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Refugee Communities: a campaign for Self-Sustainability

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Refugee Communities: a
campaign for Self-
Sustainability

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Global Studies Thesis
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Abstract

The struggles of becoming self-sustainable and gaining independence from resettling institutions are prominent ones for refugees who resettled to a host country. A multitude of obstacles such as language barriers, cultural differences, and loss of sense of purpose in life are phenomena often experienced by refugees regardless of ethnicity and nationality. These phenomena leave struggling refugees in a state of dependence on any form of guidance and support in order to achieve full assimilation. Through my work at the International Institute of Rhode Island in the refugee resettlement office, I witnessed the crucial role that this humanitarian organization plays in the resettlement system. Providing paperwork and documents, housing and initial capital is something that only an institution could afford to do equally for all of its clients. The International Institute of Rhode Island, although acting in western style, provides initial help to the refugees necessary for any kind of stabilization in a developed country such as the United States. Simultaneously to witnessing the irreproducible help offered by IIRI, I have also witnessed the effects of a system that unintentionally promotes dependence rather than independence. Providence Rhode Island, for example, is a city in which it' refugees suffer from the resettlement system because of a lack of refugee communities to which to turn to for mutual help. These refugee communities, through alleviation of culture shock, helping with lingual barriers and promotion of cultural traditions, limit the dependence on a western institution because of the sense of self-sustainability that they promote. Because of its abundance of Burundi refugees, Providence is a city that is in dire need for a Burundi community. Interviews with Somali and Burundi refugee where taken to

conclude whether a refugee community was something sought after by refugees in Providence and whether it was possible to create. My hypothesis states that because of cultural similarities between the two ethnic groups, just as Somali refugees have been successful in building refugee communities around the country, Burundi refugees also have the desire and capabilities to create a Burundi community in Providence. My hypothesis is proven correct after analyzing the answers collected from the interviews taken with refugees of both ethnic groups. A Burundi community is something that is wanted and needed in Providence and through minimal support from humanitarian institutions such as the International Institute of Rhode Island in encouraging the communication between Burundi refugees, this desire can become a reality.

Introduction

Clarification:

Who or what is a refugee? A refugee is defined as

“a person who is outside his/her country and is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of a well-founded fear that she/he will be persecuted because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group”¹

With the recent influx of global migrants to the United States, a feeling of resent on the behalf of the existing American population has been increasing, causing mounting hardships for the refugees seeking asylum and peace. Because of this feeling of resent, it is a common perception that refugees are “economic migrants” solely looking for a more prosperous life. It is believed that they simply make their way into to a developed community in search of an easy and guaranteed avenue for safety and support. In reality, refugees are distressed human beings who, due to abysmal circumstances, are forced out of their home country in search for some tranquility, equality and justice. Refugees are in need of support from their new host countries, but despite this dependency, if given the right resources and opportunities, they are still capable of self-sustainability.

Personal Reflection:

Working at the International Institute of Rhode Island in the refugee resettlement department has allowed me to experience and learn first hand about

¹ "Who is a refugee?" Who is a refugee? 1 Mar. 2001. U.S Department of State. <<http://www.state.gov/g/prm/rls/fs/2001/2129.htm>>.

the resettlement process. Shadowing teachers of different level ESL classes, working alongside caseworkers, and researching and working with the databases are my main responsibilities. These responsibilities, which allow me to track resettling cases, have increased my awareness of the frustrating and habitual problems of the resettlement process.

I have been working closely with a group of Somali and Burundi refugees whose resettlement process, needs and desires I have been monitoring. In general, incoming refugees have little knowledge or misguided expectations about American culture. They require guidance on things ranging from paying electric bills to using a flushing toilet. The minute details of American lifestyle come as a complete shock to people who have been living in substandard conditions within a refugee camp. Adaptation to a different culture is a slow process, thus coming to the United States, whether it is because fleeing their country due to political instability or for fear of persecution, can be a doubled edged sword. Although resettlement to a host country offers a safer life from that which is available in a refugee camp, it also introduces them to a new world of loneliness and isolation. One refugee spoke of her fears of living in the United States after fleeing her home country and seeking asylum due to her fears of her country's tradition of female genital mutilation. She noted that in the United States "when you get asylum, you are legally safe but alone."² Having to fully depend on the kindness and charity of others can become frustrating and at times humiliating as it limits

² Constible, Pamela. "Area Immigrant with Wounds that Won't Heal." The Washington Post 3 Nov. 2008: B01.

ones confidence in ones ability for self maintain. In a situation when trying to successfully resettle refugees to a community completely different from their own, a careful balance must be kept between the amount on interference of resettlement organizations and that of the capability of self-sustainability of refugees themselves. In order to guarantee self-sustainability of refugees, it is imperative that refugee communities be created which promote family relationship providing support, aid and mutual understanding to each of its members. The purpose of my thesis will be, through civic engagement, to prove the importance of these refugee communities.

Executive Summary

The literature that was reviewed in this chapter clarifies the necessity of community for the self-sustainability of resettled refugees and the benefits that it has both on the refugee and the host country. A combined review of several articles and books regarding the resettlement of refugees will be used as the beginning research to support my above cited hypothesis.

The review of the social solidarity movement by the Zapatistas identifies four distinct kinds of solidarity and proves how, of all the movements, global solidarity mostly supports the philosophy of self-sustainability of resettled refugees through community. This section is connected with the review of several books and articles on refugee resettlement experiences that provide proof of the necessity of ethnic refugee communities. Struggles suffered by refugees are discussed in the literature disclosing the shortcomings of a resettlement system that sometimes fosters isolation, discontent and passiveness by refugees. Specific obstacles such as language barriers, identity loss and cultural barriers are examples of such struggles. The same literature of this section is used in a third section to provide examples of how refugee communities can improve and increase success rate of assimilation in some cases of resettlement. Through facilitating communication and limiting language barriers, alleviating culture shock and providing a forum for cultural preservation, we learn of the success of community living. The last section reviews literature that discusses actual success cases of self-sustainable communities where refugees have made great strides in

improving their life situation thanks to the support they receive from their fellow refugees.

Review of the Literature

Initial Findings:

Self-sustainability for newly resettled refugees is the most important step towards achieving stability and maintaining dignity in a host country.

Humanitarian institutions established all around the country offer support and resources to the resettled refugees. Unfortunately, because the workers or volunteers of these organizations are not refugees and cannot identify with the struggles of their clients, more often than not they offer aid at a third party solidarity level in a manner that fosters disempowerment. As explained further in John Knight's book *The Careless Society*" the professionalization of human relationship, making a career out of what should be natural relationship, tends to undermine a peoples confidence in their ability to address it's own problems³.

This benefactor to beneficiary relationships leads to a sense of isolation and helplessness by the refugees who loose confidence in their ability to take care of themselves and become fully dependant on the time and services offered by the workers at the humanitarian institutions. Dependence may lead some refugees to become unmotivated and resentful towards the host country they thought offered much greater opportunities. In some cases, refugees chose a nomadic life traveling cross county in search for a greater sense of community and global, interactive and reciprocal solidarity where self-sustaining refugee communities

³ McKnight, John. *The Careless Society: Community and Its Counterfeits*. New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1995.

help with the assimilation process. Incapable of offering sustainable incentives to attract and promote the foundation of refugee communities, many cities in the United States result in being only temporary transitional places rather than new, safe and stable homes for the refugees.

Statistics by the World Refugee Survey 2008 show that Africa alone provides 2,779,500 refugees⁴, all who are in search for assistance, stability and safety in their host country. Based on the same survey, a chart categorizing refugee resettled by country shows that the United States, one of the richest of the developed countries of the western world resettles the greatest number of refugees, 48,281⁵. With such an influx of refugees, an increase need for resources and services is inevitable in order to support the needs on the newcomers.

For the purposes of this thesis and because of my specialized volunteer work at the International Institute of Rhode Island, a focus will be placed on the necessities expressed by the Burundi and Somali refugees resettled in Providence Rhode Island. My recent work at the Institute has enlightened me to the reality that Providence, as a growing city in the state of Rhode Island, has received in this last quarter a large number of refugees from Somalia and Burundi. Despite the aid provided by the resettlements office, the refugees who believe that not

⁴ Resettlement By Country." 2008 World Refugee Survey. USCRI.
<http://www.refugees.org/uploadedfiles/investigate/publications_&_archives/wrs_archives/2008/resettlement%20by%20country.pdf>.

⁵ "Refugees and Asylum Seekers Worldwide." World Refugee Survey 2008. 31 Dec. 2007. USCRI.
<http://www.refugees.org/uploadedfiles/investigate/publications_&_archives/wrs_archives/2008/refugees%20and%20asylum%20seekers%20worldwide.pdf>.

enough external, social support are offered express a growing concern. A flaw in the system that resettles refugees in Providence is the absence of an existing self-sufficient community to which they can turn to for additional support. Statistics provided from the 2007 Annual Report of the International Institute of Rhode Island show that 475 refugees, including 104 new arrivals⁶, received services last year. Many of these refugees, unable to find stability and comfort in Rhode Island, move after only a few short weeks to a new city and restart the frustrating process of assimilation. Fortunately, I was able to witness this phenomena when one Somali refugee, with whom I had been able to build a relationship with, moved to Maine where more opportunities were available to him. This pattern of multiple relocations within the third country host, name appropriated to a country of resettlement after refugee camp, is too often the pattern followed by disillusioned refugees.

