LIVES DISRUPTED:

RESETTLEMENT STORIES OF MEN LEAVING WAR TORN COUNTRIES

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Holly Maria Bressler, candidate for the degree of Master of Social Work, has presented a thesis titled, *Lives Disrupted: Resettlement Stories of Men Leaving War Torn Countries*, in an oral examination held on April 29, 2015. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore the lived experience of men who fled war torn countries and now reside in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Drachman's (2008) Stages of Migration Framework was used to explore three stages of migration: pre-migration/departure, transit and resettlement. This qualitative research study used a narrative approach using Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber’s (1998) holistic content analysis to uncover the themes. Bronfenbrenner’s (1989) ecological theory was used to analyze and interpret the findings.

Three participants were interviewed for this study and a total of seven themes were uncovered from the men’s narratives. In the pre-migration stage, two themes were discussed “war” and “loss of freedom.” Participants described the terror, destruction and killings of war and the devastating loss of freedom. During the transit stage the themes of “the journey” and “waiting to relocate” were themes uncovered. Prior to arriving in Regina, the first participant fled from Burma to Thailand spending almost ten years in a refugee camp; the second participant escaped from Guatemala to Mexico and was in exile for several months; the third participant fled from Afghanistan to India for close to seven years. During the resettlement stage three themes emerged which were “challenges,” “demonstrating resilience”, and “stability.” The challenges
commonly discussed included language, climate, dealing with trauma, cultural adjustment and overcoming employment challenges. A major part of “demonstrating resilience” was a willingness to access support from family, friends and community settlement services. Stability was viewed as success for participants.

The findings of this study highlighted the benefit of strong relationships with settlement services and supports to improve English language training and employment integration. Equally important were services fostering relationships with community agencies and relationships with individuals in Regina. The lived experience of war had life-long impacts on the participants and was a devastating disruption in each participant’s life. Participants reported a lack of culturally appropriate mental health support to address trauma from war. Civilians continue to flee war torn countries sharing their stories is an important observance of human rights.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank the three men who so graciously shared their stories for this research. Telling and sharing their stories of war and resettlement ensures the hardship and struggle of survivors of war will be recognized and never forgotten.

I would like to acknowledge all the people who have supported me throughout this process. Thank-you to my supervisor, Dr. Donalda Halabuza, who offered her unwavering support, guidance, insight, humour and enthusiasm to ensure this research made it to the “finish line.” I sincerely appreciate all your efforts and contributions you provided throughout this process. Thank-You! I also want to acknowledge my committee members Dr. Miguel Sanchez and Dr. Sadeq Rahimi who offered thorough feedback and insight. I appreciate your willingness to offer your time to this research despite your busy schedules.

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appreciative of my cousin Alexis Wellwood who so kindly offered her time to discuss my thesis and offer feedback. I must also specifically acknowledge my wonderful friend Meighan Mantei who allowed me to use her home as my office throughout the research process.
DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to all those who have endured, suffered, and survived war; and to acknowledge those whose lives have been lost as result of war. I would also like to dedicate this to my grandpa as it is his story that continues to inspire me throughout this journey.
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1.0 MY NARRATIVE

As a child I grew up listening to my grandfather’s stories describing events in his early childhood and his survival of World War II as a German civilian. During the war, he survived dismal conditions of famine, threats of bombings, and extreme poverty. After the war, he immigrated to Canada from Germany in hopes of a better life for himself. As a child I was naïve in believing that the atrocities described in his stories of war no longer occurred in present day. Grandpa’s stories were intriguing, however, and sparked my curiosity to learn more about people who experience war and immigration. Unfortunately, I learned that the destruction of war and its cruelty largely continues in many parts of the world. As an employee with a local newcomer settlement agency, I met survivors of war on a daily basis who were struggling to overcome integration challenges. Despite their difficulties, I witnessed individuals who exhibited strength, resilience and perseverance. I believe exploration of war as a factor in the integration process of immigrants and refugees is important, and that it could further support immigrants and refugees to resettle in Regina, Saskatchewan.

2.0 BACKGROUND

At the time of writing this paper, numerous countries were experiencing civil war and upheaval. The media was filled with stories of war, violence and horrendous atrocities committed towards civilians around the world. Worldwide ethnic and geographic conflicts caused the highest numbers of refugees in history
According to the United Nations, there were currently:

Some 43 million uprooted victims of conflict and persecution worldwide.
More than 15 million of them are refugees who have fled their countries, while another 27 million are people who remain displaced by conflict inside their own homelands -- so-called “internally displaced people” (2015, para. 2).

Displacement due to war has been described as the most serious crisis facing human kind to date (Schmitz, C., et al.). The negative impact on civilians exposed to traumatic events is immense. Many individuals arriving to Regina from war-torn countries may have additional difficulty with their resettlement when dealing with possible consequences to mental health.

A great deal of literature and research has concluded that individuals exposed to war-related traumatic events are at a greater risk of developing psychological problems including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), social anxiety disorder (SAD), and depression and anxiety (Johnson & Thompson, 2008; Kashdan, Morina, & Priebe, 2009; 2008). At the same time, many studies detail various coping strategies available to individuals to enhance positive well-being and mental health despite these traumatic experiences. Refugees have immense strength and resilience demonstrated through their capabilities to save themselves from dangerous situations and then find means to support themselves amidst tremendous upheavals in migration (Hokenstad & Midgeley, 1997). Individuals fleeing war need to be viewed by their capacities, talents, competencies,
possibilities, visions, values, and hopes (Saleeby, 1996). It is therefore my perspective that a community must aim to provide the necessary conditions to promote well-being and growth.

Prior to World War II, legal protections were solely focused on soldiers rather than civilians (Hobfoll, 2003; Stocking, 2009). As a result, civilians were completely vulnerable, having little recourse or protection from a wide-range of atrocities. In 1949, legal changes were proposed and implemented under the Geneva Convention to address and offer protections to civilians (Hobfoll, 2003; Stocking, 2009). Implementing legal protections to civilians was an improvement; however war continues to be directed against civilians (Van der Veer, 1998 as cited in Paulson, 2003; Whitaker, 2000 as cited in Paulson, 2003). Paulson (2003) explains that civilians who are poor and belong to minority groups often become targeted in war. Paulson (2003) noted the following countries and regions have carried out wars on civilians since the 1980s: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Chile, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Indian Kashmir, East Timor, Israeli-occupied territories, Liberia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Northern Ireland, Peru, the Philippines, Russian Chechnya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Timor, the former Yugoslavia, and Zaire (Wright, 1999 as cited in Paulson, 2003). South East Asian countries such as Burma and Cambodia can be added to this list, and likely many others. While writing this thesis, Ukraine and Syria have frequented the news for uprising, instability and violence.
Paulson (2003) maintains that a government’s main strategic goal of war is to control and subjugate the civilian population by means of terror. As Stocking (2009) put it, “The killing of civilians is the norm, not the exception…government forces and non-state actors simply flout the law, or justify the attacks by interpreting the Convention in a way their authors would never have recognized” (p. 10). He also suggested, “Governments had largely justified a large number of dead civilians for a relatively small victory in the fight against terrorism” (2009, p.10). Many of the individuals who have escaped and survived these atrocities have endured grotesque suffering. It is highly probable they have witnessed the killings of close relatives, friends and community members. It is important for social work agencies and host communities that support individuals who have fled war-torn countries to address the experience of war as a factor to the resettlement process.

3.0 RESEARCH PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

This qualitative study was conducted to explore and interpret the experiences of male immigrants and refugees who left their countries of origin as a consequence of war to resettle in Regina. The objectives were to gather information on the process of resettlement in three stages:

Stage #1: What was the experience of men prior and during war in their country?
Stage #2: What was the experience of men during transition?
Stage #3: What was the experience of men during re-settlement and integration?

This study allowed individuals to describe their lived experience, and how they were able to cope, endure and overcome hardships throughout their
The findings collected from this study can be used to inform programs to improve the settlement processes for individuals who have experienced trauma as a result of war. The purpose of this research was to explore the lived experience of men who fled their countries of origin as a result of war and who now reside in Regina, Saskatchewan.

This study is specific to immigrant and refugee men who live in the city of Regina. In general, migration studies are primarily associated with challenges experienced by women during resettlement (Este & Tachable, 2009). Immigrant and refugee men also arrive to Canada with significant societal and personal challenges related to various roles, identities, and experiences (Shimoni, Este & Clark, 2003). Currently, very little research specific to the prairies exists describing experience of immigrants and refugees regardless of gender. Several studies have explored settlement challenges experienced by specific cultural groups and issues specific to women. I focus on the experience of immigrant and/or refugee men as a complement to these studies.

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Key terms

4.1.1 The “lived experience” of civilians

The term “lived experience” refers to any given phenomenon that is consciously experienced (Farmer, 2013). Personal meanings are then ascribed to these experiences through told stories (Farmer, 2013). By exploring individuals’ unique stories, an explanation of the subjective significance attributed to their personal and social experiences can be revealed (Kumassah, 2008; Rossman &
Rallis, 2003). The stories of the three men described in this study illustrate the lived experiences of three civilians who have survived war and resettled in Regina, Saskatchewan. The term “civilian” refers to a non-combatant or an individual who did not specifically choose to become a combatant or soldier (Krippner & McIntyre, 2003). Each research participant was a civilian in his country of origin, over eighteen years of age, a resident of the city of Regina for at least five years, successfully adapted and overcame common resettlement barriers, and was fluent in English.

4.1.2 Newcomer, immigrant and refugee

Participants in this study are collectively described as newcomers. Two arrived in Canada as refugees, and one as an international student. In the literature, “newcomer” applies to individuals who have arrived in Canada regardless of their entry categorization. Some researchers choose to specify participants for their studies as specifically immigrants or as refugees, acknowledging that differences do exist between these two populations. The term “immigrant” is used to refer to someone who chooses to move to Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2011). From a Canadian perspective, this person can enter as an immigrant within different categories based on family class, skilled workers and entrepreneurs (CIC, 2011). The government of Canada recognizes the 1951 Refugee Convention definition of refugee as an individual who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or
owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (CIC, 2011, para. 1). The main difference between the application of the terms “immigrant” and “refugee” is that immigrants can choose to leave their country of origin, while refugees are forced to flee and come completely unprepared for resettlement (Canadian Council for Refugees [CCR], 2009). As a result of having made a conscious decision to leave immigrants often have different life circumstances. However, it is important to acknowledge that many immigrants choose to leave their country of origin because of war or imminent war in their home countries.

4.1.3 The immigration experience: a continuum

Conceptualizing immigration, settlement and integration is a difficult task, and a variety of definitions have been employed by service providers, educators, academics, advocacy groups, lawyers, recruiters, employers, and entire bureaucracies (Tolley, 2011). Definitions for resettlement and immigration vary depending on the purpose of the study or the role of the intended organization. The literature tends to conceptualize the immigration experience as a continuum. During this continuum the needs of both the immigrant and the community shift and differ at points throughout the process (2011). Tolley provides a thorough literature review explicating a “theory-based model” of the stages of immigrant adaptation. In her review, she discusses various models that attempt to conceptualize the “stages” of the immigration experience, and some involve more stages than others. Tolley (2011) highlighted the ideas of Herberg (1988) and Richmond and Shield (2005), who suggest that full integration may take
generations. Overall, scholars tend to view immigration as a continuum however may challenge certain stages and points (2011).

I have chosen to use Drachman’s (1992) three stage model to conceptualize the understanding of the immigration experience. Her Stage of Migration framework has been widely used in order to focus on particular situations in a newcomers’ migration process (Drachman, 1992). The framework provides a means to examine the unique needs, experiences and circumstances of newcomers, and can be applied to all newcomers regardless of country of origin or the country of resettlement (Drachman, 1992; Healy, 2008). The framework consists of three major stages: (1) pre-migration and departure, (2) transit, and (3) resettlement (Drachman & Ryan 1991). The framework is based on the following assumptions:

All immigrants have an experiential past; some experience abrupt departure while others experience a decision-making process and a period of preparation for a move; a physical move is always involved and finally resettlement and some type of adjustment to a new environment occurs (Cox, 1985, p.75 in Drachman 1991).

As shown in Table A, the framework further assumes that various factors such as age, family composition, socioeconomic, educational and cultural characteristics, occupation, a rural or urban background, belief systems, and social supports all have an integral role and influence on the migration process (Drachman, 1992).
4.2 Table A: Stages of migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Migration</th>
<th>Critical Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Pre-migration and departure | Social, political, and economic factors  
Separation from family and friends  
Decisions regarding who leaves and who is left behind  
Act of leaving a familiar environment  
Life-threatening circumstances  
Experience of violence  
Loss of significant others |
| Transit                  | Perilous or safe journey of short or long duration  
Refugee camp or detention center stay of short or long duration  
Act of awaiting a foreign country’s decision regarding final relocation  
Immediate and final relocation or long wait before final relocation  
Loss of significant others |
| Resettlement             | Cultural issues  
Reception from host country  
Opportunity structure of host country  
Discrepancy between expectations and reality  
Degree of cumulative stress throughout migration process |

*Drachman, 1992, p.69*

4.3 War

War can be described as a state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country. It can refer to any “...armed conflict between two countries; between two groups in the same country; or between ethnic, political, or religious groups regardless of their country of origin” (Paulson, 2003, p.5). The nature of war has shifted in recent decades, towards increased targeting of civilian populations that are mostly poor and from minority groups with few allies (Van der Veer, 1998; Whittaker, 2000 in Paulson, 2003).
4.4 The experience of civilian survivors

The number of civilians impacted by war is on the rise, as warfare and torture continues to occur on a large scale in many countries (Johnson & Thompson, 2008). Paulson (2003) provided a concise overview of war and the stages of suffering experienced by civilian survivors of war throughout the migration experience. The experience is progressive with three stages: (1) increasing political repression, (2) major traumatic experience, and (3) life in exile (Paulson, 2003). Paulson (2003) outlines, each stage, social and political changes occur in the civilian’s country of origin. These changes lead to personal losses of basic rights such as freedom of speech and restriction of movement, and intimidation by police or military groups. Civilian’s reactions are often passive acceptance and indifference. During stage two, psychological defences cease to work, as the political and social situation worsens. People may directly witness the killing of family and friends, be arrested, detained and/or jailed for minimal or no reason (Horowitz, 1998 in Paulson, 2003). Some may be forced to endure torture, which can be used as a means to intimidate and destabilize the population. Finally, stage three involves hardships and suffering endured by those who escape.

4.5 Settlement experiences

Immigration and settlement have continued to increase in Saskatchewan as a result of increased provincial immigration strategies, combined with federal support designed to enhance labour shortages (Birjandian & Bray, 2009). Saskatchewan is also committed to the humanitarian cause of providing asylum
for refugees fleeing persecution in war-torn countries (White, 2009). As White (2009) explains there is a need for an inclusive and responsive approach to addressing the needs of newcomers, and a need to explore the mental health needs of immigrant and refugee women living in Saskatchewan. In particular, access to mental health services for newcomers, specifically refugees, appears problematic during the settlement process.

There is a wide range of information regarding general resettlement and integration barriers for newcomers. I have chosen to discuss the following barriers to integration that emerge in the literature: employment, language, social connections, health and well-being, war, history of war trauma, and treatment models. While these barriers have been previously identified as common themes, it is important to recognize that these are generalizations based on large numbers of people, and it is expected that there will be differences in the lived experience of particular individuals.

