a uniform nature in refugee camps and during resettlement (Stein, 1981, p. 321).

Definition of Key Terms

In order to further understand the research, it is important to put into context some key words and terms. There are several definitions within academia and practice professions, but for the purposes of this dissertation the following definitions will be used. These definitions are either based on federal statutes and government definitions or internationally understood terminology. This section defines those concepts.

Cuban-Haitian Entrant:

- “Any..national of Cuba or Haiti who was paroled into the United States and has no has not acquired any other status under the Immigration and Nationality Act” (Florida Department of Children and Families, Refugee Program Eligibility Guide for Service Providers). “If an individual demonstrates that s/he meets any of the criteria for Cuban/Haitian entrant...that is the basis of their eligibility for refugee program services” (Florida Department of Children and Families, Cuban/Haitian Entrant FAQs).

Integration:

- “Integration is a dynamic, multidirectional process in which newcomers and the receiving communities intentionally work together, based on a shared commitment to acceptance and justice, to create a secure, welcoming, vibrant, and cohesive society” (Halpern, 2008).

Parole:

- “The discretionary decision that allows inadmissible [people] to leave an inspection facility freely so that, although they are not admitted to the United States, they are permitted to be physically present in the United States. Parole is granted on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit” (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Glossary).

Refugee:

- Someone who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to receive the adequate protection of that country (UNHCR, 2011).

Resettlement:

- The process of a refugee settling in a host country. “The process of moving people to a different place to live, because they are no longer allowed to stay in the area where they used to live” (Resettlement, 2015).

Resettlement agency:

- One of nine non-governmental organizations tasked by the U.S. federal government in assisting recently arrived refugees. Until 2015, they were known as voluntary agencies or VOLAGs.

Self-sufficiency:

- Defined by the U.S. federal government as “earning a total family income at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant” (Smith, 2013, p.24).

Travel Ban:

- Executive Order 13769 also known as the Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States was an executive order which restricted the legal entry of individuals from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. As they also represented countries with a Muslim majority, it was popularly known as a Muslim ban.

Voluntary agency:

- One of nine non-governmental organizations tasked by the U.S. federal government in assisting recently arrived refugees. Until 2015, these agencies were known as VOLAGs or Voluntary Agencies. They are now referred to as Resettlement Agencies.

Theoretical Framework

The study uses the theories of Human Needs and Social Identity to analyze the data gathered and develop an understanding of the concepts presented through the literature review and other sources of information. To begin, John Burton’s Human

Needs Theory provides insights on why fulfilling some but not all of a refugees needs can lead to some of the failure when only considering economic self-sufficiency as a measurement to successful integration.

Human Needs Theory

Conflict scholar John Burton adapted Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to show how refugees' needs being unmet can lead to the development and escalation of conflict. Maslow's renowned theory states that certain universal needs must be met for people to be fulfilled. These needs are demonstrated in the following graph:

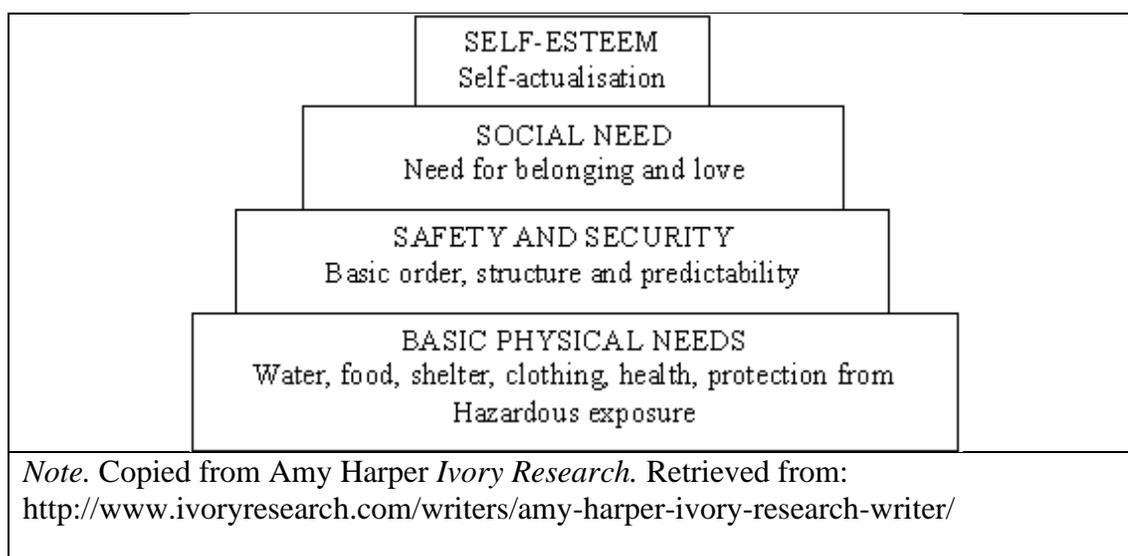


Figure 1. Maslow's List of Needs

Unlike Maslow, Burton does not believe that needs fall within a hierarchy and that actually all of them have equal value. Therefore, safety and security are in equal footing as food and shelter. He modified Maslow's original list to include identity and security as two equally important needs. In the case of refugees, whose criteria in receiving that status ascertain that they must have experienced persecution, security is key to their integration in a new home.

For Burton, the concept of basic human needs offered a possible method of grounding the field of conflict analysis and resolution...In Burton's view, the needs most salient to an understanding of destructive social conflicts were those for identity, recognition, security, and personal development...The great promise of human needs theory, in Burton's view, was that it would provide a relatively objective basis, transcending local political and cultural differences (Rubenstein).

Considering refugees come from different and varying ethnic and religious groups, Burton's modified list, which is mentioned below, can be used universally and is current to the refugee crisis experienced globally.

Table 3

John Burton's List of Needs

<u>Safety/Security</u> : The need for structure, predictability, stability, and freedom from fear and anxiety.
<u>Belongingness/Love</u> : The need to be accepted by others and to have strong personal ties with one's family, friends, and identity groups.
<u>Self-esteem</u> : The need to be recognized by oneself and others as strong, competent, and capable. It also includes the need to know that one has some effect on her/his environment.
<u>Personal fulfillment</u> : The need to reach one's potential in all areas of life.
<u>Identity</u> : Goes beyond a psychological "sense of self." Burton and other human needs theorists define identity as a sense of self in relation to the outside world. Identity becomes a problem when one's identity is not recognized as legitimate, or when it is considered inferior or is threatened by others with different identifications.

<u>Cultural security</u> : Is related to identity, the need for recognition of one's language, traditions, religion, cultural values, ideas, and concepts.
<u>Freedom</u> : Is the condition of having no physical, political, or civil restraints; having the capacity to exercise choice in all aspects of one's life.
<u>Distributive justice</u> : Is the need for the fair allocation of resources among all members of a community.
<u>Participation</u> : Is the need to be able to actively partake in and influence civil society.
<i>Note.</i> Copied from Sandra Marker' <i>Unmet Human Needs</i> (2003). Retrieved from: http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/human-needs

The government's focus on economic self-sufficiency and the funding of resettlement agencies to provide initial shelter, food and personal care items for recently arrived agencies appears to mirror Maslow's hierarchical pyramid. In receiving status, refugees are given safety and security and taken from an environment that was filled with fear, persecution and violence. Through resettlement, the basic necessities are met. However, the literature review will show that there many internal needs that are not addressed. Programs funded through federal monies or led by local agencies might teach refugees English or life skill classes which will in turn help in elevating self-esteem. But the system is built to address economic self-sufficiency so focusing on other wants is not considered primordial to success. Based on Burton's theory this might be the reason why self-sufficiency is not enough and needs to be reevaluated. While freedom and safety and security are met, self-esteem, personal fulfillment and cultural security are all affected.

Social Identity Theory

Burton introduced the idea of identity as a key need an individual has as a prerequisite for success and fulfillment. In looking at this research through a theoretic framework, Social Identity Theory, pioneered by Henri Tajfel in 1981, supports the literature found. Identity Theory, a similar theory, influenced by Sheldon Stryker and other theorists, also mentions belonging to a group as part of an individual's identity, However, Social Identity theory's; "emphasis is on the qualitative characteristics which generate the subgroups or social categories with which social identities are associated – gender, race, religion, language, etc."(Jasso, 2003, p 6). These characteristics (race, religion, and language, when tied to nationality) all influence a person's identity and are the same reasons an individual person was persecuted and granted refugee status, thus creating a link.

In this case [of refugees], the identities are social identities, each associated with membership in a social category: "The basic idea is that a social category (e.g., nationality, political affiliation, sports team) into which one falls, and to which one feels one belongs, provides a definition of who one is" (Jasso, 2003, p. 5-6).

Looking at this phenomenon through a conflict lens and looking at the impact of identity on a refugee:

People within any community differ in their sense of identification with their surroundings and in the degree of intensity with which they share prevalent, majority beliefs. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that within any refugee wave, individuals who constitute it are not equal in their social relationships; some feel more marginal than others toward the society which they leave behind.

Because in the resettlement phase many of the refugees' problems could be traced back to their emotional links with and dependence on their past, the refugees' marginality within or identification with their former home country is important (Kunz, 1981, p. 47).

Adding to the potential sense of nostalgia for the past and isolation from the present, "Only seldom do refugees enjoy the luxury of linguistic compatibility and even rarer are the refugee's chances to move to a culturally compatible country" (Kunz, 1982, p.47). Focusing on taking the first job offered, many times also a low paying job, in a foreign country, particularly one where the cultural context is different, hinders the integration process and impacts self-sufficiency.

Because in addition to the culture being different, the professional identity is also affected when beginning their new life in an entry level profession or a blue-collar job. If refugees do not have a support system to propel them forward, this can create pockets of marginalized, isolated and potentially resentful communities where the negative sentiment for the host country becomes tied to the new identity of those refugees resettled in America (Appendix E provides a simplified look at in-group and outgroup dynamics).

Meaningful work is a primary source through which we define ourselves and our role both in the wider society and in the family. This is particularly important for refugee arrivals, many of whom will have struggled to maintain a positive identity in the context of disruption and dependency. Being able to realise their personal potential in the labour force is a significant factor in successful integration. This is particularly the case for men, with studies indicating that being unable to obtain

work commensurate with their skills and experience is a significant risk factor for depression in this group (United Nations High Commission for Refugees, 2002).

Therefore, this poses some questions not only about identity and its effects on self-sufficiency, but also on self-sufficiency's effect on identity.

Conclusion

While the future of the program is in peril and the direction of programming is unknown, the United States remains a beacon to many facing persecution at the hands of state-sponsored actor, rogue regimes and civil strife and instability. Despite the program nearing its fortieth year since inception, there is still limited literature to examine its effectiveness and impact. This study will examine the meaning of self-sufficiency to refugees who now work in refugee resettlement or similar programming in South Florida.

Through their dual lived experience, the research will utilize the theories of Human Needs and Social Identity to analyze the findings and ultimately seek to understand the phenomenon. In Chapter 2, the existing literature will be presented to reinforce the need for this research and identify the gaps found by other researchers from the passing of the Refugee Act of 1980 to present day. The methodology used to conduct the research and the process will be introduced in Chapter 3. In Chapters 4, the results will be shared following the tradition of the methodology used in the research. Lastly, in Chapter 5, the findings will be interpreted and recommendations will be made based on the answers to the research questions and understanding of the phenomenon.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

While refugee dissatisfaction with the process has been reported, it has not been greatly studied; literature on this topic is scarce. Part of it might be because of differing goals between the government and its partners and the refugees themselves. While other countries such as Australia and Canada have looked at the overall experiences of those resettling within their borders, the United States has focused on refugee satisfaction with individual programs or a component of programs. This chapter will briefly examine existing literature and studies. The fact that many are decades old proves the dearth of empirical and best practice in research, as well as shows the lack of gains and changes that have been made to the field of focus. With a resettlement program that is almost forty years-old in need of revamping and unprecedented federal budget cuts, refugees themselves can aid in redefining the goals of resettlement in this country.

Revisiting Goals and Objectives

C. Michael Lanphier finds and states in *Refugee Resettlement: Models in Action* that the U.S model of economic self-sufficiency is flawed. The problem “is that a system of structural constraints leads refugees, their sponsors and service agencies to emphasize relatively short periods of adaptation prior to the refugees' developing a certain independence” (Lanphier, 1983, p.16).

Refugee resettlement in the United States has followed this model both in its conception and practice. Conceptually, refugee resettlement is seen as an activity of sponsors from the private sector and voluntary organizations (VOLAGS) which undertake to provide goods and services to refugees on a short-term basis in order that they may assume full engagement as productive members in the labor force

in their new host country. The refugee is perceived as being displaced and in need only of temporary assistance to enable him/her to resume activity more or less resembling that of any newcomer. Sponsors encourage the refugee to become acquainted with the job market and to ignore for the moment other types of alternative activities which might deter him or her from this major goal. As a result of emphasis on securing employment as quickly as possible, only token attention is awarded to fitting a job to the particular aptitude and qualifications of the refugee, or indeed to securing an employment situation which maximally resembles that most recently held by the refugee in the country of origin. Rather, a full-time job is sought which requires as few adaptations to spoken and written language as possible. Most likely, these jobs require manual skills (p. 11).

This model also does not take into consideration the fact that upon arrival a refugee might not be ready to seek employment. After experiencing trauma due to persecution, the loss at migrating and the experience of moving to the unknown, the focus on finding a job and becoming economically stable may not be the short term goal for the individual. Additionally, emphasizing a limited period of adaptation lacks the recognition that intangible needs such as for mental health and emotional and social support require longer periods of time and that these might impact program outcomes.

Zucker points out in *Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Policy and Problems* (1983) that philosophically many questioned even providing any assistance to refugees besides legal entrance into the United States. This camp argues that providing physical safety removes the refugee from ongoing harm and that is the only duty of the global community. With nations around the world dealing with poverty, civil strife and

ongoing threats to their borders, they cannot provide more to nationals of other countries nor is it their responsibility.

A different perspective suggests that refugees need a lengthy period of public support, social services and language lessons before employment. In the other side of the spectrum there are those who see refugees as survivors of severe persecution who need aid to overcome trauma. The U.S. resettlement programs have taken a middle approach to aid.

One middle view holds that refugees are capable survivors, anxious to reassert control over their lives. Resettlement aid, therefore, should consist of providing opportunity and solving the short-term problems that inhibit adjustment. This approach emphasizes the necessity of earliest possible employment, even to acceptance of almost any entry-level job, with resettlement aids language, vocational upgrading, and so on-being provided concurrently with early employment. The contrary middle view stresses that refugees are disadvantaged persons unable to cope with their new environment without a lengthy period of public support. "Front-loading" with language lessons and social adjustment services takes precedence over employment. Front-loading, in turn, produces the ancillary questions, What programs? To what level? For how long? And for whom? (1983, p. 184).

Robert Wright states in *Voluntary Agencies and the Resettlement of Refugees* that the original goal of resettlement was to find a home and job for the refugee being assisted. As these are the most costly and challenging to obtain, in theory, providing these would set a refugee on a path to success. Even Jennifer Mincin in her research

Strengths and Weaknesses of the U.S.-based Refugee Resettlement Program: a Survey of International Rescue Committee Employee Perceptions highlights:

The literature indicates that employment in and of itself can be a positive force in a person's general mental and physical well-being. Studies have shown that prolonged periods of time without employment can lead to depression, anxiety, and diminished physical health, including an increase in alcohol/substance abuse, diabetes, and heart problems (2012).

However, placing a client in housing and employment is not enough. In part, this is because the standard of living in the United States has changed since resettlement began in the 20th century, and also because the nature of the refugees arriving in the United States has changed (Wright, 1981). The traditionalist perspective resonates with a time where life was viewed through a more simplistic lens. Service provision was designed from a paternalistic perspective instead of employing a holistic approach. Wright explains that the resettlement agencies and the government need to change and adapt to the times:

One of the recurrent questions in resettlement concerns its objectives and defining when the goals have been met. Should we be content merely to rescue the refugee and plant him or her in a new, safe environment, or should we immediately provide him or her with opportunities for upward mobility, or something in between? The importance of the answer for the future of refugee resettlement can hardly be exaggerated (Wright, 160).

Zucker agrees and states that the government, despite almost four decades of programs, has yet to decide its intention. Is it to solve the short-term problems by pushing

early employment, even by accepting any entry-level job, with other services, such as English classes being provided concurrently? Many of the jobs are minimum wage positions. The average wage for a refugee in 2009 was \$8.67 (GAO, 2011), which most times is insufficient and can lead to unemployment, dependence on social welfare, and delayed social and economic instability (Halpner, 2008). A study looking at refugee economic integration had the following outcome:

Unemployment rates for refugees in the sample [studied] are significantly higher than those of the general population, indicating that economic adjustment continues to be challenging for refugee populations. The labor force participation rate was 67 percent for the sampled refugee population, the same as that of the U.S. population. The refugee unemployment rate was 21 percent, compared with nine percent for the U.S. population (Report to Congress, 2010, p. iii).

States have stepped in to customize programming to match the needs of the local landscape. However, even those funds are a pass-through from the federal government, which has the main oversight for the national resettlement program. Matching Grant and the majority of refugee resettlement employment programs are funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). When ORR staff was surveyed and asked “what are the key challenges that ORR programs face in regard to refugee economic self-sufficiency?” they provided the following responses: The top five were Resources (mentioned 13 times), Transportation and Language Barriers (each mentioned 10 times), Hard-to-Serve Clients (9 times), Refugee Attitudes/Expectations, Diversity of Refugees, Local Employment Conditions, Cultural Factors and Limited Length of Time to Work with Refugees (mentioned 5 times each), and lastly On-line Job

Applications, Provision of Follow-up Services, Documentation Issues, and Staff

Turnover (mentioned 3 times each) (Halpern, 2008).

