

Response strategies in forced migration:
Women refugees' narratives of health, identity and mothering

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Dedication

To Layla James, my soul.

To Hazel Isa Arbor, my spirit.

To Bodhi Earnest, my greatest teacher.

To Tony.

To my Dad.

To women in every place in the world and under every circumstance,
who *are* home for their children.

Abstract

The year this dissertation was submitted there were more individuals forcibly displaced around the world than at any other point in history. Research describing the vulnerabilities, human rights violations, and challenges individuals, families, and communities encounter across the spectrum of migration is readily accessible. Less available are studies that document the strengths-focused response strategies women refugees engage to navigate systems and experiences associated with displacement. This research, developed with the purpose to answer questions residing in this gap, is a series of ethnographic case studies documenting experiences of resilience, identity construction, and mothering among Karen refugee women from Burma.

I define a response strategy as a tool engaged by an individual or community to navigate forced migration and promote the resilience of interpersonal connections, and cope individually and collectively with the challenges inherent to cultural transformation. Through this conceptual model I explore the experiences of women refugees from Burma living in refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border and post-resettlement in the United States. Discourse, positional identity and hybridity frame, from a theoretical perspective, the tension inherent to the transformation of systems and structures. In particular, in this research I engage hybridity theory and the space of cultural difference to articulate the intersection of this transformation with the migration narratives of Karen women.

The total study period was eleven months and characterized by two distinct phases of data collection. In the first phase I spent three weeks in two refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border conducting participant observation and informal interviews

with Karen refugee women. In the refugee camps I partnered with the American Refugee Committee (ARC). The maternal-child health focus of ARC programs in the camps along the Thai-Burma border is highly regarded. In the second phase of data collection and analysis, I recruited and interviewed repeatedly a cohort of twelve Karen women post-resettlement in the United States over a seven-month period. An essential community partner in this phase of research was the Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM). The KOM was the first Karen run organization in the United States advocating and supporting the experiences of refugees from Burma in resettlement.

I formally approached the analysis of each phase of data collection using Spradley's levels of analysis, a classical method of analysis in ethnographic research. In working through the four levels of Spradley's analysis I reconstructed, from the narratives of refugee women, processes integral in self-understanding, identity, and the negotiation of factors associated with migration. This method of analysis supported an intricate approach to the data. I was able to establish broader categories of meaning, such as response strategies that support the health of individuals, families, and communities. Spradley's analysis was also a mechanism through which I captured finer characteristics in the data, such as contrasts and silences. In the analysis I also drew from Critical Discourse Analysis and Grounded Theory to elicit patterns and politics embedded in language that influenced position, as well as to identify spaces between language where participants actively shifted meaning.

Findings suggest that the response strategies women engaged as they navigated migration, the unique space of the refugee camp, and mothering post-resettlement

facilitated the negotiation of the social, cultural, political, and legal structures they encountered. I assert that within the transformational spaces that refugee women constructed, the processes of coping and becoming reflected the relationship between structure and agency. Within these intersections a woman could express her resistance to a system that in its design represented a majority she was not a part of. As Karen refugee women moved to redesign their position within these systems, a shift in cultural norms resulted, inclusive of those that influence or define the role of women.

To filter support through these spaces in ways that preserve them, also preserves the balance that women have constructed through the transitions and unknowns of migration. As public health practitioners, engaging in a caring response to refugee experiences, we need to seek out these spaces and find ways to funnel support through them without taking them over. Understanding ways refugees negotiate transition is not a phenomenon unique to the Karen. This is a facet of migration for all migrant groups, those with legal status such as refugees, and those without.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Dedication.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Table of Contents.....	viii
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Chapter 1	
Eh Hser’s Narrative.....	1
Chapter 2	
“ <i>I have many friends in Burma, do you know them?</i> ”: Reflections on Position, Interpretation, and Meaning.....	19
Chapter 3	
A Systematic Review of Karen Refugee Health.....	29
Chapter 4	
The Intersection of Coping and Becoming: <i>Inside/Outside</i> Figured Worlds in Two Burmese Refugee Camps.....	64
Chapter 5	
“ <i>What about the next generation that’s coming?</i> ”: The recontextualization of mothering post-refugee resettlement.....	113
Chapter 6	
Synthesis.....	167
Bibliography.....	177
Appendices.....	186

List of Tables

Chapter 3

Table 1 <i>Qualitative Synthesis</i>	51
Table 2 <i>Quantitative Synthesis</i>	57

Chapter 4

Table 1 <i>Domain and Taxonomic Diagram: Response Strategies</i>	82
Table 2 <i>Paradigm Worksheet: Figured Worlds & Agency</i>	83
Table 3 <i>Ways Women Articulate Active and Passive Transcendence</i>	92
Table 4 <i>Ways Women Articulate Impermanence</i>	93
Table 5 <i>Ways Women Articulate Equilibrium</i>	97
Table 6 <i>Exploration of Discourses and Situated Meanings in the Ways Women Articulate Movement</i>	99
Table 7 <i>Ways Women Articulate Position</i>	102
Table 8 <i>Ways Women Articulate Distress</i>	103

Chapter 5

Table 1 <i>The Women</i>	124
Table 2 <i>Domain and Taxonomic Diagram: Response Strategies</i>	129
Table 3 <i>Cultural Attributes</i>	130
Table 4 <i>Divergent History – Circumstance</i>	138
Table 5 <i>Legitimation in the Karen social practice of mothering post-resettlement</i>	141
Table 6 <i>Levels of Recontextualization of the Discourse of Discipline</i>	146

List of Figures

Chapter 3

Figure 1. PRISMA Flow of Information..... 33

Chapter 4

Figure 1. Entrance to the Umpiem Camp..... 94

Chapter 5

Figure 1. Mechanisms of Transformation..... 150

Chapter 1
Eh Hser's Narrative

မဲလော့၅၅၅၅နံ၅မဲယဖျိထီ၅ယဲ၅၅နံ၅တီ၅တံ၅အလီ၅ခံ၅ယဟဲ၅သုး၅ယီ၅အသး၅ဆူ၅ကညီ၅ဒီ၅ကလု၅
(K.N.U) ထံ၅ကီ၅ကဝီ၅တ၅ပ၅လ၅အဆီ၅လီ၅ပ၅လီ၅သး၅မဲ၅ကီ၅ပ၅ယီ၅ဒီ၅ယံ၅ကီ၅အကီ၅ဆ၅န့၅လီ၅.
ဒီ၅ယစးထီ၅မ၅ယု၅မ၅သကိး၅တ၅ဒီ၅ကညီ၅ဒီ၅ကလု၅မ၅ဖျိ၅ကရ၅(K.N.U) လ၅အမ့၅ဝဲ၅န့၅ကီ၅ရ၅ကညီ
ပိ၅မ့၅ကရ၅အကရ၅ခိ၅တ၅က၅အသီ၅မဲ၅၅၅၅နံ၅န့၅လီ၅.ဒီ၅ယမူ၅ယဒါ၅မ့၅ဝဲ၅တ၅ကွ၅ထွဲ၅ပိ၅မ့၅ဘီ၅၅၅၅,
ယမ၅တ၅လ၅မူ၅ဒါ၅တ၅ခါ၅အံ၅ယံ၅န့၅အဖီ၅ခိ၅ယထံ၅လိ၅ယသး၅ဒီ၅ယသးမူ၅အတံ၅သကိး၅ဒီ၅ပဒီ၅တု၅ဒီ၅ဖျိ၅
သးမဲ၅၅၅၅နံ၅န့၅လီ၅.ဒီ၅တ၅အိ၅သးလ၅ကီ၅ပူ၅မဲ၅န့၅အဆ၅ကတီ၅တမ့၅တ၅မ့၅တ၅မ့၅လ၅လ၅ပဲ၅ပဲ၅
ဒီ၅တမ့၅ခါ၅ကိး၅တ၅ဒုး၅တ၅ယ၅အဆ၅ကတီ၅ဘ၅န့၅လီ၅.တ၅ကရ၅ကရီ၅အတ၅ပညီ၅တခီ၅ဘ၅ယးဝဲ၅
ထံ၅ဂ၅ကီ၅ဂ၅န့၅လီ၅.ဆ၅ကတီ၅မဲ၅န့၅အခါ၅တ၅ဒုး၅အိ၅ထီ၅ဝဲ၅ပိ၅မ့၅ဖျိ၅ကရ၅(K.W.O)တ၅ပ
ညီ၅ကွ၅ခိ၅လ၅တ၅ကရ၅ကရီ၅တခါ၅အံ၅မ့၅ဝဲ၅ညီ၅န့၅ပဝဲ၅ပိ၅မ့၅တဖ၅လ၅အအိ၅လ၅န့၅သဝီ၅ပူ၅သ့၅တ
ဖ၅အတ၅ကူ၅ဘ၅ကူ၅သ့၅တအိ၅ဘ၅န့၅အအံ၅မ့၅ဝဲ၅တခါ၅လ၅ပကဘ၅ပ၅သ့၅ပ၅သးဒီ၅တ၅လ၅
အက၅တခါ၅မ့၅ဝဲ၅ပိ၅မ့၅တဖ၅ပဘ၅လူ၅ပိ၅ထွဲ၅မ၅ထွဲ၅ဝဲ၅ပဝ၅အခံ၅.တ၅ထီ၅ဘီ၅မ့၅ဝဲ၅ဟံ၅ခိ၅ဟံ၅
ကစ၅ဒီ၅ဒ်တ၅န့၅လီ၅မ့၅အိ၅တမံ၅မံ၅ဒီ၅ပိ၅မ့၅တဖ၅ဘ၅လူ၅ပိ၅ထွဲ၅မ၅ထွဲ၅ဝဲ၅လ၅န့၅လီ၅.
သ၅တခါ၅တခါ၅မ့၅ဝဲ၅တ၅မ၅အမ၅ဆ၅မ၅ဘ၅ဒီ၅လ၅တ၅တဖ၅.လွံ၅ခါ၅တခါ၅မိ၅မ့၅တဖ၅ဘ၅တ၅ကွ၅တလီ၅
အီ၅အါ၅ဘ၅တ၅ကွ၅ပိ၅မ့၅တဖ၅တ၅ဖံး၅တ၅မ၅တအိ၅ဘ၅အဝဲ၅သ့၅ဘ၅အိ၅လ၅ဟံ၅.ဘ၅မ၅ဟံ၅
ယီ၅တ၅ဖံး၅တ၅မ၅.ကွ၅ဖိ၅ဒီ၅လ၅တ၅အံ၅အယီ၅အဝဲ၅သ့၅တဒီ၅န့၅ဘ၅တ၅ခွဲး၅တ၅ယ၅လ၅ကဆ၅ထ၅လ၅အ
ခိ၅လ၅ကယု၅ကျိ၅ယု၅စု၅လ၅ဟံ၅ဖိ၅ယီ၅ဖိ၅ဂီ၅ဘ၅န့၅လီ၅.တ၅သ့၅တဖ၅အံ၅ကဲထီ၅က့၅ဝဲ၅တ၅ဘ၅ထွဲ၅လီ၅
မ၅အလု၅အလ၅ဒီ၅ပိ၅မ့၅သ့၅တဖ၅အိ၅ပ၅ယ၅အသးဘ့၅ဘ့၅ဘီ၅ဘီ၅လ၅တ၅န့၅အယီ၅အဝဲ၅သ့၅
တအိ၅ဒီ၅တ၅သး၅လ၅အကတဲ၅ဖျါ၅ဝဲ၅ဘ၅န့၅လီ၅.

In 1975, after I graduated from the seventh grade, I moved into the KNU territories near the border of Burma and Thailand. I joined with the KNU. There was not peace, but also no war. The focus of the organization at this time was political. At that time the KWO was not in existence. In 1979 I began to organize a women's organization in a KNU province. And from this the KWO began to organize. The main purpose for KWO was that commonly women in a Karen village didn't have education. That's the first

တၢ်လီၤတၢ်တၢ်လၢပလဲၤအိၣ်ဗူသ့ၣ်ပသးအလီၤတၢ်မၤဒဲၤကဝီၤပူၤဒံးဘၣ်မၤလၢဖဲၣ်အခါ
UNတယုၤယီၤအစုတၢ်မၤစၢၤဘၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ပယုၤလီၤဆူယီၤကီၢ်ဒီးပအိၣ်ဆီလီၤသးဖဲယီၤကီၢ်
ဆၢန့ၣ်လီၤ.ဒီးတၢ်လီၤဝဲၣ်န့ၣ်ဟံၣ်ယီၤတၢ်အိၣ်နီၣ်တဖျၢၣ်ဘၣ်ဒီးယတမ့ၢ်စ့ၢ်ကိးပုၤထဲတဂၤလၢထံၣ်ဘၣ်
တၢ်ကီၢ်တၢ်ခဲၣ်အံၤဘၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.အါဘၣ်တၢ်တက့ၢ်ပိၣ်မုၢ်တဖၣ်ယုၤလီၤဝဲၣ်ဒီးအမိၣ်ဒီးအဝၢတဖၣ်တပၣ်စ့ၢ်
ကိးဘၣ်.မၤလၢယအိၣ်ဒီးယမိတဖၣ်အယိယဘၣ်တုထီၣ်ဝဲၣ်ဒဲၣ်လၢပကအိၣ်ဆိးအိၣ်တဖၣ်တလီၤအ
ဂီၢ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ဒဲလၢပသ့ၣ်ထီၣ်အိၣ်အံၤမ့ၢ်ဝဲၣ်ဝဲၣ်ဒီးအခိၣ်ဒုးလၢဖျၢၣ်စံးန့ၣ်လီၤ.ပကျိၣ်စုတအိၣ်ဘၣ်,
တၢ်တအိၣ်ဒီးပုၤနီၣ်တမံၤဘၣ်ယနီၢ်ကစၢ်ဘၣ်ယဲယသးသဟီၣ်စၢ်ဖးဒိၣ်မၤလၢယဝၢတဟံၣ်ယုၤဒီးယၢ
ဘၣ်အယိန့ၣ်လီၤ.ဒီးယဘၣ်စးထီၣ်ဟံးထီၣ်မိၣ်ထီၣ်ဝဲၣ်မူၤဒါဒိၣ်ခါတဂၤဒီးယတမ့ၢ်စ့ၢ်ကိးပုၤပိၣ်
မုၢ်ထဲတဂၤလၢဘၣ်ဟံးန့ၣ်ထီၣ်မိၣ်ထီၣ်မူၤဒါအံၤဘၣ်.ပိၣ်မုၢ်အါဂၤတဖၣ်စ့ၢ်ကိးဘၣ်ကဲထီၣ်က့ၢ်ဟံၣ်
ခိၣ်က့ၢ်ထွဲဖိလံၤဒီးဘၣ်မၤတၢ်ခဲလၢတၢ်က့ၢ်ထွဲဟံၣ်ဖိယမိအဂီၢ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ပထံၣ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ကီၢ်တၢ်ခဲၣ်
တၢ်လၢအတၢ်တၢ်ဒီးပုၤဘၣ်ဆၣ်ပမိဖျိပဝဲပသးအုးသးဘၣ်ဖျိဘၣ်ဆၣ်ပတဟ့ၣ်အစွဲးလၢတၢ်ကမၤ
လီၤမၤဒီးမၤဟးဂီၢ်ပသးဘၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.

The first location where we hid was not a refugee camp yet because the UN was not giving support yet. We lived on the border of Thailand and Burma. There were no houses. I was not alone. There were many women who fled without husbands. I had my children so I had to build a temporary shelter with sticks and a plastic roof cover. We lived under this. We didn't have money; we had nothing. It felt so bad without my husband. I was the one who had to take care of the children and to do everything that men do. And not just me, every woman had to take charge to care for the household. We were faced with big challenges, but we stayed. We felt sad, but we did not allow that to break our hearts.

ပအိၣ်လၢတၢ်လီၤဝဲၣ်အံၤလၢဒဲလၢဘၣ်တၢ်သ့ၣ်ထီၣ်အိၣ်လၢဝဲၣ်ဒီးဖျၢၣ်စံးဖိလၢအံၤယံၣ်ဝဲၣ်
လၢၤလၢအတၢ်ပူၤညါန့ၣ်လီၤ.အါတက့ၢ်ဟါလီၤခိတခိန့ၣ်ပတမၤတၢ်နီၣ်တမံၤဘၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.သနၢ်က့ပ
စူးဖျိၣ်ရိဖျိၣ်ထီၣ်သကိးသး,ဖးလံၣ်စီဆံ့အဆၢတဖၣ်.ဟ့ၣ်ဂံၢ်ဟ့ၣ်ဘါလိၣ်သကိးပသး,ဒီးတဲနံၤတဲအု
လိၣ်သကိးပသးန့ၣ်လီၤ.ဒီးလၢပမၤတၢ်ဝဲၣ်အံၤအယိပထံၣ်ဘၣ်လၢပန့ၣ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ဂံၢ်တၢ်ဘါလၢမၤနၢၤ
က့ၢ်ပတၢ်သ့ၣ်ဘၣ်ဖျိသးဘၣ်ဖျိတဖၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.တၢ်စူးဖျိၣ်ရိဖျိၣ်သကိးလိၣ်သးမၤတၢ်လၢအရ့ၣ်ဒိၣ်ဒိၣ်

မးန့ၣ်လီၤ.ပမ့ၢ်အိၣ်တကၢတပူၤန့ၣ်ပကလဲၤထံၣ်န့ၣ်တၢ်ဂံၢ်တၢ်ဘါဖဲလဲၣ်.ယကထံၣ်န့ၣ်တၢ်သ့ၣ်ညါန့ၣ်
ပာ်ဖဲလဲၣ်.တၢ်အိၣ်သးအဝဲအံၤနးဒိၣ်မးဘၣ်ဆၣ်စံးဘျူးကစၢ်ယွၤလၢတဟ့ၣ်ပလီၤယံၤဘၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.
ပသ့ၣ်ထီၣ်တၢ်ရဲလိၣ်သကိးသးဒီးတၢ်ဟ့ၣ်ကူၣ်ထီၣ်လိၣ်သကိးအဂံၢ်အဘါဒီးပထံၣ်န့ၣ်တၢ်ဂံၢ်ဆူၣ်ဘါ
ဆူၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.တၢ်စူးဖိၣ်ရိဖိၣ်လိၣ်သကိးပသးတဘျီအံၤပုၤလၢလၢဟံးန့ၣ်ဖိၣ်ထီၣ်မူၤဒါမ့ၢ်ဝဲကညီဒီးက
လုၣ်ပိၣ်မုၢ်ကရၢ(K.W.O)န့ၣ်လီၤ.ပိၣ်မုၢ်ကရၢမူၤဒါခိၣ်တဖၣ်ဟံးန့ၣ်ဝဲမူၤဒါလၢတၢ် စူးဖိၣ်အိၣ်သကိး.
ဟ့ၣ်သ့ၣ်ညါအါထီၣ်ပိၣ်မုၢ်တဖၣ်တၢ်သ့ၣ်ညါန့ၣ်ပာ်ဒီးတၢ်ကူၣ်ဘၣ်ကူၣ်သ့န့ၣ်လီၤ.

We lived in this location for four months with the sticks and plastic roof. In the evening we didn't have anything to do. We would gather, just gather together, read the Bible, read scripture and encourage each other, and talk about funny things. We found courage to overcome the sadness. Gathering together is important. If we live separate, how do we find encouragement? How do we find knowledge? This situation was terrible, but thank God for not letting us down. We build relationships together and moral support, and became powerful. The leaders of KWO would organize these gatherings. The KWO worked hard to gather the women together, to give them knowledge, to give them education.

ဖဲပန့ၣ်လီၤအိၣ်လၢဒဲကဝီပူၤအခါ,ယနီၣ်ကစၢ်ဒၣ်ယဲလၢစ့ၢ်န့ၣ်အလီၢ်ခံယကဲထီၣ်ဘၣ်ယဲဒဲ
ကဝီခိၣ်တကၢန့ၣ်လီၤ.ယကဲထီၣ်စ့ၢ်ကိးယဲတၢ်ကလုၢ်တဖျၢၣ်လၢယကစံးကတိၤတၢ်ပီၣ်တၢ်ပီတၢ်
ဒီးပုၤဆီၣ်ထွဲမၤစၢၤတၢ်ကရၢကရိတဖၣ်ဒ်အမ့ၢ်ဝဲUNန့ၣ်လီၤ.ယနီၣ်ကစၢ်ဒၣ်ယဲတဖျၢၣ်လၢ ယကဲထီ
ဒီးဘၣ်ယဲဒဲကဝီခိၣ်ဒ်ဘၣ်န့ၣ်ယမၤတၢ်လၢပိၣ်မုၢ်စၢၤဖိၣ်ကရၢတစီဒီးယထံၣ်ဘၣ်ယဲလၢပုၤကမျၢၢ်
လၢဒဲကဝီပူၤအါဒီးအါဂၢဆီၣ်ထွဲမၤစၢၤစ့ၢ်ကိးဝဲပုၤန့ၣ်လီၤ.ဒီးပဝဲပိၣ်မုၢ်တဖၣ်ဖဲဘၣ်သဂၢၢ်ဝဲတၢ်ကံ
တၢ်ခဲဒ်အမ့ၢ်ဝဲဟံၣ်ဖိယိဖိတၢ်သဘံၣ်သဘုၣ်,တၢ်ဆီၣ်တံၢ်မၤနၢၤ,တၢ်မၤဘၣ်ဒိဘၣ်ထံးပဝဲသ့ၣ်တဖၣ်
ပလဲယံၤဝဲဆူပိၣ်မုၢ်အပုၤဘၣ်မူဘၣ်ဒါခိၣ်တဖၣ်အအိၣ်,ဒီးပအိၣ်ဒီးသးသဟီၣ်လၢအဂံၢ်ဆူၣ်ဘါ
ဆူၣ်,ဒီးပသးန့ၣ်ဆူၣ်ဝဲလၢပကလဲၤတဲဘၣ်က့ၤပခိၣ်ပနၢ်တဖၣ်လၢပဟံၣ်ဖိယိဖိအတၢ်ဂ့ၢ်ကီလၢပ
ဟံၣ်ဖိယိဖိလၢအမၤဆါပုၤဒီးအံၤဒီးန့ၣ်လီၤ.ကညီစၢၤဖိၣ်ကရၢ(K.W.O)ဟံးန့ၣ်မူၤဒါမ့ၢ်လၢတၢ်က
ရၢကရိတခါအံၤဘၣ်ယးဒီးပိၣ်မုၢ်တကၢပၤန့ၣ်လီၤ.

When I entered the refugee camp, I continued to be the chief of KWO. Many years after I entered the refugee camp, I became the camp leader. I was a voice, the one who could

communicate with many organizations, the UN. I began to organize the KWO in the camps. People who live in the refugee camp have support in KWO. When we face challenges like violence, family abuse, we go to the camp leader. We feel powerful. We have more encouragement to go to the leader to tell them, 'my family, my husband is doing this to me.' The KWO takes charge because they are part of the women.