4.6 Barriers to integration

4.6.1 Employment

Employment influences economic independence and ability to plan for the future. Employment facilitates interaction with members of the host society, provides opportunities to develop language skills, and to restore self-esteem, and encourages self-reliance (Ager & Strang, 2008). However, many barriers exist for newcomers entering into the labour market in Canada. Discrimination, a lack of official recognition of foreign credentials, language difficulties, and lack of Canadian work experience have been noted as common barriers (Valtonen, 2008).
Foreign qualifications and work experience are persistently undervalued resulting in newcomers tending to gain employment in “entry-level” positions, jobs with a sharp drop in the skills, status, and pay compared to the kind of work done prior to arriving in Canada (McCoy & Mausch, 2007). Employers have tended to disregard the diverse knowledge and abilities of newcomers creating challenges in both regulated and un-regulated professions (Akbari & Aydede, 2010). It appears to be accepted across the literature that many barriers exist for newcomers when entering into the labour market, regardless of past education, skills and abilities.

4.6.2 Language

Language is a central component to the integration process (Ager & Strang, 2008; Valtonen, 2008). The inability to speak the language of the host community creates countless issues for newcomers. Newcomers may be offered language classes, however the level of competence attainable within quick programs is problematic (Ager & Strang, 2008, Valtonen, 2008; White, J., 2009). As White explains in her study, “basic illiteracy (reading and writing) was an additional challenge as it reflects the impact of war and unrest on newcomer women” (White 2009, p.100). Developing basic literacy skills and the ability to communicate in the language of the host society is foundational to successful integration.

4.6.3 Social connections, health and well-being

Newcomers’ overall health and well-being is closely tied to their ability to feel “at home” (Ager & Strang, 2008; Valtonen, 2008). In Ager and Strang’s (2008) study, participants were concerned with the social and cultural impacts of
housing. In Ager & Strang’s study participants expressed a desire to establish continued relationships with their neighbours: the ability to feel safe and secure within one’s neighbourhood aided in the ability to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to their community. When newcomers felt their neighbourhood was unsafe, this resulted in set-backs to their health and well-being.

Many barriers exist for newcomers to access appropriate health services, which adds to difficulties in resettlement. Researchers noted language difficulties, ill-equipped health service structures and differing cultural perceptions as barriers that prevented newcomers from receiving mainstream health services (Ager & Strang, 2008; White, 2009). Moreover, “Service providers at mental health agencies explained they had minimal, if any, experience working with newcomer women” (White, 2009). This study suggested that the traditional medical model was not appropriate for newcomer women. Even though this research focused primarily on women, it is likely that mental health service providers felt inadequate when dealing with newcomer men or women.

In a study by Duke, Sales and Gregory (1999), they found that the development of a social connection with community organizations was important: They provide a “voice for refugees”, contact points for isolated individuals, expertise in dealing with refugee issues and flexible and sensitive responses to the needs of their target populations. They also provide cultural and social activities which offer refugees the chance to maintain their own customs and religion, talk in their own language,
celebrate their traditions and exchange news from their home country (p. 178).

Cultural community organizations offered a sense of familiarity for refugees by sharing in their culture, which offered a reprieve from the day to day stressors of resettlement. These community organizations were specifically geared to newcomer’s needs and interests allowing newcomers the opportunity to share opinions, stories and feel understood. Similarly, developing a sense of belonging within one’s host society was usually enhanced when relationships were established with community groups consisting of people from similar ethnic origins; social connections within one’s community provided a sense of home or feeling of being “settled” (Ager & Strang, 2008).

4.6.4 History of war trauma

Experiencing war complicates the resettlement process as research shows exposure to war can lead to numerous mental health consequences such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression and psychosomatic complaints (Krippner & McIntyre, 2003). Individuals who have experienced war may develop “a complex, long-lasting trauma” caused by multiple stressors such as physical harm, intimidation, loss of loved ones, deprivation, abuse and/or starvation (Kuwert et al., 2009, p.955). Refugees were described as exhibiting similar negative psychological outcomes regardless of the specific country or region the war took place (Helman 2000 in Krippner & McIntyre, 2003). The terms “war stress” and “war trauma” have frequently been used in the literature to describe the mental health effects of war. The term “war stress” has been used
“To refer to the multiple stressors that people are exposed to when they have experienced war, either directly or indirectly” (Krippner & McIntyre, 2003, p.6). War trauma is defined as “the effects of war as an extreme stressor that threatens human existence, acting upon a human being or a group of people” (Krippner & McIntyre, 2003, p.7; Shannon, Cook, Vinson, Wieling, & Letts, 2014). Much literature suggests that experiencing war during the immigration process poses a high risk factor for mental health consequences (Johnson & Thompson, 2008; Krippner & McIntyre, 2003).

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a condition that may develop after experiencing war trauma, torture or any life threatening event (Johnson & Thompson, 2008). The past traumatic event is processed as a current event, leading to symptoms which fall into three groups that define PTSD: intrusive symptoms, avoidance symptoms, and symptoms of over arousal (DSM-V TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Johnson & Thompson, 2008). A systematic review of 7000 refugees indicated that those who settled in western countries were approximately ten times more likely to develop PTSD than were individuals of the same age in the general population (Fazel, 2005). For instance, a study conducted with Karen refugees fleeing Burma later resettling in the United States reported that 86% of their participants exhibited symptoms of war trauma. Older women who were participants in this study and described experiences of torture showed an increased level of distress, posttraumatic stress, depression and somatic complaints (Fazel, 2005). The suffering caused by pre-migration trauma may continue for refugees even after decades had gone by. A
study of the effects of war conducted on Cambodians, 20 years after resettlement, reported high rates of PTSD and depression related to pre-migration trauma (Marshall, Schell, Elliott, Berthold, & Chung, 2013). It is apparent that individuals fleeing war are likely to experience mental health related difficulties, which may continue years after the initial exposure to war trauma.

4.6.5 Treatment models

Much of the literature (Fazel, 2005; Hanscom, 2001; Helman, 2000; McKrrippner & McIntyre, 2003; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010; Marshall, Schell, Elliott, Berthold, & Chung, 2013; Paulson, 2003; Peddle, 2007) refers to trauma and various treatment methods. As a result I choose to include treatment perspectives suggested in the literature as a means to support an individual’s ability to cope with war stress and war trauma. Mental health treatment models and perspectives are usually conceptualized between the trauma focused model and a psychosocial model (Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). The medical model focuses on the direct exposure to violence and atrocities experienced during war using a series of checklists and questionnaires to establish conclusions. A psychosocial perspective of the effects of war focuses on the accumulation of stressful events which caused or were worsened by conflict such as poverty, malnutrition, displacement, destruction of social relationships, loss of social and material support, and divisions within one’s community (Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). In addition I include six different treatment model perspectives indicated by Daryl Paulson (2003). Further I highlight the HEARTS (2001) treatment model and the
Multidimensional Trauma Recovery and Resiliency Scale (MTRR) as viable options for treatment models in practice.

Paulson (2003) has worked for over 25 years with civilian survivors of war and described the six treatment model perspectives as follows:

(1) Psychiatric approach: views refugee traumatization in terms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) along with disorders such as depression and meaninglessness.

(2) Developmental approach: the ability of people to develop psychologically is interrupted as a result of the trauma and remain at their current level of growth which can be of concern specifically in children.

(3) Psychodynamic approach: views trauma as an interaction of the person with the environment, the trauma experiences are beyond those that are normally experienced and thus overwhelm the psyche.

(4) Family systems approach: this view evaluates the roles, rules, and taboos of the family system and restructuring occurs to become more effective in meeting the needs of the family members.

(5) Learning theory approach: this approach focuses on learning strategies to avoid stimuli that are associated with a trauma. Self-
regulation and control strategies are developed to aid in the desensitization process.

(6) Cognitive-behavioural approach: this approach seeks to alter the individuals thinking process, using strategies such as positive self-instruction, positive self-talk, and reframing.


I have chosen to include the HEARTS (2001) treatment model as it can be applied by a variety of professionals increasing opportunities for survivors of war to receive treatment. This treatment model is based on a developmental perspective which looks at how torture and traumatic events have disrupted an individual’s ability to feel safe and to trust others, experiencing extreme feelings of vulnerability. Hanscom (2001) utilized the HEARTS model in the training of mental health professionals in the United States and in the training of promotores (health professionals) and comodrones (midwives) in Guatemala. The treatment model consists of:

H: Listening to the History
E: Focusing on Emotion
A: Asking Questions
R: Explaining the Reasons for Symptoms
Hanscom (2001) indicates that the HEARTS treatment model is effective, as it can be used by the survivor and a compassionate community member who is willing to listen. While this approach strays from a western medicine concept of the therapeutic session, it increases the number of available counsellors for survivors of war.

Miller and Rasmussen (2010) and Peddle (2007) use an “ecological” perspective which focuses on the interactions between the person, event, and environment. These authors use this ecological lens to examine the complexity of culture and trauma and its relationship to the person’s psyche. Culture is said to have an important role in shaping the response to trauma and the development of healing strategies (Helman 2000 in Krippner & McIntyre, 2003). Peddle (2007) indicates that many psychological trauma measures have not been developed and evaluated for their cultural validity with individuals who have been affected by war. Peddle (2007) used the Multidimensional Trauma Recovery and Resiliency Scale (MTRR) with 83 untreated war-affected adolescent and adult refugees. The results from this study supported the MTRR as a tool that captures the complexities of both culture and trauma responses. The MTRR tool was developed based on the tenets of ecological theory recognizing the individual’s environment is an interrelated system, each part influencing one another (Peddle, 2007).
Further, Miller and Rasmussen (2007) support a treatment model which includes the interaction between daily stressors and the person. They support an integrative sequenced approach to intervention, in which daily stressors are addressed first, and then specialized interventions are provided to individuals who continue to experience distress even when the social ecology has been altered. In contrast, Miller and Rasmussen explain, trauma-focused models primarily focus on war-related trauma to improve mental health rather than day to day stressors. They contend, “Exposure to armed conflict also gives rise to a constellation of daily stressors, which in turn affect psychological well-being” (Miller & Rasmussen, 2007, p. 8). These authors suggest treatment models must include the complexities of everyday life in addition to the impacts of war trauma.

5.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Ecological theory

To conceptualize and understand newcomers’ experiences an ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) was used to analyze the participants’ immigration experiences. Ecological theory provided a framework to examine how different individual and contextual variables were related to immigrants’ development, adjustment and mental health over time (Chronister & Serdarevic, 2005). The ecological theory proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1989) states that individuals are embedded within multiple ecological contexts all of which have influence and power on individual development. Within this model individuals are directly influenced and have the power to exert influence and make changes to their environments (2005). Human development is a process based on interactions
within the environment at any point of the life span (Halabuza, 2009). Human
development involves ongoing forms of interactions in the immediate
environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Bronfenbrenner (1989) describes five levels
of the environment that influence human development. These are micro-, meso-,
exo-, macro and chrono-systems. Bronfenbrenner also considers the ontogenetic
development or change as a result of internal processes to include biological
factors such as genetics, health, and age (White & Klein, 2008).

I used Bronfenbrenner’s ecological framework in my theoretical analysis
which is described throughout this section. The first level of analysis is the
microsystem which consists of a pattern of activities, social roles, and
interpersonal relations that involve direct and concrete interactions between the
individual and people in their immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994;
Chronister & Serdarevic, 2005; Halabuza, 2009). For example, this includes
immediate family, friends, teachers, and co-workers. These interactions have a
direct and frequent impact on individual development (Chronister & Serdarevic).
Bronfenbrenner (1989) explained that it is within the immediate environment that
direct interactions take place that develop and sustain human growth.

The second level of analysis includes the mesosystem which consists of
connections between processes taking place between two or more settings
impacting the individual indirectly (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). For instance, this
would involve the relationship between the individual’s children and teacher at
school or the interaction between the child’s parent and teacher. The mesosystem
is described by Bronfenbrenner as a system of microsystems (1994).
The third level of analysis is the exosystem which are systems within the external environment that have an indirect influence on the individual, such as public and government policies (Chronister & Serdarevic, 2005). For instance, the government has numerous immigration policies and laws such as Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act; Interim Federal Health Program policy and Skilled Immigrants express entry program (Government of Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2014). These government policies impact individuals indirectly (Chronister & Serdarevic, 2005). The exosystem would also include events that have a direct influence on the human development processes within the immediate environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). These may include events of violence or declaration of war forcing individuals to flee.

The fourth level of analysis is the macrosystem which contains the overall cultural context in which the systems are organized (Halabuza, 2009). This includes values, cultural beliefs and norms, social structures, gender-role expectations, race-relations, and global resources (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). This level of the ecosystem points to the necessity to analyze how characteristics of a given culture ultimately affect the conditions and processes of human development within the family and community (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The last level of analysis in ecological theory is the chronosystem which represents the development of interconnections between individuals and their environments occurring over time (Chronister & Serdarevic, 2005). Bronfenbrenner (1994) stated the chronosystem encompasses change or consistency over time not only for the individual but also changes that occur in
the environment in which a person lives. This may refer to historical eras, changing economies, and political relations (Chronister & Serdarevic, 2005). For example the continuous advancement in technology has had a dramatic influence on individual’s lives and the way people communicate and establish relationships across countries. In White’s study she noted:

Globalization and technology have had an impact on how women now experience settlement and integration. Contact is easier because of the telephone and the internet and television has brought vivid images of war to the homes of many newcomers. These technologies have their benefits, but they have heightened the frustrations and anxieties of several participants” (2009, p.100).

White highlighted the significant impact technology has made for immigrant populations allowing family members in other countries to remain in contact. Technology can help newcomers to overcome some of the tremendous culture shock experienced, however the ability to view images of war in their countries of origin and elsewhere can induce further stress.

6.0 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Narrative research

Narrative research is a specific qualitative method that offers a subjective rather than an objective perspective (Creswell, 2007). Lieblich, Turval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) provide the following definition of narrative research:
… [Narrative research] refers to any study that uses or analyzes narrative materials. The data can be collected as a story a life story provided in an interview or a literary work…It can be the object of the research or a means of study of another question. It may be used for comparison among groups, to learn about a social phenomenon or historical period, or to explore a personality. (1998, p. 2-3)

From this point of view, narrative methods allow researchers to study “real-life” stories of individuals. The approach includes stories from a personal perspective, thereby “humanizing” the participant’s stories and experiences rather than describing it simply as “data.” Narratives are discussed:

[Narratives] do not merely describe what someone does in the world but what the world does to someone. They allow us to infer something about what it feels like to be in that story world. Narratives also account for those events that happened unwilled, unpredicted and often unwished for by the actors…Narratives do not merely refer to past experience but create experiences for their audiences. (Mattingly, 1998, as cited in Riessman, 2008, p.22)

This quote illustrates how narrative analysis can uncover the emotional impacts of unpredicted events on individuals.

Most researchers acknowledge procedural variations within narrative research. Narrative analysis includes a chronological sequence, a thematic sequence, a post-modern narrative, and a combination of the story and themes arising from it as methods for analysis (Creswell, 2007; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach
& Zilber, 1998; Riessman, 2008). Creswell (2007) describes chronological sequence as a process of restorying, reorganizing stories into a framework for gathering and seeking out key information, and then rewriting the stories chronologically (p. 56). Thematic sequence is used when researchers want to go beyond chronological sequencing to uncover participant’s values, beliefs and/or meaning attributed within the story (Creswell, 2007; Lieblich et al., 2008).