The following literature review will provide an overview of the importance and relevance of community and the success of integration by refugees in American society. The argument will be reinforced by analyzing examples of unsuccessful cases of resettled refugees, as well as examples of successful cases resulting from community living.

The concept of solidarity

Solidarity is a characteristic of a type of integration between members of a society. This is an important concept to understand in light of relationships

⁶ Annual Report. Rep.No. International Institute of Rhode Island. 2007.

between refugees. In the cases of refugee resettlement, depending on the type of solidarity, different relations are built between the refugees, and different outcomes result as far as successfulness of integration and assimilation.

Social solidarity refers to the ties that bond together members of a society. To prove the relativity of this concept it is important to note that “solidarity relationships between individuals and groups separated by physical, social and cultural distances have been present since the middle of the 19th century”⁷. Solidarity relationships are concerned with numerous aspects of promoting human sustainability, whether political or material. Being that there are many forms of solidarity, different countries practice different forms depending on the need.

In societies such as the ones in the United States and Europe, Third World solidarity is practiced when relating to people in need. This “one-way” solidarity focuses on the structural and social inequalities between the different stratospheres of economic and social levels of the world. Third World solidarity works within the framework of benefactor and beneficiary, displaying elements of inequality between the two groups. In this category of solidarity, a kind of transfer of goods and services occurs between the benefactor, who is stronger, and the beneficiary. An example of this type of relationship is that found between humanitarian aid institutions, such as the International Institute of Rhode Island, and its clients, the resettled refugees. Non-governmental organizations, conscious of the struggles and necessities of the refugees, genuinely try to aid and support

⁷ Olesen, Thomas. "Globalizing the Zapatistas: from Third World solidarity to global solidarity." *Third World Quarterly* 25 (2004): 255-67.

them in their journey but nevertheless impose an image of themselves as the benefactor, or “savior”. Occasionally, rather than feeling comfortable, safe and urged to take advantage of their new opportunities, refugees are left with a sense of debt towards the institutions. In order to improve the system of resettlement for refugees, and increase their levels of self-sustainability it is necessary to change how they are viewed and treated. A different category or solidarity should be practiced.

Third World solidarity and the type of efforts made by these institutions should not be eliminated, but alternatives that are more empowering for the refugees himself should be developed. Similar to Third World solidarity, Rights solidarity has its limitations. The Rights approach relies on people with rights to lobby against human rights abuses. Again, this approach to solidarity depends too much on a third party, government or institution to take care of the problem not experienced by themselves.

A third form of solidarity is that of Political solidarity which stems mostly from the Marxist and socialist ideas of “a cosmopolitan alternative to global capitalism”⁸ based on the understanding that “working classes all over the world face similar conditions and similar prospects of social change.”⁹ This almost utopian view of the economic, social and political spheres across the world would

⁸ Olesen, Thomas. "Globalizing the Zapatistas: from Third World solidarity to global solidarity." *Third World Quarterly* 25 (2004): 255-67.

⁹ Olesen, Thomas. "Globalizing the Zapatistas: from Third World solidarity to global solidarity." *Third World Quarterly* 25 (2004): 255-67.

in terms of refugee resettlement foster shortcomings because it promotes a global consciousness based on falsely assumed equality in all countries. This assumed equality excludes the real cultural, social, and economic differences that a refugee may be shocked by when resettled to a third country host such as the United States. Assimilation and adaptation to new customs is always the biggest obstacles to overcome, making a philosophy that does not acknowledge their existence incompatible with the process.

Fortunately, with the growing modern beliefs of justice and democracy, a transition to more comprehensive philosophies of solidarity has been on the rise. The belief in justice and democracy intertwined with the notions of a single humanity who shares certain inalienable human rights have given rise to the notion of global consciousness and Global solidarity. Global solidarity, unlike Third World solidarity “that divides the world into first, second and third world countries...”¹⁰, insists on an understanding of the world and its people as one. Global solidarity involves a reciprocal transfer of services, good and support between the provider and beneficiaries. In this form for of solidarity, the lines between who is giving and who is receiving are blurred “in an expression of a more extensive global consciousness that constructs the grievances of physically, socially and culturally distant people as deeply intertwined”¹¹

¹⁰ Olesen, Thomas. "Globalizing the Zapatistas: from Third World solidarity to global solidarity." Third World Quarterly 25 (2004): 255-67.

¹¹ Olesen, Thomas. "Globalizing the Zapatistas: from Third World solidarity to global solidarity." Third World Quarterly 25 (2004): 255-67.

Global solidarity as enforcer of community building

Within a refugee community where sustainability is dependant on mutual help, the principle elements of Global solidarity are exemplified. For starters a refugee community can offer an outlet for new refugees completely estranged and isolated from their surrounding, to find comfort and a sense of familiarity through their common understanding of their struggles. Some institutions and other humanitarian aid services often made up of non refugee volunteers directed their help, as reiterated before, in a benefactor to beneficiary form. What is truly needed, and is more efficient, is a reciprocal form of help from one refugee to another. In a report by the Applied Research Center, a research institute that emphasizes issues of race and social change states that,

The strength of organizations that are culturally and linguistically equipped to serve immigrants lies in the personal experience of the staff, the organization's history of serving their community, and the staffs ability to understand, communicate with, and emphasize with their clients ¹²

This report supports the belief that mutual understanding and acceptance is the key to success. In the autobiography *Of Beetles and Angel* by an Ethiopian refugee named of Mawi Asgedom, it is once again suggested through his life accounts that despite all the efforts to understand and relate made by strangers, there is no deeper relationship and sense of understanding than that within

¹² Applied Researcher Center, comp. "Mapping the Immigrant Infrastructure." Mapping the Immigrant Infrastructure. Spring 2002. Annie E. Casey Foundation. 26 Nov. 2008 <<http://www.arc.org/pdf/269bpdf.pdf>>.

members of the same community. In describing the support provided by the resettlement agency, Asgedom states, “even with their support, though, we still felt the deepest homesickness. We yearned for a piece of *injer* bread or a bowl of *sebhi* stew. For a neighbor who spoke our language. For our people”.¹³ Despite all the attempts to make assimilation to a new culture and country a smooth process, this refugee family still needed a connection to their African roots. Their expressed need for their own people represents their innate understanding and necessity to be more dependent from the Third World solidarity provided by the resettlement agency and be more self-sufficient. While acknowledging and appreciating all the help that was given to them by humanitarian organizations, Asgedoms’s family, just like many other refugees, felt the necessity to grown and succeed on their own. Through the support and comfort that is provided by communities of ethnically similar people, resettlement for refugee becomes a process of interactive and proactive leaning, accepting and achieving rather than passive receiving and resignation.

Patterns of obstacles in assimilation

Identity struggles

In his autobiography, Asgedom discusses his families’ resettlement to Chicago from a refugee camp in Sudan. Many aspects of their experience are discussed, from classroom assimilation of the children to loss of identity of Mawi’s father. This loss of identity exemplifies one the possible outcomes of

¹³ Asgedom, Mawi. Of Beetles and Angels. Mawi Inc, 2004.

increased dependence on others because of lack of transparency in the resettlement system, and deep cultural differences between Mawi's family and the Americans. Mawi explains, "all through my childhood, I witnessed my father's metamorphosis. Watching him deteriorate, seeing him become dependent on others...I had witnessed his unmanning"¹⁴. This dehumanization was limited, and at times eliminated when community interaction with other refugee and/or Ethiopian families was possible. These reunions, either for simple afternoon tea gatherings of three or four, or for events at banquet halls attended by hundreds welcomed fellowship and community. For Mawi's family and other refugee families, connecting with others like themselves was not only essential for their wellbeing and success with assimilation, but it also ensured a continuous tie with their own culture.

The importance of the preservation of culture to avoid dehumanization is also present in Mary Pipher's book *The middle of everywhere* in its explanation of how by not celebrating ones differences by making ones home look like everyone else's, equals to making (him) homeless¹⁵. Referencing the multiracial look that her town had adopted Jane, the American citizen and main character, described how globalization was threatening the uniqueness of cultures and how it was imperative that migrant communities maintained their own culture while still trying to assimilate to new ones. To a refugee struggling with identity, Jane

¹⁴ Asgedom, Mawi. Of Beetles and Angels. Mawi Inc, 2004.

¹⁵ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

suggests that she form her new identity by accepting and rejecting certain values from both the American and Vietnamese cultures in order to “play by American rules” but not discard her own traditions completely¹⁶. Assimilation to a new country means learning all new traditions and growing accustomed to other traditions that may come as a complete shock. “Everyday in a foreign country is like final exam week. Everything is a test whether of one’s knowledge of the language, the culture, or of the layout of the city”¹⁷. This great challenge is revealed in a N.Y Times article focused on Liberian refugees in New York City who struggle with cultural assimilation due to past experiences¹⁸. Similarly, in a second article also in the N.Y Times, struggles of an uneducated and unemployed couple unfamiliar with basic American appliances, is disclosed¹⁹. These challenges experienced by refugees create an identity struggle because of the feeling of inadequacy that comes from being unable to perform daily activities smoothly.