As a follow up, staff members from the government's refugee agencies and their social service partners were asked what they perceived to be areas that need to be further examined. They provided a lengthy list of topics and questions to researchers (Halpern, 2008). Below is a sample chosen because these questions either directly or indirectly address a facet of self-sufficiency and the need for additional research around the topic of employment and its impact:

Table 4

Proposed Areas to Study

<u>Areas to Study</u>	<u>Proposed Questions to Ask</u>
Longitudinal Study on Economic Outcomes	What happens to refugees in individual programs and nationally over the long term after receiving 8 months of cash assistance and employment services in terms of their employment status, family income, and receipt of public assistance benefits?
Job Retention	What kind of job retention rates do refugees have?
Career Advancement	How do refugees advance in their employment?
Refugee Expectations Prior to Arrival	What type of orientation are refugees given overseas, and what kind of expectations do they come to the U.S. with?
Follow up Services	What percentage of refugees return for employability services after the initial 6-8-month period?
Ethnic Community Self-Help Organization	Do those who participate in these organizations end up less integrated than those who are in more isolated situations and are forced to integrate with mainstream society?
Longitudinal Study on Integration	What happens to refugees over the long-term regarding integration into their communities, e.g., family size, quality of life, housing, children's achievement and adjustment, English language skills, citizenship, and their contributions to the economy?
<p><i>Note.</i> Adapted from Peggy Halpern (2008). <i>Refugee economic self-sufficiency: an exploratory study of approaches used in office of refugee resettlement programs</i>. Department of Health and Human Services report. Retrieved from: http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/08/RefugeeSelfSuff/index.shtml#CHALLENGES</p>	

One question is similar to what this study expects to answer. Under the category “High Priority Services,” (not listed above) staff posed the research questions “from both refugees’ and agencies’ perspectives, what ORR services have the most value in regard to economic self-sufficiency? Which services related to self-sufficiency and integration would refugees and agencies like to have received or provided?”(Halpern, 2008). This reinforces the need for the refugee perspective in understanding the effectiveness of services and the measure of self-sufficiency in the resettlement of this vulnerable population into the United States. The inclusion of the refugee voice would ultimately allow for more informed funding and policy decision-making.

A study conducted by Columbia University argued that the main problems arise from not taking into consideration “individual profiles” (Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, 2010, p. 11). The one size fits old model is an antiquated approach to humanitarian assistance and service provision:

The notion that every refugee needs the same baseline services that has persisted since the inception of the refugee program aligns poorly with the goals of self-sufficiency and integration in the medium and long term. This is especially true given the diversity of the refugees arriving to the U.S. and the diversity of circumstances they face once here. Refugees have little agency over what services they can access, and even VOLAGS have minimal room to account for refugees’ individual profiles when deciding what services to offer (Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, 2010, p. 11).

This leads to varying degrees of integration that is determined not by the measure of self-sufficiency but by the host communities existing resources and support.

Supporting this, UNHCR' *Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration* (2002), states that community backing allows for existing “policy and service infrastructure and the workforce capacity to support integration.” Therefore, this supports the perspective that self-sufficiency is not only based on economy but other factors as well.

Integration and Self-Sufficiency

In *Immigration Journey: A Holistic Exploration of Pre- and Post-Migration Life Stories in a Sample of Canadian Immigrant Women* (Rashid, 2013), a small qualitative study of immigrant women in Canada yielded findings that stated that successful integration is based on more than economic self-sufficiency. One key theme was that loneliness and isolation created challenges to integration. Even in communities with a heavy concentration of refugees, the personal journey which propelled someone to seek refuge in another country can have extensive emotional fallout with deep repercussions. The findings of the study do acknowledge the impact of financial independence; however, the social aspects and other factors were also key to a positive adaptation. The women who were part of the study discussed the loss of status, the realization that their past employment history was not recognized, and the discord in the family also added to the difficulties resettling. While employment was a factor in integration, the other areas wore on them and affected how they felt about their post-migration life. One thing that needs to be kept present is:

People choose to immigrate to the United States for a variety of reasons and under different circumstances, and consequently, immigrants cannot be treated as a homogenous group of individuals. Immigrants can be separated into at least two

distinct groups: refugee immigrants, individuals fleeing persecution in their home country, and economic immigrants, individuals searching for better jobs and economic security. One important characteristic that distinguishes these two immigrant groups is their ability to return to their native country. Refugee immigrants are unable or unwilling to return home for fear or threat of persecution, and thus must make a life in the country that gives them refuge. Economic immigrants, on the other hand, are free from this constraint and can return home whenever they so desire. In fact, for many economic immigrants the purpose of their stay is simply to earn money and then return home to buy land, build a house, support immediate and extended family members, and retire in their motherland. A second observable difference between these two immigrant groups is that refugee immigrants are likely to have fewer social contacts with their home country through return visits. In contrast, economic immigrants are able to make trips to see family members, relatives, and friends they left behind (Cortes, 2004, p. 465).

Mincin presented in her study (2012) the insights on self-sufficiency that employees at a refugee resettlement agency shared through surveys and other research methods. Her findings include the fact that “integration occurs on multiple pathways” and these include learning the language of the host country, acquiring health care, stable housing and employment, as well as becoming involved in their new community. She also found that “learning to speak English is the most important indicator of and basis for integration in the United States.” Lastly, she added that “going to work is a key facilitator of integration.” She does not disagree with the fact that economic stability is essential,

but her research proves that there are also variables to self-sufficiency in the United States. It is important to note the results also brings into focus the interchangeability between self-sufficiency and integration. The findings suggest that the definition of self-sufficiency can be expanded on and be more comprehensive. Randy Capps (2015) also points this out in his report for the Migration Policy Institute:

While the scale of the program implemented by the U.S. government and its' partners is impressive by almost any international standard, it has come under recent criticism for not increasing funding and support for reception and integration sufficiently to address the growing size and needs of resettled populations (p. 6).

Additionally, Lutitia Clipper explains in *Trials, Transition, and Trade offs: A Descriptive Study of the Educational Implications of the Adjustment Experience of Sudanese Refugees in Southwestern Pennsylvania* (2009):

The success of that resettlement policy is dependent on so many factors beyond the control of the resettlement agencies charged with compliance with the program objectives. As is evidenced in this study the **refugees'** forced migration experiences and pre-migration education experiences are significant factors in their adjustment experience (p. iv).

Need for Research

This researcher found a lack of substantive research on the effectiveness of the overall resettlement program since the authorization of the Refugee Act in 1980. An emphasis in today's literature is on individual components of service provision, such as the efficacy of ESL or English as a Second Language programs or on the integration of

one specific group. Even early research showed that studies did not capture the full scope of the process.

The studies of the adjustment process tend to fall into two sizeable groups. First are those studies which focus on the refugees: their mental health, occupational adjustment, language, residence and community patterns, culture and identity problems, health, reactions to stress, relationships with natives, the problems of the women and children and various measures of their progress and adjustment.

The second set of studies focuses on the programs themselves: the mix of services and assistance; which policies and programs and which agencies provide the most effective aid to the refugees (Stein, 1981, p. 325).

Mincin (2012) states in her dissertation that “the literature review in [my] dissertation indicates that research has not sufficiently examined practitioner perspectives on resettlement service provision, data collection, program evaluation, and the evolution of self-sufficiency” (p. 145). While not directly impacted, they have a unique and first-hand view of the challenges, barriers and opportunities presented.

There is also limited but comprehensive research from other host countries who resettled refugees such as Australia. This highlights how progressive Australia and other countries have been in comparison to the United States despite its ranking as the country of destination for the most number of refugees resettled. Interestingly, research done overseas by other host countries found that their top resettlement needs and challenges were “acculturation, housing difficulties, developing language skills, lack of employment opportunities and family” and they look to address these through a more comprehensive and holistic approach. This reinforces the thought that successful refugee programming

requires more than economic stability to deem a person self-sufficient (Hashimoto-Govindasamy and Rose, 2011).

Additionally, U.S. federal programming impact has come into question. Despite the refugee programs overall success,

a sample of refugees in the U.S. less than 5 years show decreasing employment and lower self-sufficiency rates compared to previous years. These findings indicate that this may be the result of welcoming a greater number of refugees with poorer employment and self-sufficiency prospects due to lower education and inability to speak English or illiteracy (Halpern, p. v).

Continued research is important not only because world events are creating forced migration, but because the U.S. has contributed by disrupting migration patterns and pushing people to flee their countries of origin. In the *Politics of Refugee Advocacy and Humanitarian Assistance* by Kathryn Libal and Scott Harding focus on the displacement of Iraqis by the war and their subsequent arrival in the United States as refugees. The uprising against Saddam Hussein forced approximately 4 million Iraqis to flee their country and seek refuge abroad (Libal & Harding, 2007). The United States along with other Middle Eastern nations have opened their borders to receive them. American resettlement agencies such as the International Rescue Committee and World Vision began resettling Iraqi citizens in the mid-2000s (Libal & Harding, 2007). While many Iraqis arrive to the United States with a Special Immigrant Visa and not refugee status, the Iraqi experience is important because they were one of the newest groups to receive refugee status in the United States in the 21st century. They have also experienced difficulties with integration resulting in repatriating back to Iraq or to a third country.

In The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study (Stein, 1981) looks at refugee resettlement at four stages: “1) the initial arrival period of the first few months; 2) the first and second years; 3) after four to five years; 4) a decade or more later” (Stein, p. 325). He found that according to the federal government the long term outlook is not positive. “Many will be embittered and alienated. Many will be just surviving, acculturated enough to function but far from assimilated or integrated” (Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1979 as quoted by Stein, 1981, p. 325). This was especially true of Iraqi refugees as mentioned above. Many have left the United States and either returned to Iraq or resettled in countries such as Jordan.

There is a lack of research on each wave of refugees which does not prepare the government or resettlement agencies for the next group that will be resettled. Program outputs are evaluated but not the impact that each population has on the effectiveness of the approach (Halpern, 2008). This is important because the face of refugee resettlement needs to keep evolving as the populations of refugees keeps changing.

The U.S. Congress enacted the first refugee legislation in 1948 following the admission of more than 250,000 displaced Europeans. This legislation provided for the admission of an additional 400,000 displaced Europeans. Later laws provided for admission of persons fleeing Communist regimes, largely from Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Korea and China, and in the 1960s Cubans fleeing Fidel Castro arrived en masse...With the fall of Vietnam in April of 1975, the U.S. faced the challenge of resettling hundreds of thousands of Indochinese (HHS, History, 2012).

In *Bridge Builders: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Experiences of Former Refugees Working as Caseworkers in the United States* Stacey Shaw examines how former refugees, who are now part of the labor force, fare in assisting other refugees through the resettlement process. Their knowledge in having lived through a similar experience and understanding of the adaptation process challenges mainstream resettlement. The study suggests that alternative resettlement strategies need to be examined and that the process can use revamping. Focusing predominantly on early economic self-sufficiency may inherently indicate a certain assumption regarding the concept of integration. In other words, it seems that ORR views economic self-sufficiency as a central factor in refugee integration” (Smith, 2013, p.25) However, when asked participants, “the concept emerged from the interviews as a central theme, many interviewees explained that self-sufficiency for refugees, in and of itself, is not integration but a vital component thereof (Smith, 2013, p.36).

Conclusion

The limited information that had be gathered by scholars and findings from studies conducted all found a disconnect between the existing programming and the reality faced by the population served. Even early publications acknowledged that “refugees' expectations, often romantic and unrealistic..are quite different from what we know they should expect. The refugees' expectations will have a large impact on their behavior during resettlement” (Stein, 1981, p. 325).

Yet despite the recognition of the divide, the refugee program has expanded to become one of the largest formal resettlement systems in the world. This study aimed to contribute to the understanding of the U.S. approach in delivering aid and provide a voice

to those directly receiving the assistance. Chapter 3 will examine the methodology used to capture the experiences, understanding and overall essence of the phenomenon. The participants will be introduced, and the process for conducting the research and collecting and analyzing the data will be detailed.

Chapter 3: Research Method

This chapter includes a discussion on the methodology chosen, how the analysis conducted was consistent with the chosen approach, and its use to address the research questions. Additionally, this chapter presents preliminary information on the study and participants, including the demographics of the sample. It also includes a comprehensive description on the process used to analyze the transcripts from the nine individual interviews conducted to uncover the meaning in their statements. At each level of analysis, the data was further distilled, until themes emerged, which will be described in detail in the next chapter.

Choosing a specific research tradition

The researcher picked qualitative research to examine this topic. While this study could have been carried out using quantitative methodology, qualitative research can capture cultural context better as it allows the researcher to interpret nuances not attained in a survey or by raw numbers or data. One of the key mandates of refugee resettlement is to be culturally appropriate in service provision, design and implementation of programs.

Additionally, the researcher chose phenomenology as the research tradition within the realm of qualitative study to explore the phenomenon of resettlement and self-sufficiency. This tradition captures the essence of a lived experience and the process fits the formula the researcher sought to use to explore the phenomena.

Research first turns to a phenomenon, an “abiding concern”, which seriously interests them. In the process, they reflect on essential themes, what constitutes the nature of this lived experience. They write a description of the phenomenon,

maintaining a strong relation to the topic of inquiry and balancing the part of the writing to the whole (Creswell, 2007, p. 59).

Other qualitative research methods, such as grounded theory and case study, were explored. Grounded theory was discarded as its focus is to utilize data to build a theory. This study does not use, test or validate an existing theory or seek to develop a theory from the data captured in this study. Additionally, there is no theory that would be applicable to support approaching the study using this method. Likewise, the case study approach was discarded as it encompasses extensive data collection and there is a lack of research and literature on this subject.

There are several phenomenological approaches available seeking to understand the human experience as it is lived. However, meaning is the core of transcendental phenomenology or TPA (transcendental phenomenological approach), which is designed to acquire and collect data that explains the essences of the human experience. Developed by Clark Moustakas (1994), it proposes a more structured approach in comparison to other phenomenology traditions (Creswell, 2007).

Taking into consideration that these individuals might not come from a western society or understand the context or structural meaning of the questions, allowing open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to capture the essence of the refugees' experience. Because of the diversity of the population, due to language, background, religion, and other demographic, this type of research approach helped to equalize the data. This means that it ensured that the data captured was similar despite the variations in the background of individuals interviewed (Moustakas, 1994).

As such [personal perspective and interpretation] are powerful for understanding subjective experience, gaining insights into people's motivations and actions, and cutting through the clutter of taken-for-granted assumptions and conventional wisdom. Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions. Adding an interpretive dimension to phenomenological research, enabling it to be used as the basis for practical theory, allows it to inform, support or challenge policy and action (Lester, 1999, p.1).

Quantitative research, particularly looking at surveys or through surveys, can be used in the future when looking at defectiveness of the programming provided or potentially new programming created. In Chapter 5, this will be added as a recommendation for further studies into the subject area.

The Sampling Approach

The minimum number of participants sought to participate in the research was eight, with data saturation reached at nine. It was concluded that the point was reached when no new information emerged and statements from prior participants were reinforced by those interviewed during the latter part of the process. This research's inclusion criteria was that the participant must be an adult, male or female, who arrived to the United States as a refugee, who also works or has worked for a resettlement agency or in refugee programming in South Florida. Additionally, the inclusion criteria extended to adults, male or female, who arrived to the United States as a Cuban/Haitian entrant (parolee), who also works or has worked for a resettlement agency or in refugee

programming in South Florida. The exclusion criteria for both groups would have been if the individual had not experienced resettlement and had not worked in a resettlement agency or refugee programming.

Parolees, especially Cuban entrants, were included in the sample. A parolee is someone who also has relatives in the United States, as these are the people who have petitioned the federal government to allow them entry. These relatives or sponsors will be fiscally responsible for these individuals, thus changing the dynamics of being economically self-sufficient and their perceptions of the resettlement process. One exception are Cuban nationals who under the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1996 are guided by special provisions (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Green Card for a Cuban Native or Citizen). One policy that was in place until 2017 was known as the “wet foot/dry foot” law. It permitted entry into the United States if they touch American soil through a port of entry or by arriving at a U.S shore. Their parole is not contingent on familial sponsorship but on humanitarian grounds. The researcher focused on the refugee population in South Florida, which the U.S. prioritizes on three levels detailed below and on Cuban parolees as described above.

Priority Levels

- Priority One (P-1) is those refugees with "compelling security concerns in their country of first asylum; persons in need of legal protection because of the danger of being forced to return to their home country; those in danger due to threats of armed attack in areas where they are located; persons who have experienced persecution because of their political, religious, or human rights activities; women at risk; victims of torture or violence; physically or mentally disabled persons;

persons in urgent need of medical attention not available to them in the first asylum country; and persons for whom other durable solutions are not feasible and whose status in the place of asylum does not present a satisfactory long-term solution" (Patrick, 2004).