Narrative analysis is appropriate for smaller groups of participants, however the quantity of data gathered through this process is large (Lieblich et al., 1998). When using a narrative approach a great deal of listening time is required to analyze the extensive data (Lieblich et al.). Lieblich et al explain that the process of analyzing the data contains at least three voices within the audio-recordings; myself, the researcher; the participant; and the theoretical framework used to provide concepts and tools for interpretation. Analysis occurs in a circular and interactive process through reading and analyzing the narratives until themes emerge (Lieblich et al., 1998). I followed the holistic content analysis guidelines to uncover the themes within the data. The holistic content approach is described in full detail in the method of analysis section. By using these guidelines I was able to interpret the story told by each participant (Creswell, 2007; Lieblich et al., 1998). Prior to developing any categories I needed to be familiar with the data collected from all the stories (Creswell, 2007; Lieblich et al., 1998; Tutty, Rothery, Griffin, Jr., 1996).

Using a narrative methodology in this study contributes a compassionate and holistic analysis of individual’s experiences of war and
resettlement. It allows individuals who have re-settled in Regina to tell their real-life experience, and describe how they were able to cope, endure and overcome hardships throughout their resettlement. The participants in this study were interviewed, and asked to provide their stories of their journeys to Regina. Goodson (2011) describes how narratives or stories are embedded within human life, “allowing individuals, communities, cultures, and nations to express who they are, where they have been, how they have lived and what they aspire to” (p. 6). The study of narratives was the means to understand the lived experience of three men resettling in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. In summary, the holistic content approach consisted of studying three individuals by gathering data through a collection of their stories and reporting the themes from each individual experience. Using this approach the researcher can become an active participant in the process of sharing and growing from the information exchanged (Creswell, 2007).

6.2 Trustworthiness and reliability

The process of validation within qualitative research is determined by our ability to make claims regarding trustworthiness of our interpretations (Riessman, 1993). A fundamental criterion of validity requires interpretations and conclusions to follow evidence originating within the text (Leiblich et al., 1998). I used a holistic content approach in my analysis which involved reading and re-reading the participant’s transcriptions to uncover themes. I used quotes throughout the analysis to justify the rationale for each theme. At all times I was aware participants had to decide what details, events to include and exclude. Due to
timelines of interviews the participant’s stories are partial and incomplete and I do not assert to have told their story in entirety. This research set out to understand what was important and what held the most meaning for the participants in this study rather than seeking historical truths.

In addition, I was most interested in using a narrative approach which provides extensive analysis based on a small sample size, in this study three participants. As I was interested in the stories of the men rather than uncovering “truth” it was unnecessary to have a large sample group. Emphasis was based on the men’s stories rather than a quantitative analysis based on a large random sample size. Mischler (1990) recognizes that by addressing “trustworthiness” rather than “truth” - validation is aligned to a social world constructed through our own discourse and actions rather than a perceived objective reality. Riessman explains historical truths or facts are not the primary concern within the narrative as an individual may construct varying narratives about the same event and may change the order of the telling or of the occurrences over time (1993). The individual narratives are dependent on values, beliefs and interests of the person doing the telling. Riessman (1993) explains there is no real set of formalized “rules” or procedures as the stories are always partial, committed and incomplete therefore researchers must attend closely to the methods they are using to obtain “valid” interpretative narratives.

### 6.3 Statement of the problem to be investigated

By exploring war as a factor in the integration process this study aims to raise awareness and highlight the plight of civilian populations who have fled
war-torn countries. In this study, interviews were conducted to explore and interpret the experiences of male civilians who fled their countries of origin as a result of war, ultimately resettling in Regina. As previously mentioned this research is conceptually organized around Drachman’s stages of migration (1992). Further, I used narrative analysis with the intention of directly involving the individual’s stories of their migration experience. Questions were designed to examine Drachman’s three stages of migration. This study used Lieblich, Turval-Mashiach & Zilber’s (1998) holistic content perspective as a means to manipulate the data and uncover themes and assumed the personal, social and historical contexts would emerge through stories of the participants. Once the themes were uncovered from the data, Bronfenbrenner’s (1989) ecological framework was utilized to analyze the results.

6.4 Recruitment of participants

I interviewed three people who had immigrated to Regina as a result of war. Recruitment for this research study was conducted through my professional connections through my employment with Regina Open Door Society, a local newcomer settlement agency. Upon approval from the University of Regina Ethics Board I was able to begin the recruitment process. Each participant met all selection criteria requirements. I deliberately chose participants who were from different geographical areas and represented different countries. Two individuals were past colleagues. The first individual I was able to contact after receiving their contact information from co-workers who were still in direct contact with this person. I contacted him directly and I explained the purpose and methods of
my study by telephone. Upon approval from him, I mailed a paper copy of the Letter to Participate to him. I advised him that I would contact him after he read the material in this letter and determine his interest. I contacted him and he agreed to participate.

I contacted the second participant by telephone and upon his request we scheduled a time to meet to discuss the details of the study contained in the Letter to Participate. He was a former co-worker whom I met in my former employment at a settlement agency. He read over the information and agreed to participate. I received the contact information about a third individual from a previous co-worker. She was aware of my research topic and believed her husband met the selection criteria and would be willing to participate in the study. She provided me with his contact information and I was able to contact him directly. I sent him the Letter to Participate via email so he would have all details of this study before making a decision about participation. I contacted him several days later and he agreed to participate.

I knew two of the individuals as acquaintances from employment at the newcomer settlement agency and believed the pre-established rapport would allow ease and comfort throughout the interview process. I also believed that because of the rapport and trust I developed with the third individual’s wife that he might also feel a level of comfort and ease during the interview.

6.5 Conflict of interest and power relationships

One of my main concerns was to minimize the possibility of a dual relationship and conflict of interests with participants. I did not interview any
former clients or friends. I recognized the level of power I hold as the researcher within the research process: I am in control of the purpose, process, and analysis, and I determined the results based on my analysis (Halabuza, 2009). I was mindful that I was interviewing individuals from a different gender and that I myself have not experienced war and resettlement. In all interviews I aimed to build a sense of trust and authenticity to allow the participants to feel comfortable and provide an in-depth personal story. I was attentive to any discomfort at all times, ensuring each participant was comfortable. I was concerned with the agreed upon standards of practice and ethical principles within research involving human subjects are created to ensure participant rights are safe-guarded (Antle & Regehr, 2003). Three primary ethical practices are used to guide research processes. The ethical practices include: (1) autonomy and self-determination, concern for the dignity and respect of individual participants; (2) beneficence, the obligation to bring about good; and (3) justice, the obligation to ensure fair distribution of burdens and benefits (Antle & Regehr, 2003). Further, social workers in Saskatchewan adhere to the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) Code of Ethics that provides its own core values outlining roles, responsibilities and ethical standards of practice which parallel those just mentioned (CASW, 2005). As a registered Social Worker, I uphold the values of my profession and the three primary internationally agreed upon ethical principles, which guided how I treated participants throughout the entire research process.
6.6 Selection criteria

I recruited participants using purposeful sampling methods based on pre-determined selection criteria. The criteria used for recruitment were the following: men who have resettled in Regina as a result of war; who were civilians, not combatants; who speak fluent English; who have lived in Regina for at least five years, and made successful community adjustment.

Firstly, I wanted to interview men who resettled in Regina and chose to move from their country of origin as a result of war. People arriving in Canada as refugees are considered to have been forced to flee their countries of origin. This study was not concerned with the individuals’ specific immigration entry categorization; therefore the person could have arrived as either an immigrant or a refugee. I recognize that individuals may have entered into Canada as an immigrant, thus choosing to move. However, the sole decision was participants that left their country of origin as a result of war. Secondly, this study was specifically focused on men who were civilians, not soldiers. Based on the literature civilians often are targeted during war, despite international human rights protections. Therefore, I wanted to learn about the experiences of individuals who were not directly engaged in war. Participant’s fluency in English was a requirement of participation in this study. This criterion was chosen primarily due to my own inability to communicate in languages other than English.

Further, the individual must have lived in Regina, Saskatchewan for a minimum of five years and consider themselves to have successfully adjusted in
the community. This criterion was decided to ensure adequate time to overcome common resettlement barriers and be in a position of stability. Participants must have successfully integrated and overcome common resettlement barriers. Participants were screened to ensure that they had self-identified as successfully integrated. To make this assessment participants were asked whether they had overcome common resettlement barriers which emerged throughout the literature review. The following criteria were used as indicators of successful adjustment for newcomers: whether they are currently employed, speak fluent English, secured adequate housing and feel they have established a social connection to the community. My rationale for asking screening questions on these areas was that, once a person had successfully adapted and overcome common resettlement barriers, they are likely to be in a position of stability.

6.7 Risks and benefits

Above all, the social work research design must account for any possible risk and/or benefits which could emerge from participation in the research. Potential risks must be weighed against the expected outcomes to ensure participants are not harmed nor face undue hardship (Antle & Regehr, 2003). The key risk involved within this research is that I explored a highly sensitive and emotional topic. The participants have directly experienced war and in the interviews would revisit memories when discussing events occurring prior to migration. The potential for unresolved emotional anguish to surface at any point during the discussion was present during this research. Therefore, I chose my questions intentionally using careful wording and was open to the individual
telling their story in their own way. I have included the interview guide in Appendix 12. 6 (115).

Further should I have noticed any emotional distress from the participant, I planned to discontinue the interview and encourage the participant to receive professional support at an agency in Regina that provides professional counselling. I contacted theravive, a local network of professional counsellors, therapists and psychologists to determine their willingness to accept referrals from this study. Many of the professionals connected with theravive have extensive experience supporting individuals with posttraumatic stress disorder and trauma related life experience (Theravive, 2013). I received written confirmation from two counsellors that they would provide counselling if required. I did not refer any participant for counselling because there was no evidence of emotional distress during the interviews.

Throughout the interviews I remained highly vigilant to any signs of emotional vulnerability during the interview process. Prior to the interview the participants were told that they do not need to answer any questions that they were uncomfortable with and that they were able to stop the interview at any time. I reminded them that I was prepared to stop the interview if there were any apparent signs of emotional distress. However, all participants told their stories mostly with ease, they did not request to stop the interview nor did they refuse to answer any questions. Further, I acknowledged that emotional distress could follow the interview, and therefore I contacted participants one week after the interview to determine if further follow-up was required. If needed, a referral
would have been made to a professional counsellor, therapist or psychologist for appropriate support on a priority basis. As already stated a referral was not needed. I reviewed the consent forms both during my screening and prior to commencing the interviews, in order to highlight the risk of emotional issues that may arise during or after the process.

Overall, I recognized that there were many positive aspects participants may experience during and after the interview process. Participants were provided an opportunity to tell their stories, and asked to highlight their resilience and ability to overcome hardships. Further, participants may feel empowered by contributing insight to research and awareness to the plight of civilians in war-torn countries. Their participation may provide a sense of control and pride by contributing to knowledge that can lead to the enhancement of settlement services within Regina and the province of Saskatchewan. In addition, I noted that each participant displayed considerable pride and eagerness to share their story during the interview process. As mentioned previously, very little information and research exists documenting the themes of war leading to resettlement in the prairies. Using a narrative approach allowed participants to construct their own story, and this process could help them to enhance their awareness of their own immense personal strengths, furthering their self-esteem and self-worth.

**6.8 Data collection for the study**

I interviewed each participant once using a digital recorder. Recordings were tediously transcribed verbatim. In addition, I took field notes after each meeting to record any non-verbal interactions. I also made note of the overall
atmosphere of the interview location and its contribution to the mood of the interview. Each participant chose the location of the interview. One interview was conducted in a private office, and two were conducted in the participants’ homes. Transcripts are kept in a locked filing cabinet located within my home, and will be destroyed after five years of this study. The digital recordings were deleted after transcription. Presently my academic supervisor and I have access to the transcriptions. If any questions are raised about my analysis or any part of the research process, my supervisor has access to the data collected. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour which provided a large amount of data resulting in a time-consuming transcription process. The exact amount of time was dependent on the participant’s stories and their available time. I used a semi-structured interview process which used open-ended questions and an interview guide contained in Appendix 12.6 (115). These questions were used as a guide for the interview and were not strictly adhered to.

6.9 Consent for participants

Ensuring that participants have autonomy and self-determination are ethical principles that guide consent within the social work research process (Antle & Regehr, 2003). All participants were provided with an information letter explaining the research purpose, how data will be handled, and verification on how confidentiality and anonymity will be guarded. I provided sufficient time for each participant to consider the potential risks and benefits involved in participation. I provided opportunity for participants to ask any questions prior to agreeing to participate in this study, in order to ensure that the research intentions
were transparent. If an individual was interested and comfortable with participating in the interview, a consent form was signed at the time of the interview to ensure they were fully informed prior to participating.

6.10 Anonymity and confidentiality

As mentioned earlier, participant’s interviews were recorded and transcribed. All transcripts and identifying information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at a secure location for five years in my residence. Access to the transcriptions is available to myself and my Academic Supervisor if needed. The participants were given a pseudonym to ensure the participant’s identity remains confidential. In reporting results, a pseudonym was used and no identifying information was disclosed.

6.11 Research interview

This research used a semi-structured interview process which has been noted as the best way to gain an understanding of an individual’s perceptions and experiences (Tutty et al., 1996). As mentioned earlier, the interview was audio-recorded using a digital recorder. I also took field notes after the interview to record any non-verbal interactions such as pauses, gestures, and humour (Tutty et al., 1996). As a social worker I have a history of developing relationships with clients. I was mindful of the difference in my role as a researcher and of the participants’ interactions and level of comfort in the interview. Each interview began with a social conversation to create a relaxed atmosphere and build comfort. In addition, rapport and trust developed throughout the screening process which was evident by the ease and enthusiasm by which each participant shared
their story. I was able to gain a sense of the individual’s personality. My intention was to allow the participants freedom to construct their own story. All participants were well informed about the purpose and the intention of my research. I was self-aware in allowing participants to share what they saw as most relevant and important to them. I inquired about pre-migration, transition and/or resettlement stages in the order they chose. I was sensitive to the fact that there may have been areas the participant did not intend to fully explore. They had the right to refuse to answer any questions, and could withdraw without any penalty or otherwise negative consequences.

It was important to note that the research interview has different goals and practices than a therapeutic interview. I viewed the participants as partners in gathering useful data (Tutty, Rothery, & Grinnell, Jr., 1996). A therapeutic interview, in contrast, seeks to produce change in the participant’s functioning, provide interpretations, make connections and/or provide advice (Tutty et al., 1996). My role of researcher was not to provide therapeutic support, even if strong emotions become evident during the interview process. I clearly recognized that the topic of this research study could elicit powerful recollections of critical events in each participant’s personal journey. Therefore, I was flexible throughout the interview process to ensure participants could share their stories in a manner they were most comfortable with. I prepared an interview guide that is contained in Appendix 12.6 (115) which provided a list of questions to be used as a prompt or a starting point rather than a strict guideline.
Further, to ensure that the participants were comfortable I prepared to contact participants a week after the interviews to see if there were any negative reactions. If I recognized the participant to be overwhelmed with emotion in the interview I would have asked if they were comfortable with the question and remind them they may choose not to answer. During the interviews all participants were animated, engaged and enthusiastic and did not show signs of unpleasant emotions that required discontinuation of the interview. After the interview one participant stated in an email he was a bit nervous in the beginning of the interview because he didn’t like to remember the war but expressed his gratitude in being allowed to share his life story.