¹⁶ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

¹⁷ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

¹⁸

¹⁹ Hamilton, William L. "For Bantu Refugees; hard won American Dreams." ProQuest. 5 July 2004. The New York Times. 29 Oct. 2008 <<http://0-proquest.umi.com.helin.uri.edu/pqdweb?index=2&did=658692421&srchmode=2&sid=4&fmt=3&vinst=prod&vtype=pqd&rqt=309&vname=pqd&t>>

Uselessness

The feeling of uselessness is another theme explored across much of the literature on refugees. For refugees who suffer identity crises, internalized feeling of confusion can forge a desire for a return to their home country. Pipher writes:

Hard as her life had been in the past, at least she has been useful. Now she was home alone most of the time. She cooked and cleaned the house, but had no money and no friends. She missed her communal life of the past²⁰.

Sometimes, refugees are portrayed and understood to be helpless victims. Products of their environment, if little opportunity for self-sustainability is given to them, refugees begin to live marginally. Some are fortunate enough to travel and be resettled with their families. Others easily find support in their country host. Again, others arrive alone and because of this, are at a great disadvantage. Even in the more fortunate cases where entire families move together, due of the limitations of language or cultural barriers equal educational and employment opportunities are not available. In Asgedom's autobiography, the chapter The Unmaking of a Man unfolds the fathers misfortunate loss of a sense of purpose. Back in Sudan, the father Haileab "had been an advanced dresser...but when he came to the States...he was fortunate to get a job as a janitor"²¹. Asgedom refers to this transition from a highly respected position in Sudan, to a less respected

²⁰ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

²¹ Asgedom, Mawi. Of Beetles and Angels. Mawi Inc, 2004.

career in the U.S as the transformation to a “monstrous black beetle”²². Loss of esteem and sense of purpose is a gateway to depression and dependence, which counteracts the goal of resettlement agencies of self-sufficiency of the refugee within four months²³.

Cultural Barriers

Cultural differences because of different tribal values and customs are another major reason for isolation experienced by refugees in their host countries. Many refugees, traumatized by tribal wars or harsh lives in refugee camps, resettle to the United States and may be fearful, insecure and defensive. Danger of members of rebel groups coming to rape, pillage or kill are realities that are on the radar for refugees living in camp. Violence and corruption are accepted at an early age, therefore survival of the fittest becomes part of their philosophy of life. These harsh realities are hard to forget and may give rise to situations of conflict in a host country. In *Of Beetles and Angels*, an example of conflict between refugees and Americans caused by the unmistakable and inflated sense of survival of refugees adapted from life in the camp, is described. Mawi and his brother, who growing up in a Sudanese refugee camp were accustomed to fighting, found coexistence with American children tough, and made assimilation into the American school system challenging²⁴. Sometimes, cultural differences can lead

²² Asgedom, Mawi. Of Beetles and Angels. Mawi Inc, 2004.

²³ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

²⁴ Asgedom, Mawi. Of Beetles and Angels. Mawi Inc, 2004.

to misunderstandings that instill unnecessary fears. This is evident in *The Middle of Everywhere* where Haileab, the father, is constantly warning about “the house of imprisonment” where Americans would place people who do anything wrong²⁵. Initial view of the host country also affects greatly how impressing cultural differences will be for the refugee. Misconceptions of what to expect may cause disappointment and shock. “There are two common refugee beliefs about America, one that it is sin city; the other that it is a paradise”²⁶. The idea of paradise is tied with the freedom from the oppression that was suffered in their home countries. Additionally, a sense of safety caused by the physical distance from the wars that destroy their lives also provokes an idea of paradise. Contrarily to this positive view of American, some refugees view American as a country of sin. As examples, Iraqis who have never before been exposed to the freedoms of women, or for Middle Easterners who are much more formal in their intersexual relationships, find Americans sense of freedom and self-expression offensive. Having to accept and live in a manner that is significantly different from that to which one might have been accustomed to before comes as a great challenge. Refugee communities where cultures, customs and traditions are shared and identified with by all the members are essential for the alleviation of the mentioned symptoms of isolation, uselessness and homesickness.

²⁵ Asgedom, Mawi. Of Beetles and Angels. Mawi Inc, 2004.

²⁶ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

Necessary characteristics: What ensures survival?

Although there exists a belief that refugees are defenseless and at the mercy of humanitarian aid, I find it necessary to reference that “may arrive penniless, but they are not resource less”²⁷. Refugees have been exposed to much greater levels of struggles and, due to these experiences, have developed individual attributes that would otherwise have been left dormant. In *The Middle of Everywhere*, Pipher explains that refugees possess “the outsider’s impatience, the gritty resolve to storm the barricades and triumph from within”²⁸. In the novel Jane, the main character, explains that for successful assimilation of refugees aid is needed from citizens or institutions of the host country. She further clarifies this statement by saying that despite the help they may offer, there are certain vital attributes of resilience that refugees obtain on their own that ensure their own survival. She states, “future orientation, ambition and initiative, verbal expressedness, lovability, flexibility...” are essential²⁹. To make these characteristics of resilience more effective, living in a community where its members also share in these same characteristics is be ideal.

²⁷ Pipher, Mary. *The Middle of Everywhere*. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

²⁸ Pipher, Mary. *The Middle of Everywhere*. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

²⁹ Pipher, Mary. *The Middle of Everywhere*. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

Successful resettlement: The influence of refugee community living

When adjusting to something different from what one has known throughout ones existence, supportive communities that identify with this challenge make a tremendous difference. “Nothing is as important as friends, not food, shelter, work, or even language”³⁰. It is a natural instinct to want to live in a place where there are people just like oneself, therefore newly arrived refugees gravitate towards cities where there are more refugees from their home countries. The encouragement for refugees to resettle in cities where there are more people of their same ethnic group creates a grouping of ethnicities and a greater pool for support. Ethnic communities offer help ranging from language facilitation, to culture shock alleviation and for cultural preservation. By easing the sock of transition from one culture to another, refugee communities assist refugees in becoming more successful and self-sufficient members of society.

Language as a facilitator

In a well functioning community, interaction and communication between community members is key. Any community, group, association prides itself in the relationship of its members. Whenever numerous people work together, it is important that coexistence is maintained through clear communication, as well as mutual support and equality. When a community begins to ostracize its members

³⁰ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

because of differences, the community itself becomes weaker and its survival is threatened.

Language is connected to both good judgment and to forming relationships. Humans trust or mistrust others on the basis of nuances, tonal variations, and small contradictions. Without language, we miss metaphors and subtleties. We cannot read between the lines or sense what is not being said³¹.

In the case of refugees, language barrier is a major cause of isolation from the rest of the American community. In an article of the New York Times, an example of frustrating isolation experienced by Somali children in schools is discussed. In an attempt to improve communication between these children and the other members of their schools tutors were provided. Unfortunately, because the ninety Somali children were spread out across twenty-one public schools, not enough attention was given to them. Suggestions were made to maximize support and reduce wasted travel time by the translators by clustering the children in a few schools³². This suggestion, which was denied, only increases the separation and isolation of the Somali refugees from Americans and the American culture.

Shock Absorbers

Although third country resettlement offers a brief feeling of relief and euphoria for refugees, it is important to remember that it is also a time of recovery. In leaving their home country, refugees simultaneously leave behind a

³¹ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

³² Winerip, Michael. "Refugees, Plucked From Africa, Still Isolated in Their Classes." The New York Times 28 Dec. 2005: B10.

repository of bad memories and all their “routines, their institutions, their language, their families and friends, their homes, their work and incomes”³³.

Anything that is familiar is lost and refugees must become accustomed to new traditions and learn to assimilate simply through survival instincts. When resettling to a new country and assimilating to a community, four different reactions are reported. The four reactions are:

Fight it because it is threatening; avoid it because it’s overwhelming; assimilate as fast as possible by making all American choices; or tolerate discomfort and confusion while slowly making international choices about what to accept and what to reject³⁴.

These reactions result from confusion and frustration, and they that cannot be identified by anyone other than a refugee who has also experienced them.

Fighting off and avoiding the new culture, although possible if one lives in an ethnically superfluous area solely comprised of other refugees, is difficult.

Completely rejecting the culture of ones host country would only increase ones isolation and exude a false sense of superiority. Quick and complete assimilation into the new culture is also not the best response because it can causes identity confusion and loss. One should not be expected to reject ones roots on the account of being accepted in another country. Toleration of some uneasiness and frustration while slowly integrating into a new culture is the ideal form of action.

³³ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

³⁴ Pipher, Mary. THE Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002.

Seeming to be most reasonable, gradual integration is possible through the support from a refugee community, which acts in absorbing the cultural shocks caused by frustration and confusion. Cultural differences, when not interpreted correctly, often can cause deep disturbances, awkward encounters and miscommunications. For instance, an American handshake meaning “thank you” can be interpreted as something obscene in Somali culture, and the Somali habit of talking loudly is interpreted here in the United States as rude³⁵. In order to bridge the gaps and ease tensions, institution and community based effort should be made in to bring together refugees to help each other and teach each other how to assimilate successfully.