- Priority Two (P-2) is for those refugee groups from approved countries. "The list of nationalities eligible for P-2 status is reviewed annually, at which time certain nationalities are added and others removed according to the urgency of the situation at the time of review." In FY 2015, Jews, Evangelical Christians, and Ukrainian Catholics and Orthodox from Eurasia and the Baltics; Cubans; Ethnic Minorities and others from Burma in camps in Thailand; Ethnic Minorities from Burma in Malaysia; Bhutanese in Nepal; Iranian Religious Minorities; Congolese in Rwanda; and Iraqis Associated with the United States were eligible for P-2 status (Department of State, 2014).
- Priority Three (P-3) is also for those of certain nationalities and reserved for spouses, unmarried children under 21, and parents of persons already lawfully admitted to the U.S. as asylees or refugees.

The table below provides a snapshot view of the regions where refugees were coming from during that period of time and the numbers allocated by the US government.

Table 5

Refugees admitted to the U.S. by region of origin, FY 2003 totals

<u>Region</u>	<u>Total (no. of arrivals/regional ceiling)</u>	<u>Main Countries/Groups of Origin</u>
East Asia	1,724/4,000	Vietnam, Burma
Latin America	452/2,500	Cuba
Near East/South Asia	4,293/7,000	Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq
Africa	10,717/20,000	Liberia, Sudan, Somalia
Europe and Central Asia	11,269/16,500	Former USSR (Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians, Jews), Former Yugoslavia (Serbia)
Unallocated Reserve	0/20,000	*Note: the unallocated reserve is not designated to a particular region but can be used if and when additional refugee caseloads are identified and after congressional approval
<u>Total FY 2003</u>	28,455/70,000	

Note. Copied from Erin Patrick (2004). *The U.S. refugee resettlement program.* Migration Policy Institute (MPI), Retrieved from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=229>.



Figure 2. Refugee Country Origin for Each State

Fitting the demographic make-up of the South Florida region and at the time of the study being one of the largest refugee-origin groups in the country and the largest group resettled in South Florida as seen in Figure 2, it is not surprising that the sample majority identified as Cuban (Capps, 2015, p. 2). However, it is important to note that:

Most refugees in Miami do not come to the country under Section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The refugee population in Miami is unique in that most of the “refugees” are not granted refugee status prior to entering the country and assigned to a VOLAG for R&P services. Instead, they are granted asylum under Section 208 of the INA or are admitted as Cuban/Haitian entrants [parolees] under the Refugee Education Assistance Act in accordance with the requirements in 45 CFR § 401.2, adding some complexity to their resettlement process, including lawful employability and their efforts to establish legal residence status. While some Cubans do arrive in the United States under INA Section 207 as refugees, many Cubans and some Haitians arrive in the United States in undocumented status, and are permitted to enter (Pindus, 2008, ES-3).

While there might appear to be homogeneity in the nationality of the refugees who participated in the study, the case sample did include a variation in work experience and in time living in the United States. Additionally, each participant’s role was unique because the duality of their life experiences which allowed for multi-faceted perspectives in their position as “cultural brokers [between]...their community of origin and new social and cultural systems in their country of migration. This [complex and delicate] role often entails mediating between refugees and other service providers, providing

information, and encouraging integration (Abrahamsson et al., 2009)” (Shaw, 2014, p. 285).

Shaw also added in her study that “they described being able to understand client feelings, challenges, expectations, points of view, and cultural and family issues. Caseworkers also discussed how having a similar culture, language, and experience helped clients feel comfortable and understood” (Shaw, p. 294). While this leads to internal and external conflicts, it is an asset in understanding the multi-faceted phenomenon of refugee resettlement. Table 5 presents one example.

Table 6

A Refugee Caseworker’s Understanding

Trina expressed understanding the agency’s role, or the agency’s ability to help in proscribed ways and provide specific services. But she also continued to identify with client demands or frustrations and put herself in a position to respond to the client with empathy. She sees the need for clients to keep appointments as well as the need for the agency to be flexible and responsive. Part of the conflict is also related to Trina’s memory of her experience as a client. She stated that at first, she also did not understand the agency’s role. Although she now understands, she remembers what it was like to be frustrated and unable to keep appointments (Shaw, p.289).

Note. Copied from Stacey Shaw. (2014). *Bridge builders: A qualitative study exploring the experiences of former refugees working as caseworkers in the United States.* Journal of Social Service Research, 40.3 :289.

Locating Individuals, Gaining Access, and Developing Rapport

Because of the complex yet specific inclusion criteria and sensitive nature of the experiences lived by potential participants, the research took structured and detailed measures to identify individuals to interview for the study. After approval from the Institutional Review Board or IRB, which can be found in Appendix F, the researcher engaged in the steps highlighted in Table 8 to recruit participants and ensure an ethically appropriate consent process.

Table 7

Overview of the Steps in the Recruitment and Consent Process

<p>Step 1a: The researcher advertised the study via email using the local Refugee Task Forces' email Listservs and sent the written recruitment material found in Appendix E. electronically. The researcher also presented at the Miami-Dade Refugee Task Force meeting on 2017.</p>
<p>Step 1b: The researcher also engaged in snowball sampling through their connection to a gatekeeper in the community. This unexpected connection was made through a fellow colleague, who worked in refugee resettlement. While they did not meet the eligibility criteria, they did understand the study, its goals and objectives and potential impact. They actively sought to make introductions, which proved to be fruitful.</p> <p>The researcher also asked the gatekeeper, in person, to provide potential participants with the written recruitment tool, which they received both in electronic and printed format.</p>
<p>Step 2: Once potential participants contacted the researcher through email, in person, or via telephone, the researcher sent them the pre-screening tool via email and gave them up to a week to return it electronically. This is found in Appendix H. If they did not respond, they were sent one reminder, giving them another week to reply.</p>
<p>Step 3: Based on the information on the pre-screening tool, the researcher informed the participant if they are eligible to participate. Only one of the individuals who contacted the researcher was not eligible to be a part of the study.</p>
<p>Step 4: If the participant was eligible, they were sent the consent form electronically (via email) and set up the formal interview (via email or telephone) at the participant's preferred location. The consent form is found in Appendix I. The participant was given the researcher's contact information in case they had any questions or concerns.</p>
<p>Step 5: The researcher contacted the participant via email and telephone two days before the interview to remind them of the upcoming appointment.</p>

Step 6: Eight of the nine interviews were conducted in person; the remaining one was held via telephone. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced themselves.

Step 7: They reminded the participant of the informed consent's content. They also reminded them that all the information was confidential and that they did not have to answer all the questions. They also reminded them that they could stop the interview at any time. The researcher also asked if they felt comfortable if they took notes and recorded the interview. They were explained the minimal risks involved in the research and that resources were available to the participant if they felt impacted by the study.

Step 8: The researcher asked the participant if they had any questions and addressed any that came up.

Step 9: If everything had been clarified and the participant wanted to move forward, the researcher collected the informed consent form.

Step 10: The interview then began. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher thanked the participant for their time.

Interview Questions

Though most refugees resettled in Florida are Spanish speaking, the researcher developed the questions English. Since individuals participating are part of the U.S. labor sector and use English in a professional level, the questions were fashioned in this language.

The questions used during the interview process were developed from a generalized profile and the researcher's academic experience and professional background interacting with refugees and working at a refugee resettlement agency. In addition to the researcher's knowledge of this area, information gathered in the literature review such as the following account on the refugee experience helped in developing the questions:

Table 8

The Refugee Experience

After all the trauma and suffering, after the refugee camp, a refugee approaches the new land with mixed feelings. The refugee left home to escape danger; there was no destination in mind, no "positive original motivation to settle elsewhere" (Kunz, 1973). The country of resettlement is often chosen against or despite his wishes; the refugee is taking a "plunge" into the unknown.

On his way to the country offering him asylum, the refugee experienced ... his liberation from the troubles and cares which has driven him from his fatherland; the oppression of the uncertain arrival which he was to face; the sorrow on account of all that was dear to him and left behind. Against the background of his . . . experiences ... he fostered undifferentiated and rosy-colored expectations about things awaiting him in the country lying ahead (Ex, 1966).

Refugees have high expectations about their new life, especially regarding their economic and occupational adjustment. They do not expect to lose anything because of their migration. The refugees want to recover their lost status and are resistant to accepting jobs that represent underemployment. . . . A phenomenon of particular importance regarding refugee behavior during resettlement is the refugees' strong belief that they are owed something by someone. Since their persecutors are unavailable, the refugees shift their demands to the government and the helping agencies.

Refugees often have difficulties with agencies set up to help them. . . . Many agencies report that the refugees studied tended to be very demanding, displaying an attitude that they should be compensated for their unjust suffering and fortitude. They continually complained of not receiving enough (Rogg, 1974).

Neither the government nor the agencies are able to satisfy all of the refugees' demands. As their requests are frustrated the refugees become suspicious and bitter. Denied what they believe is owed them, feeling that the agencies seek to control them, the refugees suspect "counterfeit-nurturance", that is, aid given to humiliate and subjugate the refugees rather than from motives of genuine charity. A vicious spiral can set in: refugees are helped because they are helpless; they must display their need and helplessness; the caseworker cannot accede to all who are needy and must shield himself from emotional involvement; the cool attitude of the caseworker conveys suspicion to the refugee about his truthfulness; if they won't believe the truth the refugee inflates it; hearing exaggerated stories the caseworker becomes suspicious.

The immigrant tends to see the resettlement agency as a hostile bureaucracy. This may cause the immigrant to become aggressive, demanding of resources and to measure his initial success in the United States by how much he can get from the agency (Taylor and Nathan, 1980).

A last point regarding refugee resettlement behavior: the refugee is searching his way through a strange and frightening society. The patterns of behavior that sustained life at home are no longer sufficient. The refugee is uncertain about how to mobilize his resources to succeed in his new home.

Loss of patterns of conduct is intensified by the uncertainty of what kind of behavior is acceptable or nonacceptable in their new environment . . . (They) may exhibit restlessness, aimless bustling about, constantly searching for something to do (Taylor and Nathan, 1980).

Without clear guidance from the host the refugee does not know what to do. This need for guidance is greatest in the initial stages of resettlement.

(He)... is experiencing crisis and is often placed in ambiguous situations without clear definitions of behavioral expectations . . . tries to redefine his life situation and to adopt strategies for dealing with the crisis; he begins to discover that their prior life experiences have not adequately prepared him for a life in this different culture (Taylor and Nathan, 1980).

The split-screen view of resettlement reveals a tension in resettlement that must be dealt with if refugees are to integrate successfully into a society. The resettlement agencies and the refugees have different views of the same situation. In pursuing their rose-colored expectations of their ability to recover what they have lost, refugees can become aggressive, demanding and suspicious. Behind these behaviors, though, is confusion, uncertainty and a need for guidance.

What is portrayed is somewhat bleak but it reflects the realities. There is a tendency to dwell on refugee success stories which are not representative of the experiences of the group. Such stories set a standard of expectations that add to the refugee's frustrations.

In reality, lives torn apart are not easily repaired. The refugee pays a high price for flight. Remember, though, that the refugee fled for safety and freedom not for economic or social values and opportunities.

Note. Copied from Stein, B. (1981). *The refugee experience: Defining the parameters of a field of study*. *International Migration Review*, Vol. 15(1/2), 326-328.

In this research, the questions focused on the “how” and “what” about the refugee experience, which are in line with the methodology tradition chosen for this study. The main questions addressed were “How do refugees resettled in the United States define self-sufficiency?” and “What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?” The interviews were semi-structured with additional questions asked when

needing to prompt the participant regarding a point they might be trying to make. The list of the questions asked during the semi-structured interview are presented below.

Principal question #1: What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?

- What does it mean to be a refugee?
- What is difficult or easy about being a refugee?
- What made you decide to seek refugee status?
- How did you feel about your new host country?
- What were your goals as a refugee in the United States?
- How was the assistance aligned to your needs as a refugee?

Principal question #2: How do refugees resettled in the United States define self-sufficiency?

- What does it mean (to refugees) to be self-sufficient?
- What is not necessary to be considered self-sufficient?
- What would you change in the resettlement process once you arrived? How would you change it?
- What does integration mean to you?
- How will you know when you have integrated?

In some instances, following the phenomenological research tradition, additional questions were asked if the participant alluded to a specific point or the answer in a previous response. For example, as part of principal question 2, when engaged in the conversation on integration, one additional point asked was, “How did you know that you had integrated to the United States?”

Demographics of Sample

A total of nine participants were interviewed for this study. Apart from the principal and complementing questions, all participants were asked about the following demographic points: age, gender, nationality, years living in the United States, and years working in refugee resettlement. Table 9 indicates the participant demographics that represent minimum requirements sought as described above. This was the participants' demographic information at the time of the interview. Pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality.

Table 9

Demographics of Sample

Participant	Gender	Age	Nationality	Years in the United States	Years Working in Resettlement
Daniel	M	27	Cuban	14	4
Victoria	F	46	Cuban	33	29
Elena	F	64	Cuban	47	5
Antonio	M	36	Cuban	7	5
Fatima	F	20	Jordanian	1	1
Julia	F	68	Cuban	57	20
Alicia	F	75	Cuban	53	7
Maria	F	45	Cuban	16	4
Roberto	M	42	Cuban	16	14

In further breaking down the demographics of the group, these were the key points regarding the participants:

- Three of the nine participants were male; the majority or six identified as female. No one identified as being non-binary.
- The ages of the participants were varied and ranged from 20 years-old to 75 with a mean age of 47.5. Two participants were between the ages of 20-29, while one was between 30 and 39. Three participants were between the ages of 40-49. No one identified in the 50-59 age group, but 3 of the participants were 60 years or older.
- All but one participant was born in Cuba. The participant who was of a different country of origin was of Cuban descent.
- Five or approximately fifty-six percent of participants had lived in the United States less than twenty years, and the majority (3) had lived in the U.S. between 10-19 years. Though the modern refugee program is almost forty years-old, the U.S. has historically welcomed refugees throughout its history. Surprisingly, three of those interviewed had lived in the United States over 40 years, thus resettling in the country before the Refugee Act of 1980 was enacted.
- The total years worked in refugee resettlement varied among the 9 participants sampled. Two participants had over 20 years of experience; while only one fell between the 10-19 year range. The majority of the group, six or approximately 67% had 1-9 years of experience working in refugee resettlement. This fact is not surprising as the most robust and comprehensive refugee programming was only developed in the last couple of decades.

Collection of Data

Recording Information and Storing Data

These 45 to 60-minute interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed. “The ‘problem’ for many researchers with phenomenological research is that it generates a large quantity of interview notes, tape recordings, jottings or other records all of which have to be analysed” (Lester, 1999, p.2). Therefore, the researcher read through the text and made notes on the transcripts. They also made notes on gestures and other non-verbal cues not captured by the software.

After the interviews, the consent forms and written notes, were scanned onto the researcher’s computer and the notes shredded. The same procedure took place after data coding. After the data has been collected, the researcher created and organized individual digital files. All information was saved and stored in password-protected hardware, including a computer and USB drive.

Audio-recordings were captured by a digital tape recorder, which were uploaded into the researcher’s computer. These recordings were stored in this password-protected device and into a secure USB drive. No one outside the principal researcher and faculty adviser, when consulted for technical assistance, will have access to any of the data and information. To decrease invasion of privacy, the principal researcher transcribed all the recordings using headphones and in a private space in her home. The transcriptions were saved in the method described above. The recordings and digital data will be destroyed 36 months after the conclusion of the study.

Risks to Participants

The study will work to ensure that personal risk is minimal. In this study, the main risk to highlight is the potentially loss of confidentiality. Maintaining confidentiality will be done in various ways.

During the data collection process, the researcher had to address how confidentiality would be maintained in the close knit community in which the interviewer and participant work in. In part this was achieved by interviewing participants in a location of their choosing thus not placing an emphasis on a formal office environment. Also, the researchers reiterated the fact that the purpose of the research was for an independent project conducted for academic purposes and restated the confidentiality process. While the findings could be of interest to the resettlement agencies in the region, no identifying information would be shared. Everything publish would be posed as best practices and lessons learned.

Additionally, because the participants' voice can be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, confidentiality about things shared could not be guaranteed although the researcher tried to limit access to the audio clip to only the researcher and their advisor. Apart from confidentiality an additional risk that had to be prevented or mitigated was the emotional impact of the study. Because the participants answered questions related to a lived experience, there might have been memories of negative situations that arose during their storytelling. This might have caused feelings of sadness, loss or other adverse emotions. It was also explained to participants that there could be potential emotional discomfort that could arise from sharing lived experiences and the availability of referral and resources for those who request it.

Analysis of Data

Moustakas' (1994) data analysis was primarily utilized in this study.