ခဲအံၤတခီယထံၣ်ဘၣ်လၢပလုၤပလၢန့ၣ်လဲလိာ်က့ၤသးဒီးတခါလံန့ၣ်လီၤ.ဖဲပအိၣ်လၢဒဲက
ဝီၤပူၤအခါပဒီးန့ၣ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ဆိၣ်ထွဲမၤစၢၤလၢတၢ်ကရၢကရိတဖၣ်အအိၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ဒီးတၢ်ကရၢကရိတ
ဖၣ်အံၤအိၣ်ဝဲဒီးတၢ်သိၣ်လိသီလိလၢကိးနံၤဒဲးန့ၣ်လီၤ.ကညီစၢၤဖိၣ်ပိာ်မုၢ်ကရၢ(K.W.O)ပၣ်ယုၢ်မၤ
သ ကိးလၢတၢ်ဟ့ၣ်တၢ်သိၣ်လိတဖၣ်အံၤဒဲးသိးပိာ်မုၢ်တဖၣ်ကကဲထီၣ်တၢ်လဲလိာ်ဆီတလဲအခါခါက
သ့ ဝဲအဂီၢ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ပမုၢ်ထီၣ်သတြီၤပုၤလၢအအိၣ်လၢအူသဝီပူၤဒီးပုၤလၢအိၣ်လၢဒဲကဝီၤပူၤတဖၣ်အ
တၢ် ဆိကမိၣ်တၢ်သိးလိာ်အသးဘၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.အါဒၣ်တၢ်တက့ၢ်ပုၤအိၣ်လၢဒဲကဝီၤပူၤတဖၣ်ဒီးန့ၣ်ဘၣ်
ဝဲ တၢ်က့ၣ်ဘၣ်က့ၣ်သ့ဒီးဒီးန့ၣ်ဘၣ်ဝဲဒၣ်တၢ်သိၣ်လိန့ၣ်လီၤ.နမ့ၢ်ပာ်ဖိၣ်တၢ်ခံခါအံၤဒီးနကထံၣ်ဘၣ်ဝဲ
တၢ်လဲလိာ်အသးသ့ဝဲလီၤ.ပိာ်မုၢ်တဖၣ်ဆီတလဲက့ၤတၢ်အိၣ်မူတၢ်သးလီၢ်သးကျဲလၢထံကီၢ်သၢဘၣ်
တဘၣ်အံၤအပူၤစုၢ်ကိးန့ၣ်လီၤ.တၢ်ဆဲးတၢ်လၢအတၢ်လီၤစၢၤလဲလိာ်က့ၤသးလီၤ.ပဒီးန့ၣ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ခွဲး
တၢ်ယၢ်အါထီၣ်လၢကီၢ်အမဲရကၤပူၤအံၤန့ၣ်လီၤ.ပိာ်မုၢ်တဖၣ်စးထီၣ်မၤတၢ်အဝဲသ့ၣ်စးထီၣ်ဆိၣ်ထွဲ
မၤစၢၤလီၤက့ၤအနီၢ်ကခါဒီးအစုအိၣ်ဝဲလၢကကွၢ်ထွဲဝဲဟံၣ်ဖိသီဖိအဂီၢ်န့ၣ်လီၤ. ဖဲထံကီၢ်အဝဲအံၤပိာ်
မုၢ်တဖၣ်အတၢ်ထံၣ်အါထီၣ်လဲလိာ်ထီၣ်ဒီးအိးဟံၣ်ထီၣ်အသးအါထီၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ဒ်တၢ်သ့ၣ်ညါအံၤအ
သိးထံကီၢ်အံၤမုၢ်တၢ်လီၢ်လၢနဘၣ်အိးထီၣ်နမဲၢ်ရံၤ.အိးထီၣ်နသးအတၢ်ဆိကမိၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ဘၣ်ဆၣ်ခဲ
အံၤဟံၣ်ဖိသီဖိတဖၣ်လီၤဖးဝဲ ဒၣ်န့ၣ်လီၤ.ဖဲအံၤဖိသ့ၣ်သ့ၣ်တဖၣ်အမိၢ်တအိၣ်လၢကဘၣ်. မ့မုၢ်ပိာ်မုၢ်
အိၣ်ဒီးဝဲတနီၤအဝဲသ့ၣ်တဆီတလဲဝဲဘၣ်.အဝဲသ့ၣ်အိၣ်မူဒီးတၢ်အိၣ်မူလၢညါ.တ့ၢ်ယုၢ်မုၢ်တမုၢ်လူၤပိာ်
ထွဲဒီးဝဲအလုၤအလၢဒီးသိးလၢညါလၢအမုၢ်ဝဲဘၣ်အိၣ်လၢတၢ်အဖီလၢန့ၣ်လီၤ.အဝဲသ့ၣ်တဖၣ်မၤသး
ဒီးသိးပုၤလၢအိၣ်လၢသဝီပူၤလၢအန့ၣ်ဝဲလၢတၢ်ခဲလၢာ်မုၢ်တၢ်ဟဲဝဲန့ၣ်လီၤ.

Now I see norms are changing. When you live in a refugee camp, you get support by many organizations. You have many lectures going on every day. The KWO is part of giving training to women, so they can make change. People in the village and people at the camp, they no longer think the same. People living in the camp, they have more education; they have more training. When these are combined together, something might change. And women are making change in the third country as well. The culture that we

belonged to, it has changed. We have much more opportunity in the United States. Every woman starts working and they start to support themselves and find money to take care of the household. Here women are more worldwide. They are more open. This is the place to open your eyes, open your mind. But the family is divorced right now. The children have no mom. And there are some women who never change. They stay, drag or take along the tradition; they have to live under their husbands. They are like the people in the villages who just believe in fate.

ပဲသဲသဲတနီပတၢ်ဆိကမိၣ်သ့ၣ်နီၣ်ဒီးဒၣ်ပတၢ်လီၢ်တၢ်ကျဲလၢအမ့ၢ်ဝဲတၢ်လီၢ်လၢအိၣ်ဒီးတၢ်
မ့ၢ်တၢ်စ့ၣ်န့ၣ်လီၢ်.မ့ၢ်သ့ၣ်န့ၣ်ပအိၣ်ဒီးတၢ်တိၣ်ကျဲလၢပကၠၢ်မိၣ်ဝဲဒၣ်ပပုၤသးဝဲလၢခံတမိၤလၢအိၣ်ဒီး
တၢ်ကူၣ်ဘၣ်ကူၣ်သ့ၣ်တဖၣ်.ဒ်သိးကသ့ၣ်ထီၣ်က့ၤပဝဲကညီတဝၢ,ကသ့ၣ်ထီၣ်က့ၤပဝဲပုၤကညီဖိ
တဖၣ်ဒ်သိးကဂံၢ်ဆူၣ်ဘါဆူၣ်ထီၣ်,ကဂၢၢ်ကကျဲလၢထီၣ်က့ၤတၢ်သ့ၣ်တဖၣ်အံၤပဆိကမိၣ်ဒီးတိၣ်ပဝဲ
န့ၣ်လီၢ်.အိၣ်ခါစ့ၣ်က့ၣ်(AungSanSuuKyi)မ့ၢ်ကထီၣ်ဘၣ်ကီၢ်ခိၣ်န့ၣ်မ့ၢ်တၢ်ဂ့ၤလီၢ်ဘၣ်မနုၤအယိ
လဲၣ်အဝဲမ့ၢ်ပုၤတဂၤလၢအလၢပုၤဒီးတၢ်သ့ၣ်ညါန့ၣ်ပၢၢ်,တၢ်ကူၣ်ဘၣ်ကူၣ်သ့ၣ်.တၢ်လဲၤခိၣ်ဖျိဒီးအဝဲမ့ၢ်ပိၣ်
မ့ၢ်တဂၤလၢအကူၣ်သ့ၣ်ဒီးအတၢ်ထံၣ်ထီၣ်ဂ့ၤဝဲလၢပုၤကလုၢ်တဖၣ်အဖီခိၣ်န့ၣ်လီၢ်.မ့ၢ်ဒ်န့ၣ်သၢ
ပျၢၤဒီးယကမ့ၢ်ပုၤတဂၤလၢက့ၤက့ၤဆူယတၢ်လီၢ်အဆိကတၢ်န့ၣ်လီၢ်.

We are still thinking of our land, it's the most peaceful and we have a plan of bringing the youth generation who have education to build our community, to build our Karen people to become stronger, sustaining. Yeah, we're still thinking about that. If Aung San Suu Kyi becomes prime minister, of course she has full knowledge. She has experience and she has a wise heart, real kindness to every ethnic group...I would be the first to go back.

- Eh Hser

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore resilience, identity construction, and the recontextualization of mothering within the narratives of Karen women refugees from Burma. Inherent to this exploration are the interconnectedness of familial relationships and the importance of community structures in supporting the health of these relationships. The identification of response strategies that women experiencing forced

migration engaged to support health revealed the social, political, and cultural systems around and through which women navigated displacement. The narrative of Eh Hser is reflective of the ways Karen women positioned themselves as agentic and resilient actors within the discourses of forced migration. As women pursued *peace* and *together* within their families and communities, their experiences centered around the balance they constructed that enabled the passage of culture through to the next generation of its members. As women reflected during our discussions, what they chose to express in those moments held significance - because of what they said, how they said it, what they included, and what they did not. My intent is to write in a way that captures what I understood to be the intended meaning and context of these interactions. Based on these representations, I consider how nurses might partner with migrant communities to support this balance to achieve health in individuals, families, and communities.

Resilience & Response Strategies

Defined as the processes of adaptation and recovery in response to a traumatic event, resilience is a product of the presence or absence of fundamental attributes. These include risk and protective factors, psychosocial and biological predispositions, and individual and environmental states (Garcia-Dia, 2013). In refugees globally, resilient outcomes are predicted by individual coping style (Hooberman et al., 2010; Schweitzer, Greenslad, & Kagee, 2007), family (Darychuck & Jackson, 2015; Brough et al., 2012; Wycoff, Tinagon, & Dickson, 2011; Weine, 2011; Sossou et al., 2008; Schweitzer, Greenslad, & Kagee, 2007), gender (Darychuck & Jackson, 2015; Sossou et al., 2008), tradition (Darychuck & Jackson, 2015), religion (Ager et al., 2015; Darychuck &

Jackson, 2015; Munt, 2012; Schweitzer, Greenslad, & Kagee, 2007), and processes of meaning-making (Brough et al., 2012; Munt, 2012).

At the level of community, resilience factors engaged by members of a refugee community can function to protect its members from scrutiny and stigma (Mason & Pulvirenti, 2013). Holzer (2014) documents the built environment as a key mediator of individual health and collective function in the refugee camp setting. Resilience is dynamic, continuous, and reflects connections between the individual, the immediate social network, the community, and the environment (Lenette, Brough, & Cox, 2013).

Accounts of refugee resilience from the perspectives of both individuals and community are well represented in research. An important protective factor that impacts positive adaptation and coping are the presence of family, strong social networks, and relationships. This is different, however, from considering the resiliency of a relationship itself and in my research this is an important distinction. Descriptions of patterns of resilience present in the connection between a mother and her children in the context of refugee migration are limited. In the research involved in this dissertation, as my relationships with Karen women participants deepened over time, I recognized that these connections were a foundation of every experience women shared.

Often what challenged women, or were compelling experiences for women through the course of migration, were the altered state of the relationships that they valued. The ways in which these relationships shifted in response to displacement were a product of the response strategies a woman engaged to support the health of these individual, family, and community connections. In my research I define response

strategies as the tools engaged by an individual or community to navigate forced migration and promote the resilience of interpersonal connections, and cope individually and collectively with the challenges inherent to cultural transformation. Relevant to this, and an additional gap that I examine is the intersection of the ways Karen women from Burma enact resiliency through response strategies engaged to address the systems and structures they navigate through refugee migration.

Dissertation Aims

Aim 1. Identify response strategies related to psychosocial and physical health engaged by Karen refugee women to navigate migration.

Aim 2. Investigate the individual and group processes of identity construction in the context of Karen refugee migration.

Aim 3. Understand the experiences of refugee women as they interact with the network of support structures put in place for refugees and examine how refugees are positioned and position themselves within these structures.

Aim 4. Make recommendations relevant to future research and programmatic interventions that effectively target the health experience of emerging and highly vulnerable communities of refugee women.

I capture Aims 1 and 2 through a systematic review of the literature presented in Chapter 3 of the dissertation, as well as the ethnographic case study methodology described in Chapters 4 and 5. I address Aim 3 through the mechanisms of analysis I selected with the intention to reveal embedded power and influence. Through Aim 4 I

acknowledge the potential impact of strong community partnerships as findings are translated into programs.

In pursuing these aims, broad themes of health, identity construction, and mothering emerged. I interpreted these ideas using tools such as figured worlds, the third space, recontextualization, and the identification of spaces of transformation. These ideas became relevant as women described constructing and sustaining balance within the fluid context of migration. Though I did not anticipate that the topic of the Karen social practice of mothering would emerge so prominently in discussions with women, the notion that a mother's migration experience is inherently tied to the experience of her children is compelling. I address these findings further in the dissertation manuscripts and synthesis.

Theoretical Framework

I interpreted data collected over the eleven-month study period through the lens of three broad theoretical frameworks. The first, a tool central to the examination of the ways in which Karen women produce and construct identity, is discourse. The assertion that power, prestige, and status circulate and influence the lived experience is increasingly recognized throughout a broad range of social and cultural contexts. Discourses and social practices exist in a dynamic relationship in that social practices are constructed through relevant discourses, while simultaneously social practices act on and transform those same discourses (Gee, 2014; Rogers, 2011; Van Leeuwen, 2008).

Positional identity refers particularly to the ways discourses are situated within routine or day-to-day events and interactions. The discourses of power, status, and

privilege systematically circulate around the individual and within the collective. Over time, as an individual makes sense of and takes up certain social positions, they become figured into a status. Inherent to this process of self-understanding and self-making is an awareness of the available social positions that were not taken up, the recognition of the *other*. What one becomes is relevant to what one did not become (Holquist, 2002; Holland et al., 1998).

Finally, the theory of hybridity references the tension residing at the intersection of cultures. In this data, the intersection of inherited Karen collectivist culture and characteristics of dominant individualist culture within the United States is a representation of a cultural hybrid space. The binary division of what extends culturally from the past and what is unique to the present within this hybrid space is problematic. As actors mobilize differences in culture to produce meaning, an alternative to the past/present dichotomy is realized. At this state of in-between, identity is transformed as actors engage and negotiate shifting cultural contexts (Bhabha, 1994).

Method

This dissertation is a series of ethnographic case studies exploring experiences of resilience, identity construction, and mothering among Karen refugee women from Burma. The ethnographic case study design integrates an emphasis on understanding cultural patterns within dominant social, cultural, and political discourses with in-depth descriptions of the experiences of refugee women. Through this method I maintain a lens of culture through distinctive categories of inquiry in my data.

In the first phase of data collection, I spent three weeks conducting participant observation and informal interviews in two refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. In the second phase of data collection, I recruited and interviewed repeatedly a cohort of twelve Karen women post-resettlement in the United States over a seven-month period.

Significance

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) program operating the nine refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border (where a majority of displaced Karen initially relocated) has significantly reduced the processing of resettlement cases. There remain around 5000 refugees living in these camps who expressed interest in third country resettlement within the 2013 announcement period and are awaiting notification of their migration status (US State Department, 2014; UNHCR, 2014). This policy shift is a result of movement towards democratic reform by the Thein Sein presidency, who came to power in Burma in a controversial and widely criticized election in 2011. Nonetheless, President Thein Sein took power as the first civilian president in almost five decades. More recently, in November of 2015, what is described as Burma's first national vote in over fifty years resulted in a decisive victory for the National League for Democracy (NLD) party. Further reform is anticipated. The political agenda will likely include decisions surrounding ongoing negotiations of an organized return program for the nearly 120,000 refugees from Burma remaining in camps along the Thai-Burma border.

At this moment in history, the patterns of movement of displaced communities are more dynamic than ever before, and this is reflected in the current context of Karen

migration (UNHCR, 2015). Karen refugees continue to migrate to the United States through the resettlement program. Spontaneously and with increasing frequency Karen refugees are returning to Burma from the camps. And there are Karen who remain in between. Response strategies women engage as they navigate migration, the unique space of the refugee camp, and mothering post-resettlement facilitate the negotiation of the social, cultural, political, and legal structures they encounter. I assert that within the findings I describe, including transformational spaces and the third space, the processes of coping and becoming reflected the relationship between structure and agency. Within these intersections a woman could express her resistance to a system that in its design represented a majority she was not a part of. As Karen refugee women have redesigned their positions within these systems, cultural norms shifted. These shifts were inclusive of norms that influenced or defined the role of Karen women.

Dissertation Format

This dissertation is organized according to the three-manuscript format option and criteria set forward by the University of Minnesota Graduate School and the University of Minnesota School of Nursing. In this, Chapter 1, I introduce the dissertation through a brief historical narrative of Eh Hser, one of the Karen women participants. With this as context, I describe the purpose and aims of the study and provide background on the concept of resilience in forced migration. I introduce broadly my theoretical frameworks and methodology. I conclude this chapter with a reflection on the significance of this work.

Chapter 2 is titled "*I have many friends in Burma, do you know them?*":

Reflections on Position, Interpretation, and Meaning. In the chapter I reflect on my intersectional identity, namely the positions I experience as an educated white woman from the United States, a mother, a nurse, and a researcher. I consider the formative experiences in my background that have shaped my position and led me to the questions I ask in this dissertation. Finally, I discuss my approach to the interpretation of findings through the perspective my intersection of identities afforded me. I consider attributes of feminist ethnography relevant to positionality and representation.

Chapters 3-5 are presented in manuscript format. The Chapter 3 manuscript is titled: *A systematic review of Karen refugee health.* The review addresses the research question: What is the impact of trauma and migration on the physical and mental health of Karen refugees? The objective of this inquiry was to provide a comprehensive perspective of the mental and physical health impacts of the Karen migration experience through a critical review of the relevant qualitative and quantitative bodies of literature.

The Chapter 4 manuscript is titled: *Identity construction at the intersection of coping and becoming: A study of the Inside and Outside figured worlds in two Burmese refugee camps.* This manuscript is an analysis of findings from the first phase of data collection that I conducted in the Nu Po and Umpiem refugee camps, two of the nine refugee camps situated along the Thai-Burma border. The research question I addressed in this manuscript was: How does a refugee woman situate her identity in response to the unique space where she is both positioned as a camp inhabitant experiencing a series of unfolding sociopolitical events while simultaneously actively redefining her position? In redefining this position, I considered that she is drawing on historical experiences, as well

as integrating these experiences with the anticipation of the future for herself, her family, and her community.

The Chapter 5 manuscript is titled: “*What about the next generation that’s coming?*” *The recontextualization of mothering post-refugee resettlement*. This manuscript is an analysis of findings from the second phase of data collection, a seven-month period of participant observation and interviews of a 12-member cohort of Karen women resettled in the United States. The research questions I address in this manuscript are: 1) How do Karen women construct the social practice of mothering within the discourses of migration and resettlement? This question approaches the active internal processes and strategies Karen women engage to develop mothering practices. 2) In what ways are the social, familial, and legal institutions within which women negotiate individual and cultural mothering identities represented in discussions with women surrounding the social practice of mothering? This question approaches the external systems and processes that Karen mothers engage with post-resettlement.

Finally, Chapter 6 is a synthesis of major findings in the dissertation and a discussion of implications, limitations, and next steps. I reflect on the relevance of the human rights framework in this research, and the parallels through which this framework has impacted my research lens as well as the migration experiences of the women I partnered with as research participants.

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Chapter 2

“I have many friends in Burma, do you know them?”

Reflections on Position, Interpretation, and Meaning

I began data collection for this dissertation project in the Nu Po refugee camp, one of the nine camps situated along the Thai-Burma border. On the first day of participant observation and informal interviews, I met a 75 year-old Karen woman who had fled to Thailand in 1997, before Nu Po was established. In our conversation, she related the fear in her heart from her memories of guns, and the experience of homelessness. She said that security was the most important thing to her. And she judged this security through the presence of friends, family, and God. At the end of our discussion, she leaned her head to one side, looked at me directly in the eye, and said, “I have many friends in Burma, do you know them?” It was very clear that the “friends” she referenced in her question were not those who contributed to her wellbeing. Rather, these were the “friends” who “*burned everything*”. This moment in the field transformed my agenda as an ethnographer. I set aside my dissertation aims, and committed to approaching my research through a lens of cultural relativism and community partnership. I began to explore the questions of why this woman decided to share her history and perspectives with me, given what she had experienced? How was situational power constructed in this space? And, what position did I embody that resulted in the suspicion she communicated in her final statement? In this chapter I explore how I approached these questions. In doing so I draw from background experiences as well as those that shaped my perspective as this project evolved.

The Day I Began to Eat Lunch with the Women

One of the memories most prominent in my mind from the two years I lived as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania was the day I began eating

lunch with the women of my host family. When I first moved to Seyenne Gababe I represented the status conferred to a community that accompanied the placement of a Peace Corps volunteer. Mauritania was at that time a country most recognized from the outside for the spreading Sahara, increasing incidence of famine and drought, and presence of modern day slavery. A Peace Corps volunteer placement implied to peer villages that the community had the wealth to construct a dwelling for the volunteer, the resources to assign a host country national counterpart, and the capacity to “develop”. And for a while, representing that status superseded any of the other identities that defined me. And as a result, for the first six months I lived in the community, I ate lunch every day with the men, including my host father, the village chief. This meant I was served by and before the women in my family, and that I occasionally ate a vegetable or piece of dried fish.

And then my position shifted, and one day I began eating lunch with the women. I journaled extensively about this change; though never felt that I quite captured the nuances in the transition. It could have been that on that day I was simply no longer invited to eat with the men. But the way I remember it, I was *invited* to eat with the women. And as I look back at my journals, I celebrated this; the opportunity to eat an hour later from bowls half full of plain rice that had been cleared from the interior salon where the men had just finished. Because what I felt the shift represented was a deepening affection within the community, a recognition and acceptance that though I was ‘other’, I belonged. My becoming in the sense of my growing integration within the community became tied to the becoming of the community as we discussed a garden

expansion, the community's perceived need for an additional well, and the feasibility of cultivating fruit trees. And while I continued to embody a conduit to financial resources, I became most recognized for sitting by the well in the morning to help women draw water and carrying the buckets on my head with a shocking lack of grace to the garden. And I carried this experience with me through my dissertation research because it signified that my position inhered much more fluidity than what a traditional ethnographic perspective holds, regarding a discrete emic/etic binary (Soni-Sinha, 2008; Merriam et al., 2001).

In her book *Woman, Native, Other* (1989) Trinh Minh-ha writes,

This [discovering ones position] is further intensified by her finding herself also at odds with her relation to writing, which when carried out uncritically often proves to be one of domination: as holder of speech, she usually writes from a position of power, creating as an "author," situating herself above her work and existing before it, rarely simultaneously with it. Thus, it has become quite impossible for her to take up her pen without at the same time questioning her relation to the material that defines her and her created work. As focal point of cultural consciousness and social change, writing weaves into language the complex relations of a subject caught between the problems of race and gender and the practice of literature as the very place where social alienation is thwarted differently according to each specific context (p. 6).

I interpret this passage to suggest that an idea explained from a position of power is vacant. It implies that in this context a question asked between *us*, about *them* results in the 'subject' repositioned as an outsider (Minh-ha, 1989). In contrast, thought and language generated at the intersection of cultural hybridity, critical consciousness, and reflexivity holds meaning and references the becoming of the relationship between actors. Minh-ha focuses on writing in her work. However her critical reflections concerning position and meaning are relevant to perspectives in feminist ethnography. As I engaged

in partnerships with Karen refugee women I drew from these perspectives to understand the strategies Karen women engaged to support health through migration. And in doing this, processes of reflexivity, position, and representation became central to this work.

More than ten years ago, I submitted an application for admission to the Johns Hopkins University Masters of Science in Nursing and Masters in Public Health dual degree program. The first paragraph of my admissions essay read:

I have seen poverty. I lived in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania for two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in a small rural community. It is a different world with a different mindset and what struck me during my experience was that poverty as it is defined is not a way of life. The community of Seyenne Gababe is considered impoverished by any standard. But the reality is that the community members live their lives the way they have always lived their lives. The death and illness, starvation, and hardships they deal with through laughter and dependence on family and community as they always have. Poverty is not a way of life, it is a word applicable to this circumstance because these conditions do not exist in all parts of the world, and I have the perspective to compare them. In my mind, when I think about my community, it is not poverty that defines them. They define themselves through their strength as they battle disparity.

I include this passionate and idealistic passage in this chapter, because it reveals the longevity and evolution of my thinking in two important ways relevant to position, context, and the interpretation of meaning. First, in the essay I reflected on poverty as a word, one that facilitates the construction of a division of experiences. Applying the word poverty distributes power to one group (those in a position to label a context outside of their own as one that is consistent with the standards of poverty) over another group experiencing a different, more vulnerable, set of circumstances. Through this reflection I indirectly referenced the impact of a position of privilege, and I identified this privileged position as a part of my own perspective.

Second, I alluded to the counter-narrative. In this case my impression of the community's resistance to definition by a label of poverty. This impression evolved from observations of a collectivist approach to addressing hardship, laughter, and the reliance on inherited cultural practices and norms to generate meaning within this counter-narrative. These were observations I engaged within a space of cultural hybridity, in partnership with members of the community. Though I was not conducting research, navigating this positionality necessitated reflection on the recursive nature of the narrative and counter-narrative contexts.

Position, Representation & Subjectivity

I began my dissertation research conscious of my identity as a white, educated, middle-class, female, nurse, student, and mother. Early on, I recognized that these identities would emerge differently as I became situated within the relational spaces of the refugee camps and resettlement communities. While I felt some unease in the position of a cultural, ethnic, and linguistic newcomer, I was initially most unsettled in articulating a response to the question of why should this research matter to me? I am not Karen, nor am I a refugee. My position as a nurse ultimately became a primary facet in my approach to navigating these questions. I recognized that as a public health nurse engaged in a response to displacement, interactions I was having with women in the camps and post-resettlement in the United States directly impacted my ability to contribute to these discussions.

And through this duality of position and the ways I represented this position as I encountered and came to know participants, reciprocal dialogue became a feature that

characterized my experiences in the field as both a nurse and a researcher (Bobasi et al., 2003). *Nurse* has relevance across many cultures. Though the education experiences, practice settings, roles, and autonomy of nurses vary, people have an idea of what a nurse represents. And, these notions are generally tied to health, dignity, and caring. So the nurse position in an ethnographic research context, and the way this identity impacts the research process is powerful. It supports a connection between actors (Bobasi et al., 2003; Henry, 2003). And as evidence of this reciprocal circumstance, almost universally in the refugee camps and during early interviews for the United States-based participants some portion of time was spent discussing specific health questions or concerns of the Karen woman participant. In this sense I was ascribed a nurse subject position by the participant herself (van Stapele, 2014).