Cultural Preservation

As described previously, the slow transition to a new culture through the help of community support allows for greater possibility for cultural celebration and preservation. Through community get together and the sharing of stories and experiences, culture shock as well as the memories of a shattered past can be discussed and forgotten about. Refugees identify with each other’s struggles and can offer each other support, strength and esteem. In discussing their experiences, refugees can encourage each other in suggesting to leave certain cultural practices behind while maintaining and practicing others. *Of Beetle and Angels* discusses the practice of Mawi family’s customs of drinking tea and *boona*, (African coffee). During these daily breaks, women gather around telling stories and

³⁵ Mosely, Brian. "Refugees' impact being documented." Shelbyville Times-Gazette 7 Nov. 2008.

sharing memories, done just in the same fashion as it would be done in their home country of Sudan³⁶. Likewise, Mawi's family participated in community gatherings where everyone congregated yearning for brotherhood and dosage of home³⁷. These community activities allow for the participation in cultural tradition and encourage pride in ones original culture.

Community building and living: Example of successful case

While the presence of refugee communities is affluent and successful in several parts of the country, in others it is completely lacking leaving refugees in those areas at a disadvantage. Organizations such as International Institute of Rhode Island identify sponsors for the resettlement of refugees, and depending on the availability, refugees are placed all over the country. Most refugees are resettled without any prior knowledge of their host country and city, and certainly have no choice in their placement. According to statistics of the 2007 fiscal year by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, majority of refugees are resettled in the South and Midwest³⁸. It is in these areas where the majority of successful community life is seen practiced and enjoyed by refugees. In an article published by The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis,

Minnesota and Wisconsin are favorite destinations for many refugees, as evidenced by their large Hmong and Somali populations.

³⁶ Asgedom, Mawi. Of Beetles and Angels. Mawi Inc, 2004.

³⁷ Asgedom, Mawi. Of Beetles and Angels. Mawi Inc, 2004.

³⁸ Fiscal Year 2007 Refugee Arrivals. Rep.No. Administration for Children & Families, U.S Department of Health and Human Services.

Asked why they have chosen to settle in a climate with such cold winters, many refugees respond that they came because of the area's strong economy and supportive environment³⁹

Because of the great numbers of refugees that settle in this area, the support that is available for the incoming refugees is impressive.

As refugee communities grew in Minnesota, they established ethnic-based nonprofit organizations, sometimes known as mutual assistance associations (MAA), to welcome and integrate new arrivals. MAAs connect families to basic services like financial assistance, temporary housing, transportation and child care⁴⁰

These reports provide information about the successfulness of the refugee in assimilating and flourishing due to the support received by their ethnic communities. Because of the proven necessity of refugee communities, others have been seen springing up in areas more north of the country, but these have yet to be a large presence. These communities in the north, such as for example the Somali community in Lewiston, Maine, have only resulted from recent concerns expressed by the Somalis who lived in the area who did not want to resettle to other parts of the country. Understandably, refugees who are settled in one state do not want to be uprooted a second or third time in search of support. In response to this concern, a bigger effort should be made in reminding refugees of their

³⁹ Thao, Bo. "Twin Cities refugee groups tackle community development." Community Dividend. Sept. 2005. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. 20 Nov. 2008
<http://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications_papers/pub_display.cfm?id=2321>.

⁴⁰ Thao, Bo. "Twin Cities refugee groups tackle community development." Community Dividend. Sept. 2005. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. 20 Nov. 2008
<http://www.minneapolisfed.org/publications_papers/pub_display.cfm?id=2321>.

capabilities of building their own communities in the state where they are and in aiding them in this endeavor.

Conclusion

Solely through facts from articles and books, the importance of community for the success of refugee resettlement and increased self-sustainability of refugees was proven. One of the themes discussed in the articles was the growing concern by refugees of a deficient resettlement system, disclosing their desire for support other than the support offered solely by resettlement agencies. To understand the nature of the deficiency of the present resettlement system, it was important to demonstrate the erroneous way in which refugees are viewed and assisted. Through the investigation of four types of solidarity, Third World solidarity, Rights solidarity, Political solidarity and Global solidarity, it was shown how Third World solidarity, the presently used form of solidarity, is limited in its inability to allow refugees to become self sufficient. Third World solidarity, practiced by humanitarian institutions, instills a sense of dependency upon the refugees who lose faith in their own capabilities. Global solidarity, on the contrary, because of its belief in a reciprocal transfer of services, goods and support between people, proved to be the ideal form of solidarity. The value of Global solidarity of a single humanity whose people should equally help and support each other is exemplified in the relationship between members of a community. A presence of a refugee community where refugees, through the implementation of Global solidarity, can identify with each because of mutual struggles increases the success rate of assimilation. The articles chosen for the

literature review provided proof that in the cases where assimilation for refugees was unsuccessful, it was due to a lack of refugee community and Global solidarity. The refugee expressed their concern with the lack of an ethnic community, the limited support in schools and employment agencies to help with assimilation and major obstacles due to language barriers. In the cases when all of these concerns were tended to, the rate of success and self-sustainability of the refugee was much higher. Based on the consistency of the limitation experienced by refugee who do not live in ethnic communities, it can be concluded that success comes with the introduction of these refugee communities wherever refugees are resettled.

Throughout the remained of the thesis research, I will conduct interviews to prove the hypothesis that refugee communities and Global solidarity are the only ways to ensure self-sustainability for refugee living in a host country.

Methodology

Thesis Topic and Problem Statement

With the expansion rate of globalization and the spreading of cultures and societies, we see an increase of the border crossing phenomena from people leaving their home country for a new future. For political, social or economic reasons people migrate to foreign countries in search for what is lacking in their home country. For refugees, the absence of safety, social and political stability as well as opportunities to sustain their families are the main reasons for migration.

In the year 2007, the United States became home for about 48,281 resettled African refugees, this only being a fraction of the world's displaced refugees. Upon their arrival to a host country, along with caseworkers and volunteers from resettling institutions, refugees are greeted by a world of insecurity, isolation, and fears. Their ignorance about what to expect in their host country leaves newly resettled refugees at the mercy of resettling institutions. For the initial weeks these resettling institution are the only connection between the host country and the resettled refugees, providing food, shelter and knowledge for survival. The dependence on these institutions increases when refugees are resettled in American communities where there is no presence of a refugee community to which they could turn to for mutual help and support.

Limitations of the resettling system become evident when refugees, because of lack a refugee community, become dependant on the resettlement institutions and lose faith in their own ability for self-sustainment and survival.

Social and emotional insecurities hinder the newly resettled refugees from adequately adapting to the new culture therefore leaving these refugees in a state of helplessness. This helplessness, consequently, creates tensions between the refugees and the host society in which they are trying to assimilate because of additional demands places on the resources of that society. Helplessness can cause the loss dignity and loss of sense of identity for the refugee, while at the same time create dependency on the limited resources offered by humanitarian organization.

My thesis will focus on proving the necessity and benefit of refugee communities for resettling refugees to give support alongside governmental and non-governmental humanitarian institutions. The presence of these refugee communities improve the overall resettlement system as they alleviate dependence on the western aid institutions and programs and ensure self-sustainability for the refugees. .

Summary of Findings from Literature Review

In my initial findings I found several example cases of where refugee communities were essential to the bucketful assimilation of resettled refugees into the culture and society of their host country.

Initially, through the reading and understanding of the different kind of solidarity philosophies, I discovered that Global solidarity, one in which equality, unification and reciprocal direction of aid are at it's core, is most effective. Global solidarity involves a reciprocal transfer of services, goods and support between

the provider and the beneficiaries. This is reflected in the relationship of community members who help each other in matters of identifying with common struggles, integration and familiarization. Throughout the various literatures that I read and reviewed, I was able to identify various cases where the lack of a refugee community in fact hindered successful assimilation. In the cases where resettled refugees felt isolated and longed for any connection to their home country and culture, communities and communal events would have alleviated the depression. Other cases when social and cultural differences caused friction and misunderstandings between refugee and American could have been avoided if there had been present an interpreter or a third party refugee who could have intervened. In addition, limited equal educational and work opportunities available for the refugees due to language and culture barrier led to a feeling of uselessness, which could have been avoided or alleviated within a refugee community where opportunities for volunteering and helping others out would always be readily available. In the literature I also came upon examples of when communities proved to be helpful with language learning process and aided with the assimilation into a new culture through the use of tutors, while still preserving their own beliefs and traditions. In my research I intend to discover which aspects of community living are most essential for the ensuring the self-sustainability of refugees. I intend to make this discovery by interacting daily with refugee and interviewing them.

When asked about my work with refugees, I was once asked: “which is most challenging obstacle for migrants to overcome as part of the assimilation

process into a new culture; the language or the cultural barrier?” As an immigrant myself, and based on my life experience, I have my own opinion about this question. Nonetheless I would like to discover the answer to this question through a different perspective; that of resettled refugees. I am interested in learning from the refugees that I intent to interview which part of the resettling system they felt was weak and what improvements they see fit. What where some programs or assistance that they feel should have been provided that weren’t. Do they feel that a more intimate community of other refugees would aid in their resettling and assimilation process, versus just depending on NGO and institutions such as International Institute of Rhode Island? It is my hypothesis that their answers will support my theory that refugee communities are an essential aspect to resettlement and assimilation.