I built rapport with the participants but was careful not to inappropriately step into the role of a therapist or a friend. As I have experience working within a Regina settlement agency I was able to recruit participants from work acquaintances. Two of the three participants I had previously worked with while one individual was referred to me by work acquaintance. Only one of the participants I had not met before but I was able to start the rapport building upon initial contact with him. The relationship between me and the participants remained a partnership of mutual respect and trust.

6.12 Transcription

After each interview I transcribed them verbatim. I was mindful of the personal meanings attributed to sarcasm, moments of silence and changes in tone to ensure the transcriptions within the report are most accurate. These transcripts
are kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years in my residence and then will be shredded.

6.13 Method of data analysis

I used Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber’s holistic-content perspective of narrative analysis to uncover the themes throughout the data. The holistic content perspective method of analysis consists of these steps:

1. Read the material several times until a pattern emerges, usually in the form of foci of the entire story. Read or listen carefully, empathically, and with an open mind. Believe in your ability to detect the meaning of the text, and it will “speak” to you.

2. Put your initial and global impression of the case into writing. Note exceptions to the general impression as well as unusual descriptions. Episodes or issues seem to disturb the teller, or produce disharmony in his or her story.

3. Decide on special foci of content or themes that you want to follow in the story as it evolves from beginning to end. A special focus is frequently distinguished by the space devoted to the theme in the text, its repetitive nature, and the number of details the teller provides about it.

4. Using coloured markers, mark the various themes in the story reading separately and repeatedly for each one.

5. Keep track of your results and follow each theme throughout the story and note your conclusions.
This style was most fitting as it takes into consideration the development of the individual’s life story as a whole, and explores how they came to their current position in life (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). My interviews with the participants allowed them to narrate their story in three stages: pre-migration; the process of transition; and finally resettlement. Using the holistic-content perspective I was able to include the participant’s life story and specific themes that emerged in each story. It was possible to note any similarities or differences of themes among participants.

I thought these procedures were straight forward, however once I started I found the process to be extremely tedious. Upon completion of transcription, I re-listened to the interviews from start to finish several times. I listened for the different “voices” described by Lieblich et al. I then read the written transcriptions over and over again, however I became overwhelmed by the amount of data. I realized I needed a visual aid to help my interpretations and to make sense of it all. I created “visual maps” to create themes using poster board and post-it notes writing quotes from the transcriptions and placing them on the “maps.” I also kept notes of my reactions and emerging issues in a journal including any initial and overall impressions and/or unusual features in the participant’s story (Lieblich et al., 1998; Tutty et al., 1996). The visual maps displayed the chronology of events, and turning points in the participants’ lives (Creswell, 2007).
To develop the themes I used coloured markers as suggested in the procedures to highlight my chosen text (Creswell, 2007; Lieblich et al., 1998). I then transferred the highlighted text onto post-it notes and placed each theme on the “visual map” on poster board. Eventually, I was able to see specific content and themes that I wanted to follow in the participants’ stories from beginning to end (Lieblich et al., 1998). Once the themes were determined I created a separate “visual map” for each theme. At this stage of analysis I typed the name of each theme and corresponding data from each map into a chart using a word document to help organize the data in a systematic way. This allowed the data to be collected and referred to in a simple yet concise manner.

7.0 RESULTS

The narratives obtained from the three interviews were coded into seven themes. These seven themes were divided into three categories: men’s experiences during pre-migration and departure, experiences during transit, and experiences during resettlement in Regina, Saskatchewan. A list of themes shared by participants is provided in Table C (53).

7.1 Table B: Participant demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage #1 Pre-migration and Departure</th>
<th>Saw Baw</th>
<th>Carlos</th>
<th>Armin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
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### 7.2 Participants

Participants varied in ethnic background, countries of origin, occupation, and marital status. Each participant is identified here by a pseudonym to allow for confidentiality and protect their privacy. In some instances, I also obscure some details of their stories to ensure their anonymity. Participant demographic information is detailed in Table B. A summary of each participant’s narrative throughout each stage: pre-migration/departure, transit and resettlement is provided later in this section. In addition, directly following participant narratives I include a section (7.3; 7.4; 7.5) describing the themes which were uncovered using the holistic content perspective. The themes are described in relation to each stage of migration they were noted in.
7.2.1 Saw Baw’s Story

The first participant, Saw Baw, was fifteen years old when military soldiers began to target, attack and destroy his village in Burma. Saw Baw belonged to the Karen ethnic group in Burma a country known for its brutal force towards citizens. His family lived in a small village near the jungle, a farming community where his daily hard work was necessary to provide for his family. Saw Baw explained that, because he was still young, he attended school and studied some English. He described that day when soldiers entered the village. Saw Baw was helping his brother and sister-in-law with work in the field. His family was able to hide, but when they returned to the village they found that many people had been captured.

Prior to this, Saw Baw explained that military spies had come to his village to collect information about what activities were taking place, and to learn about the people in the community. He explained the military used a “four-cut” plan which aimed to take over large sections of land within a four-year time frame. Once one section was occupied, the military would continue to the other section of land within a span of four years. The takeover of Saw Baw’s village was now part of this “four-cut” plan and over the next one to two years the military would suddenly arrive in the village to capture, kill and destroy the residents. The villagers prepared themselves to hide in the nearby jungle at any moment. Each time the military arrived to the village, Saw Baw’s family managed to escape to the jungle to hide sometimes for a few days or even weeks until they believed the military was gone. Finally, the frequency of the military’s killing of women, men
and children became more and more prevalent, ultimately leaving Saw Baw’s family no choice but to abandon their village for the last time.

Saw Baw described a difficult journey trekking through very high mountains until he and his family reached the Burma/Thai border. Once they reached it, they faced new challenges. The family managed to remain independent by establishing a small farm on the Burma/Thailand border, and they would cross the river back and forth every day to work. Then, Saw Baw explained, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) opened a camp allowing registration for those people who fled. Saw Baw’s parents, sister, and brother-in law initially chose to continue working on the small farm, and did not register with the UNHCR refugee camp. Saw Baw made the decision to register to the camp. At this point, Saw Baw explained he was young and single with hopes to get married and start a family. He hoped by registering with UNHCR it would offer him a future.

During his nine years in the refugee camp he got married and had four children while awaiting acceptance for permanent residency in another country. Saw Baw explained several non-profit organizations existed within the refugee camp. These organizations supported him and his family with food, shelter, and skills training. Saw Baw received training to become a Primary Health Care worker where he took care of patients in a hospital. Saw Baw was appreciative of the services and support offered by the non-profit organizations; however, he still felt incredibly restricted because he was forbidden to leave the camp. Saw Baw expressed a lack of control over his and his family’s future.
Finally, after nine years in a refugee camp he received information that the Canadian government was accepting applications for resettlement. Saw Baw quickly applied and to his immense relief his family was accepted. Hopefulness and excitement could be heard in his voice when he spoke of this time. Shortly after his family was granted Canadian permanent residency they received an orientation session providing brief details of their new home. Next, travel arrangements were coordinated first from the refugee camp then to Bangkok. Finally, his family was able to leave the refugee camp and board the actual flight to Canada. Saw Baw experienced a great deal of fear during this time despite being excited – “Oh! We [were] very scared.” They were conflicted with emotions of happiness, uncertainty, excitement, sadness but mostly terrified as they embarked on the next step of their journey. In the end he spent ten years in living in uncertainty while at the Thai refugee camp until he resettled with his wife and children in Regina.

Saw Baw and his family arrived to Regina and began their difficult resettlement process. It was difficult because everything was new for them. Saw Baw arrived during the summer months; however, winter arrived quickly and his fear increased because he was unfamiliar of winter weather. Saw Baw was able to laugh while describing his first winter but was clear to acknowledge that the winter was completely unbearable and very frightening to him. Saw Baw laughed as he described the amount of clothing he wore – “Toque, mitts, boots – only my two eyes weren’t covered.” There were more factors that complicated his resettlement, for example; living in city rather than a village; figuring out the
language and transportation; and finding employment and housing. Saw Baw received extensive support to overcome these challenges from local settlement agencies, churches, and specifically a local newcomer settlement agency’s Host Program, which helped him find a mentor family to foster familial connections with Canadians. Saw Baw was truly grateful and humbled by the support he received during his resettlement.

At the time of the research, Saw Baw felt more relaxed and more comfortable with his life in Regina. His children were in school, and he had a sense of pride that he was able to provide for them. After a long and difficult journey, Saw Baw felt lucky; he appreciated his new home and bought a car. Saw Baw was proud of his car which meant freedom and independence. It also meant he no longer had to wait for the bus during the cold winter months. Saw Baw was very proud to share his most recent success – he was now a Canadian citizen. Finally, he felt a sense of belonging and stability after a journey filled with anguish and turmoil.

7.2.3 Carlos’s Story

Carlos, the second participant, was approximately eighteen years old when he left Guatemala out of fear of persecution by either the army or para-military forces. Carlos was a young adult with goals and aspirations. He was planning to attend university. However, these plans were dramatically disrupted once the killings started. He was witness to kidnapping, disappearing, and constant killings of civilians at the hands of the army. He knew the army would come at night to kidnap, torture and possibly kill civilians in their homes. Sometimes their bodies would be left in the streets, or people would simply disappear without a trace.
Carlos knew the bodies left in the streets were an intentional warning to all civilians to comply with the military at all times. He said that any act of resistance by civilians was met with fierce brutality. He noted that young people who became leaders of demonstrations were targeted for attack by military forces. Despite this, Carlos wanted to be part of a solution to help stop the killings, and began participating in student demonstrations. After one demonstration, he was advised by others that the army had targeted him and were looking to find him. At this moment he decided to flee to Mexico, avoiding capture. He knew that the army was capable of anything, and felt he had good reason to believe that his life was in jeopardy.

Carlos took just a quick moment to gather a change of clothes and then started running. His friends collected a small amount of money which covered the cost of a bus ticket to Mexico. During his escape he began to realize the war was widespread because he met others who had also fled. Carlos eventually found refuge in a church in Mexico which provided support to refugees. He recalled a woman who cooked meals, cleaned, and essentially took care of all of the people staying at the church.

After a month or so in the church, Carlos received information that a letter from Canada had arrived back at his home. Prior to leaving he had applied to attend post-secondary education in Regina and believed that this letter stated whether or not he was accepted. After some contemplation he decided he would take the risk to return to Guatemala. When he returned home he found out that he was accepted as an international student. Immediately he began gathering all of
his documents and completed the paperwork necessary to leave the country. He was grateful to have the opportunity to say formal goodbyes to his mom and his family; however, felt conflicted because he was unable to explain his true reasons for leaving which were to save his life because of his activism. Carlos did not want his past actions to place his family in danger by the military therefore remained silent. Later, Carlos struggled with his “secret” however expressed no regrets. His family’s safety and well-being were priority.

After Carlos said his good-byes he was on a plane to Regina. Carlos found life in Regina difficult for a variety of reasons, including learning the language, adjustment to the harsh climate, learning about a different economic system, and differences in family obligations. He also experienced difficulties during resettlement as a result of the trauma he experienced in Guatemala. He received some support from friends who were also originally from Central America, who provided him with food and clothing. He found that housing was not an issue, as it was fairly easy to secure living arrangements. Carlos immersed himself deeply in his English language studies to help keep his mind occupied, so that he would not think about memories of the “destruction” and killings which continued in his country. Despite these efforts, Carlos explained that he suffered from fear, nightmares, and insomnia. He believed that he had to tackle these issues privately, and did not seek professional support.

Throughout Carlos’s resettlement, he maintained a strong connection to his country of birth, continuing to be interested in the political climate of Guatemala. He found speaking and sharing parts of his story with various groups in the
prairies to be therapeutic, allowing him to maintain a sense of connectedness to his homeland. The more he publicly spoke about the conflict in Guatemala he realized, the more his well-being improved. Advocacy provided him with a sense of connection. More than anything, he wanted peace for the people in his country. Carlos noticed that, once he had children, his focus shifted. While advocacy remained a priority for him, his children gave him a renewed sense of hope, a reason to live and a strong desire to protect them. At one point in time, it appeared that the conflict was resolved in Guatemala, and he went back to be part of the celebrations and share the experience with his young child. This was a memorable moment in his life because he was able to share it with his child. Carlos has since dedicated his professional career to advocate for oppressed groups within Canada and continues to remain strongly connected to Guatemala.

7.2.4 Armin’s Story

The third participant, Armin, was in his early thirties when he decided to leave Afghanistan. Prior to his departure he had completed a Master’s Degree in Law, and held a government job that he was proud of. He would have preferred to continue working in this job, yet due to political instability and war he found he could not continue.

Once the warlords arrived in his city, Armin realized that his life would continue to be difficult. Armin lived in Kabul the capital city he explained life was good as he was newly married and enjoyed his professional career. However, it all changed and it did so gradually. At first he noticed the violence increasing; however, continued to carry out his life and daily activities. Soon this became
impossible. Armin remembered the day he could no longer ignore the violence. He needed to purchase a few items at a local store when he was stopped randomly and investigated on the street. He was questioned regarding his appearance and his choice to not grow a beard. Armin was forced to provide his name, his wife’s name and their address. He gave the correct information and was later terrified that the warlords would return to their home and kill him and his wife.

He knew they were increasing danger and needed to escape because remaining in Kabul was no longer an option. During this time, rocket fire and air-strikes were occurring on a daily basis. Different rebel groups were arriving in Kabul and were firing weapons and killing one another. Armin stated that the killings were frequent; houses were destroyed, and long-time residents of communities were forcibly separated based on their ethnicity. Armin and his wife made a plan to leave Afghanistan. He fled to India with a plan to reunite with his wife. However his plan took a devastating turn due to air strikes in Kabul. Following this, he was unable to communicate with his wife, and had no knowledge of her whereabouts. Eventually, he received information from a relative that his wife had fled to Pakistan and she had been injured but was in stable condition. This was a very difficult time for him, as they were separated by war. Armin’s wife was eventually able to join him in India where they struggled with finances and finding employment.

Armin’s transit stage consisted of almost eight years in India prior to permanent resettlement in Canada. Armin and his wife experienced many difficulties while in India, he felt a great deal of pressure to find employment as
they had limited resources and his wife was pregnant. Armin was competing for a limited amount of jobs in a country with large population and high rates of unemployment. Coincidentally, Armin noticed tourists who were speaking Russian, a language he also spoke fluently. He learned these tourists were establishing an exporting company within India and would require an interpreter. Armin was able to sign a contract with this company and was able earn an income. After several years in India, Armin and his wife had two children and started to wonder how they were to afford to pay for their children’s education. Armin’s contract eventually came to an end during this time his wife found employment with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Her job was to teach beginner level English to Afghan refugees. Through this position she became aware the Canadian government was accepting applications for refugee resettlement. Armin had just signed another employment contract when his wife received confirmation their application for resettlement in Canada was accepted. They decided Armin would remain in India for one year while his wife and children resettled to Regina.