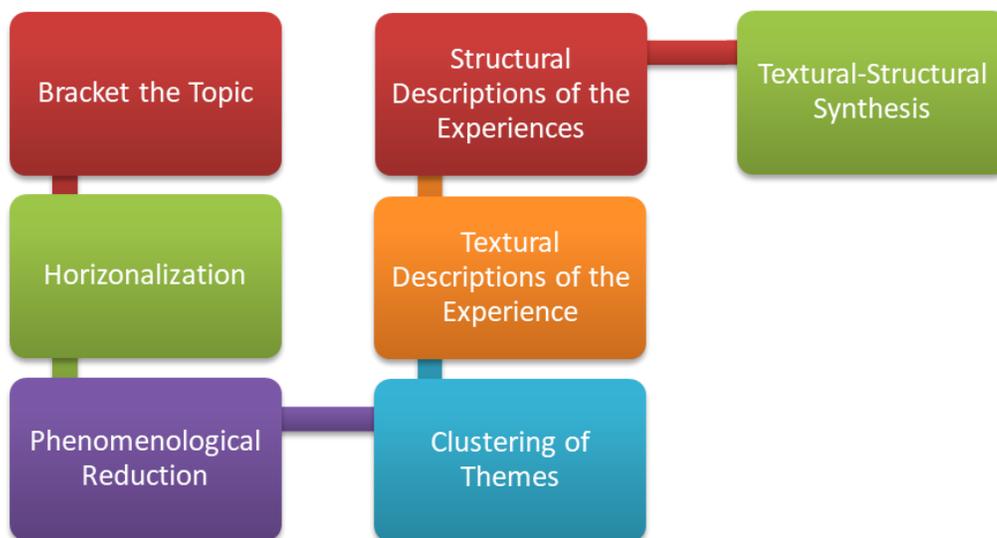


Figure 3. Transcendental Phenomenology Steps to Data Analysis

Bracketing

Part of the reason for using the approach of transcendental phenomenology is because of the emphasis and focus on objectivity. Because of the researcher's prior history working in agencies involved in the refugee resettlement field, including state government and a non-governmental organization, they had to address two concerns. Internally, they had to bracket out their perspectives and views on the resettlement process and refugee experience in the United States and particularly the South Florida region. This was done after engagement in the process of reflexivity.

Reflexivity is the key thinking activity that helps us to identify the potential influence throughout the research process. Reflexivity involves the realization of an honest examination of the values and interests of the researcher that may impinge upon research work (Chan, 2013, p3).

In an effort to see the phenomenon without biases, it was necessary to set aside preconceived ideas and thoughts. It pushed the researched to be open and mindful to hearing about experiences with a fresh perspective (Moustakas, 1994). This was done by being conscious of the bracketing process throughout the data collection and analysis and being focused on listening to the participants and being observant during the limited interactions.

Additionally, the researcher had to examine if they were the correct individual to conduct the study (Chan, 2013, p4). They asked themselves the guiding question, “Do [I] understand the topic enough that [I] can justify the research proposal while maintaining..curiosity in this area?” (Chan, 2013, p4). Because they had working knowledge of the issue but their personal and professional experience had not directly involve this area, they felt comfortable responding “Yes” to the question. Additionally, in the planning, the interview questions were developed to follow a semi-structured format. The ability to elicit open-ended responses maintains the curiosity and goal of seeking knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon.

Horizontalization, Phenomenological Reduction, and Clustering of Themes

Once the interviews had been conducted and then transcribed, the researcher engaged in the process of horizontalization. Utilizing Microsoft software, particularly Microsoft Word and Excel, as a more traditional method to distill data, the researcher identified 49 individual statements as significant to the study. A sample of some of the statements or themes is presented in Table 10; the remaining will be shown throughout Chapter 4 and the full complementing summaries of the interviews are found in the

Appendix section. These statements reflect entire sentences and were a subjective extraction from the transcripts.

Table 10

Sample of Selected Significant Statements

- “So do you think having these tangible items, when people think self-sufficiency, it's more tied to the tangible stuff? I would say yes, initially yeah, initially yes. I mean later on, you know, the mental part” (Victoria).
- “If you include like some mental health, or perhaps, those programs that will help you find or create your own businesses, you know, stuff, like those, those, programs that could actually, once you're ready for them, will be there for you to help you out, that would be ideal” (Victoria).
- Being able to take the bus, feel comfortable to where you are going, driving around. I think that's, that's feeling part of something” (Victoria).
- “Self-sufficient is that you can provide to yourself a basic needs, then you can have a better lifestyle but when you come here you can't have it at the beginning” (Fatima).
- “To become self-sufficient, we started working, I started working at 13” (Julia).
- “They have so many opportunities and they don't realize it. We have a small group. You know like 30 percent of the people use it; but 70% when they realize it it's too late because we have a 5 year limit” (Julia).
- “It's kind of a domino effect getting documents, then a job... then eventually will be able to pay your bills” (Roberto).

- “Take into consideration that the sooner you provide [documentation such as employment authorization] the sooner that person is going to be self-sufficient and it's not going to be a burden to the society” (Roberto).

The statements selected all had an equal value of importance in understanding the phenomenon. Once these were compiled, those that were redundant or repetitive were eliminated through the process of phenomenological reduction. The statements that emerged are known as meaning units or horizons.

These horizons, which were not presented in any specific order, were then grouped into categories. They were then used to cross reference overall meaning with the developing themes. This exercise was done for each principal question.

Textural and Structural Descriptions of the Experience

The textural descriptions of the data focused on accurately describing the refugee experience of self-sufficiency. The textural descriptions used statements from the participants to try to capture and then describe the phenomenon. This part of the process aimed to capture the “what” of the phenomenon.

While the textural descriptions of the experience focused on the “what” of the phenomenon, the structural descriptions focused on the “how” of the phenomenon. The structural description of the experience focused on the underlying nuances of the refugee experience (Moustakas, 1994). This included details about participants’ past and how they arrived to the United States. The structural description of the participants collectively aided to further understand how as they as a group experienced the phenomenon of migration and resettlement (Moustakas, 1994).

Textural-Structural Synthesis: Essence of the Experience

The final step in data analysis is a synthesis of meanings to develop and extract the essence of the experience. This provided the foundation for explaining the how and what of the phenomenon examined (Moustakas, 1994). This deduction is based on the formal transcripts, the analysis of the data and formal response from those interviewed and the researcher's intuition and reflection. According to Moustakas, reflection helps to create the structures for the essence of the experience. These descriptions, through the process of synthesis, clarify the experience of refugee migration and resettlement and culminates in a full, composite description of the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

Conclusion

Phenomenology allowed the researcher to draw out the information of those being interviewed. It also captured patterns, trends, and themes of what was shared. This tradition gave refugees a voice which was positive as there are practical policy implications in this research.

Using this method, individual refugees were interviewed about their experience. Understanding how they felt about this process helped to understand if the goals set up by the government are in tune with the needs of this population. Formulating these meanings aided in having a better understanding at something that has been hinted on (the refugee dissatisfaction with resettlement) but not studied. This was achieved through "gathering 'deep' information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative methods such as interviews, discussions and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s)" (Lester, 1999, p.1).

In Chapters 4 and 5, the findings of the study will be shared and interpreted, respectively. The distilled data and themes will be presented with the goal of answering the principal research questions: “What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?” and “How do refugees resettled in South Florida define self-sufficiency?” The responses will address the phenomenon researched through this study and produce an overall understanding of the essence of the experience.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, the results of the data analysis are presented. The data was captured and then examined in response to the problem posed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. The fundamental goal drove the collection of the data and the subsequent data analysis. The goal was to capture the refugee perspective through the voice of those who lived the refugee migration experience and now work in refugee resettlement in South Florida. In this section, the researcher presents tables and graphics, as well as quotes from the participant interviews to address the two principal research questions: “What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?” and “How do refugees resettled in South Florida define self-sufficiency?”

Following the qualitative methodological tradition of transcendental phenomenology, the synthesis of meaning will be outlined first. This process provided the foundation for explaining the how and what of the phenomenon examined or essence of the study. The essence is the principal idea and the core of the phenomenon this study sought to explain. As described in Chapter 3, the participant interviews were transcribed and then analyzed through the process of horizontalization. This allowed for the emergence of themes, which were then clustered or grouped into categories. The two figures below illustrate the process for the two main areas analyzed: lived experience and self-sufficiency.



Figure 4. Most Used Words to Describe the Lived Experience of Refugees

The most frequently used words were Forced, Refuge, Transition, Lost, New, Leave, Change, Different, Persecution, Survival, Choiceless, Migration, Jail, Separation, Restarting, and Freedom. The size of the word reflects the number of times it was mentioned by participants. The larger the size of the word, the higher the frequency in which it was mentioned in interviews.



Figure 5. Most Used Words to Describe What Self-Sufficiency Means to Refugees in South Florida

The most frequently used words were Pay, Rent, Food, Survival, Education, Training, Orientation, Information, Learning, Employment, Basic Needs, Adapt, Know the System, Language, Independent, Own, Thrive, Adapt, Adjust, Assistance, Contribute, Money, Language, Communication, Integration, Insurance and Orientation

As stated above, the size of the word reflects the number of times it was mentioned by participants. The larger the size of the word, the higher the frequency in which it was mentioned in interviews.

As explained in the previous chapter, textural descriptions of the data focused on accurately describing the refugee experience of self-sufficiency. The textural descriptions used quotes from the statements participants made with the aim of describing the “what” of the phenomenon. These participants’ own words illustrate through narrative their meaning of the concept.

While the textural descriptions of the experience focused on the “what” of the phenomenon, the structural descriptions focused on the “how” of the phenomenon. This included details about participants’ past and how they came to migrate to the United States. The structural description collectively aided to further understand how they as a group experienced the phenomenon of migration and resettlement.

Figure 6 below visually demonstrates the process. The essence, located at the top of the chart, with the headings of lived experience and self-sufficiency diverting the themes into two sections, is central to the study. The themes are shown in an outline form with a number (e.g.1) delineating its purpose and then future broken into categories (e.g. 1a).



Figure 6. Structure of Themes

As explained in Chapter 3, the essence is the main theme that was extrapolated through the background research, interviews and analysis. The research found that among refugees the experience of self-sufficiency has varying meanings. This phenomenon shapes their perspective on resettlement and participation in the process upon arrival to their new host country. These findings signal that programming should create multiple paths to self-sufficiency, particularly as the world has more refugees today than at any other point in history.

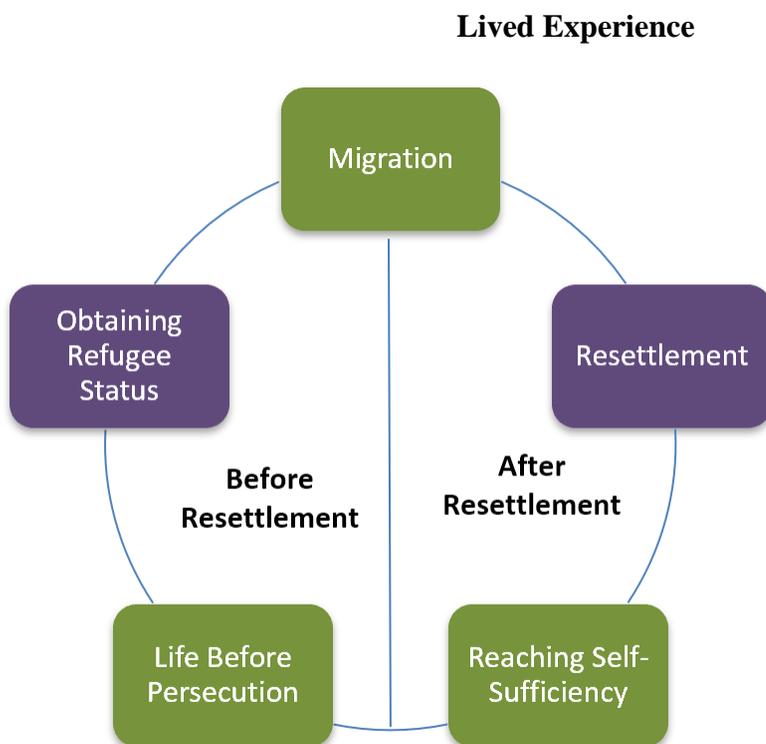


Figure 7. Refugee Lived Experience

To begin looking at the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency in South Florida, the two main themes appear to be time stamped. The statements about the time closest to migration and after arrival at the United States were decidedly more negative. Those describing life at least a year before becoming a refugee to a year post-arrival showed more positive sentiments. Figure 7, which was developed by the researcher, illustrates this with the areas shaded in purple marking the height of negative experiences and emotions with green showing times that participants highlighted in a more positive manner.

1. The Lived Experience: Before Resettlement

As defined in Chapter 1, a refugee is someone who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to,

or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR, 2011). As there is a legal definition, everyone agreed on the basics of who is a refugee and each participant easily identified as such. “A refugee is someone who is fleeing from their country not because they want, it’s because they are forced to do that” (Fatima).

Accompanying the refugee experience of being forced, both literally and figuratively, from the person’s country of origin, there were complementary sentiments such as loss. However, showing the resiliency of this population, the other themes focused on the newness and rebirth that came with their migration. While being labeled as a refugee conjured fear, trepidation and hesitation, it also appeared to bring a sense of hope and opportunity.

1a. Forced into Migrating

As Fatima added, “they have no place left for them in their countries, so they are forced to leave their country for X reason and they seek refuge in another country so they can start a life; maybe for their children a better life for them, a better future. That’s what a refugee actually is” (Fatima). Daniel elaborated in the definition by stating, “you left whatever situation that you had that made you migrate your country in the first place.” Two participants and their families (Julia and Roberto) were persecuted because of their affiliation to the Catholic Church. Three participants and their families were harassed by the government in their country of origin and threatened with imprisonment (Daniel, Victoria, and Roberto) pushing them to find a way to safety.

As physical safety is the primary goal, a refugee focus at this phase is not self-sufficiency but to flee persecution and survive. Even after migrating, survival is the

instinctual objective upon arrival. While survival in that case does not pertain to security, it relates to seeking emotional and mental well-being. Nonetheless, there are dreams and expectations tied to the escape from their current situation and hopes for the new future.

1b. Hope for a Better Future

Antonio was in his late 20s when he arrived to the United States from Cuba.

While he spoke candidly about the challenges faced by refugees, he shared this about his hopes and dreams and thoughts before resettlement: “I always dream to come to this country, since I had sense of everything that was around me.” He added, “I felt that I can had any kind of any plan, you know, any plan, any regular plan of a human being...to have a house, to have a home, to have a future, to have a boy, and I have one right now .” He concluded that “some people adapt very bad[ly] or not adapt at all to the changes and the process is hard. Not for me because that was my dream as I said.”

In this case, the dreams he had before migration aligned with the goals of the resettlement program. His statement gives insight into the tangible and intangible aspirations he held. Similarly, Daniel shared a high degree of optimism. He said “you arrive to a place where you could reach whatever expectations you have and have more than what you ever dreamed you were going to have.” While Antonio and Daniel had high aspirations, Daniel acknowledged that most just wish for a positive outcome. He said, “you leave everything behind and you hope to make the best out of the new country.”

While for some refugees their goals before migration align with their goals at arrival, many are not familiar with the process of resettlement and what it has to offer.

This creates unrealistic expectations about life after migration to the United States and creates an overall dissatisfaction with the refugee process as supported by the literature.

2. The Lived Experience: After Resettlement

Common perception is that since refugees escaped the persecution which warranted their migration and being awarded refugee status, a sense relief at their safety must be felt. However, since refugees are forced from their homeland, life after resettlement continues to follow patterns experienced before migrating. The separation from their homeland and the experience of learning the most basics aspects of life again, even in adulthood, weighs heavily on this population. “I had never been away from my family, away from my country, away from my culture and I missed all that. I remember crying for a whole month” (Alicia).

2a. Pushing Through Loss

Alicia added that, “at that time [my goal] was surviving, surviving and having my daughter. Just survive one day at a time and of course, trying to find a job, which was very difficult because I was pregnant and I started showing” (Alicia). Despite the difficulties she faced, she still wanted to focus on employment to get her family ahead. Two other participants (Antonio and Julia) shared that though they were minors when they arrived, they also worked upon resettling in the United States to financially contribute to the household. While refugees are immigrants due to persecution and not economic forces, they strive to move forward financially from the first day they set foot in their new host country. As Elena stated,

The advice that I would give [recently arrived refugees] is like fight for what they want, persist, do what they want, be patient because you're not getting everything

you want in one day or one month. You have to fight for it. You have to put your whole effort and you have to go through many things that are not the pleasant ones, but are the ones that are going to take you to the place or level where you want to be. But if you put your effort, you are going to get there. It [depends] on you; not on anybody else. The country is open the door for you. It's giving a lot of opportunity, help and everything, but if you don't know how to handle it; you cannot get what you want out of it, nobody's going to take you and give it to you for, for nothing. You have to fight for it.

Roberto reiterated Elena's statement and summarize that "it's a process that you'll have to learn to deal with and it's just a matter of patience and sacrifice. You'll be there, you'll get where you want to get but you have to be patient."

2b. Finding How to Stay Connected to "Home"

Despite the importance of economic stability, other factors impact refugee integration and self-sufficiency. Alicia spoke at length about her journey with her spouse and the unexpected barriers they faced, including being told to leave South Florida due to a lack of resources for those with her status. Ultimately, she and her husband decided to stay in the community even knowing that the assistance was more limited and that it would be more challenging with the limited assistance offered. Nevertheless, the proximity to their country, the burgeoning Cuban community in Miami and informal network of refugees they found, convinced them to stay.

While resources are recognized as indispensable, there are other intangible factors like the sense of community that Alicia described which kept her and her spouse in South Florida. Upon resettling, four other participants (Victoria, Julia, Maria, and Roberto)

were told to live in other parts of the United States as there were more benefits for refugees available in other regions. Victoria, Julia, Maria and Roberto did live in the West Coast or in northern States when they first migrated. While they all did feel there were more resources assistance elsewhere, they all, ultimately, felt that South Florida was more representative of their home country and chose to move to the community. This hints at the fact that while financial assistance is important to successfully resettle in a community, there are other push-pull factors to consider.