Community Engagement

My community partner will be International Institute of Rhode Island. The institute’s mission is “to enable all area residents, especially immigrants and refugees, to become self-reliant, invested participants in our communities, while fostering respect and understanding among all people”. Since 1921, the Institute’s goal and mission has been to provide educational, legal and social services to immigrants and refugees throughout Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. The Institute is comprised of several different offices including citizenship and immigration, education and training, interpreting and translating, minority health and, last but not least, refugee resettlement. I have been volunteering at the refugee resettlement office since September 2008 building

relationships with both the caseworkers and refugees in order to create a comfortable work environment for next semester when I will begin my research. Rather than having one main contact at the Institute, I will be working with several caseworkers and teachers including Tom Dedah (caseworker), Zenaida DaCruz (teacher), Nbumba Kamwanyah (teacher) and Firewoine Kassahun (caseworker).

My presence and participation at the Institute will be felt in several different ways. So far my work at the Institute consisted of following cases, filing paperwork and getting hand on experience and primary knowledge about the obstacles and frustration that come along with the resettling system. Caseworkers Tom and Firewoine where the people with whom I primarily worked with. Through my work I have been able to see, in detail, exactly what services are provided for each resettled party, as far as housing, education, work, clothing, language classes ecc. In addition, I was able to spend some personal time with certain refugees whom I helped with filling out paperwork or doing job searches. In addition to the casework that I have done, I also worked with the language teachers Nbumba and Zenaida getting an insight into the various levels and types of language learning programs offered. This part of my work at the institute is what allows me to spend more personal time with the refugees, getting to know them intimately and befriending them. I plan on continuing these two volunteering jobs in order to strengthen the relationships that I have with both caseworkers and refugees. Creating relationship will limit the tension and skepticism that the refugees might feel towards a stranger.

Research Plan

The overall model for my research project will be Participatory Action Research (PAR). This research technique is based on the idea that people should participate in the research that affects their lives and focuses on the effects of the researcher's direct actions. The final goal of P.A.R is of improving the performance quality of the community or an area of concern through the results of the research. Research done in the P.A.R format is ideally intended to be done *by* the local people (the research subjects) *for* the local people. P.A.R research is to be conducted through education, investigation, planning and action all for the final goal of improvement.

Through interviews and collecting information directly from the case files of my interviewees I will collect all the information necessary for my research. It is appropriate that I compare the information gathered through interviews with the refugees to analyze discrepancy, perhaps due to language barriers or intimacy issues that might arise in having to answer a question in a method that might seem more threatening or judgmental. All questions will be focuses for understanding of what programs should be been offered to resettling refugees and which ones they think would be beneficial for the improvement of the resettling system.

Product

My final product will be a traditional thesis that discusses and analyzes the current resettlement system used in the United States. My research, which will

have focused on the limitation of this system, will result in a collection of possible suggestion presented from both the interviewed refugees, who will have provided insight to their experiences, and my own ideas based on my work experiences.

The suggestions that I will make will be directed towards workers and volunteers of the International Institute of Rhode Island in hopes that they will take them into consideration and take strides into implementing change.

Timeline of Action

September 2008 _____ Start internship
at IIRI to build relationship

- Volunteer each Tuesday regularly and any additional needed days

January 2009 _____ Come up with
questions for interviews

- Chose which specific refugees I would like to interview
- Introduce them to the idea of the interview and give them some information regarding my thesis

January/ February 2009 _____ Conduct the
interviews

March 2009 _____ Complete
interviews, compile and compare information and come up with final results

Findings

As described in the methodology, the community engagement part of the thesis consisted in volunteering at the International Institute of Rhode Island and working with Somali and Burundi refugees. Through the research technique of personal interviews with the refugees, I was able to collect data regarding their view of the resettlement system, its successes and its limitations.

Forming the correct questions in order to get the most honest answers from the refugees was the biggest challenge for this section. Language barrier and skepticism towards being spiteful against a resettlement system that offered new life opportunities to the refugees acted as an inhibitor for some of them to entirely unveil their sincerest feelings. It was obvious, by the nervousness and shaky answers of some of the refugees during the interview that they did not completely trust me, and my intentions of being a resource for change for them was not transparent. On the other hand, the bonds that I had created with the refugees throughout my year spent working with them fostered a sense of safety and trust which allowed some refugees to fully open up without reservation. I believe that the discrepancies that are found in the answers of some of the questions posed during the interviews is due partly to the lack of trust with some of the refugees who feared me rather than viewing me as an opportunity to openly discuss their needs.

In analyzing the answers that I have collected in the five interviews conducted I intend to prove that a source to the problem that results in the

inadequate resettlement system within which we work today comes from an unjust social frameworks in which a social domination system is allowed. The discovery of the similarities between the answers given by the Somali refugees and the Burundi refugees will be used to support my hypothesis that a refugee communities and preferred and necessary.

Experience in the United States

An important commonality that the majority of the interview subjects shared was the amount of time that they have been residents of the United States for. Four of the five interviewees stated that they have lived in the same state and the same house for a minimum of six months. The one interviewee who was not part of this group was Zenaib Abdi, a Somali refugee, who had been living here five month meaning that the other two Somali refugees and the two Burundi refugees had equal amount of legitimacy. In the half a year of experience in assimilation to the American culture, these refugees have had plenty of time to compare what they had expected of American life before resettlement to what they have actually experienced. This amount of time is significant to the legitimacy of their concerns because, according to expectations of resettlement institutions, all refugees should be capable of self-sustainability within the first three months of resettlement. Having been residents for a minimum of six months means four out of the five interviewees have had plenty of opportunities to obtain jobs, enough time to integrate into the American society and enough exposure to the differences between the two culture. In a successful resettlement case, a refugee at six months should be fully assimilated into society and flourishing.

From the interviews conducted with the refugees, two out of the five reported to be disappointed by the discrepancy between what they had expected of American life and what they have experienced. The refugees who reported limitations, Zenaib Abdi and Hakizimana Gracias both mentioned that they were disappointed by the levels of camaraderie and aid provided from people outside of the resettlement institution. The aid that both Zenaib and Hakizimana hoped to receive was from neighbors and friends such as the one that they were used to in Africa. Hakizimana specifically spoke about his memories of his African neighbors who were willing to help in any circumstance versus the experiences with his American neighbors who ignore him and are indignant towards his because of their differences. Zenaib complained about the lack of support provided to her children who are in school and who cannot turn to their fellow American students for help because of communication barriers. Zenaib's aggravation with the school system is directly related to the case discussed in my literature review from the article *Refugees Plucked from African Still Isolated in their Classes* where another refugee family suffered because of same limited system of support for refugee children in American schools. As discussed in the literature review, the lack of support outside from humanitarian institutions cause frustration and isolationism for challenged refugees. Although disappointment with the resources available was not shown to be a feeling shared by the majority of the interviewed refugees, the statistic does prove the existing need for improvement of the system.

Dependency, Third World solidarity and Community Living

A theme that presented itself throughout the literature review was that of complete dependency, by refugees, on the resources offered by humanitarian institutions. Because of a lack of refugee community that could offer resources for the independization and self-sustainability of refugees, they are limited to aid offered by caseworkers or volunteers who, as cited in the literature reviews, offer Third World solidarity. As I explain, “dependence may lead some refugees to become unmotivated and resentful towards the host country...” (p.6) Throughout the interviews, it was a concern by the majority of the refugees that the lack of a refugee community in Providence was the main cause of difficulty in assimilation to the American culture and obstacle to their independization from the Institute who had helped them resettle. Although only three out of the five refugees reported a desire of wanting to live in a community, all five of the interviewees accounted for their culture’s tradition of giving relevance to community and commonality.

Out of the three Somali refugees who were interviewed, both Zenaib Abdi and Daud Yusuf felt that a refugee community in Providence was necessary. Although they both expressed positive feedback on the resources and help that the Institute offered, they acknowledged that this Third World solidarity was not enough to help the refugees in general. Both Zenaib and Daud expressed the importance of the preservation of their culture to help with conservation of their identity and their sense of purpose. They both felt that identity and purpose would be forgotten if they could only depend on American humanitarian institutions.

Daud remembered the day of his arrival to the United States and how the fear of his future and the desire to return to Africa was only calmed when another Somali, who offered him guidance, approached him. Daud's fears of his uncertain future were tied with those of losing his identity and at the sight of another Somali, he was reassured that he was not alone in his host country. These feelings expressed by Daud support my statement in the literature review that without a surrounding of a refugee community, refugees tend to lose their sense of identity. To give further urgency to the necessity of refugee communities in Providence, it is corrigible to look at the case of Zenaib and her family who chose to move to Pennsylvania because of the state's existing large Somali communities. Daud on the other hand, would rather not move to another state have to start assimilation all over again, providing more support for the statement made in my literature review of how the majority of resettled refugees do not want to be uprooted after resettlement. Daud sees himself as a mentor for the incoming Somali refugees and he intends on remaining in Providence to start a Somali community here. Both Zenaib and Daud support my hypothesis that refugee communities are something seen essential by refugees for their assimilation into the American culture.

Omar Latif, the third and youngest Somali refugee interviewed, expressed his belief that he benefits from the lack of Somali community. He points out that fully assimilating into the American society cannot be done while being surrounded by Somali culture. In the literature review the four reactions to assimilation by refugees described in Mary Phipps' book *The Middle of Everywhere* are discussed. Of these four, the "assimilate as fast as possible by

making all American choices⁴¹” model is the one that Omar suggests. Omar did not seem to express too much interest in maintaining his Somali culture and taking part in Somali traditions here in Providence. The discrepancy between Omar’s opinion and that of Zenaib’s and Daud’s could be caused by their tribal differences. Zenaib and Daud, who are both of Somali tribe, believe more in concept of the importance of preservation of culture and the necessity for a refugee community. Omar instead, who is a Banjuni-Somali, believes more in an independence from cultural traditions.