It was a difficult year being separated from his family in Canada while he remained in India. Armin expressed his bewilderment upon first arriving to Regina. He laughed when he recalled arriving in Regina for the first time. He remembered noticing the absence of noise and people, and observing the cold weather (in July). Armin experienced numerous challenges during his resettlement including difficulties with learning the language, inability to obtain his foreign credentials from his country of origin which created setbacks to gain
employment in his profession. In addition, it was a major cultural adjustment, complicated by financial difficulties. Armin attended English language courses at the University of Regina, and later attended employment programs through a local settlement agency. Armin and his family greatly appreciated the support of a host family organized through a local newcomer settlement agency. Through involvement with the host family he learned how to purchase a home and how the financial institutes worked in Canada. He said that his host family provided a great deal of insight, support, and friendship.

At the time of this research, Armin and his family had been in Regina for almost fifteen years. He believed that his family was very lucky: he was proud two of his children were enrolled in university and proud because he was employed and owned his own home. Armin was most interested in enjoying life with his family, travelling, and socializing, acknowledging that each moment is precious.
7.3 Stage #1: Men’s experience during pre-migration and departure

### 7.3.1 Table C: Themes arising from men’s narratives

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### 7.3.2 War: “There were constant killings”

Each participant was directly impacted by war, conflict and violence resulting in their decision to leave their country of origin. War is defined as “armed conflict between two countries, between two groups in the same country; or between ethnic, political, or religious groups regardless of their country of origin” (Krippner & McIntyre 2003, p.5). War was prevalent in the region of South East Asia, Central America and the Middle East prior to each participant’s departure. Each participant noted political and ethnic dimensions to these wars. All of the men spoke of constant killings, ruthless attacks, the capture and disappearance of numerous people, complete destruction of properties and homes, and the gripping fear that they felt. It was apparent in each interview that the participants were deeply impacted by their experiences of war. When they
mentioned of the events of war it brought a change in their voices; a change of tone, mood, and body language.

7.3.2.1 Saw Baw’s Story

Saw Baw spoke about the political and ethnic conflicts that fueled the war. Saw Baw explained Elderly community members spoke of political spies who would come to their village to collect information. The villagers lived in fear knowing that they would eventually be targeted for attack. Once the military started attacking the village, they did not stop. Saw Baw explained these actions as part of the military’s “four-cut” plan, which aimed to take over a large section of land every four years. As Saw Baw recalled, “They have a time period like they start to move around and attack people, kill people and destroy the village.” The military would then retreat and eventually return to carry out more killings. The surviving villagers were on constant alert, waiting and fearful for the next attack, knowing that they may need to flee at any moment with no warning. Saw Baw belonged to a small farming village which was directly between two ethnic groups. He recognized the danger his family and all the villagers were in.

[In Burma] we have different ethnic groups who each want freedom so because of [their want for] freedom they are fighting each other …but, these ethnic group are small [so] to get their freedom [in exchange] they cooperate with the federal government.

Saw Baw explained many ethnic groups wanted independence; however, this was difficult as it required cooperation with the federal government.

7.3.2.2 Carlos’s Story

Carlos talked about his naivety of war. He was unaware of the extent to which governments used military tactics and horrific strategies against its citizens.
He explained that this naivety was the result of an efficient and effective military strategy to censor media, and to retaliate with force against any opposing individuals or groups. For Carlos, it was:

…a dirty war – a war in which the army was killing lots of people and obviously the reaction from people was [to think] when will they [military] come to kill us? Are we next? So every time we heard they found a body we would ask when will this end?

Carlos explained that young people and leaders of demonstrations were targeted and attacked by a military that had almost complete control over the people. He believed that:

Forty five thousand people disappeared without a trace, thousands of women raped, million people in exile, and two million [people] who were internal refugees. [Internal Refugees] were basically put into concentration camps. It was on a daily basis a terrifying war.

In Canada, Carlos began to investigate the political motives for the war. As he recalled, “I realized that we were in the eye of the storm in the sense that Guatemala was the battleground for the Cold War that’s when the Soviet Union and the US (United States) were fighting.” He understood the motive and realized the support given to dictators was in response to American interests. Carlos did not realize the facts until after he left his country. Carlos said, even though the current government continues to deny the killings ever took place. The United Nations declared that genocide had occurred in Guatemala. He explained:

We really had no clue [about what was going on] and with all the killings eventually it became a genocide in some parts of the country. Indigenous groups became targets because the army identified them as communists and therefore [the rationale was] they had to be eliminated. A United Nations study was later conducted and concluded that it was genocide.
However, despite the United Nations study, Carlos stated, “The government today has so many military men back in power. They deny that killing ever took place even though bodies have been found.” Carlos explained the military used tactics to dehumanize, terrorize and to justify attacks specifically on indigenous groups by labelling them “communists.” He pointed out that in his country, “communism is equal to terrorism” and therefore justified their reasons to attack citizens.

7.3.2.3 Armin’s Story

Armin described killings, air strikes, kidnappings, and disappearances of people. He said, “They [warlords] started killing, killing, killing and it was in a dangerous time.” He recalled, “Even in the middle of the night I can hear the noise from the neighbour’s houses - kids and women are crying. [They were crying] because their husbands were being taken [away] and all that kind of stuff. It was very hard.” Armin also pointed out that conflict was occurring between different ethnic groups: “There was a war, rockets were coming from everywhere, [and] groups in the city were fighting each other.” He explained communities became divided based on ethnicity which created fear and mistrust between people who had previously lived peacefully together. Armin said, “We didn’t exactly know what was going on but if you were in one ethnic group going to an area [of another ethnic group] then you were investigated and killed. There were lots of people killed.” Armin knew families who had lived in ethnically diverse areas for generations and innocent people who were killed.

As Armin shared his memories of war, he emphasized that only people who have experienced war can truly understand it. He said, “Everyone [had] guns
and rockets so the situation was unimaginable only those that experienced it [war] can feel it [war].” Armin found this situation difficult as he felt he was unable to convey the intensity and fear experienced. He also emphasized the deep impact that war has on a person for the rest of their lives; for him, the feeling of war returns when he hears about war in other parts of the world. He empathized with people who are still living in war-zones, saying that he “feels” their struggle. Armin wished he could destroy every rocket in the world. It was apparent that Armin had vivid memories of the rockets, their sound, the fear that they brought, and the aftermath of their destruction.

During the pre-migration stage participants all highlighted ethnic and political conflict in their country of origins. Saw Baw explained the military wanted to take over the land that was previously occupied by ethnic groups. Carlos explained he was unaware of the exact motives behind the killings however later attributed the killings to genocide. Armin described situations where specific ethnic communities became targeted and killed despite living in Kabul for generations. Participants described stages of suffering similar to what was described by Paulson (2003). First, political repression then major traumatic experience and lastly life in exile (2003).

7.3.3 Loss of freedom: “People feared for their lives...”

7.3.3.1 Saw Baw, Carlos & Armin’s Story

Once the conflict started in Saw Baw’s village his freedoms were completely removed, and life was reduced to daily survival. As previously stated he was a farmer; however, he and his family were no longer safe to farm. After
witnessing all the killings and destruction of property Saw Baw’s family
eventually made the decision to leave. Carlos attempted to exercise his rights by
speaking out against the violence, leading demonstrations and organizing
students. He learned quickly that the military had targeted him for his
involvement in these activities. Carlos knew that the military had no mercy for
protest activities, and that his life was in jeopardy. Carlos explained that his
decision to leave was about survival:

I remember the moment that I had to decide either to wait until the [military] comes for me and maybe they would spare my life but I had no hopes [of them sparing my life]. I had seen so much destruction and death that I knew they wouldn’t spare my life. They [military] were capable of anything…I had to leave.

Carlos was single without children at this time, which allowed him to leave
quickly. He stated:

I saw stuff every day, every week, and a lot of young people disappeared and were killed. I had to make a decision and I had to make it fast. I was able to make this decision because I was on my own. I had my mom and dad and my siblings but not like other people who had children. Many of these people perhaps stayed because of their children and eventually they paid with their life and their kids’ lives as well. So, I feel one of my advantages was that I was single.

Carlos attributed his ability to survive to being young, independent, and believed that his decision to leave would not impact his family’s livelihood.

Armin was newly married, he held a professional job that he enjoyed, and appeared to feel accomplished. Once the conflict started, he was unable to
continue with this life, as it became too dangerous to be on the street, shops were closed, there was no electricity, and no food. Armin feared investigation by war-lords, was worried about breaching some imposed rule or new policy. Armin
made similar comments as Carlos, “I was lucky to not have any kids at that time…our children were born in India”. In reference to his children he stated:

It is very hard if you have kids and [because] you can’t explain [the situation] to them – they don’t understand. You want (them) to be quiet, but they are crying and they shouldn’t be crying because the warlords are there.

During the war, his wife stayed in a bunker with other families to avoid the rockets. Armin decided that there was no quality of life that he and his wife could have there, and decided to flee. He said:

During this time you could not go to the city [because] there was fighting. People feared getting killed when they left their homes. There was no life [for] people. That’s the way lots of people are [were] killed because they wanted to carry on with their lives and needed to leave their homes [even] with all the shooting and rockets. Some people just decided they had no choice but to carry on with their lives and leave their homes - chancing death. They knew anything [could] happen and it did happen to lots of people [people were killed].

In short, his choices were to stay, go about everyday life and face probable death or to flee. All participants experienced profound losses of freedom and decided to leave their countries of origin in order to live.

Each participant described countless killings, absolute fear, and uncertainty for their future, forcing them to decide to leave. Life became impossible for all the participants during the war, and each day was about survival. Each participant shared stories of profound losses to their freedom during pre-migration and departure stage. All participants spoke of restrictions placed on their freedoms. Whether it was restrictions on their personal and civil liberties; an extreme lack of safety; pervasive fear; an inability to speak freely privately or publicly; forced segregation; and livelihoods taken away. One notable
difference was how these losses of freedoms impacted Carlos differently than the other two participants. He participated in advocacy efforts as means to prevent further killings however as a result of these actions was forced to flee.

7.4 Stage #2: Men’s experience during transit

7.4.1 Saw Baw’s Journey

Saw Baw and his family faced extreme dangers in their journey. Initially, his family hid in the jungle hoping that the military would not enter the village. Yet, the military continued killing, burning homes, barns and churches. Saw Baw recalled escaping to the jungle each time he received information that the military was near. On each occasion his family risked the chance of being captured and killed. Saw Baw experienced immense fear when deciding whether it was safe to re-enter their village. After these attacks, when they returned to the village they would evaluate property losses, remained uncertain about whether the military had retreated.

Eventually, Saw Baw’s family made the difficult decision to leave their home, livelihood, and country. This journey was born out of an incredible amount of loss, desperation to survive, and to hope to discover a new life. The decision to leave meant a two to three day treacherous trek through a high mountainous region. Upon arrival to a bordering country his family was exhausted and frightened. Once there, they met other people fleeing the military, and learned of formal refugee camps. Saw Baw explained that a river provided a border between the two countries, and crossing the river meant entering one country and exiting the other. Initially, his family remained on their countries side of the river at
night, and created a small farm on the other side of the border. Each day, they would travel back and forth. Saw Baw made the decision to register at the camp and eventually spent ten years living in limbo at the refugee camp, until he resettled with his wife and children in Canada. During his time at the refugee camp he worked as a Primary Health Care worker with patients in a hospital setting.

7.4.2 Carlos’s Journey

Carlos’s decision to leave was based on survival. He faced torture and death for his role in student demonstrations if he stayed. His family had no knowledge of his involvement in demonstrations. He clearly and with noticeable difficulty described the moment when fellow students confronted him with the news that he was being sought by the army. One of his friends had just been captured and tortured, ultimately providing the names and addresses of other students involved. Carlos explained:

It was a matter of minutes before they [military] would reach me. I really didn’t know what was happening until the rest of the council – four guys went to my house. They [the council] told me that a student was captured by the military. The council told me I had just a few minutes to get out of there before they came to capture me as well.

Carlos bought a bus ticket to Mexico, in this moment his thoughts were on survival:

Just to survive, I just kept thinking I need to reach the border. I just need to cross the line [border]. I knew people sometimes didn’t reach the border because they were killed along the way. There was always this chance. I knew they could kill me but at the same time I was not well known. I wasn’t a rebel leader and I did not take up arms.
When Carlos reached Mexico, he was able to find refuge in a church with many other people fleeing similar situations.

Carlos was ambitious, having many goals and aspirations. Prior to fleeing to Mexico, he had applied as an International student at the University of Regina. While in Mexico, he received information that a letter from Canada had arrived for him back home; he returned, to learn that the letter advised acceptance. Immediately, he began completing the paperwork required to leave his country. He explained, “I still had a chance to say formal goodbyes to my family and my mom” he explained to his family, “I will just be here a few minutes and I have to go.” Carlos did not feel safe and knew he must leave soon. His thoughts were, “Just to survive, survive.” He had no expectations about Canada, and saw his acceptance to the University as a second chance at life. He said, “I was lucky I was able to leave - I brought absolutely nothing to this country.”

7.4.3 Armin’s Journey

When Armin first left his country, he went to India for one to two weeks, at which point he sent a letter to his wife advising her to purchase flight tickets to join him. When he went to India, he thought that he and his wife could settle there. His wife received his letter, and purchased her tickets. However, the day before she was to leave for India, the airport was closed due to air strikes. All communication was cut off – “no telephones, no nothing”. Armin was devastated; he did not know where his wife was, or how they were to reunite or whether she survived the attacks. Eventually he received information that she had fled during a ceasefire but was injured. Armin was not able to speak directly to her, but heard
through a relative that she was safe in Pakistan. After a difficult and complicated process Armin was able to reunite with his wife in India. Once in India they struggled to find employment and at times were worried how they were going to pay their rent and purchase food.

During the transit stage, each participant spoke of survival and experienced an exceptionally different journey to Canada. These differences included the type of journey, feelings of fear and uncertainty; duration of the transit stage, survival, loss of family, friends and freedoms; making decisions and waiting to relocate. Both Saw Baw and Armin experienced lengthy transit stage prior to resettlement in Regina. Carlos’s journey was quick in comparison to the two other participants; however, his too was a story of survival. Upon arrival, each participant had to re-negotiate their identities, abilities, and future goals. The decisions to leave can be understood through a context of survival, loss and profound challenges.

7.4.4 Waiting to relocate: “We weren’t sure how long we could live like this”

Saw Baw waited years to relocate and resettle to Canada. Being in a constant state of uncertainty caused additional stress for the participants who had all left traumatic situations. Saw Baw recognized a future for himself in the refugee camp; he was young and single, with hopes to one day get married and have a big family. With this in mind, he decided to register with the UNHCR. His future did not allow the freedoms he had hoped for and he soon found out his immediate future was filled with restrictions. Saw Baw married and had children while in the refugee camp, however he did not have freedom. He could not leave
the camp to work. According to Saw Baw, it was against the law for refugees to work and this was very difficult on his identity which was pride in being able to provide for himself and his family. Instead, he received training and education working as a Primary Health Care provider in the hospital at the refugee camp; however it was a sharp contrast from his identity as a farmer.

Upon arrival in Regina, Saw Baw was extremely grateful for the support from the non-profit organizations that supported his family with food, shelter and training. Yet, he compared the refugee camp to a jail because of restricted freedoms. He lived with uncertainty and had no sense of what the future would hold for him and his family. Finally, after nine years in the refugee camp, Saw Baw received information that the Canadian government would be accepting registrations for individuals for resettlement. Saw Baw registered his family for resettlement after they were accepted. The Canadian government arranged all the travel plans for Saw Baw and his family. Saw Baw and his family also received an orientation session about Canada prior to resettling. Saw Baw and his family arrived during the summer months to Regina.