2c. Everything is New

Antonio shared, “I think that I was lost [literally and figuratively] because I didn't know what was north or south. I was completely lost when I get here.” The resettlement process provides an orientation in the country of origin as well as after arrival. However, as intensive as the classes are, they do not begin to capture everything that is different for a refugee who is restarting their new life in the United States. This is particularly difficult because while migration was sought by the refugee, it was a choice based on limited options. Fatima talked about the “newness” of the experience. “[You] start learning everything from zero. It’s like being born again, so that's like the most difficult thing because they are forced to do it not because they wanted to; it’s like they are forced to do something” (Fatima).

When examining the “new factor,” this is what various individuals’ interviewed shared. In being a refugee moving to a new host country, “it’s just a different culture, different country, new laws, totally different, and even weather-wise it was challenging because of the clothing that we brought in; so those are the things that I remember” (Victoria).

2d. Freedom and Opportunity

Despite leaving behind the persecution, strife and conflict, there is tremendous sense of hope. Antonio said “I have so many expectations and this filled everything and more.” He like others found that being free and having options were some of the most important points of the experience: “Freedom, freedom of everything, free of, you know work, or goal or any plan for the future that you had” (Antonio).

Daniel echoed that sentiment when he said, “you arrive to a place where you could reach whatever expectations you have and have more than what you ever dreamed you were going to have. It’s safer. You know, different environment completely because people that come to this country obviously are not [because] they are not having a positive situation in their current country. It’s another chance; it’s basically another chance.”

The lived experience of refugees can be construed as traumatic, isolating, and filled with anxiety, despair and unknowns. The promise of opportunity and to fulfill dreams exists but with many tangible and intangible barriers including disappointment in their new host country and the resources it offers and difficulties in regaining a life equal to or better to the one that was left behind. The conflict goals and expectations can be inconsistent from that offered by the standardized programs as there are differing expectations from the refugee and the government programming. As introduced in Chapter 2, the conflicting goals and expectations create a divide between the main stakeholders in the process, which are the refugees themselves and the federal government as representatives of the United States. When the goals of these actors do not align, self-sufficiency is in peril.

Meaning of Self-Sufficiency

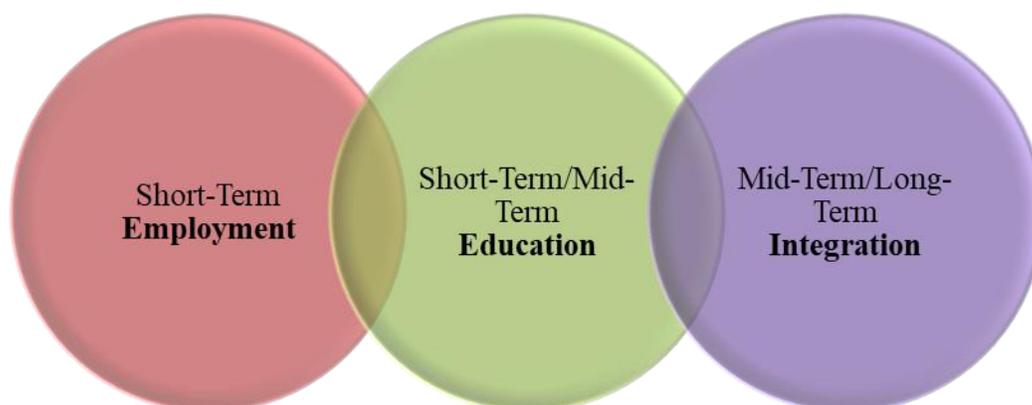


Figure 8. Meaning of Self-Sufficiency

The second major heading or area studied in this research was refugees meaning of self-sufficiency. It is worth noting that defining a time frame for self-sufficiency marked how participants defined it as illustrated in Figure 8. This figure was developed by the researcher based on the results. In other words, upon arrival, the individual's goal was to be able to meet very basic needs (internal and external). After a period of time, which is very subjective in what that length of time encompasses, the goal shifts to being self-sufficient which focuses on independence from resettlement programming and government assistance. To some this might be through employment, while to others through education and potentially being reconnected to that past identity. Those who have already found their footing and have a broader sense of understanding of the system, focus on integration. Victoria captured the sentiment by stating, "in the short-term, self-sufficiency is more about those tangible things and then long-term, it's more about the emotional."

1. Self Sufficiency Means: The Ability to be Independent

There was a general consensus amongst participants on the definition of self-sufficiency. This definition centers on the concept of being independent. According to one individual interviewed, being “self-sufficient is like when the family is ready to go by themselves and they don't need...any hand to help” (Antonio). Fatima added:

To be self-sufficient is that you, you can actually go at the end of the month and you can pay your bills or you can just be able to get what you need; at least the basic needs in a monthly basis by your paychecks. I think that's self-sufficient and to know how to move, to know how to be on your own; not to need anyone's help or assistance for most things.

It is important to note what is assistance varies from participant to participant. Some define assistance as government aid and others as that received from any external stakeholder including family, friends, faith-based organizations and community agencies. While some participants expressed that receiving assistance from informal networks did not impede them from feeling self-sufficient, others articulated that to be self-sufficient, it was necessary to be free of any outside contributions to their welfare.

What is complex about this; however, is that what falls under government assistance can be extensive and defined very differently by each individual. For example, some defined government aid as being what they received from a formal refugee resettlement agency or affiliated program. However, they did not include receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP funds as assistance from the government. One theory is that the SNAP is a mainstream benefit that can be accessed by the general community; not just those with refugee status. Therefore, it is not seen as

assistance given due to the person being a refugee. It is something that everyone, including U.S. citizens can apply for to supplement their income. Nonetheless, receiving limited or no government assistance was in general the universal feeling amongst participant of being able to provide for themselves.

Another point to make is that participants discussed needs being met as defining self-sufficiency and all of these were either categorized or described by the individual as being basic needs. There was a general understanding that during this new phase or transition, the expectation was to be able to provide for what can be described as bare bones or minimal. This consensus was shared by all participants interviewed. One participant, Victoria, stated:

I mean, I think self-sufficiency is when you actually feel you can pay at least your minimum, you know, you're rent, you know, for food even though, you know, you got the initial help, you know, but I think having that, you know, feeling that you don't depend on anyone basically, you know economically. That you can you can support yourself. That's the way that I see self-sufficiency. I mean of course, you know, eventually having a house and all the dreams, but initially it is just paying the rent, being able to pay for food and, you know, probably a haircut stuff like that, that you need, but that being covered. I think that's what I would call self-sufficiency.

One area where participants differed is on how independence is reached. To some, like the participant quoted above, independence was gained through employment and the ability to take care of their basic needs, while to others independence is more intangible. To some participants, the state of independence is reached through knowledge and

education. The next section breaks down the theme of independence into the categories of employment and knowledge and education.

1a. Independence Through Employment

“Self-sufficient is when you can fulfill all your needs by yourself, by your family; by your immediate family. When you can go to work; when you can get enough money to pay your rent; pay your food; go to school” (Elena). The majority of participants echoed the sentiment of Elena as she stated above. The idea of financial independence is shared by 78% of the participants and reinforced the federal and state governments’ path in assisting refugees through robust employment programming. Daniel was more succinct about this point; he said “You get to a level where you don't have to depend on anyone, depend on a government agency, a relative, or anybody else but the product of your work.” As a group, there is a sense of identity that is disrupted or lost during the refugee phase, and most want to regain a sense of self, freedom and independence. As one participant stated, “I had to work, and I think it was healthy. I learned a very healthy way, and I think it was so good for me and for my family, my daughter. I think [it’s] what is life and it’s healthy and [a] part of who you are.”

The idea of employment and its relationship to addressing basic needs and independence surfaces and is shared amongst other participants as well. Antonio shared “you with your work, you can sustain yourself with all the expenses.” The statement also shows that recently arrived refugees’ focus, at least in the short term, is being able to obtain those basic necessities and be able to sustain themselves. Daniel stated “to be able to live on their own. Own a small car, have insurance, and basically pay for their own food without the assistance of public benefits [is to be self-sufficient].” Victoria added:

I think the economic piece brings a lot of peace of mind, you know. You're able to thrive, you know, to, to get what you need when you have things covered. I mean like if you are able to pay for your rent and if you're able to, to provide the basic needs easily you can, you know, moving to other goals and other things because a lot of refugees too are professional people that eventually want to go back to whatever they study or, you know.

Statements like this shared by Victoria also show that independence through employment is not mutually exclusive to the needs of refugees for education. It is also important to note the use of the phrase “go back to whatever they study” thus hinting at regaining a prior career or continuing past academic work. As mentioned in the Iraqi example in Chapter 1, entry-level employment is not sufficient for all and there is an expectation of regain part of the past. While there are programs that focus on career laddering, they are not part of the core-programming. The emphasis remains on securing any formal job in the U.S. workforce that can meet the basic needs of the individual and their family that arrived with them. This point is made as some refugees who have remaining family in their country of origin might look to continue to financial support them at a distance .

One participant felt the formula to successful resettlement and achieving self-sufficiency was a balance between the two.

They told me you get a car, you rent an apartment, and then you go to English classes, and then you continue to college, and then you work and you go to school at the same time. That was pretty much the process (Maria).

While both participants make the argument that in the short-term employment is the priority, others argue that education is just as vital from the onset of resettlement.

1b. Independence Through Education

One area where the U.S. model on refugee resettlement varies from developed countries like Australia and Canada, is that the latter give recently arrived refugees the option to study for a determined period of time, while the government subsidizes their daily living expenses. While the majority supports a focus on workforce programming, a few participants hinted that a modification to the current approach should incorporate a model that favors education at par or above employment. For example, Alicia said during her interview, “well, it depends on how you define it. If self-sufficient means surviving every day, we did it practically from day one. But if you are talking about self-sufficiency, having the quality of life that you are used to and that you, you want for your family; it took me until I started my career again (Alicia).

According to Alicia, she understands why the government focuses on economic self-sufficiency; however, she stated that “it has to be a combination of both. It has to be employment and education and if you ask me sometimes, education is more important at one point than, than, than employment.” Maria said that “a lot of people became self-sufficient because the amount money for the kind of job that they're doing, is meeting their basic needs...But the standards that we have here is completely different [from those from our home country].” According to her, focusing on employment is short-sighted and keeps refugees in a state of survival. A focus on education is setting them up for longer term success.

The definition of education did vary amongst those who placed education at the forefront of self-sufficiency. To some like Alicia, who were professionals in their home country, education is more tied to enrolling in an institution of higher education to possibly regain their former career or follow a similar career path. Self-sufficiency is regaining in part a past identity of sense of self.

She also stated that in the long-term the host country loses in not making this investment early on in the process. “They contribute more not only in terms of taxes but in terms of their knowledge and expertise, [which] will enrich the country.” This statement is supported by a working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research that shared that refugees pay \$21,000 more in taxes than the benefits they receive.

To others, education is not as complex. Maria elaborated by adding “I think we will need to spend a little bit more time training them to learn our process because they come completely lost. They come with a different perspective of life and [need assistance on] how to develop functional patterns that will help you to become self-sufficient.” She went on to say:

I think we have to give people the option to produce, cover [the] needs...for me, my perspective is I’m [the caseworker] going to help you to meet your needs. Give you information and offering you a job at your level at this point. Then, you are making money, we are helping you to cover your needs, and you are learning how to grow in the same process (Maria).

2. Self Sufficiency Means: Being Integrated to Host Community

Despite the focus on self-sufficiency and the interview terminology focused on that term, many participants began using the term integration and self-sufficiency interchangeably like shared by Fatima in the following statement, “working is the biggest step to integrate with the community.”

To further understand the link between integration and self-sufficiency, which the literature stated they were interconnected, the participants were asked to define it. Daniel defined integration as “it's actually learning the customs, the traditions here, learning to appreciate another culture.” Very similar language was used by another colleague who stated that “integration means learning about the way of living in the country that you are in. Learning the language, learning the culture; adjusting and accessing the resources that are available in a country; learning to do that” (Alicia). The idea of learning the language of their new home country, in this case English, is key according to some participants. Antonio stated, “I think that the integration becomes after you can communicate with the people because you cannot be integrated if you know can't communicate, if you cannot read what you're looking for. So language is basic for integration.”

The take-away from these statements is the fact that in using the terms interchangeably yet expanding on the definition of integration to be more extensive; participants are alluding to the fact that the concept of self-sufficiency is more comprehensive than being solely employment based. Language, knowledge and connection to the community were just as important.

Only one participant felt there was a clear distinction between the two. Trying to see if there was a correlation or another type of relationship between these aspects,

Antonio stated that “if [refugees] don’t accept those parameters [of resettlement and the programming], they will be [no] integration and they will...never [reach] self-sufficiency” (Antonio). He expressed it this way because according to him, while there is a connection “they are totally different things. “You can be self-sufficient but not be integrated.” While integration and self-sufficiency are two separate concepts, he agrees that there is a strong link between them. He summed this well when he said “[self-sufficiency] happened as soon as I start working. I feel integrated because I was already reaching self-sufficiency in all the aspects that they speak.”

Conclusion

While the lived experience of each refugee is unique, there are shared themes of loss and starting over. While the expectations of refugees might not align with what is offered by the programming in their new home, there is a shared goal of measured success by all parties. The challenge for receiving countries, like the United States, is creating a system meant to assist the tens of thousands accessing it that is flexible enough to allow multiple paths to self-sufficiency, while still measuring outcomes and ideally positive impact.

Chapter 5 includes the critical analysis and discussion on the themes and answers to the principal questions: “What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?” and “How do refugees resettled in South Florida define self-sufficiency?”. It will examine the findings of the research and revisit the Human Needs and Social Identity theories and literature review presented in Chapters 1 and 2, respectively. The aim is for the literature and theories to enrich the interpretation of the findings and illuminate the interpretation of the phenomenon. Lastly, the chapter will concluded with

practical recommendations for implementation that will enhance the current approach to refugee resettlement, as well as provide ideas for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusions

The goal of this phenomenological study was to determine if the U.S. government's definition of self-sufficiency aligns with refugees' meaning of the term. This was achieved by attempting to capture the refugee perspective through the voice of those who lived the migration experience and now work in refugee resettlement in South Florida. This dual reality allowed for a unique perspective into the phenomenon. This is important because public policy and programming is developed with refugee self-sufficiency at its core. Knowing this, their voice should be included in how these are developed. . For these programs to be successful it is crucial to understand if these views aligned to ensure that refugees in this country can thrive and communities flourish.

The findings presented in Chapter 4 answered the research questions: "What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?" and "How do refugees resettled in the United States define self-sufficiency?" In this chapter, those findings will be further analyzed through the Literature Review and theories presented in Chapter 1. Lastly, recommendations, and practical and theoretical implications will be discussed.

Interpretation of the Findings

The United States government definition of self-sufficiency varies from one agency to another. One standard definition is "earning a total family income at a level that enables a family unit to support itself without receipt of a cash assistance grant" (Smith, 2013, p.24). Thus, government-funded programming, whether administered directly by the fifty states or by non-governmental organizations, mostly focuses on the financial well-being of refugees and their sustainability after arrival. The focus of this

research was to examine whether the working definition is widely accepted by the stakeholders it impacts, mainly refugees.

The answers that emerged reinforce that in the short-term the majority of participants do agree that the focus on economic self-sufficiency aligns with the needs of the population. This is exemplified by Figure 8, which presents a timeline of the evolution of the meaning. As Maslow's theory mentions in Chapter 1, basic needs are second to the physical safety that refugee status garners. However, some do not share that outlook. While most participants do agree with the overall accepted meaning of the term, there is a consensus that past an initial phase, self-sufficiency encompasses much more.

Taking into consideration the diversity in refugees' background and personal and professional experience, multiple paths are needed to reach a state of self-sufficiency. The essence interpreted from the participants' interview, statements and observations gathered during the research demonstrated that much is lost when there is only one path in the resettlement route.

Multiple paths would allow a refugee different avenues to preserve their prior profession or career, thus part of their past identity; feel that they contribute to their new home from the inception; as well as begin the process of integration. There is recognition that States utilize their share of federal funding to create tailored programs to fit the needs of their population. However, upon arrival the funnel effect experienced in living through traditional resettlement delays self-sufficiency for those who due to trauma, differing expectations, or academic aspirations do not view a focus on financial stability as their primary need or goal.

Principal question #1: What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?

In Chapter 1, under the Human Needs Theory, Burton introduced the idea of identity as a key need an individual has as a prerequisite for success and fulfillment. Social Identity Theory further explains why programming should be designed to incorporate the various layers of the individual. As it stands, programs are developed considering only one identity, and that is of the person being a refugee.

After experiencing persecution in their home country, the trauma of migration and the fears of arriving into the unknown, having a tangible goal drives refugees. Whether that goal was educational, employment-based or one that meets other needs, these are key to move from a state of survival to feeling self-sufficiency. However, as Burton explained, the identity of a refugee is further defined by their nationality, language and previous profession, among other subcategories.

To some participants, self-sufficiency was tied to the long-term goal of seeking education to potentially regain their previous professional credentials or status. Others, sought self-sufficiency in communities where there was a tie to their linguistic or cultural background. They migrated from other parts of the country to live in South Florida because of its connection to their country of origin. As Kunz's stated,

Because in the resettlement phase, many of the refugees' problems could be traced back to their emotional links with and dependence on their past, the refugees' marginality within or identification with their former home country is important (Kunz, 1981, p. 47).

When participants were asked in this research if they considered themselves refugees or former refugees, all those that responded stated that they felt pride in the label

to be worn as a sign of honor. Despite having lived in the United States for decades, it felt true to their current identity. In the path to integration, refugees navigate retaining customs and the culture of their home country while adopting some from their new community. The degree in which this is done varies from individual.