Both of the Burundi refugees that I interviewed, Sayumwe Japhet and Hakizimana Gracias, believed that a Burundi community in Providence would be a great aid for incoming refugees in their process of assimilation into the American culture. Sayumwe described his enjoyment and regularity in going to visit other Burundi refugees in the area, proving the importance of relationships and community in the Burundi culture. When asked how often he liked to visit the other Burundi families Sayumwe said, “I go visit them almost everyday, when I am not working”. Similarly, Hakizimana mentioned his desire for living in a Burundi community in order to counteract the somewhat frigid and distant personality of his American neighbors. In addition, Hakizimana suggested that a Burundi community would provide an avenue where he and other Burundi refugees could continue Burundi cultural traditions, such as traditional parties. In addition to Hakizimana’s expressed necessity for a Burundi community, he also

⁴¹ Pipher, Mary. The Middle of Everywhere. New York, NY: Harcourt Inc., 2002

disclosed his desire to remain in Providence and become a resource for the incoming Burundi refugees by founding a Burundi community. Both of Sayumwe's and Hakizimana's reasons for wanting to live in a Burundi community support the findings in my review of the autobiography by Mawi Asgedom *Of Beetles and Angels* that discuss Asgedom's feelings of homesickness and necessity for a "connection to his African roots".

The effect of a domination system

It has come to my attention that cultural assimilation by refugee in their host country, and the of the relationships created or lack of relationships between American citizen and resettled refugees are effected by a phenomena known as the domination system described in the chapter "The faces of oppression" in Iris Young's book *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. In her writings, Young describes five different forms of domination seen used in relations of different cultures. These five forms of oppression are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Powerlessness and cultural imperialism out of the five form of domination are prominent within the system that deals with the resettlement of refugees. The manner in which refugees are viewed by American society, the system used to resettle them into American society, and the feelings felt by the refugees themselves once resettled to the host country all reflect the effects of the domination system.

For starters, the feeling of powerlessness is apparently reflected in the refugee's fears of identity, purpose and culture loss as well as by the frustration

they suffer from cultural and lingual barriers. Throughout the interviews conducted, four out of the five refugees mentioned feeling one of the above stated frustrations or fears. Zenaib described her disappointment with her life in America because of her insecurities and feeling of isolation caused by the lack of support that she would like to see provided by a Somali community in Providence. Specifically, Zenaib's sense of powerlessness is provoked by the lack of ability for her to continue her cultural traditions and the lack of support for her children in school. The powerlessness felt by Zenaib eventually drove her to making the decision to de-root her family from Providence and move to Pennsylvania in search for greater refugee community support. In the case of Daud, powerlessness presents itself in his frustration of not being able to get a job or continue his education as he attempts to further assimilate into American society. Daud's level of self-sustainability remains minimal because of the struggles he faces in becoming independent and defending his Somali identity. Similarly, Sayumwe experiences powerlessness because of his frustration in not being able to continue his education. As an educated Burundi refugee, Sayumwe suffers from a sense of uselessness because he is denied schooling despite the fact that he is qualified. Lastly, Hakizimana suffers powerlessness because of his inability to continue his cultural traditions that he finds so dear, due of the lack of a Burundi community in Providence. He is also subject to powerlessness because of the unfriendly and almost disrespectful manner in which his American neighbors treat him. These feelings of powerlessness suffered by the interviewed refugees are a clear obstruction to their capability to prosper. Young makes a statement agreeable to

this conclusion that people who are oppressed “suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts and feelings⁴²”.

Cultural imperialism, the second form of oppression discussed by Young, is also present in the modern system of refugee in their suffrage from the lack of ability to continue in celebrating their own culture in the host country, and their feeling of obligation to completely assimilate to the American culture. Cultural imperialism, as understood by Young, consists in the establishment and implementation of the dominant culture while oppressing anyone who does not follow that culture. The effects of cultural imperialism became apparent in the answers received from some of the refugees during out interview. Despite the fact that all five of the interviewed refugees expressed the importance of community as an avenue to continue their culture two particular refugees, Omar and Sayumwe, clearly expressed that they rather fully assimilate into the American culture than mixing the two together. Their statements came as a shock as they contradicted everything that I had researched, discovered and written in my literature review about the benefits of transitional assimilation. It came to my attention that this feeling of obligation towards total acceptance of a foreign culture and the rejection of ones culture must be the influence of cultural imperialism. For fear of not being accepted into the new culture of their host country, some of the refugees fear being labeled foreign or different and elect

⁴² Young, Iris. Justice and the Politics of Difference. Princeton University Press, 1990

total assimilation. Americans who belittle resettled refugees and judge them because of their differences further promote culture imperialism. In the interview with Hakizimana, an example of this form of cultural imperialism was apparent in the behavior of his neighbors towards him.

The next steps

Based on the findings from my interviews, I would like to make some suggestion in regards to improvements for the present system through which refugees are resettled into the United States.

The purpose of interviewing both Somali and Burundi refugees was a dual one. One purpose was to discover if reoccurring similarities between the two ethnic groups in regards to necessities, disappointments and experiences proved an urgent need for a change in the current resettlement system. In addition to this purpose, I intended to use the results from the interviews conducted with Somali and Burundi refugees to suggest that the creation of a Burundi community here in Providence Rhode Island was something possible, not only necessary. Based on the cultural similarities found between the Somali and Burundi refugees my hypothesis was to be that, just like Somali refugees were successful in building their own refugee communities around the country, Burundi refugees could also be successful in building a Burundi communities here in Providence Rhode Island. Because Somali communities exist all over the country already, I assumed that the Somali refugees resettled in this area would eventually migrate over to where these communities are already in existence. Although ideally it would be

much more beneficial for the Somali refugees in Providence to create their own community here, it is more probable that they will transfer. This assumption was supported by the experience lived by one the interviewed Somali refugees who, as she informed me, intended to move to Pennsylvania.

In analyzing the results of my interviews, I was glad to discover that Somali and Burundi refugees overwhelmingly agreed on many aspects and shared many cultural traditions. Most importantly, Somali and Burundi refugees agreed on the importance, for their cultures, of community and brotherhood. All five of the interviewees agreed that they considered community important and the majority of the interviewees agreed that if a community existed they would certainly take part in activities. The refugees who were in favor of a refugee community specifically mentioned the help that a refugee community could offer to resettled refugees for assimilation. Two of the three Somali refugees and both of the Burundi refugees disclosed the community setting in which they lived in Africa, proving that a desire for community is not something recent due to resettlement. Community living is something that has been imbedded in their cultural practices since they were born. Daud a Somali refugee, and Hakizimana a Burundi refugee, both made very strong cases for their desires to see a refugee community of their nationality here in Providence, and both mentioned their desires to create one. Additionally, at least one interviewee for both the Somali ethnicity and the Burundi ethnicity reported having been educated and having worked in Africa meaning that they had transferable skills offer to employers in the United States.

Based on my findings, the next step to improving the resettlement system to better meet the needs of the incoming refugees is to create a network through which the refugees can communicate and eventually create a community for themselves. An important aspect to the creation of this refugee community is that it not be built by a humanitarian institution, but rather it be created by refugees for refugee. Like I mentioned before, in his interview Hakizimana shared his enthusiasm and objective to create a Burundi community in Providence. In order for his to do this, he must be able to connect with other Burundi refugees as well as be superficially supported by the International Institute of Rhode Island. The role of IIRI must be minimal, but it should be their responsibility to provide Hakizimana with connection of resources in Providence in a manner that is supportive and not overpowering. A way in which I had thought refugees could connect with each other was through an Internet chatroom or blog page in which all the refugees of the institute were connected to and where they could comment with each other about what they need. Of course, IIRI would have to play a role in the creation of this blog, but it would be the responsibility of the refugees to monitor and maintain it. This refugee monitored and maintained blog page would promote a sense of self-sustainability by giving the refugees a system in which they are the creators of their own future and facilitators to their own success. This virtual form of community could eventually, if monitored and used correctly, be an avenue for the creation of a physical community.