Carlos initially fled to Mexico he spent a relatively short duration of time waiting to relocate or to determine his next “step.” His wait was still difficult however relatively shorter than the two other participants. He received confirmation to move to Canada as an international student.

Armin’s transit stage was lengthy however he was not forced to remain in the confines of a refugee camp as did Saw Baw. Armin’s transit stage consisted of almost 8 years in India prior to permanent resettlement in Regina. Armin and his
wife experienced many difficulties while in India. He felt a great deal of pressure to find employment since his wife was pregnant, and they had no financial resources. During this time Armin competed for a limited number of jobs in a country that has a large population and high rates of unemployment. As mentioned earlier in Armin’s story he was able to obtain a contract to work with a Russian exporting company as an interpreter. However, after several years Armin and his wife had two children and continued to worry about finances and their ability to pay for their children’s education. Armin’s wife found employment with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as beginner level English teacher. It was by chance that during her employment with the UNHCR she learned that the Canadian government was accepting applications for refugee resettlement. Once confirmation of their application for resettlement in Canada was received Armin was in the middle of an employment contract. Armin and his wife decided that he would remain in India and honour his work commitment for one year while his wife and children resettled in Regina.

In contrast to Saw Baw and Armin’s journey, Carlos’s wait period to relocate was several months rather than several years. As described in each participant’s journey the length of time spent to relocate to Canada varied. Saw Baw waited a total of ten years in a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) camp; Carlos’s transition was several months; and Armin and his family lived in India uncertain of their future for six years.

In addition, “waiting to relocate” created a difficult time for each participant. Each participant experienced a great deal of loss during the waiting
period. In Saw Baw’s situation he was grateful upon his successful application for resettlement to Canada. Saw Baw spoke of feelings of loss and sadness:

I feel happy now and then sometimes I feel quite sad. We had to leave our friends and family… but then [we were given the opportunity to] go to Canada and set up a new life. We were faced with a lot of problems in our country and also in the refugee camp. We were able to move now to a developed and democratic country [and] then we [think] maybe can finally set up a life, [a] new life, and now there is a future for our kids. I am very happy to come here [Regina, Canada].

Saw Baw was hopeful for a new life that held the promise for his children to have a future, despite the sadness of leaving behind friends and family in the refugee camp. He had to make a decision to leave, which he found both difficult and exciting. He believed that by coming to Canada it would allow him to leave the past behind and offer hope for his family.

Carlos clearly articulated his sense of loss throughout his entire interview. During his transit stage he met many others who described stories of loss and also survival:

I met a lot of people who spoke about the destruction they had witnessed. They told their stories. They had lost their relatives – their families and [now] became like nomads trying to survive.

People were fleeing for their lives, escaping death as many of their family and friends had already been killed.

Carlos expressed his sense of loss and grief. He described what he felt was a loss of his identity, his pride and sense of self-worth. As mentioned earlier, he stayed at a church where a woman took care of him and the people staying there. She would prepare food, cook and clean. He explained this loss:
I remember this lady who took care of us and gave us food. I felt bad and I always told her if you need me to clean or do something please tell me. Because we [were] not used to being taken care of - we take care of people.

This experience created a sense of loss because he had no control and as he was unable to provide, protect or care for himself or others. This lady allowed him and a few others to help clean which for Carlos was a means to offer his gratitude. He suggested it was his pride:

It was also a matter of pride because many of us were young and we were used to working. We started working when we were little kids so we just couldn’t stand still to receive something as an entitlement. We never saw ourselves like that.

He continued to explain:

It was our pride it was on the ground [and] we needed to pick up the pieces. If somebody was feeding us we were grateful but at the same time I have hands – In my country I was organizing. I was doing stuff. [I thought] What has happened to me? And then I was not in control of my sense of self. I was not in control anymore. I was not in my country anymore. I just couldn’t go and work and do the things I used to - it touches you very deeply and because you are not used to it.

It was emotional for Carlos to regain and develop a new identity. He expressed his loss of home, connection to place, land and country. He also described loss in regards to his ability to “take care” and or participate in meaningful work that contributed to the well-being of others.

Armin’s story he had to re-create his professional identity while in the transit stage, seeking new ways to find employment. He had previously completed a Master Degree and was employed in his profession. He now had to leave that behind, because it was not possible for him to use his education in India.
In the transit stage, all three participants were leaving their countries during wartime conflict and experienced immense loss. Each participant experienced loss of safety, freedoms, sense of self, and vision for the future. In effect, the result of the conflict and the act of fleeing put each participant in “survival” mode, so that they were simply living day by day.

7.5 Stage #3: Men’s experiences during resettlement

Challenges, resilience and stability were the three themes that emerged from the participant interviews. Each participant experienced numerous challenges during the resettlement stage, including difficulties learning a new language, adjustment to the harsh climate, dealing with trauma and cultural adjustment. Survival was again the main goal during the initial part of their resettlement stage. The participants were resilient as shown through their ability to secure employment, receive support, learn English and a willingness to learn about the culture. They all had hope for a better future. Self-sufficiency was valued and measured by their independence, concern for the future of their children, personal health/well-being, and contributions to community.

7.5.1 Challenges

7.5.1.1 Language: “I didn’t know the language so I had to learn everything”

Saw Baw was fearful, “I had problems with the language and because we had [a] different culture and we were different people with a different nature I was scared to [be] involved with other people because of the language.” The inability to communicate in English created a sense of fear of the unknown and prevented
him from participating in “Canadian” culture. Saw Baw emphasized language to be the most difficult challenge for him during his resettlement stage.

Carlos heavily immersed himself in English language training not only to learn to communicate, but as a means to distract his thinking from memories of war, conflict and violence. He said:

I stayed in school and I finished school - basically school became my refuge. I just became so immersed in learning English. I had all this time which allowed me to learn the language and I was able to learn it very fast.

Carlos completed six months of English language training during his arrival to Regina. He said, “I didn’t know the language so I had to learn everything.” For Carlos language was the first and most important step during his resettlement process.

Armin experienced many challenges and set-backs during his resettlement stage due to his inability to understand English. At the time of his arrival to Regina, he spoke no English, and still struggles with it. Armin was able to attend an English language program for almost three years at a local settlement agency, and then later at the University. He received additional support from an English tutor. It was critical for him to learn English so he could communicate in workplaces. Armin wanted to find employment; however, he had difficulty writing and communicating in English, which created barriers to successful resettlement. Initially, Armin was studying English and working part-time. He recalled working as security officer:

I started in the morning and they [my employer] needed me to write a report everyday. I had a hard time to write these reports but I tried my best. I asked my tutor how to write it, and he was able to show me. His help allowed me to work there for awhile.
Armin worked hard to learn English, which demonstrated his dedication and determination. Due to his inability to communicate fully in English, he was ineligible for positions with salaries comparable to his government job.

All three participants accessed formal English-language programs from either local settlement agencies or the university. Learning English was described by all participants as a main factor that contributed to resettlement. Without learning the English language life becomes isolating and difficult. Having better language skills directly resulted in an improvement in the quality of life for each participant. All three participants accessed formal English-language programs from either local settlement agencies or the university.

7.5.1.2 Climate: “I remember it was so cold”

Saw Baw was initially very fearful of the weather because he had never experienced snow. He remembered long waits for the city bus during the winter months. He learned how to dress properly to ensure he would be safe during cold temperatures. Carlos made brief mention of his difficulties to cope with the weather as part of resettlement however still acknowledged the adjustment required to deal with the harsh climate. Armin vividly recalled arriving in July, mid-Saskatchewan summer:

I remember it was so cold that when I went outside I was [shocked] to see everybody in shorts and t-shirts. I was so cold. Everybody was looking at me because I was basically wearing winter clothes. I was wearing a jacket. I didn’t know [this was strange] because the weather was so cold for me.

Armin acknowledged the cooler temperatures to be an adjustment even during the Saskatchewan summer months. The extreme cold winters are still difficult for
Armin. He never would have chosen to live in Regina had he left his country in any other circumstance. Adjusting to the harsh and extreme winter temperatures and overall climate in Regina was a challenge for all participants. However, in Saw Baw’s situation he experienced a great of fear related to the winter temperatures as he also was struggling to learn the bus system at the same time.

7.5.1.3 Dealing with trauma: “When you were haunted with memories”

Dealing with trauma differed for each individual. During the resettlement stage Saw Baw remained fearful and intensely worried. He was worried that he would lose his job or be told to leave Canada, and did not feel secure or safe in his new home. He was scared to talk to people that was complicated by his inability to communicate in English. Overall, he experienced a high level of stress and remained fearful one day he would again be forced to leave his home. Saw Baw struggled to feel safe and stable during his initial years in Regina.

Carlos’s first few years of resettlement were a difficult time for him. His mind wandered to memories of all the traumatic events he encountered during the pre-migration and departure stage. He explained, “I remember how easy you could lose your mind. You were haunted with many memories and these memories they become ghosts in our minds - it’s just horrible.” He recalled constant nightmares, forgetfulness, and depression at times. He just wanted to leave Canada and return to his country of origin. He emphasized his feelings of loneliness during his personal struggle to regain his sense of self. He believes that there is a gap in services for newcomers to deal with psychological issues:
I would like to emphasize that we are on our own. The best medicine is no medicine. We have to deal with it [the thoughts or “ghosts”] one way or another. We are in a pool of fear and ghosts that you have to climb out of on your own. There is no help for refugees that come here [Regina]. There is absolutely no psychological help.

Activities that helped him to overcome his traumatic memories and the associated stress were engagement with his studies, telling his story, reading, writing and exercise. He acknowledged his situation as “extremely lucky”, as he believed that many individuals from war-torn countries are living in Regina and are silently suffering. Many newcomers, he believed, are merely “surviving” despite lengthy resettlement periods in Regina.

Armin described traumatic events such as experiences of war, separation from his wife during conflict in his country, and when he remained in India for a year while his wife resettled with the children in Regina. Armin shared his recollections as if these times were surreal, and he recognized the “feeling of war” remains. He is reminded of these feelings when trigged by current stories of violence and conflict in the news. These comments were similar to White’s (2009) comments describing how the access to telephone, television and Internet can heighten frustrations and anxieties for some individuals.

From all the participants, it was evident that the experience of “war” stays with you, leaving permanent scars that may fade a little, but they never disappear. It is apparent that in addition to the traumatic events, that the participants survived prior to coming to Saskatchewan, there they encountered a whole new set of stressors upon arrival to Regina. The men in this study demonstrated resilience and ability to persevere despite dealing with the numerous feelings of fear and
uncertainty. Participants in this study did not mention that they had accessed formal mental health supports. White (2009) also noted various reports of underutilization of traditional or mainstream mental health services by immigrant and refugee women. While, her study focused on women it is likely these findings are applicable to men. In this study, with the trauma in their own unique way whether it was through speaking out, education and/or overcoming daily stressors of resettlement rather than accessing a mental health service.

7.5.1.4 Cultural adjustment: “There are different pressures here than back in my country.”

Upon arriving in Regina, each participant was confronted with a completely new culture that forced each of them into a process of learning and adaptation. All participants had to figure out how the transportation system worked, to learn how to get around the city, how to pay bills, enroll children in school, where to buy food, how to buy a house, how social systems worked, and so on. Specifically, Carlos articulated the need for employment to adapt, “You are on your own – a system where you have to work. You have to [work] if you want to have a car, house or send your kids to sports.” He described the need for self-sufficiency and ability to provide for oneself as a means to survive that places a great deal of pressure on individuals. This pressure on new refugees and immigrants can prevent them from achieving their full potential, because their focus is on survival.
7.5.1.5 Overcoming employment challenges: “I needed to find a job but it was difficult without speaking English”

As mentioned earlier, prior to the war in Saw Baw’s country, his livelihood was based on farming. Farming for Saw Baw was physically demanding, and required very hard work. While in the refugee camp he received training to be a Primary Health Care Provider working in a hospital setting. In Regina, he secured employment as an interpreter. However, at the time of the interview he was employed as a manual labourer. He spoke highly of this job, as well as of his boss and his co-workers. He enjoys physical labour because it ties him to his identity as a farmer. Saw Baw was very proud to be working at this job because he is able to receive a regular paycheque which allows him to provide for his family. Saw Baw recognized a future for himself. Life was starting to be simpler for him and his family. He had even purchased his own car, which meant that he did not have to wait for the bus during the winter. It appeared that Saw Baw both enjoyed and was suited for a job in manual labour.

As a student Carlos became highly engaged in advocacy work through his university studies and within his personal life. Doing so allowed him to continue with his efforts to end the violence in his country of origin. Carlos maintained a strong connection to his country of birth and at times struggled to decide whether he should return. His dedication to raise awareness of the genocide which occurred in parts of Central America was unwavering. Carlos explained:
Talk about it [the oppressive tactics occurring in Guatemala]. Talk about the experience and if there is somebody who will listen to you do it [tell them]. I remember there were Central American groups in Regina, Saskatoon, and parts of Manitoba and they invited me to different universities and schools. So, I told them over and over.

Carlos remained hopeful and engaged in actively raising awareness of the struggles occurring in Central America. This had become a means for Carlos to continue to find hope, to allow him to maintain a connection to his country of origin, and to give him a reason to keep focused.

Armin was motivated, eager and ready to work; however, he experienced difficulties as a result of the language barrier. He attended English language programs while also looking for part-time employment. He was previously educated with a Master degree, however, he was unable to acquire his transcripts. He explained:

But the problem is they [a Canadian employer] didn’t have my transcript because in [my country] the Taliban, who bring you the documents, the government where you work will take the whole documents and they will save it somewhere…and if you give it to them they will increase your salary or your level and if you kept it they would not increase the salary.

The government knew professionals would leave the country so as a means to prevent this they offered employees higher salaries if they could keep transcripts of their degrees. Armin provided his transcript because he had no intention to leave his country of origin at that time. He later regretted doing so because he could not have his credentials assessed for Canadian equivalency. Armin knew he needed to improve his English, and because he did not have his educational papers, he was only able to apply for entry-level positions. Still, he worked hard
and found employment with a security company and was employed as a
Commissioner issuing parking tickets.

While attending English language courses at the university Armin became
aware of an employment program offered through government that provided
funding to support newcomers in employment. Armin discontinued his English
courses and enrolled in this program. He participated in a practicum with the
Ministry of Justice which he was extended. Armin was hopeful that he could
continue to work with the Ministry of Justice and hoped for a permanent position.
He was a good candidate, and he was offered a term position to cover a leave of
absence. However, when the employee returned from the leave of absence Armin
was not able to be hired on permanent basis because he could not provide his
transcripts. He was told he would need to enroll and retake his post-secondary
education because he did not have access to the transcripts. He requested his
transcripts which he ultimately received 10 years later.

Finally, Armin was able to have his credentials assessed resulting in the
equivalency of a Bachelor Degree. During this time, he could have completed a
degree or another training program in Canada. He is still considering his
educational options. He currently works as a Health Support Worker in a health
setting. Despite the challenges Armin endured, he secured employment. It was a
process which demonstrated his resilience, ability to persevere and flexibility.
Overall, securing employment provided a means to be connected to the larger
community; it provided a sense of purpose, financial stability and pride for each
individual. Each participant’s employment goals were uniquely different. Saw
Baw was interested in manual labour similar to farming; Carlos was interested in pursuing academia and advocacy efforts; and Armin wanted to pursue his previous career engaging in justice studies or law.