Some of the original challenges in programming remain, in part because the federal government's core programming has not fully adapted to the new waves of refugees religious, which have a different religious, ethnic and racial composition than prior groups of refugees resettled. They are more singular in focus and not as comprehensive as the times dictate. If programs are measured by their participants achieving self-sufficiency, refugees' identity should be taken into consideration. How integrated they feel to their new host community impacts outcomes and their successful resettlement the country. In it also critical to remember that refugees join a community long-term as their return to their home country might not be feasible. While their financial contributions are important, they can significantly influence a community in other ways; the growth of South Florida into a global metropolitan region is an example of that.

Principal question #2: How do refugees resettled in South Florida define self-sufficiency?

While there was scarcity in the literature, the findings of the research support long-held beliefs and statements found in studies highlighted earlier, some over twenty years old. The meaning of self-sufficiency varies depending on the goals of the individual refugee. For some, it is based on being able to meet basic needs; others its being independent or integrated. Based on the findings of this research, the meaning of

self-sufficiency varies; it is very subjective and personal and per the findings shared in Chapter 4, change with time. However, the majority of these can be grouped into the following main statements: self-sufficiency means being financially independent, self-sufficiency means becoming educated and gaining knowledge, and self-sufficiency means becoming integrated to the new host community. This reinforces two studies that incorporated refugee voices.

As shared in Chapter 2, in *Immigration Journey: A Holistic Exploration of Pre- and Post-Migration Life Stories in a Sample of Canadian Immigrant Women* (Rashid, 2013), the outcome of that study showed that successful integration is based on more than economic self-sufficiency. Other factors needed to be taken into consideration. Additionally, a study on refugees published in 2013 that found the same link to integration and its complex relationship to self-sufficiency:

[As known] ORR, [the primary funding federal government agency], views economic self-sufficiency as a central factor in refugee integration” (Smith, 2013, p.25) However, when asked participants, “the concept emerged from the interviews as a central theme, many interviewees explained that self-sufficiency for refugees, in and of itself, is not integration but a vital component thereof (Smith, 2013, p.36).

This research focused on refugees who also worked in refugee resettlement programming. Dr. Mincin’s findings on the meaning of the term self-sufficiency by staff working at a refugee resettlement agency, found that these stakeholders also share the same perspective as participants of this research. Her “survey suggested that IRC employees also place critical parts to successful self-sufficiency in that they acknowledge

integration, not relying on government assistance, and the sense of empowerment that enables refugees to navigate various systems (e.g., health services, schools, and community organizations)” (2012, p. 120).

As stated in Chapter 1, the study uses the theories of Human Needs and Social Identity to interpret the findings and results of the study. Conflict scholar John Burton adapted Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs to show how refugees’ needs being unmet can lead to the development and escalation of conflict, in this particular case due to not reaching a state of self-sufficiency. Part of the argued weakness in the resettlement process is the economic focus.

The findings presented in the prior chapter support the fact that meeting the basic needs is a top priority and that aligns with Maslow’s traditional List of Needs. However, as stated earlier, unlike Maslow, Burton did not believe that needs fall within a hierarchy and that actually all of them have equal value. This explains why for some self-sufficiency is measured by other concepts outside of the economics. Looking at Burton’s list again, which has been included below, the themes can be grouped with the following concepts: Integration can be housed under the umbrella of belongingness/love or cultural security and education under self-esteem or personal fulfillment. Indirectly, a refugee’s identity is also a factor in addressing self-sufficiency.

Table 11

John Burton's List of Needs

<u>Safety/Security</u> : The need for structure, predictability, stability, and freedom from fear and anxiety.
<u>Belongingness/Love</u> : The need to be accepted by others and to have strong personal ties with one's family, friends, and identity groups.
<u>Self-esteem</u> : The need to be recognized by oneself and others as strong, competent, and capable. It also includes the need to know that one has some effect on her/his environment.
<u>Personal fulfillment</u> : The need to reach one's potential in all areas of life.
<u>Identity</u> : Goes beyond a psychological "sense of self." Burton and other human needs theorists define identity as a sense of self in relation to the outside world. Identity becomes a problem when one's identity is not recognized as legitimate, or when it is considered inferior or is threatened by others with different identifications.
<u>Cultural security</u> : Is related to identity, the need for recognition of one's language, traditions, religion, cultural values, ideas, and concepts.
<u>Freedom</u> : Is the condition of having no physical, political, or civil restraints; having the capacity to exercise choice in all aspects of one's life.
<u>Distributive justice</u> : Is the need for the fair allocation of resources among all members of a community.
<u>Participation</u> : Is the need to be able to actively partake in and influence civil society.
<i>Note.</i> Copied from Sandra Marker' <i>Unmet Human Needs</i> (2003). Retrieved from: http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/human-needs

Additionally, the link between self-sufficiency and integration that was first hinted at in the questions around lived experience was prominent in delving into the meaning of self-sufficiency. While some interviewed did not use the words interchangeably, the link is strong between the two concepts. This remains an area that needs to be further studied and researched.

Lastly, as Dr. Mincin stated, there has been an evolution on the definition of self-sufficiency; however, the core programming has not adapted to the times. While there has been the inclusion of individualized programs throughout the U.S., these have not become part of the standard resettlement process. They vary by community with their availability differing through the country. The lack of flexibility at the federal level, influences the region impact of the programming. To reiterate a quote shared in Chapter 1 from a study from Columbia University:

The notion that every refugee needs the same baseline services that has persisted since the inception of the refugee program aligns poorly with the goals of self-sufficiency and integration in the medium and long term. This is especially true given the diversity of the refugees arriving to the U.S. and the diversity of circumstances they face once here. Refugees have little agency over what services they can access, and even VOLAGs have minimal room to account for refugees' individual profiles when deciding what services to offer (Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, 2010, p. 11).

The goals, needs and aspirations of refugees vary and one standard approach cannot continue to be the status quo. As funding allocation and programming is driven by data measuring self-sufficiency based on seemingly intangible areas such as

integration and independence might be more unpopular. This process is more complex to capture than economic stability. However, outcomes are skewed when they one consider one variable.

Limitations

This research has only looked at specific populations in a specific geographic area. Given the small sample size, the generalizability of the study findings are limited and cannot represent the entirety of experiences of all former refugees who work or have worked in resettlement or refugee programming. This leaves room to explore further refugee populations throughout the country and compare them to the South Florida experience.

Additionally, the makeup of the participants was mostly Cubans and a report from the Migration Policy Institute shows that they lag in self-sufficiency rates, which may skew their answers and make their response only appropriate for similar populations.

[Self-sufficiency] outcomes vary substantially among refugees depending on their origins and other characteristics. While the process for refugee resettlement is largely standardized self-sufficiency outcomes for both recent and longer-term refugees vary. Some longer-term groups such as Iranians, Russians, and Vietnamese have educational attainment and incomes on a par with or even exceeding the U.S. average. Other long-term refugee groups such as Cubans lag somewhat on these indicators (Capps, 2016, p.3).

In part, this might have been due to the fact that historically, Cubans had additional protections that were put in place as part of the Cuban Adjustment Act. However, with the end of the Wet Foot/Dry Foot policy, their process of resettlement was

altered and today aligns more closely with that of other refugee populations. One thing to highlight is that the change in policy occurred during the period that participants were interviewed, so it is unknown how it impacted their perspective and responses.

Another limitation is that all participants (100%) echoed the sentiment that it was a significant asset having housing or receiving housing assistance upon arrival. They found that it would have been their greatest obstacle to self-sufficiency upon arrival. A sample with participant lacking housing placement might have yield different information.

A final point about the population interviewed is the duality of their experience. While seen as an asset to understanding the phenomenon researched, there can also be a bias that would distort the information gathered. In this study, it was not overtly clear if the nine participants spoke as refugees or from the perspective of their current role as a resettlement worker. The more prominent viewpoint would skew their answers to the weaknesses of the system and the improvements necessary as well as the strengths in the approach to aid.

A limitation to highlight is that refugee self-sufficiency and integration can also be looked at quantitatively to compare to the qualitative findings. Qualitatively, this interviewed captured participants during one period in time. A longitudinal study would allow researchers to view the data through pre-determined and set times. This presents the opportunity to obtain information on the lived experience in the moment, how it changes, and what variables influence them

Lastly, an additional consideration is that the term self-sufficiency is used as a technical term in many refugee programs. As the participants are all employed in the

field, they might have been conditioned to think of the word in terms of economics. A recommendation for a future study would be to use other language to describe the term or an accepted synonym to see if the responses are broader.

Recommendations and Expected Contributions

“Refugees infuse vitality into their new communities. They make permanent cultural, social, and economic contributions. Refugees, in the final analysis, bring short-term costs and long-term benefits to their receiving communities” (Zucker, 1998, p. 186). In the short-term, this research provides a contribution towards program design. As refugees are eligible for social service assistance for up to the first five years of migration, a recommendation is to expand programming to not only focus on employment, but also on other areas that affect social identity.

The federal and state governments do fund programming focused on English acquisition, career laddering and civics, but programs around emotional support, mentoring and other assistance focused more on mental health is needed. The trauma of migration is immeasurable. As the results showed, there is an evolution in meaning by the participants. Incorporation of refugee voices in the process is essential. At a micro-level, close out evaluations could be included at the end of each stage of programming. Then, throughout a developed mechanism, the feedback could be incorporated in program policy that is given on a yearly basis.

Additionally, there are various models of case management used in programming. The main one used provides a standard guide of services and the client or participant develops a service plan based on what is offered. Because the goals vary from individual to individual, promoting a client-centered model to case management is the most

appropriate to serving this population. It would focus more on their needs and identifying what strengths the person has which can be utilized in achieving that goal. In the social work field, the strengths based model “closely aligns with resilience, wellness, integration, and psychosocial approaches” (Mincin, p.51). The shift in matching the two can then be considered in developing a plan for achieving successful and impactful self-sufficiency. Client-centered models copy the tenets of a strength-based model which include the following principles (Mincin, 2012, Mattaini& Lowery, 2007):



Figure 9. Principles of Strengths-Based Approach

At a macro level, the contributions to the field of conflict resolution, particularly in the areas of practice, teaching and research, are vast. For practitioners, this research touches upon the issues of the effectiveness of public policy and how communities and their various stakeholders can impact successful refugee resettlement. This is particularly important during a time where there is heightened discussion around immigration, border security and the budget that supports these issues.

Since the United States resurfaced from a deep recession, it is working with a thin budget, which is still being trimmed. With this type of data, the federal government might be able to restructure how it allocates the funds and place them in the areas where refugees really require assistance to fully become integrated as the program goals mandate. According to Libal (2007), “only through grassroots consciousness raising and advocacy is there any hope that more just refugee policies (including resettlement programs and broad and substantial funding for humanitarian assistance) will be developed in the U.S. and other donor countries” (p. 20).

Additionally, the continuous conflicts around the world are creating pockets of refugees and displaced individuals which are seeking a better life, primarily in North American and European countries. The Syrian crisis has created much debate at the state and national level on how to respond and what that might look like around a country where there are varying degrees of reception.

The influx of people resettling within U.S borders creates the need for mediators, facilitations and negotiators who understand the needs and wants of this population. Tensions are bound to occur over misconceptions about refugees, their status and the assistance they are eligible to receive. Conflict resolution practitioners can facilitate conversations between the multiple stakeholders aimed at creating win-win situations where the newcomers receive the necessary tools to successfully settle in their home and those from the host country see the contributions that they bring to their community. Successful integration is vital at every level.

Almost all refugees surveyed in Miami reported that they are planning to apply for citizenship, ranging from 95 percent of refugees that entered in FY 2003 to

100 percent of refugees that entered in FY 2000. Cuban entrants can apply for legal permanent residency once they have been present in the United States for at least year, which then starts them on the path to citizenship (Pindus, 2008, p. 20).

This population can shape the future economic, political and social landscapes in America. The findings of this research can begin to provide preliminary information to those who teach practitioners on how to facilitate integration and mediate conflict in communities where refugees might not be welcomed. Also, this encourages research in areas where there are deep pockets of refugees such as Detroit (Iraqis), Portland (Aghans), Los Angeles (Iranians), and Minneapolis (Somalis). Understanding refugee needs can help in conflict prevention and post-settlement reconciliation as different strategies are appropriate for different types and stages of conflicts.

Conclusion

The U.S. refugee resettlement program has long been the largest in the world and a pillar of U.S. global leadership in humanitarian issues...The United States' willingness to share the responsibility of providing solutions for refugees sends an important signal to allies and adversaries alike that U.S. policy stands firmly against persecution on the grounds of race, religion, national origin, or membership of a particular social group or political opinion—in the words of U.S. and international refugee law (Newlands, 2017).

Not only is the U.S. refugee program approaching its fortieth year but there has been a changing political climate on an issue that had traditionally been bipartisan. While the ceiling, or maximum number of refugees, has fluctuated, with the lowest numbers after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on U.S. soil, the current targets admissions

numbers are the lowest in the history of the United States. By the end of federal fiscal year (FFY) 2019, only 30 000 refugees entered the United States that year.

With the travel ban and the Administration's proposed changes to laws governing the asylum process and other immigration related processes, the refugee program is in peril in a time where global crisis are creating more pockets of displaced people.

Additionally, with proposed cuts to the program, it is important to understand what are the most imperative programs and services that are not only lifesaving, but also enhance the contribution of refugees to their new host communities.

In conclusion, the United States has been seen as one of the last viable option for hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world who seek protection from persecution each year. Historically, despite the good intentions of the government and global and national partners, there has been a lack of understanding of what refugees need to become self-sufficient over time, what it means to them and how they can successfully integrate into American society. Additionally, with the changing political climate and societal attitudes about immigrants and refugees, awareness and understanding of the needs and contributions of this population is highly necessary. This study is one of the first to look at the resettlement process through the eyes of the refugees who live the reality of having to start over in the United States and who have sought to live the American dream.

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Appendix A: Curriculum Vitae

REGINA BERNADIN**EDUCATION****Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Resolution Studies**

Global Practicum Study in

Ecuador (2010) and Suriname (2011)

*Nova Southeastern University, Anticipated Completion, 2019***Master of Arts in International Administration***University of Miami, 2005***Bachelor of Arts in International Studies**

Graduated with Honors

*University of Miami, 2004***Associate Programme***Queen Mary University of London, 2001***PROFESSIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE****International Rescue Committee, Miami, FL, 2005-2009, 2011-present****Deputy Director, 2018-present**

- Responsible for oversight and implementation of programs to ensure effective client service delivery.
- Provide leadership and supervision to staff in Miami and Tallahassee, Florida.
- Ensure that programs comply with all contractual & reporting requirements and achieve required outcomes.
- Ensure quality data collection across all programs; produce reports and impact data to provide insight to internal and external stakeholders.
- Ensure that all program areas have individualized strategic plans that will lead to the sustainability and growth of programming; support new project design and program development.
- In coordination with management staff, ensure that programs maintain sound fiscal management and implement and comply with all HR policies and procedures.
- Assist with the development and maintenance of community partnerships with other service providers, government agencies, foundations, employers, community members, clients and other key stakeholders.

Additional Leadership Assignments

- Senior Program Manager, 2017-2018
- Program Manager, 2006-2009 and 2011-2017
- Interim Executive Director, 2016-2017
- Temporary Site Coordinator, Richmond, VA, October 2015

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- **Teaching Assistant:** Nova Southeastern University, Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Course: Theories of Conflict and Conflict Resolution I, 2012
- **Faculty:** Assisted in the development of curriculum and co-taught 3 courses at the Human Trafficking Academy hosted by St. Thomas University, 2012.
- **Guest Lecturer:** St. Thomas University, Florida International University, Broward College, Barry University and the University of Miami.

PUBLICATIONS

- Bernadin, R, Fernandez-Calienes, R and Perez, C. (2015) Human trafficking. *Encyclopedia of Economics and Society*. SAGE Reference.
- Beyond Good Ideas Online Magazine Contributor (Spring 2013 issue).
- *Notenoughgood.com* social research blog posts: <http://notenoughgood.com/author/regina>.
- Bernadin, R. (2011). The evolution of anti-slavery laws in the United States. *ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law*, 17(3), 507-515.
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- Bernadin, R. (2010). A call to action: An overview on the role of Christian organizations in combating human trafficking in the United States. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 2(2), 87-95.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

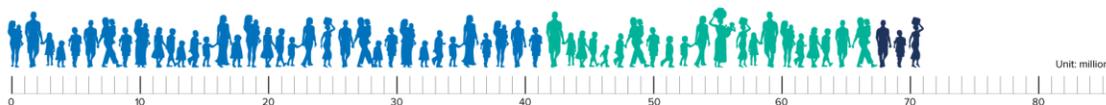
- Fully bilingual. Excellent written and oral communication skills in both English and Spanish.
- Advanced proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- Detailed-oriented and organized.
- Professional experience in budget and data analysis.
- Certified on the CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, Human Research Curriculum, 2010, 2013, and 2016.
- Grant writing, and program design and implementation experience.
- Member of several local and national boards and coalitions.
- Vast experience in creating presentations and public speaking to different levels of stakeholders.
- Self-motivated, team player. Work under minimal supervision.
- Conducted over 250 public-speaking engagements including media presentations, trainings, and workshops locally, nationally and internationally in both English and Spanish.
- Co-chaired national conferences as well as workshops focusing on the substantive content as well as logistics.