In addition to identifying myself as a nurse, I also explicitly named key partner organizations as I introduced myself to participants. I did this because I felt the established connection between a refugee and an organization that represented the system of support for displaced and resettled communities would facilitate the establishment of a rapport. I also believed that this connection would help to frame my intentions, at least initially. My concern in identifying this relationship was that women participants would feel obliged to talk with me, and that this sense of obligation would shift the context of our interaction and thus the narrative. It was possible that in identifying an affiliation with an organizational structure I shifted the balance of power. I approached this decision with reflexivity, and feel that the decision to discuss community partnerships ultimately contributed to a sense of trust.

In articulating processes of reflexivity and subjectivity in this research, I explore ways I engaged with my own identity and position as a mother, in particular as an analytical tool. I carried a picture of my family with me through the full study period, in both study sites. I did this because I wanted to disclose this element of my identity with women. This was a lens through which I would interpret the narratives of women, most of whom were mothers, as they navigated displacement. In sharing this part of myself with the women I spoke with, we engaged in an intersubjective production of knowledge (van Stapele, 2014; Willemse, 2014). As a result the interpretation of experiences that we constructed together in the interviews was dialogic in nature. This was the first step in the processes of analysis I used to elicit meaning and context in the data.

Self-reflexivity was a key facet of my analytical process (Lichterman, 2015; van Stapele, 2014). I was apprehensive of approaching too closely the identification and interpretation of the shifting Karen cultural norms, particularly those relevant to the role of women, which participants referenced across the migration continuum. This was not my overall intent. As the direction of my research evolved, my aim became to conceptualize and articulate the space of these shifts – particularly how women recounted repositioning themselves and navigating the structures within the spaces of these shifts. I documented extensively, journaling my observations and experiences in the field. As relationships with my interpreters developed, particularly the interpreter I worked with in the United States, I came to regard them as peer debriefers. We spent time before and after interviews considering the ideas that emerged in discussions and the language

(outside of the oral narrative) that participants embodied. The interpreters' perspectives became reflexive voices that helped to ground my focus.

Finally I consider the situated discursive contexts of the refugee camp and post-resettlement communities in the United States (Soni-Sinha, 2008). As I explored the narratives of Karen women through this dual-site study, I acknowledged that the shift in context itself held meaning. To explore the nuances of this shift in context between sites and its impact on my relationships with participants, I engaged a cultural consultant at the Karen Organization of Minnesota. This was a woman who herself had experienced displacement, left Burma as a refugee, lived in Thailand, and resettled in the United States with her family. Beyond the interpretations constructed with individual women as they narrated their experiences, conversations with the consultant helped to connect these narratives and explore the becoming that they contained. These conversations also served as a platform for discussion of how these findings can inform programs developed to support refugees through transition.

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Chapter 3

A Systematic Review of Karen Refugee Health

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Overview

The purpose of this paper is to provide a comprehensive perspective of the documented physical and mental health issues Karen refugees from Burma face as a result of war and refugee trauma, and migration. The review will address the question: What is the impact of trauma and migration on the physical and mental health of Karen refugees? A total of 18 articles were systematically selected for inclusion in the final review. The focal content for included articles includes qualitative and quantitative research representative of the health and migration experiences of Karen refugees. The findings of this review demonstrate significance for health providers from a public health standpoint as programs and services are targeted to meet the specific health needs of the Karen community. It also highlights the contribution of the Karen forced migration experience to the complexity of individual and community health needs, particularly as a result of the protracted conflict. This critical appraisal of the body of literature describing the health experiences of Karen refugees from Burma, with a particular focus on outcomes relevant to resettlement, demonstrates value as programs are developed with an integrated refugee perspective.

Key words: Health, Refugee, Karen, Myanmar/Burma

Introduction

Refugees, or individuals who have fled their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution, war, or violence are disproportionately vulnerable to psychosocial and physical health problems (UNHCR, 2011; Robertson et al., 2006; Jaranson et al., 2004). One such refugee group, the Karen population originating from Burma, migrating to camps along the Thailand-Burma border, have experienced extensive human rights abuses with a high prevalence of violence against women (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010; Checchi et al., 2003). To date 120,000 Karen refugees are living in camps on the Thai-Burma border. Since 2009, 73 percent of resettled refugees from Burma have been assigned to the United States as the country of resettlement, resulting in a rapid influx of Karen refugees consolidated within several metropolitan areas (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011). These urban centers are strategically positioned to build the science surrounding the effective provision of health services to a culturally unique post-trauma migrant population.

The Karen refugee community in the United States and abroad is a rapidly shifting population demographic. Though it is known that Karen refugees have experienced high exposure to trauma, the resulting mental and physical health impacts of the forced migration experience remain less clear. This disparity in knowledge impedes the ability to strategically translate patterns of health into informed programs that support the wellbeing of the Karen refugee community. Therefore, it is imperative that literature describing the trauma and health experiences of Karen refugees is appraised critically, and implications considered.

The objective of this systematic review is to provide a thorough perspective of the documented physical and mental health issues Karen refugees face as a result of war and refugee trauma, and migration. The review will address the question: What is the impact of trauma and migration on the physical and mental health of Karen refugees?

Methods

To assess the experience of Karen refugees, the electronic databases Medline (1946 - 2014), PsychInfo (1978 - 2014), Social Work Abstracts (1986 - 2014), Scopus (1823 - 2014), and Cinahl (1937 - 2014) were utilized. Key search terms included Karen, Burma/Myanmar, refugee, health, and trauma. No additional limits were applied to the search. A total of 254 articles resulted from the described search criteria (Figure 1). Duplicate publications were identified, which decreased the total article count to 207. Based on a review of abstracts, a total of 18 articles were selected for inclusion in the final review (12 qualitative studies and 6 quantitative studies). No additional publications were selected based on the review of references. The significant decrease in article number from 207 to the 18 included in the final review is attributed primarily to the broad interdisciplinary relevance of the topic, population of interest, and objective of this review. As abstracts were assessed in detail and according to the criteria defined for this review, many noteworthy publications from the education, public affairs, and policy bodies of literature were determined ineligible. Inclusion criteria for qualitative articles included content representative of the experiences of Karen refugees surrounding the event of migration, including a third country resettlement perspective. Inclusion criteria

for the quantitative articles included a public health oriented and population-based approach to research on the Karen health and migration experience.

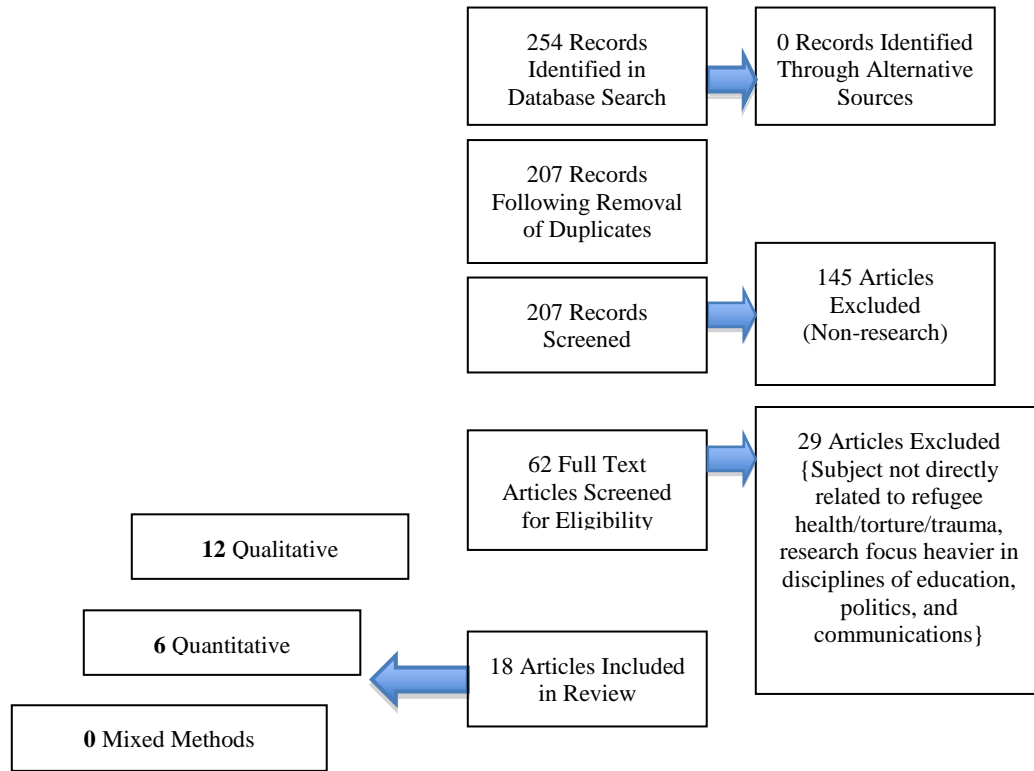


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow of Information. Adapted from “Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement” by D. Moher, A. Liberati, J. Tetzlaff, D. G. Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009, *PLoS Med*, 6, p. e1000097.

Articles were excluded if the focus did not extend to the post-resettlement period; mental, physical, or psychosocial health was not integrated within the study implications; or the primary focus of the research was on an acute or specific disease process.

Guidelines for individual qualitative article critiques include Guide to an Overall Critique of a Qualitative Research Report (Polit & Beck, 2012, pp.115-117) and *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thematic patterns across qualitative texts were recorded (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Quantitative publications were evaluated for

quality based on the National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools Quality Assessment Tool for Quantitative Studies (NCCMT, 2008). This instrument was selected for its strong methodological rating as well as its relevance to public health literature.

Qualitative Research Summary

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks of the included studies centrally approach health and wellbeing from various disciplines, perspectives, and conceptual elements. Two of the studies focus explicitly on coping, one in the context of post-resettlement (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011) and the other from the perspective of internally displaced persons in Burma (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010). Nine studies include relational aspects, from the perspectives of kinship (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011), culture (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010), the environment (Swe & Ross, 2010; Mitschke et al., 2011; Riggs et al., 2012), and interpersonal relationships in relation to adaptation (Green & Lockley, 2012; Nawyn et al., 2012; Oleson et al., 2012; Borwick et al., 2013). Power and gender are explored in the context of social response strategies of Karen women experiencing forced migration (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010). Harkins (2012) frames Karen refugee resettlement within narrative theory, in an attempt to understand the ways life experiences impact perception. Identity, within the context of cultural maintenance, social networks, and social capital, is explored from a theoretical standpoint as processes of acculturation and assimilation are discovered (Worland & Darlington, 2010; Nawyn et al., 2012). The quality of the articles critiqued was enhanced significantly by the

presence of well-constructed, integrated theoretical frameworks supporting procedural design and structure of the research methodology.

Design & Analysis

A summary of the qualitative publication study designs is presented in Table 1. Three of the studies employed a phenomenologic design with semi-structured and structured interviews (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Mitschke et al., 2011; Borwick et al., 2013). Borwick et al. (2013) adds an additional methodologic dimension through the application of a salutogenic perspective. This approach explores experiences from the aspect of health-promoting factors, rather than a pathological inquiry. Four studies employed ethnographic research methods, relying on core techniques of participant observation, and interviews (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011; Green & Lockley, 2012; Oleson et al., 2012; Harkins, 2012). Four studies relied on the more explanatory, descriptive qualitative approach (Swe & Ross, 2010; Worland & Darlington, 2010; Nawyn et al., 2012; Riggs et al., 2012). The final publication included in the review implemented an oral testimony methodology of data collection (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010).

Sampling

With the exception of the ethnography studies (Harkins, 2012; Green & Lockley, 2012; Oleson et al., 2012; Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011), all study sample sizes are small, and within an appropriate range for qualitative research methodology. Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny (2011) report a sample size of 191. This reflects the breadth of the study, which took place in both pre- and post-migration contexts. Included in this total sample size are all key informants, including abbreviated interview, observation-only,

and survey-only respondents. Though in-depth interviews took place with fewer subjects, a limitation of the study is the management of the significant amounts of data collected. Of the 12 qualitative studies, three incorporated data collected from refugees in Burma and Thai-Burma border refugee camps (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010; Worland & Darlington, 2010; Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011) and nine restricted the analysis to data collected from resettled refugees (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Swe & Ross, 2010; Mitschke, et al., 2011; Green & Lockley, 2012; Harkins, 2012; Nawyn et al., 2012; Oleson et al., 2012; Riggs et al., 2012; Borwick et al., 2013). Countries of resettlement in these studies included the United States (Swe & Ross, 2010; Mitschke et al., 2011; Nawyn et al., 2012; Oleson et al., 2012; Harkins, 2012), Australia (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Riggs et al., 2012; Borwick et al., 2013), and the United Kingdom (Green et al., 2012). Five of the studies employed purposive sampling (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010; Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011; Nawyn et al., 2012; Oleson et al., 2012; Harkins, 2012), whereas the others employed a less rigorous convenience sampling (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Swe & Ross, 2010; Mitschke et al., 2011; Riggs et al., 2012, Borwick et al., 2013). Worland & Darlington (2010) used a mix of convenience and purposive sampling, varying recruitment methods to best match the setting. Seven studies collected data from ethnic Karen participants exclusively (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010; Worland & Darlington, 2010; Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011; Mitschke et al., 2011; Green & Lockley, 2012; Oleson et al., 2012; Harkins, 2012). Three reported findings using data from ethnic Karen and ethnic Chin refugees (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Swe & Ross, 2010; Borwick et al. 2013). Nawyn et al. (2012) report data from

encounters with refugees from Burma, but do not specify ethnic identity. Riggs et al. (2012) report data collected from a diverse sample of resettled refugees in Australia, and consider findings from Karen participants in particular.

Perspective

The implications of the research varied based on whether the study took on a strengths-based or problem-focused evaluation perspective. The problem-focused research consistently point to challenges Karen refugees face in the resettlement process, specifically language barriers, securing adequate housing, and accessing healthcare and education services. Two studies cite a need to further explore the specific mental health outcomes of the trauma of displacement (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Mitschke et al., 2011).

In contrast are the articles that maintain a strengths-based perspective. For example, Oo and Kusakabe (2010) reframe the role and influence of women within the political and military conflict in Burma. Women are viewed as the sustainers and cultivators of Karen culture in the midst of chaos. The exploration of social response strategies within forced relocation sites in Burma demonstrates the potential to be replicated and explored in a post-resettlement context. Borwick et al. (2013) explore reflexivity and strength, ultimately connecting interpersonal relationships to values, and perceptions of future and agency. The authors arrive at a similar conclusion to that of Oo and Kusakabe (2010), recommending the integration of a focus on strength and reflexivity into the Karen refugee resettlement approach.

Quantitative Research Summary

Understanding the health impact of the protracted conflict in Burma, the resulting health needs post-migration, and interventions employed in addressing the identified issues are the focal areas of interest in the quantitative articles identified for inclusion (Table 2). The quantitative body of literature provides a framework for this investigation that highlights the concrete mental and physical health problems encountered by the Karen refugee community as a result of armed conflict, refugee trauma, human rights abuses, and migration. The selected research informs an experiential inquiry into the Karen migration experience as it provides evidence to connect the pre- and post-migration physical and mental states of being.

Design

Of the six publications included in the analysis, five are retrospective observational quantitative analyses of health data. Two studies were conducted as cross-sectional chart reviews from the health records of newly arrived Karen refugees in the United States and Canada (Denburg et al., 2007; Power et al., 2010). Two studies were population-based retrospective household surveys in Burma, assessing the experience of war and refugee trauma, and migration (Checchi et al., 2003; Mullany et al., 2007). Finally, Schweitzer et al. (2011) collected structured interview data in Australia from newly arrived Karen refugees using a variety of tools, to examine gender and other factors that predict mental health. Van Wyk et al. (2012) conducted a non-randomized naturalistic study exploring the impact of mental health service provision on symptoms of disease.

Tools & Interventions

Interventions described by Van Wyk et al. (2012) include a variety of mental health approaches to coping and resilience including psycho-education, skill-based therapy, expressive therapy, supportive couples/family therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, and narrative exposure therapy. Though a major threat to the validity of the study is the inability to isolate the impact of any one approach, significant decreases in symptoms defining PTSD, anxiety, and depression were reported.

Both Van Wyk et al. (2012) and Schweitzer et al. (2011) implemented the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire, the Hopkins Symptom Checklist, and the Post-Migration Living Difficulties Checklist to assess pre- and post- migration difficulties and symptoms of mental health disorders in their samples. Mullany et al. (2007) report findings from a standardized survey assessing items such as household demographics, maternal report of diarrhea episodes of children, mean upper arm circumference in children, a rapid malaria parasitemia, and report of household exposure to human rights violations. Similarly, Checchi et al. (2003) implemented a pre-piloted questionnaire assessing causes of mortality and a systematic open-ended inquiry into family's primary reason for leaving Burma.

Sampling & Analysis

Van Wyk et al. (2012) and Mullany et al. (2007) drew their samples from mixed Burmese ethnic groups. Though the assumption can be made that the conflict, trauma, and migration experiences are similar, the Karen ethnic group has a unique conflict history. This might influence the experience and health outcomes of this particular group. The influence of the Karen National Union, a political organization representing

the Karen people in Burma and a prominent influence in the armed resistance to the Burmese government, is an important point of differentiation. As a result of this resistance, extensive human rights abuses were carried out against the Karen. Though community dynamics and geographic patterns may present challenges to isolating the ethnic groups of Burma in research, it is important to take into account the impact of aggregated data. In contrast, Schweitzer et al. (2011), Power et al. (2010), and Denburg et al. (2007) regard data from samples comprised only of Karen.

The analysis of the chart review studies was conducted using straightforward descriptive statistics. Checchi et al. (2003) report descriptive statistics as well as mortality rate calculations based on reported conflict-related experiences. Van Wyk et al. (2012) use paired sample t-tests to examine mental health symptom improvements over time in Burmese refugees. Additionally, multiple regression was used to understand the interactions between variables. Mullany et al. (2007) reports odds ratios and confidence intervals to describe survey findings. Prevalence of human rights violations is discussed in greater depth. Logistic regression was employed to compare the odds of adverse health outcomes with the occurrence of human rights violations. Schweitzer et al. (2011) report descriptive and correlational results, followed by findings from hierarchical linear regression exploring the relationships between demographic variables and trauma experiences with the presence of mental health symptoms. Combined, the quantitative analysis explores the relationships and interactions between personal factors, factors influencing migration, and factors that result from conflict experiences.

Findings

Physical and Mental Health

A central consequence of the protracted humanitarian circumstances in Burma is a lack of access to routine, preventive, and urgent health care resources for ethnic minority groups. This is characteristic of forced migration and leads to unaddressed or unresolved health complications that emerge as the migratory process reaches a more stable endpoint, such as in resettlement (Mullany et al., 2007). Retrospective, cross-sectional population-based survey research indicates significant mortality, infectious and psychological morbidity, and malnutrition associated with the conflict in Burma (Van Wyk et al., 2012; Mullany et al., 2007; Checchi et al., 2003). Post conflict exposure health outcomes in Burma include elevated child mortality and child malnutrition, land mine injury, malaria, and symptoms associated with depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other anxiety disorders (Van Wyk et al., 2012; Mullany et al., 2007; Checchi et al., 2003). Power et al. (2010) report that 15 percent of Karen refugees present with at least one type of parasitic infection. Infectious diseases are common, reflecting the endemic nature of hepatitis and tuberculosis in the Southeast Asia region. Specific disease reporting indicates a 10 percent prevalence level for Karen testing positive on arrival for the hepatitis B surface antigen. Latent tuberculosis infection was diagnosed with a 33 percent prevalence in new arrivals, with <1 percent testing positive for active infection. Chronic disease is also a consideration. Refugees diagnosed previously with illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension indicate minimal prior medical management of the disorders. From a mental health standpoint, prevalence of

anxiety, depression, and PTSD are documented as approaching 20, 36, and 9 percent respectively, among Karen refugees (Schweitzer et al., 2011).

Coping and Adjustment Processes

A frequently overlooked aspect of forced migration is the psychosocial and physical health impact of loss of home and community. These experiences tend to be negated as the traumas of events leading to refugee migration are prioritized (Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010). Circumstances of protracted armed conflict require space and time to grieve loss and confront the mental distress that accompanies changing homelands and evolving individual and cultural identities (Harkins, 2012; Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011). Karen refugees report a sense of powerlessness and disillusionment at multiple phases of the refugee and resettlement process, which impacts the ability to cope with past traumatic experiences, and direct energy toward adjustment to a new life (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011). When expectations are not met, Karen refugees struggle to cope physically and mentally with the realities of transition (Swe & Ross, 2010).

Community

As resettlement trajectories of the Karen population have been observed over the last decade in the United States, patterns have emerged. Many of these patterns are reflective of the broader refugee experience, however some are specific to the Karen. For example, often the initial site of resettlement is not the final phase of the migratory process. Rather, Karen refugees have demonstrated a tendency to move once more in what appears to be a reconnection of community based on social networks reflective of life in Burma and Thailand (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011; Mitschke et al., 2011;

Harkins, 2012). This reconnection not only affords social contact with refugees similarly early in the arrival process, but also allows for a model of mentorship between long-term arrivals and those new to the country (Mitschke et al., 2011). As Karen refugees find closure in the course of migration they are able to begin the process of grieving for past losses and experiences. Because the concept of “home” is frequently experienced through relatedness to family and kinship networks, the process of healing is facilitated as displaced Karen come together geographically to reestablish a traditional sense of community (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010; Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010). One characteristic of the Karen community that has persisted through forced migration and resettlement is the concept of collective sharing. Newly arrived Karen refugees are often supported through the integration process by those with greater tenure in the country of resettlement. The emphasis on collectivism in Karen culture strengthens the sense of identity the Karen community experiences (Worland & Darlington, 2010).

Challenges in Navigating Resettlement

Challenges navigating the refugee resettlement process are documented across refugee groups, and in many ways the Karen experience reflects these precedents (Borwick et al., 2013; Mitschke et al., 2011; Worland & Darlington, 2010). Within the United States, the resettlement process is decentralized, with local resettlement agencies often operating with inadequate financial and human resources (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011; Swe & Ross, 2010). Commonly cited barriers to a successful resettlement include inadequate shelter, and inaccessible education, employment, and healthcare (Harkins, 2012; Rosebrook & Schweitzer, 2010). Refugee housing tends to be

concentrated in low-rent, low-income apartment complexes. This frequently means refugees are exposed to violence, overcrowding, and housing in various states of disrepair (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011). In the United States public school system, quality of housing and education are closely connected. As a result, refugee children might be placed in struggling schools with scarce resources to support non-English speaking students with a variety of unique needs (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011). In Karen refugee communities, there are elevated numbers of young adults not able to integrate into the school systems, ultimately exiting the education system to find employment. Employment assistance varies across refugee resettlement organizations. Some organizations have robust support systems, connecting refugees with local employers based on past work experience and the employer needs. Other programs provide no assistance. Healthcare resources are similarly inconsistent (Harkins, 2012). Depending on the state of resettlement, refugees may be provided with between four and twelve months of state/federal assistance beyond the initial health screen. Communication, cultural factors, education level, gender norms, and involvement of the resettlement agency are factors that play important roles in the navigation of the healthcare system (Swe & Ross, 2010).

Spirituality & Religion

In Burma, the Christian Karen comprises a minority faith group as compared to reported numbers of Buddhist, Muslim, and Animist Karen. However, within the population of Karen refugees resettled to the United States, Christianity is reported as the most practiced formal faith doctrine among this group (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny,

2011). Whether discussed abstractly in reference to existential values (Borwick et al., 2013) or concretely in descriptions of direct interactions with churches (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011) there is a clear pattern in the literature that faith is an integral aspect in the Karen experience of forced migration and resettlement (Worland & Darlington, 2010). Spirituality and religion play a significant role in the loss and reformulation of cultural identity. Additionally, the historical missionary roots and centrality of religion in Karen culture results in an interrelatedness of spirituality, education, collective community processes, and loyalty to Burma (Worland & Darlington, 2010). In questions relating to adversity, Borwick et al. (2013) describe a commonality among participant responses in the use of spiritual and religious language.

Identity

The overarching theme present across all studies and embedded within all thematic patterns is identity. Whether identity is considered at the level of the individual or collectively at the level of the community, it becomes an integral aspect of the discourse surrounding the impact of forced migration and Karen refugee resettlement. This is not a surprise as we look beyond initial resettlement with the expectation that the resettlement experience informs integration and the repositioning of identity within the post-migration context.