7.5.2 Demonstrating resilience: “Talk about it. If there is someone who will listen then tell them.”

Resilience was demonstrated in the willingness to learn not only the language, but to approach each challenge with an open mind, to have the confidence to ask questions, to seek out information, and to never lose hope. Saw Baw needed to “make a decision” to help him move forward in his life: “I feel like Canada is our home, we have to stay our whole life here [and] not go back, our new life is here. We will stay and work here together with friends and family.” He described the need to focus on his life in Canada, making a conscious effort to acknowledge Canada is home and he will never return to his country of origin. He has no connections to family or friends prior to arriving to Canada and Regina was now his home. Carlos differed, maintaining strong connections to his country of origin which gives him pride and a sense of identity. Armin’s perspectives have changed since coming to Canada he wants to enjoy each moment before it’s gone. All participants recognized that they were “lucky” to be where they are today, because many did not survive the war, conflict and violence in their countries of origin. It was apparent that these individuals persevered. The following factors helped these men overcome common resettlement issues: the ability to learn English; their willingness to learn; having hope; securing employment; and receiving support.
7.5.2.1 Support services for newcomers: “Because people helped me I had more confidence.”

Throughout the interviews, each participant described support they received within the Regina community to help aid their resettlement process. Saw Baw accessed formal support services directed towards newcomers. Saw Baw highlighted the benefits of the Host Program offered by a local settlement agency. This program aimed to match newcomers with individuals or families residing in Regina to provide an exchange of information, friendship, and mentorship. Saw Baw was grateful for the extensive support he received from a settlement agency upon arrival to Regina – from welcome services and reception, to initial accommodations and finally to support in securing long-term housing.

Carlos received support mainly from connections to friends he had in Regina prior to arriving. He attended university English classes and participated in university advocacy events which allowed him to feel connected to like-minded individuals in Regina who were connected to social justice issues. Armin accessed an education program which he explained supported him to gain access to work placements allowing him to network with professionals in the community. He appreciated the efforts of the educational program that facilitated his employment however this program did not directly result in paid employment. Further, Armin accessed an English tutor from the Regina Public Library to help improve his English language skills. He spoke very highly of his “host volunteer” who provided him and his wife with valuable information to support them through the
resettlement process. He explained he was originally matched with this “host family” through a program offered by the Regina Open Door Society.

7.5.3 Stability: “Now I feel like Canada is our home.”

In the interviews, the participants were asked how they described success and whether they believed they were successful since arriving in Regina, Saskatchewan. For these participants, success was measured by independence, self-sufficiency and the vision of a positive and hopeful future for their children. Success also included having good health and well-being. Saw Baw was grateful that his children had an opportunity for a future without the restrictions to freedoms that he experienced.

Saw Baw received his Canadian citizenship, which symbolized belonging and freedom for him. He no longer felt fearful that he was going to be forced to leave or terminated from his job. His ability to financially provide for his family allowed him to feel proud and accomplished. Saw Baw was also quite proud of his ability to purchase his own car, which is a symbol of freedom and self-sufficiency.

Carlos defined success through his professional accomplishments that resulted in not personal but collective gains. He was proud of his ability to advocate and bring like-minded individuals together to problem-solve community issues stemming from oppressive and discriminatory processes and practices. Armin defined his success in the achievements of his family. He was proud his children were attending university and that they were pursuing professional goals.
He recognized he will never completely overcome the challenge of dealing with the Prairie winters however recognized his family was stable and planned to remain in Regina. He also was proud his youngest daughter was born in Regina, Saskatchewan describing her as his “prairie girl.”

7.6 Summary of findings

7.6.1 Pre-migration and departure

In terms of their experiences during the war, pre-migration and departure, all participants described political and ethnic conflict, loss of freedom (restrictions on personal and civil liberties), feelings of fear and uncertainty, loss of livelihood (inability to provide for oneself whether through manual labour or other employment), and the need for survival and escape. All three men spoke of intense fear caused by the killing of civilians and other tactics of terror, whether used by military, government soldiers, or rebel leaders.

7.6.2 Transit

When discussing their experiences during transit, all men spoke of difficulties, the duration of their journey, fear and uncertainty, loss (personal identity, loved ones and freedoms), and waiting to relocate. Two participants spoke of receiving support from non-profit or non-governmental organizations during their transition. Also, two participants described the process of applying for refugee status with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

7.6.3 Resettlement

In describing their lives during resettlement in Regina, participants shared numerous challenges including language, climate, dealing with trauma, fear,
transportation, limited involvement with Canadians due to their inability to communicate in English, and learning new legal and governmental systems. Factors that contributed to resilience were employment, studying English, family, children, and support from non-profit or non-governmental organizations, success, and independence. Each individual described these themes in detail; however, the nature of the challenges and factors that contributed to resilience (and their definitions of success) varied.

Overall, each participant described an extremely difficult past filled with uncertainty, loss, and immense hardship. Given the unique history, personality, gender, and ethnicity of these participants, any attempt to capture their history here will be incomplete. Nevertheless, I will attempt to highlight, from my perspective, the meanings that emerge from their stories. After a difficult journey each participant managed to create a comfortable life for themselves in Regina. Each participant described various factors that contributed to their ability to overcome obstacles during their resettlement. All participants spoke of success, yet each did so hesitantly and humbly, leaving an impression of melancholy despite their achievements.

8.0 THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

8.1 Ecological theory

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979; 1989; 1994) theory of human development consists of five levels of analysis; the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The findings from this thesis were analyzed based on ecological theory. Using these levels of analysis it became possible to
understand how certain events and situations drastically influence one’s course of life. Each of the participant’s lives was dramatically altered when confronted with difficult decisions as a result of war.

8.1.1 Analysis during pre-migration analysis based on ecological theory

Prior to war, each participant had well-developed relationships with their families, schools, and communities; however, there were tremendous disruptions and loss within their immediate environments, or the microsystem. Each participant had to make decisions as to whether to flee alone or leave family behind. Saw Baw had to decide to hide in the jungle and eventually leave to Thailand; Carlos made a split second decision to flee to Mexico; and Armin’s decision was that he would go alone to a border country without his spouse. Armin’s decision caused immense stress when attacks resumed and his spouse was injured and forced to flee to another country. The decisions by each participant completely disrupted their lives and completely altered their immediate environments.

The meso-systems have been earlier described as the interactions between a system of micro-systems. Saw Baw’s immediate family fled with him however he left behind his school, his home, his land and his community. Carlos left everything behind as he fled independently. Armin initially left on his own with plans to reunite with his wife. Each individual’s micro- and meso-system were completely disrupted during this stage.
The next level of analysis is the exo-system. During stage #1 each participant’s experience was drastically influenced by events occurring within their countries or exo-system – war and a resulting loss of freedom. The exosystem includes government policies and activities. All the participants were exposed to violence, conflict and intense fear because of war. War was political and targeted specific ethnic groups providing no option for the participants but to flee. For instance Saw Baw described his government’s “four cut plan” which was used to systematically take over large portions of land. This policy had dramatic implications for villagers who found themselves indirect targets. Despite the fact each participant was a civilian they were dramatically impacted by war and life was tragically disrupted.

The fourth level of analysis is the macro-system which as mentioned earlier contains the overall cultural context in which systems are organized (Halabuza, 2009). Saw Baw, Carlos and Armin all described the importance of family. Each of their immediate families was dramatically disrupted as a result of war. These men each wanted to raise their own families in a place that allowed them a proper education and stability. The chronosystem refers to specific eras or the historical period occurring during human development. To understand the underlying root causes of war, ethnic and political conflict it is important to acknowledge the overall era participants were in. Saw Baw explained government policies however did not express in detail overall impressions of the global political context which influenced events in his country of origin. Carlos described a “cold war” mentality as prevalent at this time in Central America
which had an indirect but highly effective influence on beliefs and values of the culture. Armin did not express within his interview his reflections as to the underlying root causes of war in Afghanistan.

All the participants experienced a loss of confidence, pride, and identity without their means of livelihood. All participants described a positive connection to their work or in Carlos’s case his interest in pursuing secondary education. Each participant experienced devastating disruptions in their lives during the pre-migration stage. However the positive relationships and interactions within each participant’s families prior to war enhanced their resilience by providing courage to make the decision to escape. Their ties to family gave them reason to want a better life.

8.1.2 Analysis during transit based on ecological theory

The participants’ stories reflected a variation of experiences commonly referred to within the literature. Drachman’s (1992) framework is based on the assumption that some immigrants have an abrupt departure while others’ experiences involved a more deliberate decision-making process and then a move. The type of journey each immigrant makes can involve either a perilous or a safe journey and can be of either short or long duration (Drachman, 1992). The participants in this study experienced hardships, however their abilities to establish strong relationships within their microsystems provided resilience and a source of strength. Saw Baw greatly benefited from support offered from non-profit organizations within the refugee camp. Carlos received direct support from volunteers in a church where he was a refugee and gained solidarity from
discussions with other people who were in similar circumstances. Armin was married during the transit phase allowing them both to support one another during this time. All participants gained strength and perseverance to succeed from their immediate families during this time.

Services and supports offering outreach to refugees available within the mesosystem were of high value and extremely helpful. Both Saw Baw and Carlos spoke highly of the support they received and at times were greatly humbled to receive it. Armin’s experience was different because he had few services and supports when he lived in India. The lack of support available to him created heightened levels of stress and worry for his family’s future. Armin’ was dedicated to ensure his children had a safe future and a good education which allowed him to persevere. He valued education. He worried about his children and their opportunity to access education in the bordering country eventually deciding that they would immigrate to Canada. Each participant discussed stress during the waiting period before coming to Canada.

A mitigating factor for all the participants was their ability to have hope. Hope was a personal strength for each of the participants which enabled them to vision a future for their family and have an optimistic view of what life could offer them. Overall, the direct interaction between the individual and their family, children and community agencies was of utmost importance during the transit stage.
8.1.3 Analysis during resettlement based on ecological theory

The challenges that stood out within this stage of settlement were the adjustments to a new culture, language, climate and dealing with trauma. Participants described excitement by being allowed to immigrate to Canada, followed by struggle, fear, and worries related to adjustment. The findings from this study are very similar to the settlement challenges found throughout the literature which include issues related to employment, language, housing, social connections, health and well-being (White, 2009; Birjandian & Bray, 2009). The quality of services offered within the community or the mesosystem was important.

Learning the English language through formal classes was highly important because it directly impacts the overall experience of resettlement for each participant. The inability to speak English complicated the ability to find employment, develop social connections, and access to services. In Saw Baw’s story, his inability to speak English resulted in isolation for him and his family. He worried when letters came in the mail because he could not read English and was fearful that he would be told to leave Canada or be “fired” from his job. Carlos spent the first six months immersed in English language training. Armin struggled to write reports that were required in his employment. English language programs were central to each participant’s resettlement process and success.

Each participant was impacted by the traumatic events experienced as a result of war – they had memories of war, worried about family that was left behind, and felt grief for the lives of friends and neighbours who were lost.
Relationships within the microsystem were important to enable them to cope and overcome their trauma. The participants left not only war behind but also part of themselves. Each participant had to renegotiate their goals, hopes, and dreams as a result of events that were completely out of their control. Each participant dealt with their transition and migration experiences in their own unique ways. Saw Baw’s approach was to focus on the future, accept that his life is different and that he would never return to the life he once had. Saw Baw’s home is now Canada. Carlos struggled with emotional trauma. He felt isolated, alone, and did not feel his experience would be understood by local service agencies. Carlos relationship with his children provided solace and hope for purpose, meaning, and a future. Armin was motivated to provide a stable life for his children, one with opportunity. He explained “war” is a feeling that only those who have experienced can understand.

Notably, war cannot be left behind and is revealed deeply within each participant’s experience. Each participant had strong interactions within their immediate families and with people they met that allowed them to successfully adjust into the community. However each participant spoke about the element of “luck” to be a factor in their success. All of these participants were aware of others who were motivated, ambitious, highly intelligent and successful but were not “lucky.” These individuals were killed, tortured and/or disappeared.

Throughout this stage the theme of resilience was strong despite stories of loss. The participants spoke of their willingness to learn, flexibility to adjust and to find strength from their family. The third major theme was stability. Each
participant strived for stability for themselves and their family. They wanted to leave chaos behind and hoped for independence, self-sufficiency, personal health and well-being, and the opportunity to contribute to the community. Each participant’s story to obtain stability was different however the importance of employment to be self-sufficient was evident and important. For instance, in Saw Baw’s story he was proud to be working and to purchase a car therefore no longer having to wait for the bus in cold winters.

Carlos was able to regain purpose, identity, and hope when he became a father allowing him to set new goals. All the participants benefited from strong relationships within their families and in their community as a result of established programs, services offered within the city of Regina, such as the Regina Open Door Society. Programs that allowed newcomers to learn the English language, gain mentorship, employment training, and settlement services were all valuable to the participants. However, it must be noted that none of these participants relied on mental health services to deal with trauma as a result of war; rather they focused on building strong relationships with their family and developing goals that would allow their children to have a good future in Canada.

Armin struggled with employment as he was unable to obtain employment related to his previous education. Armin discussed attending an employment program and while successful in obtaining practicum/work placements in his field these did not necessarily translate into long term employment for him. Rather, Armin realized he would require further post-secondary training in absence of his transcripts. Armin was hopeful that after completion of an employment program
in his field that he could possibly obtain employment in his professional. However, this was not possible and gave him false hope. In Armin’s story the interactions between government services, the agency offering the practicum work program and employers was not clear. His story illustrated how newcomers can “fall through the cracks” because of disconnections between various services and systems.

All participants recognized direct interactions with helping services would have a positive outcome during their settlement process. However, it appeared at times that these interactions were of limited benefit. The participants gained skills and support, but were still unable to achieve their goals. Disconnections between services in the mesosystem – specifically the linkages between agencies, government programs and businesses were weak.

9.0 CONCLUSION

This study provided an opportunity for three men who fled war-torn countries and resettled in Regina, Saskatchewan to offer their insight into how they were able to cope, endure and overcome the hardships of resettlement. These stages are as follows: (1) pre-migration and departure, (2) during the transit period, and (3) during resettlement in Regina. Throughout this section I offer my conclusions about each stage using the information gathered in the research. I provide my reflections on how to promote resilience and successful settlement experiences for newcomers. This study provides a strong complement to previous work exploring settlement challenges experienced by specific cultural groups (Este & Tachable, 2009; Kummassah, 2008; & White, 2009).
9.1 Stage #1: Men’s experience during pre-migration and departure

Overall the lived experience of war described by these three participants during the pre-migration and departure stage was a time of terror, fear and immense resourcefulness. Each participant had no idea their life would experience such a huge disruption. Despite differences in demographics such as age, education level, marital status and country of origin, each participant was faced with life or death decisions prior to settlement. It was evident that each individual carried the burden of having survived war in their lives though the specific impacts differed.