Appendix B: UNHCR Figures at a Glance

Figures at a Glance

Statistical Yearbooks

70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide



Internally Displaced People
41.3 million

Refugees
25.9 million

Asylum-seekers
3.5 million

20.4 million under UNHCR's mandate
5.5 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate

Where the world's displaced people are being hosted



About 80 per cent of refugees live in countries neighbouring their countries of origin

57% of UNHCR refugees came from three countries

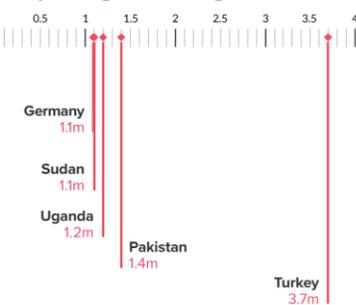


341,800 new asylum seekers

The greatest number of new asylum applications in 2018 was from Venezuelans



Top refugee-hosting countries



UNHCR has data on **3.9 million** stateless people but there are thought to be millions more



92,400 refugees resettled

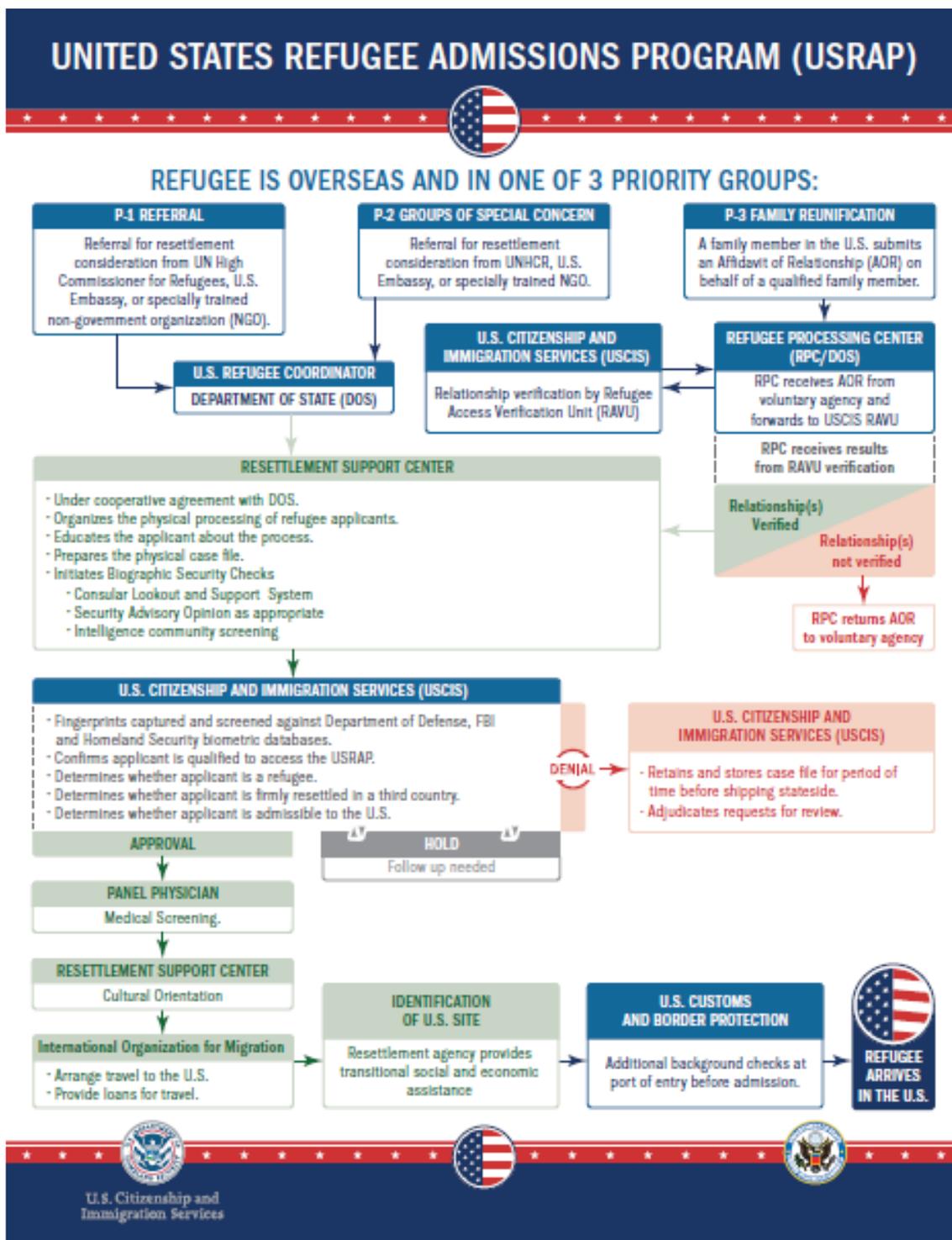
37,000 people a day forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution

16,803 personnel
UNHCR employs 16,803 people worldwide (as of 31 May 2019)

134 countries
We work in 134 countries (as of 31 May 2019)

We are funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions, with 86 per cent from governments and the European Union and 10 per cent from private donors

Appendix C: US Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) Flowchart



Appendix D: DHS Fact Sheet:

Changes to Parole and Expedited Removal Policies Affecting Cuban Nationals



Press Office
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Fact Sheet

January 12, 2017

Contact: DHS Press Office, 202-282-8010

FACT SHEET: CHANGES TO PAROLE AND EXPEDITED REMOVAL POLICIES AFFECTING CUBAN NATIONALS

WASHINGTON- Today, Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson announced several changes to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policies and regulations affecting Cuban nationals. These changes reflect the reestablishment of full diplomatic relations with Cuba and other concrete steps toward the normalization of U.S.-Cuba relations, as well as Cuba's agreement to accept and facilitate the repatriation of Cuban nationals who are ordered removed from the United States. The changes represent another important step in the normalization of the migration relationship between the two countries, and are intended to ensure regular, safe, and orderly migration between them.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

Beginning today, DHS has rescinded certain policies unique to Cuban nationals. Specifically, DHS has eliminated a special parole policy for arriving Cuban nationals commonly known as the "wet-foot/dry-foot" policy, as well as a policy for Cuban medical professionals known as the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program. It is now Department policy to consider any requests for such parole in the same manner as parole requests filed by nationals of other countries.

DHS is also eliminating an exemption that previously prevented the use of expedited removal proceedings for Cuban nationals apprehended at ports of entry or near the border.

The existing Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program is not affected by this announcement and remains in effect.

WHY THE CHANGE?

For decades, DHS and the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) have had special policies for considering parole requests from Cuban nationals. Those policies were justified by certain unique circumstances, including conditions in Cuba, the lack of diplomatic relations between our countries, and the Cuban Government's general refusal to accept the repatriation of its nationals.

In December 2014, the President announced a historic opening between the United States and Cuba, as well as an approach for reestablishing diplomatic relations and adjusting regulations to facilitate greater travel, commerce, people-to-people ties, and the free flow of information to, from, and within Cuba. Since that announcement, the United States and Cuba have reestablished full diplomatic relations and taken concrete steps towards enhancing security, building bridges between our peoples, and promoting economic prosperity for citizens of both countries.

DHS has also recently seen a significant increase in attempts by Cuban nationals to enter the United States without authorization. Many of those Cuban nationals have taken a dangerous journey through Central America and Mexico; others have taken to the high seas in the dangerous attempt to cross the Straits of Florida. This marked increase in actual and attempted migration has been driven in part by the perception that there is a limited window before the United States eliminates favorable immigration policies for Cuban nationals.

In light of these factors, the Secretary of Homeland Security has determined it is time to adjust the special parole policies for Cuban nationals. Considering the reestablishment of full diplomatic relations, Cuba's signing of a Joint Statement obligating it to accept the repatriation of its nationals who arrive in the United States after the date of the agreement, and other factors, the Secretary concluded that, with the limited exception of the Cuban Family Reunification Parole Program, the parole policies discussed above are no longer warranted.

CUBAN ADJUSTMENT ACT AND THE CUBAN "WET-FOOT/DRY-FOOT" POLICY

Under the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966, the status of any Cuban national may be adjusted to that of a lawful permanent resident (i.e., "green card" status) if he or she (1) was inspected and admitted or paroled into the United States, (2) has been physically present in the United States for at least one year, and (3) is otherwise admissible.

The policy commonly known as "wet-foot/dry-foot" generally refers to an understanding under which Cuban migrants traveling to the United States who are intercepted at sea ("wet foot") are returned to Cuba or resettled in a third country, while those who make it to U.S. soil ("dry foot") are able to request parole and, if granted, lawful permanent resident status under the Cuban Adjustment Act.

The former INS established a policy strongly encouraging the parole of Cuban nationals who arrived in the United States so that they could apply for relief under the Cuban Adjustment Act. Secretary Johnson is rescinding this outdated INS policy.

EXPEDITED REMOVAL

DHS has the authority to effectuate the removal of certain categories of individuals, including those apprehended at ports of entry or near the border, through what is known as expedited removal. Under longstanding law and policies, however, Cuban nationals were exempt from being removed through expedited removal proceedings.

In light of recent changes in the relationship between the United States and Cuba, the Secretary has determined that such exemptions for Cuban nationals are no longer warranted. Today, the Department is amending its regulations and issuing a notice in the *Federal Register* to remove such exemptions from policies governing the use of expedited removal for Cuban nationals who arrive by air, land, and sea. Effective immediately, Cuban nationals who are apprehended at ports of entry or near the border may be placed into expedited removal proceedings in the same manner as nationals of other countries.

CUBAN MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL PAROLE PROGRAM

On August 11, 2006, DHS announced it would allow certain Cuban medical personnel in third countries (i.e., not Cuba or the United States) to apply for parole. Applicants under the Cuban Medical Professional Parole (CMPP) program were required to show that they were medical professionals currently conscripted to study or work in a third country under the direction of the Cuban Government. Individuals could apply for parole at a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office, or U.S. embassy or consulate, located in the third country. Their immediate family members were also potentially eligible for parole.

In accordance with the Joint Statement, DHS will no longer accept parole applications from medical professionals under the CMPP program.

CUBAN FAMILY REUNIFICATION PAROLE PROGRAM

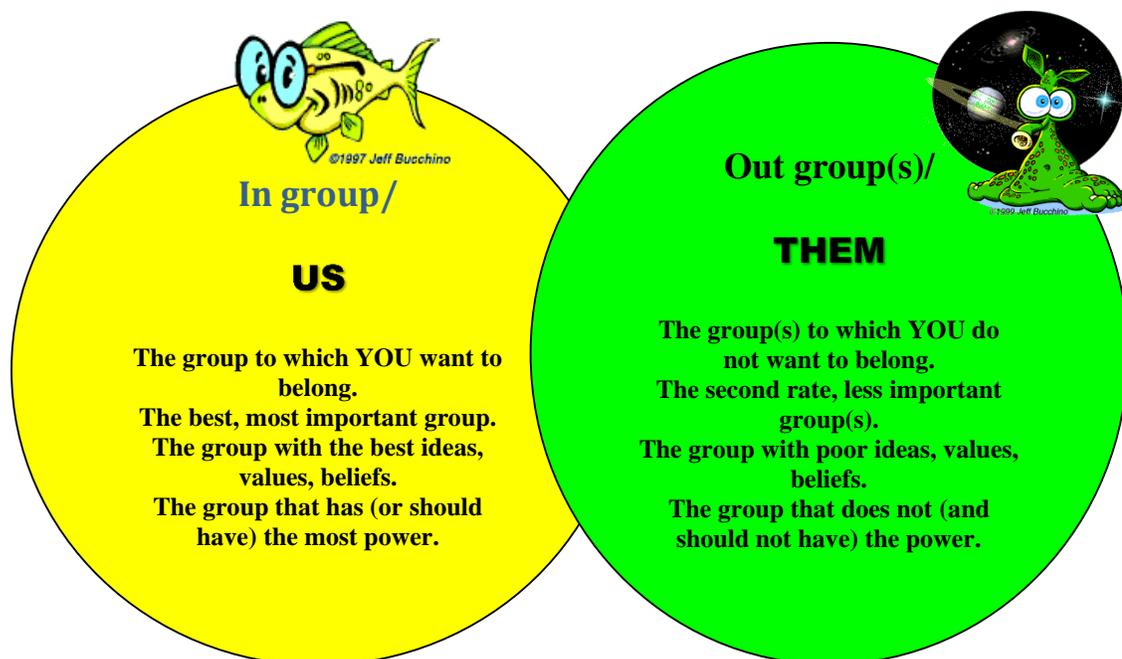
The Cuban Family Reunification Parole program allows beneficiaries of certain approved family-sponsored immigrant visa petitions to travel to the United States before their immigrant visas become available, rather than remain in Cuba to await a visa. The program seeks to expedite family reunification through safe, legal, and orderly channels of migration to the United States and discourage dangerous and irregular maritime migration.

DHS has determined that this program will remain in place because it serves other national interests.

Appendix E: Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory, Ingroup vs. outgroup simplified

Use these ideas from social identity theories to consider notions of belonging, or not belonging.



<p>Personal and social experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of belonging ▪ Shared experiences ▪ Strong sense of identity ▪ Accepted by mainstream culture ▪ Ease of access to social institutions ▪ Feeling of superiority ▪ Belief in own righteousness ▪ Having a political voice 	<p>Personal and social experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sense of not really belonging, except to the Out group ▪ Experiences differ from the dominant In group ▪ Poor sense of identity ▪ Unaccepted by mainstream culture ▪ Difficult to access social institutions ▪ Feeling of inferiority ▪ Belief in own ideas but these have to be suppressed in favour of those of the dominant group ▪ Having little or no political voice
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Appendix F: IRB Approval



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board

MEMORANDUM

To: **Regina Bernadin**
College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

From: **Pei-Fen Li, Ph.D,**
Center Representative, Institutional Review Board

Date: **December 2, 2016**

Re: **IRB #: 2016-579; Title, “Refugees’ Definition of Self-Sufficiency in South Florida”**

I have reviewed the above-referenced research protocol at the center level. Based on the information provided, I have determined that this study is exempt from further IRB review under **45 CFR 46.101(b) (Exempt Category 2)**. You may proceed with your study as described to the IRB. As principal investigator, you must adhere to the following requirements:

- 1) **CONSENT:** If recruitment procedures include consent forms, they must be obtained in such a manner that they are clearly understood by the subjects and the process affords subjects the opportunity to ask questions, obtain detailed answers from those directly involved in the research, and have sufficient time to consider their participation after they have been provided this information. The subjects must be given a copy of the signed consent document, and a copy must be placed in a secure file separate from de-identified participant information. Record of informed consent must be retained for a minimum of three years from the conclusion of the study.

- 2) **ADVERSE EVENTS/UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS:** The principal investigator is required to notify the IRB chair and me (954-262-5369 and Pei-Fen Li, Ph.D, respectively) of any adverse reactions or unanticipated events that may develop as a result of this study. Reactions or events may include, but are not limited to, injury, depression as a result of participation in the study, life-threatening situation, death, or loss of confidentiality/anonymity of subject. Approval may be withdrawn if the problem is serious.

- 3) **AMENDMENTS:** Any changes in the study (e.g., procedures, number or types of subjects, consent forms, investigators, etc.) must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Please be advised that changes in a study may require further review

depending on the nature of the change. Please contact me with any questions regarding amendments or changes to your study.

The NSU IRB is in compliance with the requirements for the protection of human subjects prescribed in Part 46 of Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) revised June 18, 1991.

Cc: **Robin Cooper, Ph.D.**

Appendix G: Written Recruitment Tool



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Refugees' Definition of Self-Sufficiency in South Florida

“How do refugees resettled in South Florida define self-sufficiency?” “What is the lived experience of refugees seeking self-sufficiency?” Regina Bernadin, a doctoral student at the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Conflict Resolution Department at Nova Southeastern University, is conducting a study looking to answer these questions. The researcher is seeking refugees and parolees in the South Florida community, who have also worked serving refugees, to share their experience in achieving self-sufficiency.

Participants will be asked a series of questions. Please note that participation in the interview is voluntary. Individuals will not be paid for their participation. It will require answering questions and will take approximately 45-60 minutes of their time. The interview can be conducted where it is most convenient.

Notes will be written and the interview audio-taped. Participants can refuse to answer any question or to stop the interview at any time. Withdrawing from the project will not result in any negative consequences. Participation poses minimal risks which will be discussed with each participant beforehand. The findings from this study will begin to provide an understanding of the needs of a population that is having an impact on American society, its economy, and its future, particularly at a time where the discussion on immigration and border security is prevalent.

Do you wish to participate?

If so, or if you have questions about the project or regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact Regina Bernadin via email at rb1096@nova.edu.

Thank you.

3301 College Avenue • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33314-7796

(954) 262-3000 • 800-672-7978 • Fax: (954) 262-3968 • Email: cahss@nsu.nova.edu • Web site: <http://cahss.nova.edu>

Appendix H: Pre-screening Communication Tool

Dear XXX (Name of Potential Participant)

‘Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. In order to determine eligibility, please answer the following questions:

1) **Please answer Yes or No:** Did you arrive to the United States with refugee status or as a Cuban/Haitian Entrant (parolee)?

2) **Please answer Yes or No:** Do you currently or did you work for a refugee resettlement agency; Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Refugee Resettlement-funded refugee program; or for the State of Florida’s Refugee Services office or program funded by the Department of Children and Families?