Conclusion

Through the course of my research on the resettlement system of refugees and its effects on the refugees, I have been able to successfully conclude that despite the beneficial nature of the process, it does still lack essential aspects for the re-empowerment of refugee who suffer degradation from having to flee their home country. My initial hypothesis regarding the effects of inadequate resettlement of refugees into a foreign community were that it would foster feelings of uselessness, isolation and frustration. This hypothesis was proven correct by the articles studied in my literature review. Selected articles presented cases of unhappy refugees who reported feeling desperate for a connection with their culture and home, and feared the unknown of a foreign culture and society from which they felt ostracized. In other articles, refugees testified to the support made available by the presence of refugee communities for the facilitation of their resettlement and assimilation process. These communities, which cultivated a sense of brotherhood between the refugee members also promoted an avenue for mutual help, identification of common struggles and a system to alleviate cultural shock. The suggestion of the importance of refugee communities cited in the articles led me to hypothesize that in a city like Providence Rhode Island, where the International Institute of Rhode Island resettles hundreds of refugees, could also benefit from the creation on refugee communities. To further extend the relevance of my research and apply it to the refugees of the International Institute of Rhode Island, I compared Somali cultural traditions and Burundi cultural tradition to verify the desire and aptitude of Burundi refugees specifically to

creating a Burundi community in Providence. Thanks to the responses collected through my interviews, I was able to conclude that for both of these ethnic groups community was not only regarded as important for the preservation of culture and participation in cultural traditions, but it also played an imperative role in the success of refugee resettlement. The strong correlation between the Somali and Burundi culture, along with the expressed aspiration by a Burundi refugee to begin creating a refugee community in Providence led to my final conclusion. A Burundi community is something not only desired by the Burundi refugees but it is also seen within their horizon. It is the responsibility of the humanitarian organizations such as the International Institute of Rhode Island to offer support without oppressing their efforts through westernization. As per my contribution I will continue to volunteer at the International Institute of Rhode Island offering as much support and guidance to the refugees as they need. I would truly like to witness the creation or the starting foundations of a Burundi community in Providence. To promote this process I will remain close friends with all the refugees that I interviewed but specifically with Hakizimana and Daud who I will urge to communicate and collaborate in their endeavors to help their ethnic tribe.

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Appendix A: Interview Notes

Case Study 1: Omar Said

DATE OF BIRTH: 1/1/ 1982

COUNTRY OF BIRTH: Somalia

RELIGION: Moslem

EHTNICITY: Banjuni

MARITAL STATUS: Single

SEX: Male

LANGUAGES: Kiswahili

Somali

English

Kibanjuni

EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA: Sales Person

ARRIVAL TO THE UNITED STATES: 9/24/2008

ADRESS IN THE UNITED STATES: 600 Potters Ave (Daud's Roommate)

PHONE NUMBER IN UNITED STATES: 401.345.360

Case Study 1:

Omar Latif, a 27 years old single male, is a Somali refugee and former resident of Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya for eleven years. Omar was resettled to the United States on the 24th of September 2008, and presently resides in Providence Rhode Island.

In Kakuma, Omar lived a solitary and single life which he carried over as part of his culture when he resettled in the United States. In Kakuma, Omar did have acquaintances and friends but no one to truly consider family. Despite his preference for independence, Omar acknowledges the Somali cultural tradition of community, spending time together and sharing all that one has. “Eating and celebrating communally is something that is highly regarded in the Somali culture”, he explains in our interview.

Life for Omar in Kakuma was limited and cyclical. At a young age, a typical day consisted in running around with friends, but with adulthood came responsibility. He mostly worked small jobs to help people around him such as selling ice and getting water.

Life in the United States for Omar turned out to be fairly close to what he had expected. Although he does not yet hold a job, he still remains hopeful that this country of opportunity will provide him a chance for a better future. In Kakuma, Omar was continuously surrounded by people due to the overcrowded living arrangements and opportunities for alone time were rare and desired. Differently, in spite of living with roommates in the United States, Omar feels he benefits from a newfound sense of freedom. Despite the lack of Somali community in the area, Omar does not feel lonely or frustrated. In fact, he believes he benefits from the lack of Somali community. He points out that the only way to successfully assimilate is to be fully emerged in American culture and not being surrounded by the familiar Somali people and traditions.

Appendix B: Interview Notes

Case Study 2: ZenaibAbdi

DATE OF BIRTH: 1/1/ 1930

COUNTRY OF BIRTH: Somalia

RELIGION: Moslem

EHTNICITY: Darod

MARITAL STATUS: Divorced

SEX: Female

LANGUAGES: Kiswahili

Somali

Elementary English

EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA: Household up keeping (Somalia)

Butcher (Kenya)

ARRIVAL TO THE UNITED STATES: 11/21/2008

ADRESS IN THE UNITED STATES: 171 Reynolds Ave Apt. 1

Just recently moved to Pennsylvania

PHONE NUMBER IN UNITED STATES: 401.699.7071

Case Study 2:

Zenaib Abdi is a seventy nine year old female refugee from Somalia. She has been a resident in Providence Rhode Island since November 21, 2008 but will be moving to Pennsylvania with her family in early February. The move to Pennsylvania has been inspired by the fact that in Rhode Island the number of Somali refugees is very limited, while in Pennsylvania the Somali community is large and strong. The lack of a Somali community in Providence made assimilation into the American society for the past three months fairly difficult and frustrating. Zenaib has high hopes for a better future and an easier experience in her new home town.

Before resettlement in the United States, Zenaib and her family lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for a total duration of seventeen years starting in October 1991. Overcrowded conditions made life so that refugees are in constant contact with each other. Zenaib speaks about how in Somali culture family is very important and that families tend to be extensive. Within the camp itself, different ethnic groups and nationalities live in close quarters. Due to the Somali tradition of community living, these seeming unrelated people form family-like bonds with one another. Although resettlement in the United States has offered a great deal of safety and improvement in lifestyle for Zenaib and her family, it has come with loads frustration, insecurity and isolation. In her host country, Zenaib still wishes to continue her cultural traditions, something that is fairly difficult to do in an area where there is no Somali community, and very few other Somali refugees. In addition, she and her children have experienced difficulties and obstacles in communicating with others. Specifically within the school system, Zenaib speaks

of the daily challenges her children face. There are no other Somali children in the school system to relate to or ask for guidance, and because all her children have to attend different schools, they cannot support each other. Communication with American children is still difficult for them because of cultural and language barriers. Furthermore, when her children come home from school with assignments, she cannot adequately help them due to her lack of schooling, insufficient knowledge on the subject and limited comprehension of the English language. “Assimilation”, she says, “is hard for all of us”. Zenaib expresses the necessity for all newly resettled refugees to obtain guidance from like refugees who are more familiar with the culture and lifestyle but who can also relate to their struggles.

As far as expectations, Zenaib has yet to be truly disappointed. While still in Africa she hoped to find work in the United States and live a safe life where she could continue her traditions. The United States granted her this opportunity in the form of welfare, food stamps and a home, just to mention a few. Zenaib has no desire to go back to Africa, but does wish to live in an area where there are more Somalis with whom she can spend time with and receive some support from.

Appendix C: Interview Notes

Case Study 3: Daud Abdi Yusuf

DATE OF BIRTH: 1/6/ 1979

COUNTRY OF BIRTH: Somalia

RELIGION: Mennonite

EHTNICITY: other

MARITAL STATUS: Single

SEX: Male

LANGUAGES: Somali

English

EDUCATION IN AFRICA: Professional (Somalia)

Technical (Kenya)

University (Kenya)

EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA: Unisom

ARRIVAL TO THE UNITED STATES: 8/13/2008

ADRESS IN THE UNITED STATES: 600 Potters Ave (Omar's Roommate)

PHONE NUMBER IN UNITED STATES: 401.347.3620

Case Study 3

Daud Yusuf is a Somali refugee who was granted resettlement from an African refugee camp in Kenya to Providence Rhode Island. Daud resided in

African refugee camps since 2000, and on August 13th, 2008 he was resettled in Providence where he resides today.

Daud was raised in an orphanage, but despite his lack of family roots, he still feels a strong connection with his Somali people. One of Daud's fundamental beliefs is: "It is better to give back to the world what you have learned than to take advantage of the suffering people around you". After living in the United States for six months, Daud feels he has accumulated enough knowledge and experience to act as a mentor to the incoming Somali refugees. All that Daud desires is an opportunity to help these suffering Somalis and teach them the how to assimilate and flourish in the American society just as he does.

Between 2000 and 2008, Daud moved frequently between the refugee camp in Nairobi, Kenya and shelters built in his home country of Somalia guarded by the military of the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees). Refugee camps, although they offer shelter, lend to civil unrest due to overcrowding and ethnic discriminations brought into the camp with each individual ethnic group. Led by his aspirations for a career and future, Daud abandoned the minimal safety that the substandard and dangerous refugee camp offered, in search for opportunity in Somalia. He was urged by UNHCR soldiers of the camp, whom eventually exploited him, to return to Somalia under the false pretenses of work. During his schooling, Daud studied computers and technology and upon his return to his home country, he decided to share with the rest of his people what he had been taught. He shared his good fortune in the form of a shop for computer training. Although this store offered Daud a chance to earn money,

it also placed him in a vulnerable situation. African rebels and UNHCR soldiers subjected Daud to terrorism by manipulating him into paying for their expenses. His only way out of this abuse was to go back to Nairobi and continue with his resettlement case.

On the fortunate day of the 13th of August 2008, Daud was finally granted his wish of resettlement in the United States. As per his expectations, Daud envisioned the United States as the land of opportunity where he could help himself and help others in a way that is free from discrimination and violence. To the present day, these expectations have not yet been crushed. Luckily, since having resettled to the United States, Daud has not yet experienced loneliness despite the fact there are few to no Somali families in his surroundings. He lives with two other roommates, one Somali and one Iranian, but when he is not working he goes to visit other refugee families. These visits help him remain in contact with his culture, his traditions and his language. During his visits he also encourages the other families to follow in his footsteps in order to start building strong relationships and a sense of community outside of the resettlement agency: *The International Institute of Rhode Island*.