While listening to these men’s stories I began to imagine the feelings of war as “fluid” similar to navigating a boat on a prairie lake. As a child I spent much of my time boating and swimming at Last Mountain Lake which was probably comparable to many other prairie lakes experiencing drastic changes during sporadic weather. At times the water was calm but one always took care as the wind could pick up speed and turn the waves into large and potentially dangerous “white caps.” The lived experience of war is like potential danger in these waves – dark and potentially dangerous. To maintain stability on the boat, one has to be prepared to ride out the unpredictable “waves.” Eventually, even when the “feelings” of war were at their strongest, the men whose stories are reported here demonstrated resilience, maintaining stability. The overall meaning ascribed to this stage by each of the men in this study was survival.
9.2 Stage #2: Men’s experience during transit

The stories of the men parallel Paulson’s (2003) stages of suffering as described earlier as increasing political repression when civilians’ reactions are passive and indifferent. As the political and social situation worsens individuals must psychologically endure and direct witness of the killing of family and friends. All three participants witnessed the killings and disappearance of people in their villages or cities. They were able to escape prior to being arrested, which may have led to experience of torture. In stage three of Paulson’s (2003) stages of suffering he refers to hardships endured by those who escape. During the transit stage, participants experience many tragic hardships that involved leaving behind family who possibly chose to stay, or the loss of family and friends as a result of killing and the act of leaving their home and sense of security. They left behind all that was familiar.

Their main focus during this stage was on the present moment as it was a step by step process. Decisions could result in either in life or death. It is important to note that each participant had a different “step by step” process during this time period. Two participants experienced rather lengthy wait periods in other countries and refugee camps while Carlos transit was rather quick. Despite these differences each participant’s sole priority was survival. The first step in this process was to take immediate actions to escape and get out of the country. For the participants in this study it meant travelling to Thailand, Mexico and India. Upon arrival in their refuge country, each participant realized the journey really had just begun. Each participant had to find ways to meet their
basic needs on a daily basis which guided their own unique journey. The overall meanings ascribed to this stage by all three participants were survival and resilience. In addition to these meanings, specifically in one case the situation was about “enduring” a long lasting wait before the next step.

9.3 Stage #3: Men’s experience during resettlement

It was apparent that these men were extremely humble in expressing their strengths and successes when asked to reflect on their resettlement experience upon arrival to Regina. In the earlier metaphor, the “feelings” of war created waves at unpredictable times potentially and suddenly disrupting their lives as it did in the pre-migration and departure stage. This was specifically the case for one participant, who expressed difficulty dealing with trauma, and who lacked satisfaction with the services offered in the city to support him in this. He described forgetfulness, constant nightmares, and insomnia. Again, in efforts to conceptualize his experience I imagined him navigating a boat on unstable waters. The calm waters would transform quickly into dangerous waves as the “feelings” of war resurfaced. These waves would crash over into the boat in their relentless efforts to capsize and overtake him into the darkness of the waters below.

The war had followed him from abroad to Regina. It was in these moments when the waves were at their peak when he demonstrated his immense resilience to overcome hardship. In these moments he was at “war” all over again which required a dedication, a will to live, and a desire to persevere which kept him from allowing the “waves” to take him under. In these crucial moments he demonstrated his capacity to focus his energy on positive pursuits and ride out the
“rough waters” until the calm waters resumed. During these calm moments he regained his strength by studying English and dedicating his energy to unwavering advocacy efforts for peace in Guatemala and for those who experience suffering as a result of oppressive regimes. He explained it took several years before he felt the “feelings of war” were left behind. He was thankful as during this time he did not have children and was able to focus all his energy to overcome the trauma. I had the sense he was careful to acknowledge his success and would humbly deny he was “special” as he too felt a sense of guilt as many people in similar situations are unable to overcome the “storm.” As described in the results section of this study the three participants experienced numerous challenges because “everything was new.”

However, it was important to acknowledge how the “feelings” of war were always somewhere underneath the surface in each of these men’s lives. Each of these participants described their stories in efforts to “leave war behind” and to tackle the next challenge that awaited them whether that was to learn a new language, find employment, gain new skills or endure an extreme prairie winter.

After listening to these men’s stories I determined the meanings attributed to the resettlement process. Saw Baw ascribed the meanings of safety, stability and independence to the resettlement process. It was important to Saw Baw to work with his hands and do manual work as he was accustomed to in Burma. Saw Baw carefully and delicately expressed his successes I sensed he carried a sense of guilt knowing many of the people he once knew in his small village in the jungles of Burma were not as “lucky.” Carlos’s story was about healing trying to
find a perfect balance that would maintain his stability for him and his children. Reflecting on Armin’s story was slightly different because he was ready to start enjoying leisure time.

In this study the immigration experience has been conceptualized as a continuum (Tolley, 2011). Armin was at a different place in his “resettlement” process or integration continuum. When he reflected on his resettlement stage he ascribed the meanings of stability and independence. This was important because he wanted his children to have opportunities to receive post-secondary education and to have meaningful careers. The difference I sensed was that Armin was now prepared to find leisure time, enjoy the present moment and make time to have fun. Armin too was still dealing with “feelings” of war however I sensed only ripples in the waters as the waves of extremes had been calm for some time. As he looked to his future he realized he was “lucky” and wanted to enjoy the precious time he had left.

10.0 REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While this study is limited to the stories of three participants, it must be acknowledged that the findings strengthen and validate need for newcomer settlement support services. The findings of this study highlighted the long-lasting impacts of war, benefits of comprehensive settlement services, the benefit of mentorship programs and learning English as providing direct connections between newcomers and the community. The impact of war was a life-long and difficult struggle for each participant in this study.
Initially, the title for this research intended to be “Leaving War Behind: Resettlement Stories of Men Living in Regina, Saskatchewan” however after completion of this thesis, I realized that this description no longer reflected the results. The participants did not leave war behind therefore this title underestimated the long lasting impacts of war. It is important to note each of the participants described themselves as successful however all noted the impacts of war still were present at some level. Therefore, I recommend enhancing supports for individuals who have experienced war.

Support services must offer respectful and culturally appropriate services. The HEARTS (Hanscom, 2001) treatment model stood out as an effective treatment model offering a compassionate and sensitive model which could be used by various community agencies. This approach differs from a western medical model service delivery however it offers a means to increase the number of available social workers or counsellors for survivors of war. The skills described in this approach can be extended outside of a traditional counsellor’s role and offered to community members such as teachers, volunteers and mentors. There is also a need to promote and reduce the stigma surrounding post-traumatic stress disorder and war trauma by allowing individuals to speak freely about their experiences.

In all instances, it was apparent that strong relationships with organizations were extremely beneficial if not essential. It was apparent that individuals offered their support regardless of their affiliation with within newcomer settlement organizations, churches or as community volunteers did so
as an act of compassion and in the spirit of common humanity. Interactions between these participants and settlement services were extremely important for successful newcomer settlement experiences. However, it is important to avoid overgeneralizations and assumptions based on an individual’s categorization of entry. For example, it is over simplistic to assume only refugees have experienced war. As seen in this study international students and immigrants were also fleeing war-torn countries.

Similar to other studies conducted on topics of settlement, integration and immigration this study highlights the importance of support services to improve English language training, employment integration, and services fostering relationships between newcomers with the community people and with community agencies that are essential to successful integration. Specifically, the host family volunteer program offered by the Regina Open Door Society was especially important and provided continuous and substantial benefit for the participants and their families in this study. Two of the three participants noted the benefit of receiving information and advice from volunteer families who were long-term residents of the community.

In addition, as a community there is an immediate and emergent need to recognize the human rights violations occurring elsewhere in the world. Despite human rights legislation there continues to be large number of people forced to flee war-torn countries. Organizations, programs and people throughout Regina are unaware of the stories of immigrants and refugees who are now their neighbours, which is because of a lack of local research. Research using a
qualitative approach would be beneficial to continue to provide more insight into the experiences of newcomers arriving to Regina and how successful integration occurs especially as the population of Saskatchewan continues to grow largely because of immigration. This research has shared the life histories of newcomers which is an observance of human rights in itself. It is important to share these men’s stories along with my grandpa’s story to ensure they are not forgotten over time as an act of human rights.
11.0 REFERENCES


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12.0 APPENDICES

12.1 Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval

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The University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: [http://www.uregina.ca/research/REB/main.shtml](http://www.uregina.ca/research/REB/main.shtml)

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Please send all correspondence to:
Office for Research, Innovation and Partnership
University of Regina
Research and Innovation Centre 119
Regina, SK S4P 0A2
Telephone: (306) 585-4775  Fax: (306) 585-4993  research.ethics@uregina.ca
May 6th, 2014

RE: Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

The study is titled **Leaving War Behind: Resettlement Stories of Men Living in Regina, Saskatchewan.** This study explores men’s perspectives and their experiences of resettlement in Regina, SK after leaving war-torn countries. This research is being conducted as a component of my Master of Social Work degree program at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, with the Faculty of Social Work under the supervision of Assistant Professor Dr. Donald Haloza. The purpose of this qualitative research study will be to explore the lived experience of men who left war-torn countries and resettled in Regina, Saskatchewan, with the purpose of understanding what men may experience when resettling in this city.

Because you are an individual who identified as a newcomer to Regina, SK and chose to leave your country of origin as a result of war your opinions may be important to this study. I would appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about this.

Participation in this study is voluntary and would involve an in-depth interview at a location ensuring confidentiality. The questions are quite general in efforts to allow you to tell your story as you want it told. At all times you may decline answering any questions you’re not comfortable answering. All information you provide will be considered confidential. Further, you will not be identified by name in my thesis or in any report or publication resulting from this study. The data collected through this study will be kept for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet at my residence in Regina, Saskatchewan in which only I have access to. After this time frame all documents will be completely destroyed (shredded).

**Selection Criteria:**

This study will use the following selection criteria for participation: Men who are English language speakers; Men who have resettled in Regina, SK; Men who have resided in Regina for minimum five years; Men who have made a successful adjustment into the community and Men who were civilians not combatants.

If you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact either myself Holly Bressler, Graduate Student via email at bressler@uregina.ca or Dr. Donald Haloza, Assistant Professor via email at donalda.haloza@uregina.ca.

This research was approved by the Research Ethics Board, University of Regina. If you have any questions or concerns about the rights or treatment of participants, you may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at 585-4775 or by e-mail: research.ethics@uregina.ca.

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Yours Sincerely,

Holly Bressler
12.3 Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Leaving War Behind: Resettlement Stories of Men Living in Regina, Saskatchewan

Researcher: Holly Bressler
Graduate Student
Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research
Faculty of Social Work
University of Regina
bressleh@uregina.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Donalda Halabuza
Faculty of Social Work
University of Regina
Phone: 306-337-2538
Donalda.halabuza@uregina.ca

Purpose and Objective of the Research:

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to explore the lived experience of men who left war-torn countries and resettled in Regina, Saskatchewan, with the purpose of creating an understanding of what men may experience when resettling to this city.

Procedures:

Data will be collected through a qualitative interview. Each interview will last between 1-2 hours depending on the participant. Interviews will be audio-taped using a digital recorder. The interviews will then be transcribed by the researcher and stored in a password protected computer for five years. Only the researcher and the researcher’s supervisor (if needed) will have access to this information. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the procedures and goals of the study and your role.
Potential Risks:

Interview questions will focus on three stages of resettlement: (1) experience prior to war in your country of origin, (2) your transition to a new country and (3) your process of resettlement. There is potential for you to have difficult memories emerge when discussing your personal journey to Regina, SK. At all times you are given control to share aspects of your personal journey that you are most comfortable with. You have a right to refuse to answer any interview question and the right to withdraw from the study without penalty. If at any point, you experience emotional distress you will be given the option to be referred for professional counselling support if needed.

Potential Benefits:

This research will benefit participants by creating an understanding of their resilience and ability to overcome their hardships in resettlement. Participants may gain feelings of empowerment by contributing to research which seeks to promote awareness to the plight of newcomers from war-torn countries. This participation may provide enhancement of services within Regina, Saskatchewan as it will contribute to the social work knowledge base. Currently, very little information and research exists documenting the themes of war leading to resettlement in the Prairies.

Confidentiality:

- Confidentiality will be maintained by not disclosing identifying information about the participant in the research findings and the use of pseudonyms in reporting
- Anonymity of the participant will be maintained by using a pseudonym for participants and only the researcher, and supervisor will have access to the data containing names of participants
- Participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw from the study within one month after participating without consequence. When a participant withdraws, his/her data will be deleted from the research project and destroyed via shredding.
- Confidentiality will be protected by the researcher and research supervisor having access to data and data storage.
- The research results and transcripts will be safeguarded and securely stored in a locked filing cabinet by the researcher (in the researcher’s home) and a copy will be kept with the research supervisor (at the university) for a minimum of five years. When the data, of which the researcher and research supervisor will only have access to is no longer required, it will then be appropriately destroyed via shredding. Digital recordings (audio recordings, typed transcripts) will be deleted after transcription.
Data from this research will be used for the purpose of a thesis. The study may at some time be published or presented at conferences; however, your identity will be kept confidential. Although the researcher will report direct quotations from the interview, the participant will be given a pseudonym, and all identifying information will be removed from the report.

**Right to Withdraw:**

Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. *You may withdraw from the research project for any reason within one month after participating without explanation or penalty of any sort.* If you withdraw from the research project any data that you have contributed will be destroyed.

**Follow-Up:**

To obtain result from the study, please contact the researcher through email at bressleh@uregina.ca to request a copy of the research study.

**Questions or Concerns:**

- Contact the researcher at bressleh@uregina.ca
- This project was approved by the Research Ethics Board, University of Regina. If research subjects have any questions or concerns about their rights or treatment as subjects, they may contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at 585-4775 or by e-mail: research.ethics@uregina.ca.

**Consent:**

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

__________________      ___________________      ___________________
Name of Participant        Signature       Date
Holly Bressler             ___________________      ___________________
Name of Researcher         Signature       Date

A copy of this consent form will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.
12.4 Counselling referral letter from Catholic Family Services

April 8, 2014

Re: Counselling Referral

Dear Holly Bressler,

I have received your request to refer your research participants for counselling/therapy to me if at any point during your research process a participant is in emotional distress and would like to seek professional support.

Please accept this letter as confirmation that I am willing to provide counselling/therapy to your research participants upon approval.

If there are any questions I can answer, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Meighan Marchi, MSW RSW
Counsellor, Catholic Family Services
(306) 525-0521
meighan@cfregina.ca
12.5 Counselling referral letter from CLC: A Path to Healing

May 5, 2014

Dear Holly Bressler,

Thank you for considering these services for your research participants should the need arise. Please consider this letter as a formal acceptance in confirming my willingness to provide counselling/therapy to your research participants upon referral.

As discussed, participants will be made aware of costs associated with counselling/therapy and can be further discussed if there are any questions/concerns.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kindly,

[Signature]

Christine Gatzke, M.Ed, CCC, CPAC/ARC
12.6 Interview guide

I prepared the following interview questions as a prompt for participants to begin sharing their story:

- Try to remember when you first realized you were no longer willing to remain in your country of origin.
- What factors, conditions or events led to your decision to leave your country of origin? What did you do?
- Were these factors, conditions or events experienced by all peoples? Or only certain groups of people?
- Looking back at this specific time-frame, what thoughts stand out for you? What was it like?
- Describe the process of transition from your country of origin to Regina, SK?
- What were your expectations of Regina, SK prior to arrival?
- Were your expectations met?
- What was your experience upon arrival to Regina, SK?
- How do you describe your resettlement process? What supports were most helpful? How so? What did you find least helpful? Why?
- What factors contributed to your personal well-being during your resettlement process?
- How were you treated by the people in Regina?
- What types of services would you suggest to support men leaving war-torn countries to resettle in Regina, SK?