Discussion

Establishing the physical and mental health impacts of the Karen refugee experience is a complex process that must originate with an understanding of the personal narrative and extend to include culture, norms, and interpersonal relationships. Themes

that emerged from this analysis of the body of literature exploring the Karen trauma and migration experience include coping and adjustment processes, community, challenges in navigating resettlement, and the inherent presence of spirituality and religion across borders. As these themes were explored through the various methodological and analytical perspectives of the researchers, it became clear the theoretical frameworks, strengths-based perspectives, and experiential focus root the foundation of the qualitative body of research. Building on the implications of the qualitative body of research, the existing quantitative literature goes on to address experiences that influence the mental and physical health of Karen refugees.

Integration in the context of the refugee literature is "...a dynamic, multidirectional process in which newcomers and the receiving communities intentionally work together, based on a shared commitment to tolerance and justice, to create a secure, welcoming, vibrant, and cohesive society" (ISED, 2007, p. 3).

Integration is multi-dimensional, drawing from social, economic, cultural, and political structures. Time is a central element of integration in that the adaptation to patterns occurs more effectively the longer a refugee exists in the host country (Hamberger, 2009). Indicators of integration reflect the complexity of the process, and must be assessed over time and in ways that are specific to the culture of origin and country of resettlement. Among the indicators are language acquisition, achieving citizenship in the country of resettlement, accessing the labor market, use of systems (e.g. education, health), and a self-perceived state of belonging (ISED, 2007; Werth et al., n.d).

Integration may be achieved through a variety of pathways all of which reflect the active,

continuous, and bidirectional nature of the experience. However the presence of unaddressed mental and physical health consequences of war trauma and migration interrupts the capacity for positive integration and acculturation.

The United States hosts a large refugee resettlement program. Many arriving refugees report experiences of violence, torture, and other trauma. Refugee health researchers consistently identify impairments of psychological functioning such as depression and anxiety disorders, including PTSD, among refugees post-resettlement (Beiser & Wickrama, 2004; Bhui et al., 2006; Carlsson et al., 2006). As a result of PTSD or depressive symptoms, physical health, and social functioning including school and job performance, family cohesion, and friendships are threatened (Jaranson et al., 2004; Robertson et al., 2006). A number of factors put refugees at risk for impaired psychological functioning, including low education, low pre-displacement socioeconomic status, and rural origin (Porter & Haslam, 2005); refugee camp experiences (Beiser et al., 1989; Chung & Kagawa-Singer, 1993); and the inability to access medical care (Beiser & Wickrama, 2004). The impact of these experiences manifest into severe psychological and social problems that interfere with healthy resettlement experiences. It is essential to document the accessible and effective approaches intrinsic in the refugee community's approach to healing, and build on these strategies by informing community based health interventions and programmatic improvements.

Limitations

Despite the foundational perspective of the issues that the qualitative body of literature provides and the conclusions supported through the quantitative body of

research, the scope of work examining physical and mental health impacts of Karen forced migration remains incomplete. Though the search strategies implemented in this systematic review were developed to capture all relevant disciplines and research paradigms, there is potential that meaningful work was not recognized through publication, and therefore not discovered through the search. Additionally, in the field of refugee health, there are significant amounts of programmatic initiatives implemented, which are never evaluated through a research perspective and/or evade publication and dissemination. A consideration of the potential for publication bias is an essential element of rigor in a systematic review, and is an important factor in this context.

Conclusion

Among the nearly 80,000 refugee arrivals to the United States each year, a significant portion experience disproportionate vulnerability to psychosocial and physical health problems, as a result of refugee trauma and migration. The findings of this review demonstrate significance for nursing from both a United States public health standpoint as well as from the perspective of newly resettled Karen refugees as programs and services are expanded to meet the specific health needs of the Karen community.

Opportunities for future research include longitudinal evaluations of the health experiences of Karen refugees post-resettlement. Though the combination of pre- and post-migration perspectives were represented in the body of literature discussed in this review, no studies were available that described sustained interactions of Karen refugees resettled out of camps in Thailand, with family and friends who remain overseas. Post-resettlement, Karen refugees continue to struggle with issues surrounding coping and

adjustment. Anecdotally the prevalence of alcohol use among resettled Karen is increasing. Further observation of secondary migration is warranted, to explore reasons refugees are increasingly departing their initial site of resettlement. Finally, the concept of the intergenerational transmission of trauma could be an important phenomenon in understanding the challenges of second generation Karen in the United States.

In January of 2014 the UNHCR closed the group resettlement program for Burmese refugees in camps along the Thai-Burma border. At the end of 2013, the UNHCR identified that conditions in Burma were not conducive to the implementation of a broad return program for the estimated 120,000 refugees remaining in camps. Therefore, the UNHCR, Thai government, and Burmese authorities remain in a planning phase that includes the monitoring of spontaneous returns from the camps (UNHCR, 2014). In light of the shifting migration patterns and status of the Karen, it is important to consider in what ways the articles included in this review and the remainder of this dissertation remain relevant. This is a time of transition for Burma, politically, economically, and socially. In these instances, history demonstrates that already marginalized voices become even more vulnerable. Representation of personal and cultural narratives become even more necessary, and more powerful, as the meaning of peace, the meaning of home, and the restructuring of goals and response strategies are engaged to navigate change. Additionally, it is essential to transfer existing and future knowledge to the experiences of emerging groups of refugees.

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Table 1 <i>Qualitative Synthesis</i>									
Author/Title/ Journal	Year	Purpose	Design	Sample	Analysis	Findings	Strengths/ Limitations	Theoretical Framework	Implications
Borwick et al. Wellbeing of refugees from Burma: A salutogenic perspective. <i>International Migration</i>	2013	Explore sources of strength that facilitate wellbeing among Burmese refugees	Phenomenologic; Salutogenic; semi-structured interviews	N = 18 Convenience 10 Karen refugees 8 Chin refugees Post-resettlement in Australia	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)	Identified four overarching themes that emerged pertaining to strengths: interpersonal relationships, existential values, sense of future and agency, and spirituality.	<i>Strengths:</i> Discussion of rigor per Lincoln & Guba (1985); description of analysis; comprehensive strengths-based perspective <i>Limitations:</i> Sampling procedure; cultural and religious procedural considerations	Narrative Theory	Design services that enhance refugees ability to engage identified key strengths in resettlement process Establish transferability of findings to other refugee populations
Kenny et al. A mixed blessing: Karen resettlement to the United States. <i>Journal of Refugee Studies</i>	2011	1. Describe migration and resettlement of Karen refugees 2. Assess attitudes of refugees surrounding resettlement processes 3. Explore general migratory process of the Karen	Ethnographic research, structured and semi-structured interviews, participant observation, surveys	N = 191 Purposive 121 Karen refugees in Thailand 70 Karen refugees post-resettlement in US	Observer impression	1. Attitudes and expectations of resettlement 2. Challenges post-resettlement 3. Secondary migration 4. Religious influence	<i>Strengths:</i> Pre/post migration design <i>Limitations:</i> Sampling procedure; no dedicated discussion of analysis or limitations; data management	Coping; Importance of ethnic and kinship networks	Need to explore the patterns of resettlement and unique migratory process of Karen once resettled to US Explore influence of religious institutions within the US decentralized approach to resettlement
Green et al.	2012	Explore	Ethnographic	Karen	Not	Demonstrates	<i>Strengths:</i>	Zones of	Study connects communication

Communication practices of the Karen in Sheffield: Seeking to navigate their three zones of displacement; <i>Asian Journal of Communication</i>		the communication practices of newly resettled Karen refugees in the United Kingdom	c methods, individual interviews (student-student, investigator-community members), participant observation	community in UK Sample size not discussed	discussed	the importance and relevance of modern communication among a dislocated community Maintaining communication supports aspects of maintaining identity Identified key motivations and barriers for keeping in touch	Comprehensive review of the literature surrounding Karen experience (power, identity, community) <i>Limitations:</i> Sampling procedure; Analysis not discussed; Community interviews conducted only with English speaking Karen; Dispersed community challenges selected methodology; Isolated focus on availability of technology	displacement (Figure 1) and communication	across zones of displacement and collective identity and wellbeing of refugees Highlights the gap in knowledge among segments of the Karen community and the range of communication need Consideration of political outcomes of inevitable increased access to technologies facilitating communication
Harkins. Beyond “temporary shelter”: A case study of Karen refugee resettlement in St. Paul, Minnesota. <i>Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies.</i>	2012	1. Assess the local integration process in St. Paul, MN 2. Observe impact of resettlement on refugee situation in Thailand 3. Determine factors motivating	Ethnographic participatory research; unstructured and semi-structured interviews; participant observation	N = 36 Purposive 10 in-depth key informant interviews 15 semi-structured interviews with Karen refugee households 2 focus group sessions with community	Observer impression ; Case study analysis	1. Comparison of motivations and constraints in applying for resettlement 2. Assessment of factors impacting integration 3. Description of shifting gender roles 4. Analysis of post-resettlement emerging social challenges for	<i>Strengths:</i> Discussion of rigor per Lincoln & Guba (1985); description of rationale for sampling procedure (site selection, mix of participants); domestic and international context represented <i>Limitations:</i> No dedicated discussion of analysis or limitations	Adaptation; Push and Pull Theory of Migration	Necessary to further explore impact of resettlement on both asylum and resettlement countries Offers opportunities to enhance the durability of resettlement as an alternatives to refugees in camps on the Thai-Burma border

		and limiting participation in resettlement programs		leaders and members		Karen refugees 5. Exploration of resettlement impact on political and refugee circumstances in Burma			
Nawyn et al. Linguistic isolation, social capital, and immigrant belonging. <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> .	2012	Explore the experiences resulting from linguistic isolation at the household/community levels, demonstrates experience of language as noneconomic social capital	Descriptive qualitative research, individual interviews	Purposive sampling of refugees in the US between 12-180 days N = 13 Burmese refugees N = 23 Burundian refugees	Grounded Theory Approach	Linguistic resources of communities (immigrant and receiving) are key component of immigrant integration. Access to information is important for refugee survival post-resettlement	<i>Strengths:</i> Explores frequently identified barrier to successful resettlement among refugees; Description of analysis <i>Limitations:</i> No dedicated discussion of rigor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) or study limitations; Ethnicities of Burmese participants not specified	Social Capital	Understanding the role of social capital important in addressing issues surrounding immigrant integration and belonging Implications for resettlement practices surrounding language acquisition and support of new refugees
Oleson et al. Health and healing: Traditional medicine and the Karen experience. <i>Journal of Cultural Diversity</i>	2012	To examine the beliefs, attitudes, and health-seeking behaviors surrounding the use of traditional medicine	Focused ethnography methods, focus groups and key informant interviews.	N = 17 Purposive sampling Karen men and women	Systematic content analysis	Thematic categories emerged: 1. Perceptions of health 2. Beliefs in healing 3. Efficacy of medicines 4. Accessibility of medicine 5. Experience as	<i>Strengths:</i> Background discussion comprehensive, search strategies clear; clear presentation of procedure; clear organization of themes and well-supported with quotes	Health Behaviors	Consider replicating to understand behaviors among Karen of other religious groups Opportunities to integrate knowledge into Western health practices to encourage engagement among Karen refugees

		among the Karen.				refugees	<i>Limitations:</i> Figures difficult to interpret; limited sample for ethnography and heavy reliance on focus groups; all subjects Christian		
Riggs et al. Accessing maternal and child health services in Melbourne, Australia: Reflections from refugee families and service providers. <i>BMC Health Services Research</i> .	2012	Explore experiences of engaging maternal and child health services, from perspective of refugee families and service providers.	Descriptive qualitative research, focus groups, and individual interviews	N = 87 Convenience 7 focus groups with women of refugee background living in 2 geographical areas of Melbourne 4 focus group sessions with nurses and health providers 5 individual interviews with community workers	Thematic Analysis	4 Themes identified: 1. Facilitating access to services 2. Promoting continued engagement with service 3. Language 4. Strengths and opportunities	<i>Strengths:</i> Consider refugee and provider perspective Discussion considers programmatic application of findings <i>Limitations:</i> Sampling procedure Mixed ethnicity of refugees No dedicated discussion of limitations or rigor	Socioecological model of health	Research identifies range of holistic strategies to support engagement of refugees in maternal and child health services
Mitschke et al. Uncovering health and wellness needs of recently resettled Karen refugees from Burma. <i>Journal of Human Behavior in the Social</i>	2011	Explore biophysical needs of recently resettled Karen refugees at individual and	Phenomenologic research, structured individual interviews	N = 21 Convenience Karen refugees from Burma living in Southwest US	Thematic analysis	1. Role of community support 2. Disillusionment 3. Barriers to integration 4. Fear of violence	<i>Strengths:</i> Discussion of rigor per Lincoln & Guba (1985) <i>Limitations:</i> Literature review limited to grey literature; study	Based on Ecological Framework	Further exploration to establish mental health needs of Karen and identify potential interventions Opportunities identified in study to enhance ability to integrate, specifically targeting language and employment services

<i>Environment</i>		community levels					limitations not addressed		
Oo et al. Motherhood and social network: Response strategies of internally displaced Karen women in Taungoo district. <i>Women's Studies International Forum</i>	2010	Explore experiences and response (survival) strategies among displaced Karen women in Burma	Oral testimony; gathered through unstructured individual interviews and participant observation	N = 30 Purposive Internally displaced Karen women in Burma	Narrative analysis	1. Experience of women in relocation sites 2. Karen women's social network development 3. Response to insurgency by women	<i>Strengths:</i> Extensive review of the literature and historical context; integration of theoretical concepts; first author is Karen; ethnographic ethical considerations applied <i>Limitations:</i> Discussion of rigor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)	Gender roles of women in conflict; Agency; Coping	Reframing of the victimization and power status of women in conflict Potential follow up is to observe the social response strategies as Karen women permanently resettle
Rosbrook et al. The meaning of home for Karen and Chin refugees from Burma: An interpretative phenomenological approach. <i>European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counseling</i>	2010	Describe the meaning of home across migration phases of refugee experience	Phenomenologic semi-structured interviews	N = 9 Convenience Karen and Chin refugees resettled to Brisbane, Australia	Interpretive phenomenologic analysis	Perceptions of home as: 1. The experience of a psychological space of safety and retreat 2. A socio-emotional relatedness to family 3. A geographical-emotional landscape	<i>Strengths:</i> Rich thematic descriptions and integration of theoretical framework consistent with standards of qualitative rigor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) <i>Limitations:</i> Sampling procedure	Suffering; Renewal; Identity; Discovery of self; Cultural context of relatedness	Necessary to explore psychological outcomes of loss of family and home Longitudinal studies will provide opportunities to build on research by exploring adaptation over time
Swe et al. Refugees from Myanmar and their health care needs in the US: A qualitative study at a refugee	2010	Examine Burmese refugee perspectives to identify	Descriptive qualitative approach, focus group discussions	N = 36 Convenience Burmese refugees post-	Content analysis of focus group discussion content	Primary issues identified in the analysis concerned communication and cultural	<i>Strengths:</i> Description of historical context of Burmese resettlement; presentation of	Content consistent with Health Belief model and Theory of Health Perception	Demonstrates need to improve the quality and availability of comprehensive, multifaceted, and aligned resettlement programs.

resettlement agency. <i>International Journal of Migration, Health, and Social Care</i>		patterns of health-seeking behaviors and challenges in accessing and utilizing health care in the US post-resettlement		resettlement in Houston, TX		barriers within the context of accessing both emergent and follow up healthcare; navigating the healthcare system; and identifying available resources	findings in chronological perspective <i>Limitations:</i> Sampling procedure; study setting; discussion of rigor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)		
Woreland et al. The identity of displaced Christian Karen in the context of resettlement. <i>Asia Journal of Social Work and Development</i>	2010	Describe the impact of the conflict experience on the identity of displaced Christian Karen	Descriptive qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and focus groups	N = 36 Purposive / Convenience 16 Karen refugees in Thailand 12 Recently resettled Christian Karen refugees in Australia 10 Karen community leaders in Australia	Thematic analysis	Education, faith, community, and nationalism emerged as themes influential in impacting identity	<i>Strengths:</i> Comprehensive procedural overview; discussion of elements of rigor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) <i>Limitations:</i> Mis-categorized in conclusion as a cross-sectional study; no dedicated discussion of limitations	Identity; Model of Acculturation and Assimilation	Opportunities to observe the impact of faiths beyond Christianity within the context of Karen migration and identity. Potential to establish meaning of deep cultural connections over long-term.

Table 2 *Quantitative Synthesis*

Author/Title/ Journal	Year	Purpose	Design	Sample	Instruments	Interventions	Analysis	Findings	Strengths/ Limitations	Implications
Van Wyk et al. A longitudinal study of mental health in refugees from Burma: The impact of therapeutic interventions <i>Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry</i>	2012	Examine the impact of therapeutic interventions in refugees	Non-randomized observational naturalistic intervention Pre/Post assessment	62 Burmese refugees (Karen, Chin, Karenni, Mon, Kayan, Kachin)	1) Demographic questionnaire 2) Harvard Trauma Questionnaire 3) Hopkins Symptom Checklist-37 4) Post-Migration Living Difficulties checklist	1) Psychoeduc 2) Structured skills-based therapy 3) Expressive therapy 4) Supportive couples therapy 5) Couples and family therapy 6) Cognitive behavioral therapy 7) Narrative exposure therapy	Chart review Paired sample t-tests to examine symptom changes over time Non-parametric Mann U-tests where normality violated Multiple regression	Significant decrease in symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, depression, somatisation over course of intervention. Pre-intervention symptoms predicted final symptom scores for PTSD, anxiety, and somatisation	<i>Strengths:</i> Design conducive to evaluating impact of mental health services in real world setting Comprehensive pre and post symptom assessment Community partners identified <i>Limitations:</i> Results are not generalizable Unable to isolate impact of any one therapeutic intervention Interpreter validity not verified Mixed ethnicity sample	Opportunity to establish which mechanisms facilitate healing are most powerful in the refugee recovery experience in a controlled setting. Opportunity to understand effects of time alone in healing and improvement of symptoms.
Schweitzer et al. Mental health of newly arrived Burmese refugees in Australia: Contributions of pre-migration and post-migration experience. <i>Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry.</i>	2011	To describe the mental health status of Burmese refugees in Australia, post-resettlement	Cross-sectional, 2-3 structured interviews lasting 1 hour	70 newly resettled Burmese refugees in Australia	1) Demographic questionnaire 2) Harvard Trauma Questionnaire 3) Hopkins Symptom Checklist-37 4) Post-Migration Living Difficulties	No intervention	Descriptive and correlational Hierarchical multiple regression examining gender, pre- and post-migration living difficulties,	PTSD 9% Anxiety 20% Depression 36% Somatization 37% Gender did not predict mental health Post-migration challenges contributed to depression,	<i>Strengths:</i> Research has important implications for the contribution of refugees post-resettlement to mental health Identified the prevalence of mental health problems in	Important findings regarding the prevalence of mental health disorder prevalence among Burmese refugees. Establishes an important connection with the post-resettlement experience and resulting mental health of refugees.

					checklist		and mental health symptoms	anxiety, and somatization	the Burmese refugee community <i>Limitations:</i> Relatively small sample size, and potential selection bias based on recruitment strategies Mixed ethnic sample	
Power et al. Caring for the Karen: A newly arrived refugee group. <i>Minn Med.</i>	2010	Describe the health needs/presenting problems of Karen refugees presenting at Minnesota primary care clinic	Chart review	322 Karen charts plus records from the Minnesota Department of Health domestic health assessments	No instruments, observational chart review	No interventions, observational chart review	Descriptive statistics	Identified physical and cultural aspects of health and health behaviors present in Karen refugees post-resettlement	<i>Strengths:</i> Important initial step in quantifying and prioritizing issues Karen refugees experience as a result of protracted migration experience <i>Limitations:</i> Chart review methods unclear No discussion of IRB or confidentiality measures Minimal discussions of implications/recommendations for providers	Identified language and immunization status key elements of initial assessment. Parasitic infection important consideration for children. Mental health issues likely under-reported, consider documenting over time.
Denburg et al. Initial health screening results for Karen refugees: A retrospective review. <i>The Canada Communicable</i>	2007	1. Describe the burden of illness of Karen refugees 2. Add to the body of literature that argues	Cross-sectional retrospective chart review	Initial health screening results for 68 Karen refugees resettled in Toronto Canada	No instruments	No interventions, observational retrospective chart review conducted	Descriptive statistics based on demographic and biomedical results of initial refugee health screen	No cases of HIV, syphilis, active tuberculosis, or hepatitis C Burden of illness most pronounced in Hepatitis B infection and	<i>Strengths:</i> Relevance <i>Limitations:</i> Sample size; Retrospective design; No discussion of mental health screening	No current standard for initial refugee health screen in Canada, article supports implementation Information acts as tool for providers supporting the health experience of an unfamiliar population

<i>Disease Report</i>		for specific screening guidelines in newly arrived refugee populations						parasitemia Significant stunting and wasting among children		
Mullany et al. Population-based survey methods to quantify associations between human rights violations and health outcomes among internally displaced persons in eastern Burma. <i>J Epidemiol Community Health</i>	2007	Describe the relationships between mortality and morbidity and the household-level experience of human rights violations among internally displaced persons in eastern Burma	Cross-sectional retrospective household survey	Table 1 Conflict zones of the Karen and Karenni areas of eastern Burma. Target population – 129,000 20 households within 100 village-based clusters 1834 surveys	Survey: 1) Household demographics 2) Maternal report of diarrhea episodes 3) MUAC 4) Rapid malaria parasitaemia 5) Household exposure to HRVs	No interventions, observational epidemiologic methods	Odds ratios and confidence intervals reported based on survey findings Prevalence of HRVs Logistic regression to compare odds of adverse health outcomes with incidence of HRVs	<u>Reported</u> IMR U5IMR CMR ASDRs 52% respondents reported experiencing 1 or more HRV in last 12 months Table 4 – Prevalence of specific health outcomes, by household experience of HRVs	<i>Strengths:</i> 4-day training workshop for surveyors focusing on interview techniques, sampling methods, survey questions, and case definitions Overall high response rate (92%) <i>Limitations:</i> Low response rate in Karenni areas; post-sampling weighting; findings do not represent causality; sequence of event and HRV not assessed	Opportunity to further explore population-based health impact in relationship to reporting of HRVs Demonstrates collateral damage of war not resulting from direct conflict Opportunities to explore specifics around forced displacement – when, why, where
Checchi et al. Consequences of armed conflict for an ethnic Karen population. <i>The Lancet</i>	2003	Quantify mortality rates among Karen refugees in the Nu Po camp	Retrospective population survey	Karen family heads from 244 families from the Dooplaya District	Pre-piloted questionnaire to measure mortality and other population changes. Systematic	No interventions, observational epidemiologic methods	Descriptive statistics reported, mortality rates calculated	Primary reasons cited for leaving Burma include: 1) War or insecurity 2) Forced labor 3) Forced relocation	<i>Strengths:</i> Large sample Survey questions targeted key relevant topics that quantify elements of the human rights circumstances in Burma	Implications are primary policy and systems related: Demonstrates implications of conflict on ethnic minority civilians and brings into perspective the

					open-ended question about family's primary reason for leaving Burma			Findings indicate high mortality resulting from violence	<i>Weaknesses:</i> Not explicitly discussed, reflective of retrospective population-based survey methods	challenges of international protection of internally displaced persons when the government of the country
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Chapter 4

The Intersection of Coping and Becoming:

Inside/Outside Figured Worlds in Two Burmese Refugee Camps

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Under Review

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Introduction

Media images of overcrowded and capsized boats in the Mediterranean convey something of the horrific plight that refugees face in the world today. Migratory route maps allow some insight into patterns of movement post-conflict or disaster. Mental illness prevalence statistics offer an indication of the consequences of survival. What these images and figures do not convey are the narratives and response strategies of the displaced people in the boats, on the routes, and the impact on families and children left behind or in waiting. What these images and figures cannot inform are the policies and programs enacted to support those who have reached a destination, temporary or final. What these images cannot represent are the scope, scale and the history of forced migration across the world today and the human rights concerns that must be faced. The images do compel us to act, but how?

My research is focused on revealing the processes and consequences of forced migration at the intersection of human rights, forced migration, and health. I am particularly focused on the lives of women, a position that inheres vulnerability to violence, trafficking, and other abuses. Though it is also position that holds great power in influencing positive outcomes on the health of individuals, families, and communities. In conducting this research I apply the theoretical lens of identity construction and figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) to examine the experiences of Karen refugee women. The purpose of my research is to understand the socially and culturally constructed architecture within which refugee women produce and negotiate identity. In this manuscript, I focus on the study of Karen refugee women currently living in camps along the Thai-Burma border.