Please return your answers to me by replying to this email within three days of receipt of these questions. If you have any questions about this tool or the information collected, please contact me via email or telephone at 305-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you,

Regina Bernadin

Appendix I: Consent Form



NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences

Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled
Refugees' Definition of Self-Sufficiency in South Florida

Funding Source: None.

IRB protocol #

Principal investigator
Regina Bernadin, MA

Co-investigator
Robin Cooper, Ph.D .

For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:
Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790
IRB@nsu.nova.edu

What is the study about?

You are invited to participate in a research study. The goal of this study is to understand how refugees in South Florida define self-sufficiency and what is the lived experience of this group as they seek self-sufficiency in their host community.

Why are you asking me?

We are inviting you to participate because you experienced the dual experience of being a refugee and working in refugee services. There will be between 8 to 16 participants in this research study.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?

You will answer questions about your life as a refugee, with a focus on your experience during resettlement. The interview will last no more than 60 minutes.

Is there any audio or video recording?

Initials: _____ **Date:** _____

This research project will include audio recording of the interview. This audio recording will be available to be heard by the researcher, Ms. Regina Bernadin, personnel from the IRB, and the dissertation chair, Dr. Robin Cooper. The recording will be transcribed by Ms. Regina Bernadin. Ms. Bernadin will use earphones, when necessary, to transcribe the interviews to guard your privacy. The recording will be kept securely in Ms. Bernadin's password-protected computer. The recording will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study. The recording will be destroyed after that time by destroying the digital copy. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the audio clip as described in this paragraph.

What are the dangers to me?

Risks to you are minimal, meaning they are not thought to be greater than other risks you experience everyday. Being recorded means that confidentiality cannot be promised. Also, sharing a lived experience may cause emotional discomfort. A list of resources and referrals for assistance will be made available upon request. If you have questions about the research, your research rights, or if you experience an injury because of the research please contact Ms. Bernadin at (305) xxx-xxxx. You may also contact the IRB at the numbers indicated above with questions about your research rights.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?

There are no benefits to you for participating.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

How will you keep my information private?

The interviewer will not ask you for any information that could be linked to you. The transcripts of the tapes will not have any information that could be linked to you. As mentioned, the audio clips will be destroyed 36 months after the study ends. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The IRB, regulatory agencies, or Dr. Cooper may review research records.

What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?

You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to participate, you will not experience any penalty or loss of services you have a right to receive. If you choose to withdraw, any information collected about you **before** the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

Initials: _____ **Date:** _____

Other Considerations:

If the researchers learn anything which might change your mind about being involved, you will be told of this information.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing below, you indicate that

- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document or it has been read to you
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researchers any study related questions in the future or contact them in the event of a research-related injury
- you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it
- you voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled *Refugees' Definition of Self-Sufficiency in South Florida*

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

Initials: _____ **Date:** _____

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Appendix J: Participant Summaries

Daniel's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
<i>Key Words:</i> Left, Migrate Your Country, Arrive to a Place, Different Environment, Leave Everything Behind, Adapt to the New Language, Change, Caught us Leaving the County, Took Me to Jail 9	<i>Key Words:</i> Food, Cash, Not Working You are Going to be Homeless, Pay, People Pushing and Abusing other People, Live on their Own, Own a Small Car, Have Insurance, and Basically Pay for their Own Food Without the Assistance of Public Benefits, Basic Needs, Don't have to Depend on Anyone, Have the Language, Able to Communicate, Match them with the Right Skills, Learning the Customs..Traditions 12
Theme 1: Movement (Left, Migrate Your Country, Arrive to a Place, Caught us Leaving the County, Took Me to Jail) 5	Theme 1: Tools (Cash, Have the Language, Able to Communicate, Match them with the Right Skills) 4
Theme 2: Change (Different Environment, Adapt to the New Language, Leave Everything Behind, Change) 4	Theme 2: Consequences (Not Working You are Going to be Homeless, People Pushing and Abusing other People) 2
	Theme 3: Results (Pay, Food, Basic Needs, Don't have to Depend on Anyone, Live on their Own, Own a Small Car, Have Insurance, and Basically Pay for their Own Food Without the Assistance of Public Benefits (5)
	Theme 4: Integration (Learning the Customs..Traditions) 1

Key Phrases/Statements

- *You left whatever situation that you had that made you migrate your country in the first place. And you arrive to a place where you could reach whatever expectations you have and have more than what you ever dreamed you were*

going to have. It's safer. You know, different environment completely because people that come to this country obviously are not they are not having a positive situation in their current country. It's another chance; it's basically another chance. You leave everything behind and you hope to make the best out of the new country.

- *To be able to live on their own. Own a small car, have insurance, and basically pay for their own food without the assistance of public benefits,*
- *You get to a level where you don't have to depend on anyone, depend on a government agency, a relative, or anybody else but the product of your work.*
- *It's actually learning the customs, the traditions here, learning to appreciate another culture*

Victoria's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
<i>Key Words:</i> Have to Leave the Country, No Choice, Different, New 4	<i>Key Words:</i> Finding a Place to Rent, Get Food, Support Themselves, Pay at Least Your Minimum, Feel Comfortable, Thrive, Economics, Programs Very Short Term, Tangible in Short Term-Emotional in the Long Term, Tangible Stuff, Have Something on My Own 11
Theme 1: Feelings (Different, New) 2	Theme 1: Time (Programs Very Short Term, Tangible in Short Term-Emotional in the Long Term) 2
Theme 2: Lack of Options (Had to Leave the Country, No Choice) 2	Theme 2: Basic Needs (Finding a Place to Rent, Get Food) 2
	Theme 3: Goals (Support Themselves, Pay at Least Your Minimum, Feel Comfortable, Have Something on My Own, Thrive) 5
	Theme 4: Tied to Economics (Economics, Tangible) 2

Key Phrases/Statements

- It's just a different culture, different country, new laws, totally different, and even weather-wise it was challenging because of the clothing that we brought in; so those are the things that I remember*
- To be self-sufficient I think, you know, for them is to feel like they can support themselves. I mean, I think self-sufficiency is when you actually feel you can pay at least your minimum, you know, you're rent, you know, for food even though, you know, you got the initial help, you know, but I think having that, you know,*

feeling that you don't depend on anyone basically, you know economically. That you can you can support yourself. That's the way that I see self-sufficiency. I mean of course, you know, eventually having a house and all the dreams, but initially it is just paying the rent, being able to pay for food and, you know, probably a haircut stuff like that, that you need, but that being covered. I think that's what I would call self-sufficiency.

- *Yeah, that's a goal. And in one of the things that I've seen on refugees including my parents is that for many people that come from different countries, having an actual home it's a very important thing because it's like a way of saying I already, I already have something on my own because that's, that's one of things for refugees that, you know, it's you have to travel so much and you kind of a gypsy. So been able to have something that you could call home that you own it, even if you have to pay whatever you have to pay, you know, being able to call a place of your own and, and I think that's one of the reasons why people actually, you know, are actually, are able to leave and say I can call this my actual home.*
- *So do you think having these tangible items, when people think self-sufficiency, it's more tied to the tangible stuff? I would say yes, initially yeah, initially yes. I mean later on, you know, the mental part*
- *Self-sufficiency is more about those tangible things and then long-term, it's more about the emotional*
- *The programs that we have are very short term and sometimes, you know, especially for those people that might need to learn the language and stuff like that you might need a little more time. So if I could change something I would say,*

you know, like probably more time, you know, I know now they have other, you know, like other program that like help you out but I think having a little more support, for longer time could be beneficial.

- *If you include like some mental health, or perhaps, those programs that will help you find or create your own businesses, you know, stuff, like those, those, programs that could actually, once you're ready for them, will be there for you to help you out, that would be ideal.*
- *I think the economic piece brings a lot of peace of mind, you know. You're able to thrive, you know, to, to get what you need when you have things covered. I mean like if you are able to pay for your rent and if you're able to, to provide the basic needs easily you can, you know, moving to other goals and other things because a lot of refugees too are professional people that eventually want to go back to whatever they study or, you know.*
- *This country was built on refugees.*
- *Being able to take the bus, feel comfortable to where you are going, driving around. I think that's, that's feeling part of something.*

Elena's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
Key Words: Communism 1	Key Words: Ready to Go by Themselves, Fulfill Your Needs, The Basic Needs, Not Getting Everything You Want in One Day or One Month 4
Theme 1: Communism 1	Theme 1: Time (Not Getting Everything You Want in One Day or One Month) 1
	Theme 2: Goals (Ready to Go by Themselves, Fulfill Your Needs, The Basic Needs) 3

Key Phrases/Statements

- *Self-sufficient is like when the family is ready to to go by themselves and they don't need any, any, any hand to help.*
- *Self-sufficient is when you can fulfill all your needs by yourself, by your family; by your immediate family. When you can go to work; when you can get enough money to pay your rent; pay your food; go to school*
- *The advice that I would give [recently arrived refugees] is like fight for what they want, persist, do what they want, be patient because you're not getting everything you want in one day or one month. You have to fight for it. You have to put your whole effort and you have to go through many things that are not the pleasant ones, but are the ones that are going to take you to the place or level where you want to be. But if you put your effort, you are going to get there. It [depends] on you; not on anybody else. It's giving a lot of opportunity, help and everything, but if you don't know how to handle it; you cannot get what you want out of it,*

nobody's going to take you and give it to you for, for nothing. You have to fight for it.

Antonio's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
<i>Key Words:</i> Freedom, New, Adapt, Lost, Don't Understand, Plan, Guide, 7	<i>Key Words:</i> Accept Parameters, Maintenance, Integration, Communication, Language, Working, Government will Maintain 7
Theme 1: Needs (Plan, Freedom, Guide) 3	Theme 1: Outside Assistance (Government will Maintain, Maintenance) 2
Theme 2: Difficulties (Adapt, New, Lost, Don't Understand) 4	Theme 2: Tools (Communication, Language, Working, Accept Parameters, Integration) 5

Key Phrases/Statements

- *Freedom, freedom of everything, free of, you know work, or goal or any plan for the future that you had.*
- *I have so many expectations and this filled everything and more.*
- *You are in a whole new world, a whole new country. A whole new neighborhood; everything is new. So some people adapt very bad or not adapt at all to the changes and the process is hard. Not for me because that was my dream as I said. I always dream to come to this country since I had sense of everything that was around me. But yeah I think that I was lost [literally and figuratively] because I didn't know what was north or south. I was completely lost when I get here.*
- *My first impression was fantastic because of the sense of... I...the sense of free as I said before. I felt free; I felt informed. I felt that I can had any or kind of any plan, you know, any plan, any regular plan of a human being..to have a house, to have a home, to have a future, to have a boy, and I have one right now.*

- *You with your work you can sustain yourself with all the expenses.*
- *[Self-sufficiency] happened as soon as I start working. I feel integrated because I was already reaching the self-sufficiency in all the aspects that they speak. So the sensation was excellent, it was great.*
- *I think that the integration becomes after you can communicate with the people because you cannot be integrated if you know can't communicate, if you cannot read what you're looking for. So language is basic for integration.*
- *They are totally different things. You can be self-sufficient but not be integrated. I mean that's for me.*
- *If [refugees] don't accept those parameters [of resettlement and the programming], they will be [no] integration and they will...never [reach] self-sufficiency.*

Fatima's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
<i>Key Words:</i> Forced, Seek Refuge, Start from Zero, Everything is Different, Hard to Adapt, Adapt, Culture Shock, Transition 8	<i>Key Words:</i> Basic Needs, Adapt, Cultural Orientation, Working, Know the System, Learn Something New, Pay 7
Theme 1: Unwanted Experience (Forced, Seek Refuge) 2	Theme 1: Goal (Basic Needs, Adapt, Know the System) 3
Theme 2: Period in Time (Transition, Start from Zero) 2	Theme 2: Tools (Cultural Orientation, Learn Something New) 2
Theme 3: Adaptation (Culture Shock, Hard to Adapt, Adapt, Everything is Different) 4	Theme 3: (Learn, Working, Pay) 2

Key Phrases/Statements

- *A refugee is someone who are fleeing from their country not because they want, it's because they are forced to do that.*
- *They have no place left for them in their countries, so they are forced to leave their country for X reason and they seek refuge in another country so they can start a life; maybe for their children a better life for them, a better future. That's what a refugee actually is.*
- *Start learning everything from zero. It's like being born again, so that's like the most difficult thing because they are forced to do it not because they wanted to; its like they are forced to do something.*
- *To be self-sufficient is that you, you can actually go at the end of the month and you can pay your bills or you can just be able to get what you need. At least the basic needs in a monthly basis by your paychecks. I think that's self-sufficient and*

to know how to move, to know how to be on your own; not to need anyone's help or assistance for most things.

- *Self-sufficient is that you can provide to yourself a basic needs, then you can have a better lifestyle but when you come here you can't have it at the beginning.*
- *Working is the biggest step to integrate with the community.*

Julia's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
Key Words: Separation 1	Key Words: Everyone Contributed, Job + Housing 2
Category 1: Separation 1	Category 1: Process: (Job + Housing, Everyone Contributed) 2

Key Phrases/Statements

- *To become self-sufficient, we started working, I started working at 13 and. To become self-sufficient, my mother at night*
- *The new reality of migration.*
- *First, getting a job. Secondly, moving by themselves. Moving to their whatever, because they are usually living with somebody else.*
- *They have so many opportunities and they don't realize it. We have a small group. You know like 30 percent of the people use it; but 70% when they realize it it's too late because we have a 5 year limit.*

Alicia's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
<i>Key Words:</i> Being Away, Surviving, Persecution	<i>Key Words:</i> Trying to Find a Job, Depends on Definition, Surviving, Quality of Life, Adjusting, Learning, Employment and Education, Programs Tailored to Professionals, Contribution 9
Theme 1: Loss (Being Away, Surviving, Persecution) 3	Theme 1: Definition (Depends on Definition, Surviving, Quality of Life, Adjusting) 4
	Theme 2: Education (Learning, Programs Tailored to Professionals) 2
	Theme 3: Formula (Employment and Education, Trying to Find a Job) 2
	Theme 4: Results (Contribution) 1

Key Phrases/Statements

- *I had never been away from my family, away from my country, away from my culture and I missed all that. I remember crying for a whole month.*
- *At that time was surviving, surviving and having my daughter. Just survive one day at a time and of course, trying to find a job, which was very difficult because I was pregnant and I started showing.*
- *Well, it depends on how you define it. If self-sufficient means surviving every day, we did it practically from day one. But if you are talking about self-sufficiency, having the quality of life that you are used to and that you, you want for your family, it took me until I started my career again.*

- *Integration means learning about the way of living in the country that you are in. Learning the language, learning the culture; adjusting. And accessing the resources that are available in a country; learning to do that.*
- *It has to be a combination of both. It has to be employment and education and if you ask me sometimes, education is more important at one point than, than, than employment.*
- *They contribute more not only in terms of taxes but in terms of their knowledge and expertise, [which] will enrich the country.*

Maria's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
<i>Key Words:</i> Leave with No Option to Go Back, Political Reasons 2	<i>Key Words:</i> Information, Education, Adapt, Process, Training, Orientation, Working Toward Vocational Training, Amount of Money Meets Basic Needs, Differing Standards, Adjust the Old Pattern, Information and Job 11
Theme 1: Motivation (Leave with No Option to Go Back, Political Reasons) 2	Theme 1: Education (Information, Education, Training, Orientation) 4
	Theme 2: Process (Information and Job, Working Toward Vocational Training, Process, Amount of Money Meets Basic Needs) 4
	Theme 3: Internal Adjustments (Adapt, Differing Standards, Adjust the Old Pattern) 3

Key Phrases/Statements

- *I think we will need to spend a little bit more time training them to learn our process because they come completely lost. They come with a different perspective of life and [need assistance on] how to develop functional patterns that will help you to become self-sufficient.*
- *They told me you get a car, you rent an apartment, and then you go to English classes, and then you continue to college, and then you work and you go to school at the same time. That was pretty much the process.*

- *A lot of people and became self-sufficient because the amount money for the kind of job that they're doing, is meeting their basic needs...But the standards that we have here is completely different.*
- *But I think we have to give people the option to produce, cover your needs , the...for me, my perspective is I'm going to help you to meet your needs. Give you information and offering you a job at your level at this point. Then, you are making money, we are helping you to cover your needs, and you are learning how to grow in the same process. But I personally don't believe that just offering grants or scholarships for...is helpful. I had to work, and I think it was healthy. I learned a very healthy way, and I think it was so good for me and for my family, my daughter. I think what is life and it's healthy and part of who you are.*

Roberto's Participant Summary

Themes	
Lived Experienced	Self-Sufficiency
	<i>Key Words:</i> Language, Career, Job, Domino Effect, Move by Myself, Not be Dependent, Provide Documents 7
	Theme 1: Goals (Language, Career, Job, Move by Myself, Not be Dependent) 5
	Theme 2: Needs (Provide Documents) 1
	Theme 3: Process (Domino Effect) 1

Key Phrases/Statements

- *It's kind of a domino effect getting documents, then a job... then eventually will be able to pay your bills.*
- *Take into consideration that the sooner you provide [documentation such as employment authorization] the sooner that person is going to be self-sufficient and it's not going to be a burden to the society.*
- *It's a process that you'll have to learn to deal with and it's just a matter of patience and sacrifice. You'll be there, you'll get where you want to get but you have to be patient.*