Ever since his arrival, Daud has continued his customs of helping others and teaching what he has learned. He took it upon himself to become a “cultural mediator” for incoming Somali refugees who need help with resettlement and assimilation into the American system and culture. He explains, “I teach them things such as using a bus pass or food stamps, going shopping and how to operate general appliances around the house. I am very important to them”. Daud

not only transformed into an imperative resource for newly resettled refugees, but he did it completely in a voluntary manner which sprung from his enjoyment in helping others. Very rarely Daud encounters families who are suspicious of him and accuse him of being a spy or working against them. This, at times, discourages Daud but nonetheless his fire for sharing his knowledge never extinguishes.

The sense of importance that Daud feels because of the help he offers the incoming refugees acts as an anchor to tie him to Providence. “This is my home, I don’t want to go to another state” he said when questioned if he would ever consider leaving Rhode Island and moving to a place where a larger Somali community existed. In our interview, he expressed his desire to find a job and his concern that he would never be able to continue his education. Yet, the prospect of having to move and “having to start from the basic” proved to be the worse option of the two. Daud reflected on the day of his arrival to the United States and how scared, alone and confused he felt. He described these feelings saying, “I remember the day I came over here I was scared because I had no one and all I could think about was going back home. One other Somali came to the airport with Baha, director of the refugee resettlement office, to welcome me. Just seeing a familiar Somali face calmed me”. Daud acknowledged that veteran Somalis need to remain in the area in order to begin creating a community that could welcome and support incoming refugees. He expressed his goal of founding this community.

Appendix D: Interview Notes

Case Study 4: Sayumwe Japhet

DATE OF BIRTH: 4/6/ 1984

COUNTRY OF BIRTH: Tanzania

RELIGION: Pente Contalist

EHTNICITY: Hutu

NATIONALITY: Burundi

MARITAL STATUS: Single

SEX: Male

LANGUAGES: French

Intermediate English

Kirundi

Kiswahili

EDUCATION IN AFRICA: Ubalozi Va Congo (Tanzania)

Lycee de Valumiere (Tanzania)

Solidarity Secondary (Tanzania)

EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA: Teacher (Tanzania)

ARRIVAL TO THE UNITED STATES: 9/25/2008

ADRESS IN THE UNITED STATES: 428 Prairie Ave

PHONE NUMBER IN UNITED STATES: 401.383.0917

Case Study 4:

Sayumwe Japhet is a twenty four year old Burundi refugee who has been living in Providence Rhode Island since September 2008. Sayumwe, who is Hutu, was born in Kigoma, Tanzania and lived in Kakuma Refugee Camp until he was resettled in the United States.

In Tanzania, life was fairly unsettling for Sayumwe and his family. Being that they are Hutu, they lived with the constant terror of being arrested or attacked by Tutsis. At any time of the day his family could be attacked and the only possible form of salvation was bribing the Tutsi soldiers with large sums of cash in exchange for their freedom. Because Suayumwe's father was a fisherman and was able to earn money, they were able to buy themselves freedom and time until they could make it to Kakuma Refugee Camp. This was the type of lifestyle that everyone fleeing Tanzania led, and despite the Burundi tradition of community and aid, self survival instincts kicked in.

Life in the refugee camp for Sayumwe was crowded and dangerous. Sayumewe lost most of his family around 1992 during the ethnic war between the Hutu and the Tutsis, so although it is traditional of Burundi culture to have a big family and live together, Sayumwe experienced much loss leaving him to live a somewhat lonely life. Despite the reduction of his direct family, Sayumwe did not lose a sense of sharing and coexistence. He grew accustomed to helping strangers as if they were family since overcrowded quarters and limited resources forced Sayumwe to live with others without much reservation. During his time in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Sayumwe lived the life of a student going to classes in the morning, and in the afternoon helping his family and his neighbors. He would

be assigned to fetch firewood or prepare meals for people who could not cook for themselves.

Life in the United States has granted Sayumwe freedoms that he never experienced before. Living with both of his parents, who are all that remain of his large family, Sayumwe can speak Kirundi at home and can continue minimally to practice his cultural traditions. In Providence there is a growing population of Burundi refugees which allows for get-togethers. Typically Sayumwe takes full advantage of this, and when he is not working he is visiting his friends and continuing his cultural practices. The life that Sayumwe lives follows very closely to the expectations that he had of life in America. He has a home and a job which allow him to participate in American pastimes, such as going to the movies or shopping, which help him with his assimilation. One obstacle which Sayumwe encountered has been the difficulty in trying to attain a higher education. Despite his high school degree, the lack of a viable transcript from African schools hinder Sayumwe from being able to apply to an American university.

Sayumwe is very grateful to Rhode Island, as it is the first state to have welcomed him after his escape from Africa. He has no intentions of moving and rebuilding again his life from nothing. Rather than trying to find a Burundi community and move there, he believes that the only way to successfully assimilate into the American culture is to be fully immersed in it and not be surrounded by what is already familiar.

Appendix E: Interview Notes

Case Study 5: (Jimmy) Hakizimana Gracias

DATE OF BIRTH: 09/16/1987

COUNTRY OF BIRTH: Tanzania in Kakuma Refugee Camp

RELIGION: Krachuian

EHTNICITY: Hutu/ Tutsi mix

NATIONALITY: Burundi

MARITAL STATUS: Single

SEX: Male

LANGUAGES: French

English

Kindi

Swahili

Kinuakan

EDUCATION IN AFRICA: high school degree

EMPLOYMENT IN AFRICA: n/a

ARRIVAL TO THE UNITED STATES: 08/ 28/2008

ADRESS IN THE UNITED STATES: 503 Elmwood Ave

Case Study 5:

Hakizimana Gracia, also known as Jimmy, was born September 16th 1987 in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, where he lived until resettlement in the United States on August 28th 2008. Jimmy is of both the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic tribes and comes from a large family of nine.

The whole of Jimmy's education took place in Kakuma. Primary school within the refugee camp was provided by NGOs such as Unicef making this level of education fairly accessible. School days were from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon, but because of family responsibilities, Jimmy, like many other children living in refugee camps, left school around lunch time. Scarcity of teachers and resources limit the amount of classes available, making size of the class huge, sometimes fifty children to one teacher.

Jimmy's expectations of the United States and the American lifestyle were quite different from what he has experienced so far. His first misunderstanding was that of believing that many of the commodities and resources such as food, rent and transportation that Americans benefits from would have been given to him for free. He quickly realized that in order to receive these things he would have to work hard for it. Although he lives in America, Jimmy still has to work hard and deserve what he receives. Furthermore, Jimmy's view of America was one formed from watching exaggerated Hollywood movies of violence and crime. Jimmy feared life in America because he thought that he could just walk down the streets and get shot. This has not yet happened to Jimmy, and in fact, after having experienced American life in Providence Rhode Island, Jimmy laughs at his misguided fears. When Jimmy is not at work, he enjoys going to visit the few

friends and Burundi families who also live in Providence. Although there are not too many, he hopes he can start creating a network for support by connecting everyone together.

Back in Africa, Jimmy lived with his large family of two parents and six other brothers and sisters. It is common in the Burundi culture to have large families and constantly be surrounded by many people creating a strong sense of community and family. In his culture, comfort comes in being with people who are like himself, who speak the same language and look alike. In Burundi culture relationships between neighbors and friends are strong, unlike the relationship between neighbors Jimmy has experienced in the United States. In comparison to the Burundi culture where it is the common characteristic of a neighbor to come to ones aid when needed, Jimmy describes his American neighbors as too busy and preoccupied with their own lives to even notice that he exists. Jimmy experiences isolation from his neighbors and describes them as angry people who rather concentrate on the differences that separate them than welcome and embrace the diversity. He explains that “older people don’t recognize our language and when we try to speak English they feel like we are indecent”. Jimmy wishes that he was more surrounded by Burundi but despite this inconvenience, he has become used to the oftentimes coldness of Americans.

Another important Burundi tradition is that of large celebrations. For any sort of occasion, weddings, births, or any other special events, large amounts of Burundi congregate together in celebration with their traditional drums and dances. Weekends especially, Burundi enjoy getting together to drink, eat and

dance in celebration of life. An important part of these celebrations is the playing of the traditional drums which give rise to ethnic pride and foster comfort.

Unfortunately, because of the lack of a Burundi community in Providence, these traditional celebrations have not taken place. Jimmy wishes there were more Burundi in Providence to create a network and community in order to continue their Burundi traditions in their host country.

The biggest challenge that Jimmy experienced after his resettlement was the language barrier. Although he has been in the country over six months he still has some difficulties understanding the native speakers. With this type of challenge, the International Institute of Rhode Island as well as other Burundi who are more experienced, have been a great source of support. The Institute provides a system of support by familiarizing the incoming refugee with the American life style. Simultaneously, veteran Burundi refugees act as mediators between the clashing American and Burundi cultures by helping the incoming refugees balance assimilating into the new culture while maintaining their own traditions. Jimmy feels lucky for having had some other Burundi families available to help him in translation and communication because he feels without them it would have been difficult to advance in his assimilation as much as he has.

Jimmy has no intention of moving to another state despite the fact that Providence lacks a larger Burundi community. Moving to a new state for Jimmy means having to start from scratch and he does not want to experience this again. Rather, he wants to remain in Providence to continue his life and continue being a resource for the incoming Burundi who may need his help.