Context

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports accelerated and unprecedented levels of global migration resulting from conflict, human rights abuses, and persecution (UNHCR, 2014). At the end of 2014, the UNHCR estimated that globally there are 59.5 million people forcibly displaced from their homes. Forced migration is a broad categorization, encompassing individuals displaced from their communities of origin by war, persecution, coercion, environmental degradation, or as a result of development initiatives (Castles, 2004). The concept of forced migration describes individuals or groups who migrate within legally defined frameworks or principles consistent with international human rights law. These classifications include internally displaced persons¹, stateless persons², asylum seekers³, trafficked persons⁴, and refugees⁵.

The United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention defines a 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

¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA]. (1998). Guiding principles on internal displacement. Retrieved from <http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Projects/idp/GPEnglish.pdf>

² United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR]. (1954). Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/stateless.pdf>

³ International laws contributing to the definition of asylum include the United Nations 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol, the same documents that define the status of refugees. The primary difference between a refugee and asylum seeker is the physical location of the individual applying for protection. National laws vary in terms of the processing of these cases. In the United States, applications for asylum are managed through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Information retrieved <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/asylum/obtaining-asylum-united-states>

⁴ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC]. (2000). Protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons. Retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNTOC/Publications/TOC%20Convention/TOCebook-e.pdf>

⁵ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR]. (2010). Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>

himself of the protection of that country (UNHCR¹, 2015)." There are currently 19.5 million refugees registered worldwide, including the 14.4 million refugees registered with the UNHCR and 5.1 million Palestinian refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) (UNHCR², 2015). Available demographic data⁶ indicate that 50 percent of refugees included within the UNHCR mandate are female (UNHCR, 2014).

The Karen are an ethnic minority population indigenous to southern and southeastern Burma. Burma declared independence from British colonial rule in 1948. In 1962 a military coup eliminated the post-colonial democracy, establishing a politically oppressive military regime. As tensions between the Burmese majority and ethnic minority groups in Burma grew, armed factions of the Karen political movement organized (WWG, 2013). To counter the Karen resistance, the Burmese military initiated a "four cuts policy". This strategy targeted the Karen and other ethnic minority counterinsurgencies by restricting access to food, financial resources, information, and recruitment. A fifth cut, eliminating communication, was added later added to this strategy (Moe, 2011).

In the mid-1980's displaced Karen, as well as individuals belonging to other persecuted Burmese ethnic minority groups, began to cross the Thai-Burma border, fleeing civil conflict and the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Burmese army (WWG, 2013). In response to the crisis and in partnership with the Thai government, the United Nations and collaborating aid organizations established temporary shelters, more commonly referred to as refugee camps. As of 2015, nine camps remain in operation

⁶ Demographic data for gender was available at the end of 2014 for 10.2 of the 14.4 million refugees registered with the UNHCR.

along the Thai-Burma border, supporting an estimated 120,000 refugees from Burma. Approximately 80 percent of the individuals living in these camps identify as ethnic Karen (MFLF, 2014).

In January of 2013 the UNHCR initiated a dramatic reduction in the processing of new resettlement cases of refugees from Burma, pursuing the current resettlement focus of family reunification (UNHCR³, 2015). The shifting political landscape was again marked in 2015 as negotiations for ceasefire agreements between the Burmese government and armed ethnic factions progressed to include sixteen ethnic minority group signatories (Mahtani & Myo, 2015). Tripartite agreements ultimately target the repatriation of 120,000 Karen migrants to Burma. The organization continues to assert however, that circumstances in Burma are not yet conducive to a broad voluntary organized return program (UNHCR³, 2015).

There is terminology used in the humanitarian discourses surrounding the repatriation of the Karen from the refugee camps back into Burma that is potentially problematic. Considering that many of the Karen refugees who are born and raised in these camps are returning to places they have never been or lived, what are the implications in terming this a *return*? Also, what elements must be in place to ensure that *voluntary* return is in fact voluntary? There are not clear answers to these questions and I do not address them directly in this report. However these ideas were present during my time in the camp, complicate the context, and warrant mention.

Purpose

Central to my analysis are the complicated and important experiences of refugee women. I choose to focus on the experiences of refugee women because I am interested

in the intersectionality of factors that are unique to women. These intersections magnify vulnerabilities that develop through conflict related vulnerability, inequities in access to education, wealth, and health services (Cahn, 2006; Robertson et al., 2006). But their associations also serve to empower women. For example, women are closest to children, the protection of whom is apparent when women influence the ways resources are allocated and education and nutrition are prioritized (Richards et al., 2013). The connectedness of women serves to increase the capacity of a community for healing post-conflict (Zuckerman & Greenberg, 2004). And as was evident in my research for this project, women engage in relationships in ways that create a distinct sense of “*together we are stronger*” (Karen woman refugee, Nu Po camp, 2015).

The purpose of my research is to understand the socially and culturally constructed architecture within which refugee women produce and negotiate identity. I consider the findings from my research in two refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border with Karen refugee women in relationship to the question: How does a refugee woman situate her identity in response to the unique space where she is both positioned as a camp inhabitant experiencing a series of unfolding sociopolitical events while simultaneously actively redefining her position? In redefining this position, I consider that she is drawing on historical experiences, as well as integrating these experiences with the anticipation of the future for herself, her family, and her community.

In addition, research that I conducted in the spring of 2015 served two process-oriented aims. First, findings informed the development of a series of ethnographic case

studies exploring the response strategies⁷ of Karen refugee women as they navigate challenges associated with migration and resettlement. These case studies document processes of resilience, identity construction, and mothering. I used this data to tailor my approach to field-based data collection in the second phase of my research interviewing resettled Karen refugee women in the United States.

Second, given the protracted nature of the civil conflict in Burma, and the length of time most Karen refugees lived in the camps prior to resettlement, a closer involvement in the camp context was essential to establishing a rigorous inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through field notes, journaling, and reflections I recognized inaccuracies in assumptions that I held before spending time in the refugee camps. These observations and conversations have and will continue to enhance my ability as a non-Karen woman to interpret and represent the experiences and perspectives that women shared with me. Additional approaches I have taken to mediate my position within the Karen community include an interdisciplinary approach to this research, ongoing collaboration with a local community of Karen refugees and community based partners supporting Karen resettlement, and a continued emphasis on engaging cultural brokers in my analysis (McNess, Arthur, & Crossley, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

⁷ Vincent and Sorensen (2001) first coined the term “response strategies” in an attempt to resist traditional humanitarian labels applied to vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons (IDPs). The intent of the shift in discourse was to honor the heterogeneity of groups often categorized by exposure to war and conflict rather than the unique community-specific experience. The core elements that formulate a response strategy are *motivation* to establish goals and identify resources, *creativity* in navigating barriers associated with displacement, *comprehensiveness* in addressing protection and other needs of the community, and reflectivity in the evaluation of successful and unsuccessful approaches. For this research, I define response strategies as the tools engaged by an individual or community to navigate forced migration and promote the resilience of interpersonal connections, and cope individually and collectively with the challenges inherent to cultural transformation.

Identity is the major theoretical foundation guiding this analysis. Within identity, I consider the concepts of figured worlds and third space. I draw heavily from Holland et al. (1998) and Gee (2014), and integrate Bakhtin's notion of dialogism to support an exploration of these concepts. Additionally in the discussion of third space, I consider the interpretations Moje et al. (2004) propose, and explore Bhabha's (1994) foundational work.

A tool that is central to the examination of the ways in which women produce and construct identity is discourse. The assertion that power, prestige, and status circulate and influence the lived experience is increasingly recognized throughout a broad range of social and cultural contexts. Michel Foucault, a French social theorist, suggested that discourse is a representation of the relationship between knowledge and power. Weedon (1987) interprets Foucault's analysis, defining discourse as:

Ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (p. 108).

Discourse is inclusive of all aspects of social practice (Rogers, 2011).

As such, discourses and social practices exist in a dynamic relationship in that social practices are constructed through relevant discourses, while discourses act on and transform social practice. Van Leeuwen (2008) asserts that multiple representations may exist for any one social practice because of the influence of context on the transformation of the discourse.

Identity

I approach the study of patterns of identity construction among encamped Karen refugee women through the application of two established identity frameworks. Holland et al.'s (1998) notion of positional identity draws from the work of Foucault and considers power, status, and privilege as core to identity development. Positional identity refers particularly to the ways these concepts are situated within routine or day-to-day events and interactions. The discourses of power, status, and privilege systematically circulate around the individual and within the collective. Over time, as an individual makes sense of and takes up certain social positions, they become figured into a status, rank, or position. Inherent to this process of self-understanding and self-making is an awareness of the available social positions that were not taken up, the recognition of the *other*. What one becomes is relevant to what one did not become. Thinking about this from the perspective of positional identity, these are social positions that are selected by the individual or assigned to them by the surrounding systems. Further implicit is that identity develops through the lens of context, and thus resists permanence. Conceptually, the social relationships born through a refugee's positional identity represent the hierarchies and disparities existing within the refugee camp structure. Over time refugee women construct and act on an understanding of self, based on their positioning in these relationships and ubiquitous structures.

Bakhtin, a Russian literary scholar and social philosopher in the 20th century, asserted his influence across disciplines because of the relevance of his work on dialogism to identity and discourse studies. Bakhtin theorizes that the norms that define center are relative, dependent on both *self* (the perceiver) and *other* (the perceived). This is a perspective consistent with the theoretical foundation Holland et al. (1998) draw from

(which includes Bakhtin), and is an important similarity between these frameworks. Holquist (2002) interprets Bakhtin's consideration of the way the unique self fits and develops inside complex systems. Bakhtin's perspective is clearly relational, a characteristic that supports the inherent simultaneity and multiplicity of dialogism. Multiple perspectives process the same event at the same time. Bakhtin's writing parallels the perspective Holland et al. (1998) take on context, as he refers to relative time and space as the essence of cognitive becoming, a frame for the development of perception. Context in critical discourse studies is inclusive of physical time and place, and refers to the site of meaning-making (Holland, 1998). Bakhtin goes on to describe the chronotope as the connectedness of time and space, "...the place where knots of narrative are tied and untied" (Holquist, 2002, p. 109). From the standpoint of identity construction, I interpret this in reference to the space where an individual authors a unique *self* within a shared existence, which can include physical place. The resulting identity is composed of three elements including the 'I', or authored self, the 'not I', or other, and finally, the relationship between the two, the space where responses to the world are formed (Holquist, 2002).

Figured Worlds

A figured world is a model constructed by the social and cultural collective, through which actors can efficiently interpret and engage or disengage from relevant roles and identities (Gee, 2014; Holland et al., 1998). Holland et al. (1998) describe a figured world as "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others (p. 52, 1998)." Engagement in a figured

world serves several key functions. First, figured worlds are a tool of inquiry within critical discourse analysis. They act to reconcile the nuances in language, narratives, and text with broader experiences rooted in the world (Gee, 2014). In doing so, figured worlds provide a structure for the exploration of identity. Identity is dynamic in that individual and/or collective identities are not fixed states of being. Rather, identity is the course of becoming (Urrieta¹, 2007). This distinction is particularly relevant in the refugee camp context described in this research, a position that is viewed in humanitarian discourses as ‘being neither here nor there’.

Second, participants in figured worlds situate their own positions, agency, and make sense of their individual consistency with the *typical*. Examining norms illustrated by the *typical* experience is important. In my research, it has allowed me to better understand the exclusions, roles or practices that deviate from center, which are ultimately, frequently, contained in the silences in the data. An example of this is a theme that emerged prominently in discussions with Karen refugee women living in camps along the Thai-Burma border. The women I spoke with described ways the experiences of being inside the camp contrasted the experiences of being outside the camp, creating a binary in opposition. Deeper discussion revealed that women were frequently negotiating between these inside and outside figured worlds. This temporary or shifting engagement with a particular figured world is consistent with the position Urrieta (2007¹) takes, expanding on Holland et al.’s (1998) assertion that figured worlds may be partially or completely assumed. Given the inherent relationship between figured worlds and the political, the assignment of typical/atypical highlights the features of power, hierarchy, and value at stake in the development of a figured world. In this

context, the role and power of the refugee participant shifts dramatically depending on whether they view themselves as an inside or outside world participant.

The third function served by engaging in a figured world is that participants of the figured world can infer and apply key aspects of social practice and the circulating discourses. This facilitates understanding and actions consistent with the norms of that world. For example, in the outside figured world constructed in the Nu Po refugee camp, the education system is perceived as more developed in Thailand or a country of resettlement. Individuals advocating for resettlement for themselves and their families have taken up this position as they figure themselves within the migration discourse. The simplification of positioning not only allows individuals to make sense of the meaning of these socially-culturally-historically constructed worlds, it offers an alternative to appraising each situation for meaning as it occurs (Holland et al., 1998).

Finally, figured worlds are not static phenomena. They evolve based on subtle movements in surrounding contexts that occur as social practices are repeatedly played out. As individuals produce identities based on ways they perceive themselves to be and how they function within the collective, the spaces of authoring and improvisation are salient. Authoring references the ways identity is impacted simultaneously by internal individual factors and external influences (Chang, 2014; Holland et al., 1998). For example legal and humanitarian structures in the camps influenced the strategies engaged by refugees to negotiate the inside/outside figured worlds. These structures were as relevant to the production of identity, as the processes that originated through individual intention and agency. Improvisation is related to authoring because it is an action that an individual selects based on its capacity to incorporate a historical social practice and meet

the needs of an immediate circumstance (Holland et al., 1998). Improvisations work outside of established collective cultural understandings (Rush & Fecho, 2008).

The concept of figured worlds, termed as such by Holland et al. (1998), is rooted in an education research foundation, though has grown to influence perspectives across a number of disciplines. Bal (2014) discussed the role of cultural artifacts, in this case United States learner classifications within academic institutions, in constructing the figured world of difference for refugee youth entering country of resettlement school systems. Bal and Arzubiaga (2014) consider ways that trans-border cultural hybridity impact the academic identity of Muslim refugee youth. Researchers consider the figured worlds of home literacy practices (Hsin, 2011) and church-based ESL programs (Chao & Kuntz, 2013) through the experiences of immigrant learners. These authors consider the ways relationships influence participation. Though more rare in the health sciences, Dornan et al. (2015) explore the role of emotion in the identity construction of medical students, using the figured world of becoming a doctor as a frame. The authors consider power relationships between patients and physicians, and the ways experiences in patient care contribute to individual student emotions. Urrieta (2007²) and Pena-Talamantes (2013) draw from Holland et al. (1998) to explore identity construction of Chicana/o activist educators and lesbian and gay Latino students, respectively. Authoring and becoming guide the negotiation of identity construction within stigmatized contexts. Resistance in the context of the figured worlds of graffiti expression (Valle & Weiss, 2010) and literacy identity (Skerrett, 2012; Luttrell & Parker, 2001) illustrates how participation in a figured world can challenge oppressive socio-cultural norms. My research situates an exploration of the Karen refugee camp experience within a

developing body of literature that applies figured worlds to describe patterns of identity construction within complex migration contexts.

Third Space

In their review, Moje et al. (2004) suggest several perspectives on the third space, two of which are relevant to my research. The first is that the third space represents a convergence of multiple histories, where those individual histories can no longer be articulated but rather a new knowledge is produced (Rutherford, 1990). This view is consistent with the notion of the third space originally proposed by Bhabha (1994) where through language that challenges the dominant and privileged discourses, signs and symbols are ascribed new meaning. Inherent in this space is destabilization. New knowledge emerges as participants resist defining their position in relation to the oppressive discourses. For a Karen woman living in the refugee camps, this concept is reflected in the continual interaction between her positioning as a passive recipient of aid, the ways she asserts her agency, and the resulting collective shifts in social practice.

The second perspective of the third space reflects its liminal nature, and the fluidity that lies in the state of in-between (McNess, Arthur, & Crossley, 2013). Moje et al. (2004) describe this as a navigational space. In my study context this is the experience of waiting in the refugee camp. Conlon (2011) discusses waiting as a “significant facet of (im)mobility (p. 353)”, a result of the diversity of movement. In this view, waiting is an active process as Karen women construct meaning through the negotiation of inherited culture and the discourses of migration, protection, and livelihoods.

This state of in-between invites improvisation. Examples of improvisations that women I spoke with related were situated within the third space. These improvisations

encompassed a process of becoming and in doing so drew from both inherited culture as well as strategies designed to support the navigation of the inside and outside figured worlds relevant to the discourses of migration. Through improvisation, individual actions recontextualized discourse, as historical social practices were adapted to support shifting identities.

The theoretical lens I propose to frame this work is a scaffold. In one regard, this approach will facilitate the articulation of a unique space that is constructed by Karen refugee women as they draw from both inherited culture as well as the current social-political-cultural realities that influence the negotiation and refiguring of identities. In addition, these tools of discourse studies will guide the exploration of relevant and prominent discourses that are both acting on and shifting in response to evolving social practices.

Methods

I collected data over a three-week period of participant observation and interpreted informal interviews in two Burmese refugee camps located along the Thai-Burma border. Sites of data collection for this work were the Nu Po and Umpiem refugee camps. The United Nations (UN) and Thai government established the Nu Po camp in March of 1997 to consolidate two existing camps, as well as to support newly displaced persons seeking cross-border refuge from the conflict. Nu Po is approximately 80 percent Karen in its ethnic makeup (CCSDPT, 2015). The camp is situated in the Umphang District, Tak Province, Thailand and lies eight kilometers from the Burma border.

The Umpiem camp was established in late 1999, also serving to consolidate formerly existing camps. The UN and Thai government deemed the former camps insecure due to repeated Burmese army offensives targeting inhabitants. Umpiem is approximately 75 percent Karen ethnicity and lies twelve kilometers from the border in the Phop Phra District, Tak Province, Thailand (CCSDPT, 2015).

Ethnographic Case Study

I selected the ethnographic case study design because of its relevance to inquiry involving the identification of cultural patterns and dominant social-cultural-political discourses (Creswell, 2013; Gallant, 2008). In addition, though my data collection for the broader study occurred across an eleven-month period, each phase of data collection was characterized by delineated, intensive periods of time in the field. Using the ethnographic case study approach I was able to focus my area of interest as I interpreted elements of prominent discourses and behaviors most significant in the experiences of study participants.

Sample

This analysis includes data from three weeks of intensive participant observation in the Umpiem and Nu Po refugee camps and surrounding communities. Observations occurred primarily from walking through the camp communities, although I spent a significant amount of time in the American Refugee Committee sponsored patient care clinics. I spoke with non-governmental organization (NGO) program administrators and staff, as well as refugee leaders appointed within the camps. These conversations included groups of midwives and community health educators in both camps. I spoke with gender based violence program staff in Nu Po as well as staff from the Karen

Women's Organization offices in both camps. I met with a section leader in the Nu Po camp to discuss his perspective on issues associated with alcohol use and domestic abuse. Finally, one of my guides in the Umpiem camp was a section liaison who had until recently been detained as a political prisoner in Burma.

In addition, I conducted twenty-six informal ethnographic interviews with Karen refugee women living in the two camps. All of the primary interview participants were women, though there was a range of spouse, relative, child, and friend involvement in the discussions. The women I spoke with ranged in age from eighteen to seventy-five. A majority of the women were married with children. Three participants were single, one was divorced, one lived with a partner, and four were widowed (one of whom had remarried). On average, the women had spent just over 12 years living as refugees in the camps along the Thai-Burma border, with a range of one to twenty years. Three of the women had no children, the remaining participants ranged in child number between one and eight, with an average of 3 children. Two women and their families had completed all steps (including final medical screening) in preparation for resettlement, and were awaiting notification of their dates of departure from the United Nations. One of these families was assigned to resettle in Australia and the other in the United States. Finally, though I did not ask about religious affiliation directly in these interviews, in conversation a majority of the women shared that they practice within either the Christian or Buddhist faith doctrines.

Interpreters

Two interpreters facilitated all study interactions with Karen refugee participants, one in the Nu Po camp and one in the Umpiem camp. The interpreter in Nu Po had no

prior experience working as an interpreter, though had been mentored by an experienced interpreter in preparation for this work. She was in her early twenties, and had learned English from a visiting Australian teacher in the camp-based school system. She lived at that time with her parents as an only child, but was preparing to move and attend university in Bangkok in July of 2015. She planned to study education, but her goal was to become a pianist. She was of mixed ethnic origin, Karen and Shan, and spoke both Pwo and Sgaw Karen (in addition to Burmese, Thai, and English). The second interpreter I worked with in Umpiem had extensive experience interpreting for humanitarian aid organizations. He was in his early twenties and of Chin ethnic origin. He came from a large, devout Christian family. He completed the camp-based school system and was in the process of applying for programs that would facilitate university enrollment with tuition support. Specifically his goal is to attend university in China with a focus on information technology. His language proficiency encompassed Pwo Karen, Burmese, and English.

Ethical Conduct

The University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the research proposal in March 2015. Though there is no formal ethical review process in the refugee camps, a research proposal summary was provided to the Karen Refugee Committee, the administrative body charged with monitoring research conducted in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. All women who participated in informal interviews were administered consent, with a waiver of signed informed consent granted by the University of Minnesota IRB. Interviews were digitally recorded. No identifying information was included in the recorded portions of the discussions, thus data were

immediately de-identified. Recordings were subsequently transcribed for coding and analysis.

Analysis

The overarching analysis framework I engaged as I interpreted participant observation, field notes, and interviews conducted in the Nu Po and Umpiem refugee camps was Spradley’s levels of analysis (Spradley, 1980). The four levels that Spradley described represent an approach to ethnographic data analysis that not only sustains interpretation through a lens of cultural context, but underscores patterns of similarities as well as patterns of resistance. A *cultural domain* is a broad construct, where sub-categories are constructed and assigned cultural meaning by participants themselves. The more defined sub-categories are then linked to the encompassing cultural domain through a single semantic relationship. These observations are then further refined through *taxonomic analysis* into levels depicting more accurately the way a domain or cultural construct of interest is organized. Table 1 depicts the focal domain and taxonomic diagram central to this work.

Table 1
Domain and Taxonomic Diagram: Response Strategies

Domain/ Cover Term	Semantic Relationship	Included Terms					
		Equilibrium	Movement	Transcendence	Position	Impermanence	Distress
Response strategies to support health of individuals, families, and communities	← Types of response strategies ←		Physical		In collective		
			Intention to access resources		In environment		
		Purpose		Active	In family	Self	Inward
		Control	Movement of resources (commerce*)	Passive	Social status	Place	Outward
			Health		Provider/recipient	Time	
			Culture		Responsibility		

* Commerce encompasses descriptions of barter, monetary transactions, and lending agreements

A *componential analysis* then examines the cultural attributes of the included terms. The final paradigm structure of this level of analysis elicits and expresses meaning in the data in terms of contrasts (Table 2). The cultural attributes in this data represented patterns associated with the inside or outside figured world. A category of attributes also emerged that either defied or engaged both figured worlds simultaneously. I term this ‘resistance’ because of the relevance of this category to the third space.

The final step of Spradley’s analysis involves the identification of *cultural themes*, or universal generalizations that appear as recurrent patterns in ethnographic data. Cultural themes generally denote a relationship that connects prominent domains and sub-categories of domains. These may be tacit or explicit, but serve to facilitate comparisons and the identification of similarities among domains. In general, cultural themes emerge later in the process of data synthesis. In my data collection experience, the cultural themes of the inside/outside figured worlds emerged early as participants explicitly described the characteristics of these figured worlds and how they were positioned within them. Subsequent data collection and synthesis served to both explore and validate this finding.

Table 2
Paradigm Worksheet: Figured Worlds & Agency

Cultural domains describing response strategies engaged by encamped Karen refugee women to support individual, family, and community health	Cultural Domain	Attribute
		I/O/R
	Equilibrium	O
	Purpose	
	Control	
	Movement	R
	Physical	
	Intention to access resources	
	Movement of resources	
	Health	
	Culture	
	Transcendence	I

	Active	
	Passive	
	Position	I/O
	In collective	
	Self in the world	
	In family	
	Social status	
	Provider/recipient	
	Responsibilities	
	Impermanence	I
	Self	
	Place	
	Time	
	Distress	I/O
	Inward	
	Outward	
I/O/R – Inside/Outside/Resistance		

Because of the close level analysis necessary to accurately describe characteristics of the discourses intrinsic to this data, I modified strategies unique to Grounded Theory methodology, to use as tools to support the exploration of Spradley’s domains (Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2005). Specifically, these include situational mapping and line-by-line coding as preliminary data exploration techniques. Line-by-line coding involves the assignment of a theme or idea to each transcribed line of text. This approach is consistent with the discovery of nuanced meaning inherent to critical discourse analysis, and opens up the data for broader levels of exploration (Charmaz, 2006). Situational mapping is a strategy to create a visual depiction of relationships and meaning present in data. The process is a key first step in noticing sites of silence in the data, and helps to establish a frame through which actors and analyst engage (Clarke, 2005).

Critical discourse analysis is an approach that guides the exploration of meaning-making, with a particular focus on power, relationships, and context (Rogers, 2011). Communication in its infinite forms are representations of the discourses that circulate, whether the language conveyed is through visual media (such as the sign presented in

Figure 1 of this manuscript), written form (policy text), or orally (the narratives of people). The work of critical discourse analysts is to elicit the politics embedded in language that influence position, rank, and the distribution of social goods (Gee, 2014).

In addition, identifying the silences in the data, spaces where participants actively shift meaning by becoming ‘other’, are often the data most laden with significance. I conceptualize these shifts as markers of transformation. Fairclough (1995) references the tension in these moments, which he terms *cruces*. Women actively and passively shift meaning as they maneuver transformation inside of the surrounding socially and culturally constructed structures.

Findings

Central to this analysis are the subtleties of resistance that participants engage to defy complacency and forge an agentic position within systems that appear to encourage the opposite. To understand what these strategies are intended to resist, it is important to begin with a description of my observations of the daily routine of life in the camps.

The Day-to-Day

The roads leading to both the Umpiem and Nu Po camps traversed the *Sky Highway*, also known as the *Death Highway*, marked by sharp curves, steep and rapid shifts in elevation, and felled jungle flora. A frequent sighting were the farm pick-up trucks, overflowing with cabbage heads, leaving the mountain farms and beginning the journey to Mae Sot, or smaller community markets such as in Umphang. As frequent as the trucks were pedestrians of all ages, children through the elderly, walking along the road shoulders. These were day laborers travelling to and from the farm communities originating primarily from Thai Karen villages or the refugee camps themselves.

I was unsure how easily I would recognize the refugee camps as such. If from the road they would be immediately identifiable, or if they would blend into surrounding communities given the length of establishment. Both Nu Po and Umpiem were immediately identifiable, not only because of the physical barriers (i.e. fences) that delineated the perimeter of the camps, but for Nu Po the dense concentration of homes, and for Umpiem the stark visual of the isolated community clustered at the top of a mountain.

In addition, the Thai Government presence was apparent through the checkpoints and road signs beginning at least a kilometer before the camp and intensifying in the final approach to the camp entrance. Despite this, interactions with the Thai guardsmen stationed at the refugee camp were extremely limited in my experience. Each day we simply documented time of entrance and departure from the camp at the guard station. Once inside the gate, visual reminders of Thai presence dissipated.

The camps themselves were incredibly different with regard to their terrain. Nu Po was fairly flat and rocky while Umpiem was mountainous. Climbing to the households I visited in the Umpiem elevation and heat was challenging for me, whereas the interpreters and guides that I walked with around the camps were unfazed. Homes were constructed in similar styles between the two camps, but the type of materials varied. The bamboo used in Nu Po encouraged air movement through the structures because the stalks were narrow and spaced. The nature of the torrential rainstorms in Umpiem necessitated a better seal in the walls. The result was a less ventilated living space.

I was in Nu Po for a ration distribution, which happens once a month with each of the sections in the camp scheduled for a different time period during the month. There were several locations in the camp where aid organizations facilitated ration distribution by household, in an amount that corresponded to the number of registered refugee members of a family. The distribution centers were crowded with people. Individuals transported carts laden with sacks of rice, vats of oil, tubes of fish paste, and bags of charcoal, beans, and salt back to family dwellings. Rations were a central topic that women I spoke with referenced to describe both the resources available to them in the camps as well as when discussing the greatest challenges they faced. Observing the energy that surrounded a ration distribution helped me to understand this contradiction. It was powerful in the sense that for many families, what was given to them on this day was the only food they would have to sustain them for a month. Depending on who I was speaking with, this was perceived as invaluable, or as a reminder of the vulnerability of a woman's position.

I spent a significant portion of time observing in the American Refugee Committee (ARC) sponsored maternal-child clinics. Four days a week ARC-trained community midwives provided prenatal, post-partum, labor and delivery, and infant health services. One day per week was reserved for training, meetings, and other staff activities. The morning of clinic, families due for visits gathered into a seated waiting area, completed registration, and staff recorded basic growth/health statistics of the babies. During the time families waited, midwives and community health educators led large group education sessions on relevant health issues such as nutrition, vaccinations, and family planning. Men often were present with their children at the clinic for

appointments, in the absence of the wives/mothers. I asked the midwives about this because it varied from my understanding of normative gender roles in the Karen culture, and the response was that this was common, particularly if the woman served as the primary income-earner for the family. Men appeared natural and comfortable with the children, both in the clinic as well as in the community. I journaled repeatedly about the affection I observed between adults and their children. The depth of this connection with the future generation reemerged later as women I interviewed talked about the children as their focus for the family's future.

On the first day of my work in the Nu Po camp, I sat with a group of midwives in the clinic and asked about their experiences with the women they serve, their perceptions of the challenges their clients face, and how they worked with women to negotiate those challenges to achieve optimal health outcomes. In the course of the discussion, one of the midwives, who had been quiet up to this point, spoke up and said, "*We are also women, we are also refugees, and we are also stressed.*" In this moment, I began to see that the identities these women assumed in a particular place and time were not consuming, but rather served a particular purpose. For this group of 15 women, while I initially viewed them differently from the women they serve in their capacity as midwives, they did not see themselves differently. The conversation shifted in that moment, and the women told their stories and answered my questions as Karen refugee women who had pursued the opportunity to be trained and work as midwives in the camp.

Health work in the ARC clinics was extended through the work of community health educators (CHE). I had the opportunity to observe the work of several CHE in the

Umpiem refugee camp. Formal duties included participation in health education seminars delivered on clinic days at the ARC clinic. In addition, the CHE acted as liaisons between community members and aid organizations focused on supporting vulnerable persons. For example, Handicap International supported victims of landmines with special rations. Also, infants and/or mothers with complex health needs were given formula to supplement nutrition. The CHE assigned to these families made these deliveries, and monitored the status of the case. Additionally, CHE served an important informal function in that they represented a physical presence in the community of the health resources available in the refugee camps. The care the CHE provided occurred in the homes of families. Because they were typically assigned based on their section of residence, personal relationships were established with the clients they supported. They were a day-to-day presence that could be called on if health questions or issues came up. The faces that I most remember in my experiences with the CHE are those of three young Muslim women between the ages of 18 and 20 years old who were new to the CHE role. They were the most engaged individuals that I spoke with in this role, and asked questions about the health needs of the clients they work with as well questions that related to them personally. It was interesting to think about the physical, mental, and emotional health transitions these women were likely experiencing from a developmental perspective in the midst of serving in this important role as a liaison between the health resources in the camps and the community. I also remember the faces of two CHE women who were older. One of these women was established in the role, having served as a CHE for a number of years. The other was new to her role. Both brought with them invaluable life experience. In our discussions about their work, the histories and

memories of their migration from Burma were influential in the way these women carried out their role. I was reminded of how the midwives articulated their identities as refugees and as women. It was on my rounds with the CHE that I met the only political prisoner I interacted intensively with during my time in the camp. He viewed his work as a CHE as part of his healing.

My conversations with participants often centered on the presence of books, literature, and reading. References were made frequently to religious texts, but fiction novels had a place, as did children's literature. In one home I observed a 13 year old girl reading to her younger cousins as I talked with the women of the household. I asked about the reading practices in their home. Through this discussion I discovered there are three libraries in the Umpiem camp. I spent the afternoon at one of them, talking to the director of the library about the programs they have initiated with children and adults in the sections, how they are evaluating their successes, and what challenges they have faced. I was able to observe teenage volunteers preparing materials for the workshops they conducted with children. In addition to reading, the workshops included an art project. Examples of past projects were displayed in the library. The color and intricacy of the strands of paper and plastic created by children program participants that hung across the room made the space feel vibrant and alive. The library itself held a broad selection of children and adult books printed in Burmese, Karen, and Thai. There was also a section that the aid organizations working in the camps accessed. Library cards were accessible and free to individuals living in Umpiem. There was no one using the library during the time that I visited.

The level of movement inside the camps was the most striking visual observation I experienced. Much of my field journaling reflected the contradictions between the limits and restrictions of the physical camp space, and the constant appearance of people going and doing. As this observation evolved I began to ask interview participants about the movement. My curiosity stemmed from a common criticism I heard, concerning the lack of freedom and lack of choice individuals perceived as a characteristic of living inside the camp. In addition to the quantity of movement, the quality of movement, how people moved, was noteworthy. Movement was mostly on foot, carrying umbrellas to keep out of the sun, and with a Karen-woven bag generally worn diagonally across the body. The bags, as my interpreters explained, carried the individual's most valuable possessions. Because ultimately, leaving these possessions behind in their home was not a secure option. As I watched people with their bags containing their valuable possessions, it appeared to me that they were ready to flee at a moments notice. And, if these observations were relevant, given the length of time many had lived in the camps, this sense of insecurity had likely persisted within the person for many years. Aside from travelling on foot, there were frequent motorcycles and cars in the camps. This not only made passages on the narrow, rocky, and steep roads a tricky maneuver, but also brought forward movement as a representation of wealth disparities in the camps. I had not anticipated this phenomenon, but it was a stark representation of the reality of vulnerability.

Inside Figured World

The inside figured world is enacted in moments depicting the experience of Karen refugee women positioned through social, cultural, and legal camp structures as passive

recipients. These moments highlighted the realities of perceived control, disparity, and opportunity that Karen refugee women experience. Stories told through the lens of “inside” exhibited great consistency. Though each conversation exemplifies a unique lived experience, underlying patterns of meaning and context represent the construction of a figured world. The inside figured world depicts a normalized experience, from which women in the camp then view and position themselves as they construct individual identities within this context. Identity construction is influenced by the circulating discourses and prominent social practices. Two themes emerged in discussions and observations that describe patterns associated with living “inside”.

Transcendence. As Karen women participants shared the strategies they engaged to overcome the challenges of migration and transition, the mechanisms they discussed often served to temporarily escape the experiences of daily life. These strategies have an additional distinction of working to transcend the participant actively or passively. While individuals may take an active or passive approach when implementing this strategy, the agency of the person remains intact. Women who discussed transcendent strategies remained within the normative experiences of the inside figured world, though transcendence facilitated a reprieve from a perceived lack of control and choice.

Table 3
Ways Women Articulate Active and Passive Transcendence

Passive	Active
<i>“I don’t think about anything that happened in the past.”</i>	<i>“If I sing, I feel like my problems are almost gone.”</i>
<i>“I have no plans [for the future] because in the refugee camp we have no choice, so there’s no point.”</i>	<i>“We find peace when we talk, but funny [reflecting on the way her family solves problems].”</i>
<i>“I try to forget about that [feeling meaningless for her children].”</i>	<i>“If I have feelings in my heart, I read the bible and go to church, and its gone.”</i>

Impermanence. As women perceived their states of being from the perspectives of self, place, and time, they communicated a sense of impermanence (Table 4). Contextually, this theme was particularly salient at the time of these interviews because the UN had recently conducted a census exercise in both camps. The official goal of the process was to obtain an accurate count of camp members and account for ration dispersal. Perception in the community of the rationale behind the exercise varied. Particularly for individuals who held third country resettlement as the optimal resolution to their displacement, the UN presence reignited hope that there would be an increase in resettlement case processing. Per official policy communication, this was not the case. The resettlement program was concluding and the agenda of return was at the political forefront. For those that did understand the goal of the exercise, it represented the broader experience of waiting and ambiguity, characteristics of this protracted conflict.

Table 4
Ways Women Articulate Impermanence

<p><i>“My heart is always changing.”</i></p>	<p>Impermanence of self</p>
<p><i>“I have become homeless [living in refugee camp].”</i></p>	<p>Impermanence of place</p>
<p><i>“We are nowhere.”</i></p>	
<p><i>“I don’t know for sure [about plans for the future]. We have no hope to go to the third country [resettlement]; we have no hope to go back to Burma. We are between, our hearts are large.”</i></p>	<p>Impermanence of time</p>

References to the heart in dialogue as a dynamic phenomenon are juxtaposed by the unwavering presence of the heart, grounding the being of a woman (Table 4, bolded). Participants used the heart as a metaphor, often to describe emotions such as fear and anxiety. Women spoke about the heart growing or shrinking, and described the sensation of its pumping in the body.

Powerful visual representations of impermanence and the discourses of return were situated in the camp. For example the prominent sign positioned at the main entrance of the camp depicted the presence and authority of the Thai government. The sign reads “UMPIUM⁸ TEMPORARY SHELTER AREA” (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Entrance to the Umpiem Camp

Other visual images in the camps reinforced this prediction of imminent change. For example camp-based human rights organizations posted signs outlining the elements of the voluntary right of return for refugees. As women negotiated identities within the inside world of the refugee camp, these images contributed to that position. In Nu Po and Umpiem, a clear element of this negotiation was that change and transition were not only normative, but were again approaching. Individuals were responding to upcoming Burmese presidential elections, which then took place in November of 2015 (six months post-data collection). Based on the election outcome, subsequent political negotiations will likely lead to an organized voluntary return program and closure of the camps along

⁸ The spelling of the name of the Umpiem Camp in this document reflects the notation used by the UNHCR, though there is variability in the translation.

the Thai-Burma border. Camp leadership, humanitarian aid organizations, and the Border Consortium circulated this information throughout the camp. However, the logistics of return including where, when, and how remain unknown.

These signs indexed the temporality within the migration discourse through the presence of visual, material objects (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). The sign text and placement made present differences between those who created the image, those who are referenced in the image, and those who are active users of the image. And all of these actors existed together and access the same available discourses in very different ways. Questions this generated regarding the image in Figure 1 included what portion of refugees are literate and can read the sign? As the sign facilitates an interaction among relevant actors in the refugee camp, how does it reinforce disparities in terms of who can consume and how?

Outside Figured World

Women constructed the outside figured world in response to the perceived limits and lack of control available “*living inside*”. The inside/outside figured world binary was more distinct for individuals who had completed fewer years of formal education, migrated from rural areas of Burma, and/or were of lower socio-economic status within the refugee camp. Karen refugees originating from the more remote, jungle areas of the Karen state in Burma survived in their communities of origin by subsistence farming. Transferring this livelihood perspective to an existence that involved making plans for the future to support themselves and their families held challenges. Exceptions, those who originated from similar circumstances but pursued education and livelihood training

opportunities in the camps had an intrinsic motivation or resilience. These individuals may not have had a plan, but they had an idea.

Perceived restricted freedoms resulting from a lack of opportunity and choice in the refugee camps were prominent themes in the patterns of responses describing the challenges Karen women face. Notably, discussions surrounding education and livelihood emerged repeatedly as women discussed the characteristics of “*living inside*” in contrast to the outside figured world. References to Burma as the “*motherland*”, and communicating a sense of longing to return to the family community of origin, which often entailed a desire for physical land to grow food, was a pattern present among the older generation of women participants. The outside figured world was constructed as an alternative position to the perceived ambiguity of living in the camp. Engagement in the outside collective model signified possibility and self-sufficiency.

Equilibrium. Seeking a balance to this ambiguity and lack of control, participants engaged (usually partially and temporarily) in the outside figured world. In most cases, this took the form of pursuing employment as a farm laborer in the areas surrounding the camps. Women and/or men, depending on a family’s circumstances, would leave the camp for the day or potentially longer depending on the distance travelled, season, and availability of work. Wages outside the camps were on average three times higher in comparison to the professional livelihood opportunities available inside for educated or English speaking refugees. While the livelihood discourse dominated the construction of the outside figure world, there were elements of the personal reflected in the descriptions of the potential of the outside. The outside served as a space for families to reconnect, or where an individual could achieve perspective.

Table 5
Ways Women Articulate Equilibrium

<p><i>“Outside, I have more choice.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes I want to go outside the camp to relax, see a new view, or new neighbors.”</i></p> <p><i>“I go outside, to one of the villages to make some income for my family [in preparation for fees associated with upcoming school term].”</i></p> <p><i>“My husband cannot go out and work, and that’s one challenge [in a family with three children, the husband is the primary caretaker for the oldest child with cerebral palsy].”</i></p> <p><i>“The jobs are not available for everyone inside. But if I go outside I am arrested and harassed, so its not easy to go out anymore to make a little income.”</i></p> <p><i>“Outside, I have freedom, I can exercise my rights.”</i></p>

The temporary engagement in the outside figured world served an important function in that it enabled individuals to find meaning and purpose in ways that were not accessible to them inside. Working or simply being outside the camp carried a legal risk of arrest by the Thai authorities as well further financial consequences. The choice to incur this risk represented an opportunity to enact personal agency, as did the choice of how to spend the income. One woman referred to the benefit of this space as achieving *“more than what is provided.”*

In as much as it served to sustain equilibrium, the outside figured world held the potential to disrupt in the context of inherited Karen cultural norms. For a variety reasons, it was not always the male figure of a household pursuing livelihood opportunities outside to support a family. In these cases, when the female figure was successful in earning additional income as a laborer outside the camp, the flipped social structures were a potential source of conflict. Participants attributed the high prevalence of gender-based violence and alcoholism in the refugee camps to this reality.

The Third Space

Created at the intersection of the refugee camp structures that dominated individual agency and the discourses of gender that influenced the social practices of women, the third space is enacted through the ways women negotiated the inside and outside figured worlds. It was amongst the dominant circulating discourses that processes of coping and processes of becoming intersected in this space and transformed culture. Karen women described leveraging movement and position to negotiate the third space.

Movement. In Umpiem and Nu Po, there was constant and diverse expression of movement. This movement was incorporated into the stories participants shared as they constructed their personal narratives around the inside and outside figured worlds, and ultimately the negotiation between those worlds. Holland et al. (1998) would suggest that movement is an improvisation engaged by Karen women to enact resistance to authoritative social structures as well as a mechanism for authoring their position within the discourses of migration and related social practices. Bhaba (1994), credited with first articulating the construct of third space, might consider the instability in the symbolism of movement inherent in the production of the third space Karen women negotiated. For example, where historically Karen women “*followed the husband*” and did not work outside the home, women working as day laborers outside the camp was common. Women I spoke with reframed this action as one that followed the husband. Similarly men have traditionally managed the finances. Women who engaged in commerce activities to meet a family’s daily needs for food and supplies considered the trade, loans, and barter as household affairs. One participant stated “*opportunities in the camp for education and training have fueled change* [in reference to shifting cultural norms and

gender roles]”. The third space was produced by women who negotiated both the balance and the instability generated in the tension between inherited culture and shifting norms. The idea that movement underlies this negotiation was present in a physical sense, as well as in a more conceptual sense, which participants referenced as *transition*. The *transition* was represented in the recontextualization of the social practices shaping the roles of women in this Karen community.

Table 6 is an exploration of the discourses and situated meanings involved with five mechanisms of movement that emerged in interviews with women. I adapted this table presented first in Heffernan and Lewiston (2005) and subsequently modified as a tool for graduate level instruction (J. Tierney, personal communication, 2014). As I coded the movement data I constructed this grid to better understand how movement was integrated into the production of the third space, including the relevant meanings, discourses, and identities. For this table I incorporate Gee’s (2014) definition of situated identity. That is within a given discourse situated identity refers to, “the multiple identities we take on in different practices and contexts (p. 58).”

Table 6
Exploration of Discourses and Situated Meanings in the Ways Women Articulate Movement

Transcript	Situated Meaning	Discourse	Situated Identity
<p>“When I feel afraid, I walk...I just walk.”</p> <p>“I walk with friends sometimes. We talk about it [problems, challenges she faces] and my burdens are gone.”</p>	<p>Physical: movement of the body from one place to another with a less defined focus on the outcome of the movement.</p> <p>In the first passage, the source of fear is something this participant can leave.</p> <p>In the second passage the presence of the friend is secondary to the movement. But resolution appears complete.</p>	<p>Migration/Movement</p>	<p>Both passages relate an active position in addressing problems.</p>

<p><i>“Every Sunday I pray, may God send Angels to protect me, so that I can go to church.”</i></p> <p><i>“Education is for their future. If my children are not educated, they cannot do anything. They have to grow and they have to know how to cope with difficult problems.”</i></p>	<p>Intention to access resources: The intended outcome of the movement is gaining access to an identified resource. For example, achieving knowledge and education for children. Or accessing a space perceived as a resource to that individual.</p> <p>The participant in the first passage asks for protection through her movements, selecting a word with greater weight than help or support.</p> <p>The mother in the second passage also uses strong language (i.e. “cannot do anything”, “have to know”) for her children as they move into the future. Her adavance feels as though she is speaking from experience.</p>	<p>Protection</p>	<p>In the first passage, the participant assumes a vulnerable position.</p> <p>In the second, the mother assumes the responsibility of shaping the futures of her children by providing what she perceives to be a necessary resource.</p>
<p><i>“When I don’t have enough rations to provide for my family, I borrow from someone else. Then when I can I pay it back.”</i></p> <p><i>“I put my life in God’s hands. And then if someone asks me to wash their clothes, I am going to wash their clothes and get money.”</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes I go to work on a farm. I get money and then come back and buy food and oil. At night I don’t have candles to light, so we just stay in darkness.”</i></p>	<p>Movement of resources (commerce): This movement describes the interactions women broker to meet a need. Commerce encompasses descriptions of barter, monetary transactions, and lending agreements.</p> <p>The passages imply that what has been received is not sufficient and independent action is necessary to make ends meet.</p>	<p>Livelihoods</p>	<p>These three women describe the agentic actions they take to mobilize resources that meet their basic needs.</p>
<p><i>“[Asked to define health] A person who can work and can eat and can run some other place [referring to her flight from Burma]”.</i></p>	<p>Health: Movement as health (distinguished from using movement to access a health resource).</p> <p>The participant’s focus for health is based on the context that surrounds her. That is, her physical health will enable her to generate income and move if necessary.</p>	<p>Health as physical movement</p>	<p>The participant pursues an able identity.</p>
<p><i>“I go and scold my husband [when</i></p>	<p>Culture: Movement of</p>	<p>Resistance</p>	<p>Caretaker, but the</p>

<p>he drinks]. <i>It doesn't matter if he listens or not, I am free.</i>"</p> <p><i>"I worry if my children will go the right way or the wrong way."</i></p>	<p>culture, patterns of shifting norms, evidence of transformation.</p> <p>The first passage represents a departure from a traditional Karen relationship in that the wife engages with the husband about his drinking, but does not remain a full participant in that identity.</p> <p>The mother in the second passage is concerned with whether her children will begin using drugs, which is becoming more prevalent in the camp. She has classified drug use as "the wrong way". It is not clear what authoritative power has generated the right/wrong binary.</p>		<p>passages vary in terms of how fully the individual takes up the identity.</p>
<p>Adapted from Table 1. Critical Discourse Analysis example: Kevin (Heffernan & Lewison, 2005, p.110).</p>			

“Mobility, or lack there of, is political (Hyndman & Giles, 2011, p. 364).” This statement accounts for the irony that accompanied observations of diverse and frequent movement in the context of immobility, such as Karen refugees in waiting in the camps. The state of *waiting* is increasingly acknowledged in gender and mobility studies, particularly in research involving protracted conflict (Conlon, 2011; Mountz, 2011). Consistent with findings I report, waiting is neither stagnant nor passive. Gray (2011) describes the intention behind active waiting in the anticipation of permanent return. Negotiations in this circumstance create a hybrid space where the activism in immobility is portrayed (Mountz, 2011). In the spaces between the statistics indicating that global protracted refugee circumstances are becoming normative, movement (even subtleties of movement) persist and generate meaning.

Position. Engaging movement as a response strategy created a space within which Karen women exerted their agency as they positioned themselves. Transcript

excerpts included in Table 7 demonstrate the range of positions women occupied, including positions in the collective, gendered positions, or a position made available through a situated identity. Women negotiated these positions in the third space assuming partially and/or temporarily the inside and outside figured worlds.

Table 7
Ways Women Articulate Position

<p><i>“There is no inheritance for my children [discussing her rationale for prioritizing education for her children].”</i></p> <p><i>“I sell coal from my rations to buy formula for my baby.”</i></p> <p><i>“[In response to a question of why she goes to the UN office every day to get help in sorting out registration for her newborn] My most important responsibility is to look after my family.”</i></p>	<p>Responsibility: These statements often referenced perceived responsibilities to future generations. Where assertions that communicated a personal lack of opportunity were common, the responsibility to make decisions that would shape the futures of Karen children were prevalent. This particular element of position contrasts statements of transcendent response strategies women shared.</p>
<p><i>“As a human, sometimes facing a problem is hard at first, but it leads to peace.”</i></p> <p><i>“As a human we face many problems. That’s the nature. We have to know how to solve these problems and try to be happy ourselves.”</i></p> <p><i>“My home is here [referring to the camp, despite her perception of the lack of opportunity and future].”</i></p>	<p>Self in the world: These comments communicate thinking that is broader than the day to day. They reflect internalized lessons learned regarding positions available in the social-cultural-political context of the camp. The tone of the statements possesses qualities of mentorship and wisdom derived from experience.</p>
<p><i>“As a woman, we are weak. We cannot do like men do, so we have to depend on men.”</i></p> <p><i>“Health is being able to go to AMI [referring to the camp-based medical clinic] and take medicine.”</i></p>	<p>Provider/Recipient: These statements reflect the responses of women to the structures that surround them, including structures produced by culture (internal) and those produced by systems of humanitarian aid (external).</p>
<p><i>“When I fell in love with my husband, my brother didn’t like this. The camp leader said I can not write a marriage certificate for you. Now we have to stay, we are just living together.”</i></p> <p><i>“If you are educated, you know how to take care of yourself. If you are not, maybe you cannot take care of yourself.”</i></p>	<p>Social status: Lines of power and privilege are firmly entrenched in the refugee camps. The positions referencing social status are reflective of the hierarchies and disparities present in the camp structures. The speaker placing herself in conflict with something or someone else frequently characterized these statements.</p>
<p><i>“Supporting my children in school relieves my stress, knowing they will be able to write something, say something.”</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t want to be broken, I want to live as a family.”</i></p>	<p>In family: This position is a source of power for women. As women articulated the construction of their role within the family, it was clear the position was a mechanism women relied on to achieve <i>peace</i> and <i>together</i>. There is overlap in these statements with the ways women talked about responsibility and the collective that resulted from the shared relevance of the</p>

	discourse of protection.
<p><i>“If I am working in a group, and I’m not always sick, it helps the group. It [health] means you can work with them for a long time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Here [in the refugee camp] we are all the same [referring to the structures and systems that surround refugees living in camps]. So we have to depend on ourselves.”</i></p>	<p>In the collective: A core value of inherited Karen culture, these statements reflect the positioning of the individual within greater society. Shifting social practice resulted from the evolution of available positions to members of the collective. These shifts contribute to the recontextualization of the role of women within the third space.</p>

Expanding on the position of self, a pattern emerged in the data that reflected a commonly held self-perceived lack of knowledge, experience, or understanding of personal health. The women who made these comments (*“Somebody would know more than me”*, *“My brain is not working”*, *“I don’t have the knowledge”*, *“I don’t really understand what it is, health”*) had less formal education and were of lower socioeconomic status than women who were able to articulate their perspectives. There was a position assumed as a result of the process of internalizing the inability to access or possess resources. This position undermined the confidence of women to take ownership of their experiences, physical and otherwise.

Distress. The intent of this inquiry is not to dissect the horrors of war and probe the impact of these experiences on participants. However, stories of distress emerged prominently in interviews and are thus essential to a whole understanding of the spaces Karen women occupied and negotiated.

Table 8
Ways Women Articulate Distress

<p><i>“If you live with your husband, he will come and abuse you, so it’s not good to stay with him.”</i></p> <p><i>“I have a problem with my family, my children use drugs.”</i></p>	Outward distress
<p><i>“Since I ran from the soldiers, in my heart I have always been afraid.”</i></p> <p><i>“When I see someone fighting, or yelling, I am shocked [referencing her seizure disorder].”</i></p>	Inward distress

Narratives of distress evolved in the descriptions of both the inside and outside figured worlds. The experiences of distress originated in part from the destabilization the production of the third space introduced as social structures reorganized and cultural norms shifted (Moje et al., 2004). In the absence of strategies to support resilience, individuals struggle to make connections between their own inherent wisdom and cultural transformation.

Discussion

The purpose of this research is to understand the socially and culturally constructed architecture within which refugee women produce and negotiate identity. Figured worlds are defined through the positionality of actors, which is why they constantly shift. Through language, Karen women constructed an inside/outside figured world binary, as they described their perceptions of life in one or the other of these socially figured physical spaces as refugees. As my analysis has progressed, it became apparent that the negotiation of a refugee woman's identity the refugee camp (as it is situated within the broader migration experience) is actually far more complex than simply engaging in the inside or the outside figured worlds. The response strategies Karen refugee women engaged not only negotiated movement between the inside/outside figured worlds (or out of one, or into one), but also constructed a third space. Here, women were authoring and improvising ways to sustain peace, position their children in ways that empowered them, and protecting their own wellbeing. It is worth mention that this movement was not limited to physical movement, although physical movement was an essential element of my field observations.

Response strategies women engaged as they navigated forced migration and the unique space of the refugee camp encompassed coping and resilience behaviors. These behaviors then transferred to strategies Karen refugee women employed to negotiate the inside and outside figured worlds of the refugee camp. Ultimately, these actions contributed to the negotiation, refiguring, and construction of identity. Stated another way, as Karen women enacted who they viewed themselves to be in the world, coping was becoming. And contrary to a perception that health providers are often conditioned to act on, there is not an end state in this process. Rather, as women "...tell others who they are, but even more important tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are (Holland et al, p. 3)," the intersection of coping and becoming is tenable. In this space the processes of coping and becoming reflected the relationship between structure and agency, where a woman expressed her resistance to a system that in its design, oppressed her. The system in this circumstance was the structures and policies in the refugee camp that positioned refugees as passive recipients of aid and constrained agency. These constraints were most visible in the social practices that surrounded the discourses of movement and livelihoods. As Karen refugee women have moved to redesign their position within these systems, they have produced a hybrid cultural space. Inherent within this is a shift in cultural norms, inclusive of those that influence or define the role of women.

Most evident in these shifts were ways that women improvised livelihood opportunities to support the future of their families. The third space served as a platform to reconcile contradictions in the identities women assumed, drawing into a hybrid space elements of culture, survival, and protection (Gutierrez et al., 1999). Women engaged the

third space as a bridge to navigate between the discourses of forced migration and their futures as they envision authoring them to achieve *peace* and *together* in their families and communities. The concepts of peace (“*If there is no peace, then we are not a good family.*”) and together (“*If we work together we will become bigger. If we work alone it is difficult to solve problems.*”) were repeatedly articulated by women as fundamental purposes guiding their actions.

I see important parallels between these findings and the results of an oral testimony conducted with internally displaced Karen women in Burmese army forced relocation sites. Oo, a Karen woman, and her colleague (2010) explored the roles of power and gender in the context of internal forced migration in Burma. The findings indicated that internally displaced Karen women designed response strategies to forced displacement with the goals of living in peace, caring for children and families, and sustaining the health of their communities. As women assumed non-traditional gender roles in conflict, they continued to rely on inherently feminine characteristics such as motherhood and nurturing to mobilize resources and meet their goals. The researchers reframe the role and influence of women within the political and military conflict in Burma. Women are positioned as the sustainers and cultivators of Karen culture in the midst of chaos, ultimately placing them at the center of the political struggle (Oo & Kusakabe, 2010).

In my research, the refiguring of identity in the third space is a response strategy to the social-political-cultural consequences of displacement across borders. A comparison of findings of this analysis and the analysis of Oo and Kusakabe (2010) portrays the evolution of social practices that influence the ways Karen women position

themselves. The common theme motivating shifts in behavior is the impact of achieving *peace* and *together* on Karen children, families, and community. As a Karen woman in the Umpiem camp summarized her beliefs, she said *“If we stay together, we see each other. We can understand each other. We can be happy as one.”*

Limitations

The primary study limitation is the necessity of working with an interpreter. Subtleties of language and meaning are lost in the interpretation process. This poses a problem within an ethnographic design because the primary intent of the method is to explore meaning from an emic perspective. Additionally, because the data is interpreted, it is not always feasible to make definite claims about the links between structure and function in the discourse data. Interpretation is ideological and therefore it could be argued that the interpreter’s explanations are analyzed. The study examines response strategies within a specific refugee population, and therefore results cannot be generalized.

Implications

Gee (2014) describes figured worlds as a tool of inquiry in critical discourse analysis. One of the questions Gee identifies that figured worlds can help to answer is how are the relevant figured worlds facilitating the transformation of cultural systems and structures within which actors situate their identities? As figured worlds evolve through the transformation of the relevant discourses and social practices, Bakhtin’s notion of dialogism is tied to the assertion that there will always be change. In reference to the connectedness of social actors, Bakhtin states, “It is in relation to the whole actual unity that my unique thought arises from my unique place in being (1993, p. 41)”. Here again

the connectedness of one's position and the greater context links shifting identity with prominent circulating discourses and the surrounding social/cultural/political structures. Integrating these perspectives creates a foundation through which we may understand the experiences of Karen refugee women living in the refugee camps and negotiating the third space between the inside and outside figured worlds, and at the intersection of coping and becoming. And given the context of this work and the ongoing evolution of the sociopolitical context in Burma, we may derive relevance from this understanding to anticipate the processes of becoming in the next phase of migration for these refugees, which at this point is uncertain.

The inside and outside figured worlds co-constructed by the refugees and the systems that surround them are imposed and lead to a less than agentic identity. In contrast, the third space that is produced by Karen refugee women in response to this is an agentic space. This space sustains balance through transition. In the current sociopolitical context, as humanitarian organizations work to wean encamped refugees from Burma off of a near complete dependence on aid, transition is once again imminent. Some refugees have taken steps away from this dependence already by engaging in the outside figured world. For Karen women, these hybrid spaces have cultivated a repositioning of identity. This has implications culturally, particularly in regard to norms that surround gender. To filter support through the third space in a way that preserves it, also preserves the balance that women have constructed. As public health practitioners, engaging in a caring response to refugee experiences, we need to seek out these third spaces and find ways to funnel support through them without taking them over, and thus making them no longer third spaces.

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Chapter 5

“What about the next generation that’s coming?”

The recontextualization of mothering post-refugee resettlement

Introduction

Mothering is the invisible work of war. Protecting and nurturing a child in conflict influences every decision that a woman makes with regard to her circumstance. And when these circumstances warrant, the judgment of when, how, and where to migrate, is often based on how this woman envisions the future for her child. Post-refugee resettlement, the complexities of the experience change, but do not always lessen. Rather as a resettled refugee woman navigates the work of mothering across cultures, complexities intensify as they approach and impact her children. Refugee enculturation and economic adaptation is impacted by post-resettlement social determinants of health such as access to services and social capital (Mullan, Majka, & Rumsey, 2002). The processes of resilience associated with the capacity to mother in a hybrid cultural space is similarly influenced by these same conditions (Carranza, 2007; Thurston & Visandjee, 2005). Ultimately the course of healing for a woman who has survived war is inherently connected to the extent to which her children thrive in a new environment (Levi, 2014; Robertson & Duckett, 2007).

My research is focused on examining the human health experience at the intersection of forced migration and human rights. In this analysis I apply an ethnographic case study lens to the exploration of the recontextualization of mothering negotiated by a cohort of Karen women as they navigate refugee resettlement in the United States. I define the recontextualization of mothering as the mechanism through which Karen social practices of mothering that were constructed and embedded within context and discourses relevant to refugee displacement and migration have evolved in response to the structures of resettlement (Tierney, 2013). I situate this work within a

series of analyses exploring the construction of response strategies⁹ developed and implemented by Karen refugee women from Burma across a spectrum of migration. These response strategies are designed with the goals of supporting individual, family, and community health. I construct the theoretical space for this analysis drawing on the frameworks of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) and recontextualization (Van Leeuwen, 2008; Van Leeuwen, 2007). My analysis will focus most heavily on participant observations and discussions that took place with twelve Karen women over the course of eleven months. I draw from perspectives shared by community-based organizations working locally with the Karen community and discussions with local, state, and federal resettlement policy experts in the interpretation of findings and formulation of the discussion and implications.

The perspectives of Karen women that I present in this manuscript are not representative of the population of Karen refugee women and youth resettled in the United States. What I do present however emphasizes an important experience shared by a cohort of women with relevance in the broader discourses of migration. That is, that Karen women express (as diverse groups of refugees have before them) the challenges associated with negotiating the mothering identity across cultural difference and the ways in which they respond to meet those challenges.

Context

⁹ Vincent and Sorensen (2001) first coined the term “response strategies” in an attempt to resist traditional humanitarian labels applied to vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons (IDPs). The intent of the shift in discourse was to honor the heterogeneity of groups often categorized by exposure to war and conflict rather than the unique community-specific experience. The core elements that formulate a response strategy are *motivation* to establish goals and identify resources, *creativity* in navigating barriers associated with displacement, *comprehensiveness* in addressing protection and other needs of the community, and *reflectivity* in the evaluation of successful and unsuccessful approaches. I define response strategies as the tools engaged by an individual or community to navigate forced migration and promote the resilience of interpersonal connections, and cope individually and collectively with the challenges inherent to cultural transformation.

Since 2006, the United States has resettled more than 75,000 refugees from Burma, a majority identify as ethnic Karen (Lytle, 2015; US State Department, 2014; UNHCR, 2014). Trends documented in state health department refugee arrival reports as well as aggregate migration data indicate that females comprise approximately 45 percent of the population of refugees from Burma in the United States. This community in the United States is a relatively young population, with 64 percent of individuals under the age of 40. Approximately 26 percent of community-members are youth under 18 years of age (Vang & Trieu, 2014; MDH, 2013). What these statistics demonstrate are the large number of women of childbearing age and evidence of the youth generation as a significant segment in the make-up of the communities of refugees from Burma. The emergence of the experience of mothering and the notion of resilience in the relationships between mothers and their children as prominent themes in conversations with Karen women post-resettlement is cogent.

Though limited, research describing the experiences of mothering post-conflict and resettlement among refugees from Burma is consistent with the broader body of literature documenting the experiences of refugee families. Many of these studies situate parenting within the context of the school-based education experience of refugee youth or relate a focus on its relevance to the parent-child relationship (Santoro & Wilkinson, 2015; Betancourt et al., 2014; Deng & Marlow, 2013; Lewig, Arney, & Salverson, 2010; McBrien, 2011; Merali, 2009). The public health implications of this insight are important as it implies the education system is an effective mechanism of access and support not only in the development of youth, but also from the perspective of supporting health in women and families. This relationship is also consistent with the emphasis on

educational opportunities for children as a primary motivation to pursue third country resettlement, expressed by Karen refugees.

From an interpretive phenomenologic understanding, McLuaghlin & Guilfoyle (2013) examined the role of an early childhood play-group in developing informal networks of social support among refugees from Burma. In addition to findings that highlight the importance of an intervention facilitating and enhancing opportunities for socialization, the authors frame parenting within acculturation. Authors point out direct parallels between stressors associated with both the experience of acculturation and the experience of mothering. In doing so, the authors draw awareness to sources of tension involved in parenting across hybrid cultural spaces. Harper (2015) explores disparities between collective and individualist cultural frameworks through a more critical lens. This author relates the way the narratives of resettled Karen refugees counter collectivist cultural norms imposed on ethnic minority groups in Burma by the military regime. In response to a recognized need to reconcile Karen ways of knowing within a host country school science curriculum, the study described an exploration of resilience as it is anchored to inherited cultural practices of Karen parents. Finally Koh, Liamputtong, and Walker (2013) approached an understanding of dynamic familial roles from the perspective of young Burmese refugee women living in Australia. The authors explored sources of power and the roles of linguistic brokering and technology in the dynamics of intergenerational positionality.

Purpose

The purpose of this analysis is to explore the recontextualization of mothering in Karen refugees from Burma from two perspectives. In partnership with members of the

Karen community and key members of the Karen network of support, I consider the growing level of awareness within the Karen community that shifting social structures and evolving patterns of cultural norms have impacted familial relationships.

Specifically in this study I document ways these transitions enter into the relationship between a mother and her adolescent children. The emphasis on adolescence emerged as women worked to make sense of their experiences during our discussions. Adolescent children represented hope for these mothers, as the community positioned itself within the structures of resettlement. Though women acknowledged the instability of this transition for their adolescent children as a source tension in families and fear.

Next I consider ways Karen women have engaged not only with cultural, social, and political structures as they refigure themselves within a mothering identity, but I also examine the role of law in culture. I consider the codification of the discourses of discipline in the United States as well as vestige child rights beliefs that have evolved across the Karen migration experience. I document the ways in which refugee women situate their values and social practices within the confines of static laws.

These questions framed my research:

1. How do Karen women construct the social practice of mothering within the discourses of migration and resettlement? This question approaches the active internal processes and strategies Karen women engage to develop mothering practices.
2. In what ways are the social, familial, and legal institutions within which women negotiate individual and cultural mothering identities represented in discussions with

women surrounding the social practice of mothering? This question approaches the external systems and processes that Karen mothers engage with post-resettlement.

Theoretical Framework

As I discuss findings from interview data and participant observation, I will present four overarching themes that emerged as my analysis advanced. In discussing the first and second themes, my intent is to produce the context within which women address cultural hybridity and recontextualization. First, I consider recontextualization as it pertains to a liminal space generated when collectivist and individualist cultures merge. Second, I consider the shared migration histories of mothers and their children, and the frequently divergent experiences post-resettlement and the impact of this on the mothering experience. In the analysis of the third and fourth themes I describe response strategies women engage to support their own health and the health of their family relationships. Third, I observe the alignment between the response strategies Karen women engage to achieve optimal health post-resettlement and the structures and policies implemented that in theory support the same objective. Finally, I discuss the transformational spaces women identify and engage where families achieve peace and togetherness, ultimately moments of individual, familial, and community health. These key elements of my analysis are deeply rooted in the frameworks of hybridity (Bhabha, 1994) and recontextualization (Van Leeuwen, 2008; Van Leeuwen, 2007).

Hybridity

A feature of Karen culture that has persisted and held a prominent role in supporting the transition of Karen refugees through the migration continuum is collective sharing. This concept is represented in the actions taken by members of the Karen

community with advanced tenure in the country of resettlement to ease the transition for newcomers. Facilitating, at times transferring, the accessibility of services, communication, mobility, and financial resources, are typical features of this model (Worland & Darlington, 2010). The ability to cycle support across subsequent cohorts of refugee migrants contributes to positive resettlement and acculturation. As communities reconfigure themselves in ways that strengthen the network of Karen cultural connections, the prevalence of Karen secondary migration rises, and trends in the direction of these networks (Kenny & Lockwood-Kenny, 2011; Mitschke et al., 2011; Harkins, 2012). Holland et al. (2011) define a cultural artifact as a symbol produced through interaction that facilitates shaping or preserving identity. Collective sharing is a cultural artifact of collectivist culture that influenced a way of life and ways of knowing for Karen living in Burma prior to displacement. Features of collectivism thrive in the social and political structures of the refugee camps, but are challenged post-resettlement in the United States by the predominant notions of independence and self-determination. Karen mothers encounter these features of individualist culture as they negotiate livelihoods and evolving gender norms. Youth encounter and are influenced by these notions in schools, through new and diverse peer groups, and changing roles and expectations in the family structure.

Tension residing at the intersection of collectivist and individualist culture is a representation of *cultural difference* (Bhabha, 1994). This hybrid space “problematizes the binary division of past and present, tradition and modernity (p. 51)”. Rather within this hybrid space, differences in culture are mobilized to produce meaning, including “a political objective that is new, neither one nor the other (p. 37).” At this state of in-

between, identity is not fixed. Rather, identity is transformed and translated as symbols take up new meaning and are engaged by actors to negotiate shifting cultural contexts. The experience of mothering negotiated in the space of cultural difference is a state of emergence. As marginalized actors negotiate the liminal space conditioned by predominant social norms and legal parameters, evolving discourses and social practices emerge.

Recontextualization

Karen women are continuously constructing the social practice of mothering within the dominant discourses of migration and resettlement. As Karen women negotiate the liminal space of cultural difference that emerges post-resettlement, transformed representations of mothering alter the relevant discourses. Alternative discourses may take up new meaning and become significant, for example the discourses of discipline, gender roles, or child rights. Within a hybrid cultural space where norms and customs reconfigure, discourses exert influence on social practice, and shifting social practices influence the evolution of discourse. Van Leeuwen (2008) refers to this process of transformation as recontextualization.

Recontextualization is an interdisciplinary construct with roots in linguistic studies. Because of its relevance within critical discourse analysis, a method I integrate in my approach, I consider the work of Theo Van Leeuwen in recontextualization. Van Leeuwen (2008) considers the recursive, or back and forth, nature of recontextualization, and draws from the theory of recontextualization to explain this quality (Bernstein, 1990). In the evolution of social practice, each iteration distances collective behavior and action

from a starting point. In this sense, recontextualization contains the path of social change that illustrates ways the present is connected to historical narratives of the past.

Methods

I collected the data presented in this manuscript over an eleven-month period, spanning March 2015 – January 2016. The Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM) was a key community-based partner in this research. The KOM was founded in 2003 and functions as the first Karen lead non-profit organization in the United States. In Minnesota, the group provides refugee resettlement support and ongoing integration and acculturation guidance to the estimated 10,000 member Karen refugee population (KOM, 2015). I began to interact with the Karen community in the Twin Cities through volunteer and other opportunities with the KOM in the summer of 2013. In March of 2015 I began a series of interviews with key actors in the regulatory, coordination, and monitoring aspects of health services provided to refugees through migration and resettlement at the local, state, and federal level. These individuals were active in the work of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), and the Minnesota Department of Health. In June 2015 I began individual key informant interviews with a cohort of Karen women upon my return from the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. These continued through January 2016 and informed the analysis presented in this manuscript. Recruitment of primary participants took place via face-to-face invitation in partnership with the Karen Organization of Minnesota (KOM).

Ethnographic Case Study

The ethnographic case study design integrates an emphasis on understanding cultural patterns within dominant social-cultural-political discourses with in-depth descriptions of the experiences of refugee women (Creswell, 2013). Findings reported in this manuscript are situated within a larger study, where distinct phases of data collection were characterized by concentrated periods of fieldwork. Within this design, I was able to synthesize important experiences within a refugee woman's migration narrative highlighting prominent elements of the discourses most relevant to the Karen social practice of mothering.

Sample

I recruited participants and conducted in depth, repeated interviews (2-4) with a cohort of twelve Karen women from Burma who had come to the United States through the refugee resettlement program. The participants ranged in age from 23 to 61 years of age. All were ethnic Karen, with the exception of one participant who identified herself as ethnic Karenni. This woman was raised in a Karen community, was married to a Karen man, and spoke only the Karen language. She identified culturally as Karen, and for this reason I included data collected from our discussions in the analysis. Of the women, 11 were mothers and had active primary care-giving responsibilities. Time since resettlement ranged from six months to 15 years, though 9 members (75 percent) of the cohort resettled within the last 4 years. Of the participants, 3 (25 percent) were initially resettled in another state prior to migrating to Minnesota. Table 1 is an introduction to each of the twelve women I came to know over the seven-month span of interviews (all names are pseudonyms).

Table 1
The Women

Su Kwee	<p>I first met Su Kwee in June of 2015. She was a 27-year old Karen woman, who at the time of our first interview had lived in the United States for 6 months. Before this, she had lived in the Umpiem refugee camp since 2004. Su Kwee was married with two young children, and lived in the United States with them, her husband. Her mother and one brother lived in the same building, her mother was present for all of our discussions, though sat behind Su Kwee and rarely spoke. Su Kwee completed school through the fourth grade in Burma and identified as a Christian. The family left their community of origin in Burma because the Burmese army targeted her two brothers as spies. Her father was the village leader, and also worked as a fisherman. To pressure the family, the army prevented him from fishing and then selling his fish in the community. As a result, the family was starving. Su Kwee’s father was eventually arrested but was able to escape. He came back for the family who then fled together to avoid further persecution. It was after moving into the Umpiem camp that she met her husband. Both of her children were born in the refugee camp. Though it took some time before Su Kwee fully engaged in discussion, she was insightful and intelligent. When I first met Su Kwee she was enrolled in an English language-learning program with her resettlement organization. After two months, she had to withdraw so that she could be home with her children. At our last interview, she had begun an application to the Head Start childcare program. Over the course of our interactions her husband experienced severe health complications, which required emergency surgery.</p>
Naw Mu	<p>I first met Naw Mu in June of 2015. Naw Mu was a 45 year old woman who has been in the United States for eleven months. Before that she lived in the Mae La camp for 10 years. Naw Mu was married with two children, an eighteen year old in ninth grade, and a thirteen year old in seventh grade. Naw Mu did not work, but attended English classes every day. Prior to this, Naw Mu had no formal education. As a refugee living in Mae La, she worked outside the camps in the surrounding farms. Naw Mu was the only woman I interacted within in the cohort who identified as Buddhist. She was married to her husband and had one child when they decided to flee Burma. Before crossing the border to Thailand, she and her husband were both conscripted by the Burmese army to serve as forced porters, a common war tactic and form of torture used by the Burmese Army. The family left their community of origin following their release by the army; their son was six years old. During our first interview, Naw Mu began the conversation sitting, facing the interpreter and I. Slowly through the conversation, her body language shifted away from us, to the point that her back was to us and she was facing a wall. Subsequent interactions were similar. Naw Mu was soft spoken with a kind smile. She repeatedly expressed her “lack of knowledge” in response to questions I asked. She moved and fidgeted almost constantly, which suggested unease, but she denied discomfort. We came to an understanding that our discussions were over when she stopped answering questions. Though generally reserved, she spoke articulately about the meaning of transition in her life. She loved to cook and practiced the traditional Karen art of weaving.</p>
Youe Paw	<p>I first met Youe Paw in June of 2015. Youe Paw was a 58 year old woman, widowed six years ago while living in the refugee camp. She resettled to the United States two years ago with her mother and two daughters ages 16 and 14. She and her husband fled Burma when their oldest was two years old and she was six months pregnant with their second child. The Burmese army had settled in their community of origin and Youe Paw’s husband was forced to work as a forced porter. The experience left him weak and sick, and the family feared that if he was recruited again he would not survive. Youe Paw had never attended school. Upon resettlement she joined a patient care assistant (PCA) training program through her resettlement organization and at the time we spoke worked six hours per week as a PCA. She was also the primary care taker for her mother, who now lived with her sister in a nearby apartment. Youe Paw spoke about her own health issues, what she called a “problem with her blood”. Despite a recommendation from her physician not to, she continued to work. Youe Paw moved during the time I worked with her. Her second apartment was smaller, darker, and initially had a strong smell of mildew. I asked why she moved and if she liked her new apartment. She responded, “its cheaper.” Youe Paw was thoughtful, serious, and authentic. She</p>

	communicated her identity as caretaker, who as a child cared for her siblings, as a mother of her biological children and primary caregiver of two of a sibling's children, and now her own mother, in a way that centered these experiences within her narrative.
Pa Hser	I first met Pa Hser in July 2015. Pa Hser was a 48 year old woman who had been in the United States for three years. Prior to resettlement she lived in a refugee camp on the Thai-Burma border for 15 years. She was married with four children ranging in age from 10 to 22. Pa Hser did not work outside the home. Her husband travelled to a nearby city during the week to work in a meat processing company and support the family financially. Pa Hser completed the third grade in Burma, and had no further schooling. She identified as a Christian. Pa Hser left Burma by herself as the conflict was just beginning. Her sister had already fled the community and sent word from Thailand that she should leave Burma. At first she lived with her sister outside of the refugee camp in Thailand. Pa Hser was one of the only women I spoke with in the United States who related a continued longing for Burma. She discounted the possibility of return to Burma though, because as she said, she no longer had proof of citizenship and the political situation was "complex".
Eh Htoo	I met Eh Htoo in July of 2015. Eh Htoo was a 43 year old woman who resettled to the United States one and a half years ago with her second husband (she remarried after her first husband died in Burma) and three of her four children (one adult child remains in the camp). When I first met Eh Htoo, she was the primary care taker for her 16-month old grandson. His mother, Eh Htoo's 18-year old daughter, was a sophomore in high school and divorced from the grandson's father. Over the course of our interactions, the daughter and grandson moved out of the apartment. Eh Htoo never attended school because she was always in charge of caring for her younger siblings. When she left Burma, she was a single widow with three children - a 5 month old, a four year old, and an eight year old. She remarried while living in the refugee camp. Eh Htoo practiced within the Christian faith, though before she met her current husband she was Buddhist. Initially when we met, Eh Htoo did not work outside the home because she and her husband were concerned that if they jointly earned too much income, they would lose government financial support. Over the course of our interactions, Eh Htoo began to look for work because she said she was bored being at home. Eh Htoo is the only women that I spoke with who verbalized a political consciousness of the ways income levels impacted what benefits she and her family could qualify for in the United States.
Naw Moo	I first met Naw Moo in September of 2015. Naw Moo was a 23 year old female working as a parent advocate. Naw Moo came to the United States with her parents and two younger siblings as a refugee when she was 8 years old. She was the only English-speaking participant in the cohort, and the only participant without children or caregiving responsibilities. She reflected on her memories of the refugee camp as positive, and shared experiences from school and playing with friends. Last year Naw Moo graduated from a regional college in Minnesota. Her career focus is social work and was considering applying to graduate school. She remained closely engaged with the Minnesota Karen community both through her work as well as through her family and community connections. In the spring of 2015, Naw Moo spent one month in Thailand working with the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) as an intern. She pursued this opportunity because she wanted to connect with the community in a deeper way and give her time to an organization that was so positive and influential. Naw Moo was passionate and inquisitive. Our conversations were unique from the rest of the cohort in that she situated her identity both as a child within a Karen family, as well as a Karen young woman who worked with mothers in the community.
Eh Hser	I first met Eh Hser in July of 2015. Eh Hser was a 58 year old woman who was married with five children. Only one of the children, the youngest, lived with Eh Hser and her husband. Eh Hser came to the United States three and a half years ago. Prior to this she and her family lived in a refugee camp on the Thai-Burma border for 16 years. In 1975 Eh Hser began working with the KNU. At that time the focus of the organization was political. In 1997, because the conflict was escalating, she fled from her community of origin in Burma into Thailand. At that time that she began to organize the Karen Women's Organization (KWO). The KWO now exists as the most prominent human rights organization working to support and protect the rights of women refugees from Burma, both in Burma and in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. Once in the camp, in addition to her work in founding the organization, she

	<p>held the position of Camp Leader, a position more commonly assumed by men. At the time of our conversations, Eh Hser worked part time as a janitor for a prominent community based organization supporting Karen refugees, and was the sole income earner for her family as her husband had experienced a stroke and was unable to work outside the home. Eh Hser was articulate and confident in expressing her perspectives on Karen culture, the role of women, shifting norms, and strengths and challenges of the community. She was also extremely kind, humble, and honest.</p>
Min Say	<p>I first met Min Say in July of 2015. Min Say was a 61 year old woman who resettled in the United States in 2007. Before this, she had lived in a refugee camp along the Thai-Burma border since 2007. Min Say was married and had two children with her in the United States. One of her daughters was 29 and worked in the Twin Cities. Min Say cares during the day for her 1 year-old daughter (Min Say's granddaughter). Min Say's second daughter is 20 and attends university at a state regional college. The life that Min Say described living in the United States was similar to that which she described in the refugee camp. She cared for children, managed the home, focused on her faith, and attended to her health issues. The summer I met Min Say, she had one of her kidneys removed due to chronic inflammation and infection. Her recovery progressed, though she continued to experience minor complications. As we spoke, Min Say reflected on her role in her family. She described how she assumed the burden of the household, with the goal of reducing the worry of her husband and others as they pursued financial resources for the family. In many ways, she built a life in the United States that was similar to what is familiar from the refugee camp. Min Say was soft spoken, and had a lovely affection with her granddaughter, who was always with us for our conversations.</p>
Da Noe	<p>I first met Da Noe in July of 2015. Da Noe was a 38 year-old Karen woman who was married with five children ranging in age from 8 to 20. She came to Minnesota four years ago after living in the refugee camp for 16 years. She did not work outside the home. Her husband was employed as a gardener in a nursery in an outlying suburb. She left Burma with her seven siblings and her mother when she was 16. The Burmese army had settled near the village and prevented the family from farming, which was their livelihood. At that time, her father was no longer living, and her mother made the decision for the family to flee. After travelling through the jungle, the family lived in Karen villages at the border of Burma and Thailand for one year, and then moved into a refugee camp. When Da Noe's father died, she was 13 and her youngest sibling was 4. Da Noe became responsible for managing the home and raising her siblings so her mother could work to support the family. At the time of our conversations, Da Noe's mother and four of her siblings remained in the refugee camp. When I met with Da Noe the second time, she had moved from her initial apartment due to issues with the management company.</p>
Yiet Aye	<p>I first met Yiet Aye in July of 2015. Yiet Aye was a 45 year-old woman who had lived in the United States since 2007. Before resettling, she, her husband, and their four children lived in the refugee camp for eight years. At the time we spoke, her children ranged in age from 7 to 20. She has completed no formal schooling and practiced within the Christian faith. Yiet Aye and her family were originally resettled in another United States state but elected to move to Minnesota because of the challenges they faced finding work. Additionally her youngest daughter had a disability and they felt the health resources in the initial state of resettlement were not sufficient to meet her needs. In addition to this move, the family also moved to a different apartment over the course of our interactions. Yiet Aye and her husband left Burma when the Burmese army began demanding financial resources and porters from their community of origin. Additionally, livelihood opportunities were very restricted. They were married at the time and had one child who was three years old. During our discussions 10 reflected often on her memories from growing up, the struggle her mother and father had to find food, memories of feeling hungry, her duty of carrying water for the household, and trying to work during the rainy season. She recalled the decision to come to the United States was made because their son, who was 11 at the time, heard from friends who had come before him that life was good. Yiet Aye had a calm presence. Her emotions surfaced easily, and then she would quickly move past those moments. At many points in our conversations, Yiet Aye referenced connectedness – with family, friends, the community – as a strategy that kept her grounded through her experiences.</p>

Hae Wah	I first met Hae Wah in July of 2015. Hae Wah was a 45 year-old Karen woman who came to Minnesota one year ago. Before that, she lived in the refugee camp for eight years. She was married and lived with her husband, mother-in-law, and four children ages 6 – 17. She worked as a patient care assistant (PCA). Her husband works for a garden center, but was being laid off. Hae Wah was married and had three children when her family made the decision to leave Burma. The Burmese army murdered her brother in their village after accusing him of working as an informer for the Karen resistance army. The family received a message from a relative who had already fled to Thailand and was living in a refugee camp that it was no longer safe to remain in the village. Hae Wah also talked about the opportunities for education for her children as an important incentive for her to leave the village. This value not only was instrumental in making the decision to leave her Burmese community of origin, but also in the decision to pursue third country resettlement. Hae Wah reflected often on cultural changes she has observed in the Karen community, and the balance between the shifting culture and successful integration.
Nay Paw	I first met Nay Paw in July 2015. Nay Paw was a 49 year-old Karenni woman, who culturally identified as Karen. She was raised in a Karen community, speaks only Karen, and is married to a Karen man. Nay Paw lived in the refugee camp for 19 years before resettling to the United States. She was initially resettled in another United States state for one year, before moving to Minnesota. During the time we spoke, she had been in Minnesota for one year. Nay Paw had four children ranging in age from 10 – 18 and her husband worked for a meat processing company in a city two hours from the metro area. He was gone during the week, returning home most weekends. Nay Paw did not work outside the home. To flee the Burmese army and the demands to work as a forced porter, she moved with her husband twice, to two different communities within Burma, before a third move to the refugee camp in Thailand. At that time she had a three year old and a 3 month-old baby. Frequently, Nay Paw referred to herself, and to her life as “basic”. She reflected on her struggle with the behavior of her adolescent children. She lived next door to her sister, and each time I interacted with her the family was together. Nay Paw talked about the worry and stress in her life. She had difficulty sleeping and described feeling depressed. She was shy and soft-spoken and had difficulty answering many of the questions I asked because she said doubted her own knowledge.

Interpreter

A single interpreter facilitated all study interactions with the Karen speaking women in this study. Prior to this project, I worked with this interpreter in the spring of 2014, on a separate research initiative involving the Karen community. We were familiar with each other’s style of interaction with research participants, and had complementary approaches to establishing rapport and communication during interviews. This interpreter is a 30-year old woman who has lived in the Twin Cities since resettling to the United States in 2004. She is contracted to interpret frequently with local clinics and hospitals, human rights organizations supporting forced migrants, and the KOM. Several of the women in the cohort knew this interpreter, from having lived nearby, interacting in

overlapping social circles, or attending the same church. These existing familiarities served as strengths in interviews, in terms of the ease of interactions and supporting a level of trust between the women and me. Though it was helpful in the context of my research, I acknowledge that the existing relationships could have influenced what and how sensitive information was communicated. Those participants that my interpreter did not know, she connected with rapidly and it was apparent her skill in helping the woman to feel comfortable. Her parents remain in Thailand and she returns every year to visit them. The interpreter became a mother during the project, which we reflected on together in the context of the research.

Ethical Conduct

The University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study proposal in March of 2015. Two subsequent addendums were approved for minor alterations in the research proposal. The University approved a waiver of signed consent. Therefore no formal documentation of the consent process was kept, though field notes reflect comments and questions women had during the consent process. The interpreter read the translated consent form to each participant at the beginning of the initial visit. Women were then re-consented at the start of each subsequent interview. Participants were offered a copy of the consent form. Interviews were digitally recorded and immediately uploaded for professional transcription. Upon de-identification and verification of the accuracy of the transcribed records of the interviews, I deleted the recordings. One potential subject declined participation in the research.

Analysis

Across the broader series of case studies documenting the experiences of refugees from Burma (within which this analysis is situated) I have used Spradley’s (1980) levels of analysis of ethnographic data. This approach served as the foundation for the identification and interpretation of dominant cultural themes. The same is true in this report. Table 2 shows the outcome of the Domain and Taxonomic analyses. These broader categories of analysis elicit patterns in data that orient the situated meanings and organize relationships within cultural themes. Here I identify the domain focus as types of response strategies engaged by women as they negotiate the social practice of mothering across cultures. The semantic relationship most relevant to an interpretation of the response strategies women shared is an inclusive statement, where the included terms, or prominent themes that emerged in conversations with women, are a part of the broader domain. I also consider, and will write further about an alternative semantic relationship. There were many instances where women discussed strategies in the negotiation of mothering that they engaged as a mechanism to preserve or achieve an outcome. In this sense, the relationship connecting prominent ideas in the data with response strategies could also have been viewed as a means-end relationship. I ultimately chose the inclusive semantic relationship because it allows for a less prescribed space within which to explore the liminal space of cultural difference.

Table 2
Domain and Taxonomic Diagram: Response Strategies

Domain/ Cover Term	Semantic Relationship	Included Terms			
		Shared history with divergent experiences	Liminal space at the intersection of collectivist and individualist cultures	Structures within which the mothering identity is negotiated	Transformational spaces

Response strategies to negotiate the recontextualization of the social practice of mothering	← Types of response strategies ←	See their futures Shifting roles Transfer of Karen ways of knowing	In between Burden sharing Transition Self-sufficiency	social legal	Spaces free of fear Spaces of trust Spaces of caregiving
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A *componential analysis* considers the cultural attributes of the included terms. I found a recurring pattern of three attributes relevant in different ways to each of the four included terms. These attributes name moments along the continuum of migration identified by Karen women refugees that have influenced the Karen social practice of mothering and their mothering identities. These attributes include individualism, collectivism, and liminal. Table 3 identifies and defines further these attributes in relation to the included terms.

Table 3
Cultural Attributes

Included Terms	Attributes		
	Individualism	Collectivism	Liminal
	Characteristics of individualist culture: autonomy, independence, freedom (McLaughlin & Guilfoyle, 2013)	Characteristics of collectivist culture: family loyalty, common and shared norms, networks of support (McLaughlin & Guilfoyle, 2013)	Characteristics of liminal space: rebuilding of cultural identity, cultural touch points, embedded ways of knowing (Harper, 2015), sacrifice, dislocation, tension (Lewig et al., 2010).
Shared history with divergent experiences	Generational power dynamics		
Liminal space at the intersection of collectivist and individualist cultures	Social structures have flipped and children are in-between		
Structures within which the mothering identity is negotiated	Parenting practices in the context of local culture, norms, and laws		
Transformational spaces	Dinner, worship, the counter-narrative (Harper, 2015)		

Finally, I integrate concepts from critical discourse analysis (CDA) based on methods derived from the work of Theo Van Leeuwen. In defining discourses, Van

Leeuwen builds on the work of Foucault with the assertion that discourses “are socially constructed ways of knowing some aspect of reality which can be drawn upon when that aspect of reality has to be represented” (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 144). To support an exploration of the discourses of mothering in the post-resettlement context, I apply Van Leeuwen’s construct of legitimation in the consideration of ways shifts in the social practices of mothering are reconciled by Karen women with perceived sources of authority. In this research identifying mechanisms of legitimation functioned to distinguish individual mothering practices influenced by circulating discourse. These practices, warranted and justified through institutional structures and norms, were integrated into a collective social practice (Van Leeuwen, 2007). As Karen women refugees situated a recontextualized notion of mothering within perceived structures of power in the space of cultural difference, legitimation helped to access the sources of influence of the dominant discourses.

Findings

Central to this analysis are the ways in which women relate the negotiation of dominant norms within the space of cultural difference. In particular, I consider themes emerging from the data that reflect the negotiation of mothering practices within the norms, structures, and policies intrinsic to the country of resettlement.

Liminal Space at the Intersection of Collectivist & Individualist Cultures

What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2).

The liminal space is the becoming of culture. Part of the negotiation that occurs within this space involves the determination of what to preserve and what to evolve. In the context of the transition from a collectivist cultural model to an individualist cultural model, the articulation of difference is complex (Overland, Guribye, & Lie, 2014). Considering an earlier assertion that collectivist culture in Burma was imposed (Harper, 2015), and refugees are now transitioning within an imposed individualist model, the essence of cultural difference is the mechanism through which Karen women resist submission to the dominant circulating norms.

Liminal cultural space refers to a position that is inherently transitional. Actors engaged in the space are positioned at a threshold of an expectation, role, or identity that came before an event, and the versions of these experiences that are becoming. They are in-between. For the Karen women participants in this study, post-resettlement the sense of negotiating the in-between was diminishing. In particular this was the case in comparison to women living in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border, awaiting the unknown next steps in their migration process (Hoffman et al., under review). What women did suggest in sharing their experiences mothering refugee adolescents was that this threshold was very much imminent for Karen youth. For example, one participant related,

Now I rely on my children. Right now my children, the older ones know how to drive, so I just get help from them...I can live like that, rely on my children because they right now can speak English and know how to drive. The children fulfill this.

Linguistic and cultural brokering is an asset that children can provide their refugee parents as families negotiate transition. As this statement suggests, part of the in-between

experienced by youth was a result of actions taken by mothers to leverage power in the context of flipped social structures.

Another passage reflects a young refugee assuming an identity within a liminal cultural space. The below text is a portion of a discussion in which a young Karen woman reflected on her upbringing, which post-resettlement was primarily guided by her mother. The speaker was the only English speaking Karen woman participant that I interviewed over the full course of the study. Here she reflects on her mother sharing Karen culture with her and why she continues to view this as important.

Yeah [cultural sharing is important]. So that the kids have roots and they're not confused on if they're 'American' or if they're 'Karen' or they're 'Karen-American'. I think personally, I like that. I grew up in a Karen household, just because I have a history and have a background saying, oh, I'm Karen; this is how I grew up, instead of being confused, if my parents raised me as an 'American' or as a 'Karen'. Also, I like how I have a culture behind it, because some people, they just don't have anything, any background to share or to relate to. 'Karen' would be like freshly arrived to America and not knowing any of the American norms or how typical American life would be. Then for 'Karen-American', like my younger brother was born here, I would say he's in the middle. Sometimes he acts out. Sometimes it's like, 'stop being American,' because sometimes he just acts out and doesn't listen. Then sometimes I'll tell my mom to lecture [Karen women participants used the term "lecture" to mean corporal punishment of children] him more, so that he's rooted back to the 'Karen way. Then the 'American' way is just not having any culture connected and just try to be an American, like don't care about the culture or religion or anything, just being wild.

To examine the content of this statement more closely, I deconstructed the passage into discrete analytical categories. Each category represented an element of social practice, each influencing the overarching discourses (Van Leeuwen, 2008). For example, the physical elements of space and time represented position and transition within and across the elements of social practice the participant references. There are three distinct points representing time and space present in the passage. First the speaker

refers to a historical and culturally grounded experience. Second the speaker references a fresh and destabilized experience. Third, there is the in-between, the merging of the two experiences, which is the source of tension in her explanation.

The participant goes on to compare her place, which was growing up with history and roots with that of her brother, who was born in the United States, “in the middle”, or in between the two cultures. What is interesting and contradictory is that this participant came here with her parents at eight years old. So while she has memories of the refugee camp, in the greater context she has not spent any more of her formative adolescent years outside of the United States than her brother. What she attributes as the reason for her brother’s “acting out” is likely a representation of shifts in the elements of time and space at the community level, in addition to the individual and family level on which she reflects. This macro-micro intersection incorporates discourses that are represented at the level of the family, such as discipline, as well as those that are represented at the level of the community, such as cultural identity.

The participant describes this Karen cultural rootedness as being accessible to a young person if they have been raised in a particular way and take up Karen inherited values. The passage indirectly reflects the pressure adolescent Karen youth assume, as they themselves negotiate transition. The pressure this participant recounts in her own narrative, originates from a decision to share the responsibility with her parents to carry forward Karen culture. Meaningful discourses in this context are relevant to refugee transition and the protection of culture. Using an active voice in this passage she takes on a position of valuing cultural rootedness and history over characteristics the participant attributes to ‘American’ culture such as “being wild.”

Women also articulated experiences they had observing their own and other Karen children negotiate cultural difference.

“It’s not balanced yet. But Karen parents start allowing the children, adding independence within the family. For me, just only for me, I still feel strain when my niece or my nephew talk back to me...and when I see them walking in front of somebody old, they have to bow their back a little bit. That’s the way we were raised. Even though I live here, I don’t want to change that. I feel like, OK, you show your respect...That’s just the culture. That’s the basics.”

The topic of mothering and raising children who thrive in the United States while preserving elements of Karen culture was significant for women as they recounted their resettlement narratives. Women discussed the tension inherent in supporting their children through transition, and watching them struggle.

Relevant to this experience, women referenced the impact of a hybrid cultural space on the health of the family structure.

“If the husband is not working, the wife takes over working instead...There might be increased argument in the family. There might be stress. There might be depression...I worry because the Karen people are changing the way they are.”

The liminal space participants negotiate through migration and resettlement is represented in the emergence of embedded cultural differences. In response to these differences, women take action as they resist and negotiate dominant discourses. These actions are response strategies that women engage to navigate challenges in resettlement, in this context those that relate to mothering in a hybrid cultural space. Through the transformation of the social practice of mothering, as it has shifted during each phase of refugee migration, the continued presence of a strategy was dependent on whether it was taken up and transformed within the discourses relevant in that space.

For example, the strategy of burden sharing was a cultural artifact women engaged with the intent to align experiences in the current context of resettlement with what was familiar from living in the refugee camp.

For some families the man is working and the woman is not doing nothing, not managing the house well. When the husband comes home, how are they going to eat? Where are they going to find food? For my role, taking care of the household, managing the household, it's important because other people have less worry. They're just working. They just go to work and they don't worry when they come home. They have everything ready. I have the role of managing the household and it's important because I take some of the worry, some of the burdens on me. I am taking on that part. At that point we are living well together, no arguments, not fighting.

The speaker in this passage was a grandmother who provided full time care for her two-year old grandchild. The family experienced relative privilege in that there were three adults working full time and contributing to the household income. As she talked about burden sharing, this participant was addressing a severe kidney health issue for which she had experienced multiple surgeries. This action she described, burden-sharing, represented the actions women selected based on how the needs of the family evolved. Social practices require resources in order to function within a discourse. This woman positioned herself as a steward and sustainer of Karen culture in her collectivist approach to the familial relationships. Through this, she achieved peace and togetherness within her family.

Shared Migration Histories and Divergent Experiences

The migration narratives of women were weighted in the concern and focus on the survival, protection, and thriving of their children. The children who fled Burma with their mothers as infants and young children are now negotiating resettlement as adolescents. As women shared their experiences, the prominent milestones in the

memories of migration constructed a shared and connected history between a mother and her children. Women reflected on pregnancy, or bringing infant or young children through the jungle as they left Burma into Thailand. And as each woman recounted her narrative, this shared history between herself and her children remained intact through the time of residence in the refugee camp. Upon resettlement, these shared and connected histories diverged in some cases. Here I document ways women reasoned through this experience. In a later discussion, I address the ways women established spaces of transformation with the goal of reestablishing these connections.

Designing Futures

As women actively situated their children within their personal migration narrative, it became apparent that the divergence was at times intentional on the part of the mother. At other times, it was a consequence of circumstance. Women designed futures for their children as they maneuvered opportunities presented through resettlement to position their children as agents, capable to determine their own futures (New London Group, 1996).

“At first, my oldest son, he wanted to come [to the United States]. He just wanted to come study. After hearing that passion, we made a decision to come to the United States... Looking at myself, I don’t have an education. I am not an educated person. I thought that if my children had a chance to study in a good country, in a new country, that will be helpful for them.”

Women framed resettlement as a means to this end because they viewed the ability to access and participate in formal education as empowerment. Many of these women had no or minimal formal schooling. In the actions these women have taken, they have made choice available to their children. Thus the experiences of a mother and her child became divergent in two ways. First, the opportunities women positioned their

children with were different from what they had growing up as children in Burma.

Second, what they took on in the United States as immigrant women striving to support the success of their youth looked very different from the experiences of the child.

Accepting and Legitimizing Futures

The migration narratives of mothers and their children also diverged as a factor of context and circumstance. Several broader themes captured the ways women discussed the disconnection that occurred post-resettlement (Table 4). These themes included sacrificing Karen ways of knowing in parenting, transcendence, shifting responsibilities, shifting generational power dynamics, and shifting patterns of gender and livelihoods. Aspects of these findings represent the outcome of the divergence, other aspects address ways women adjusted and responded. What these categories represent holistically is the point at which women recognized and began responding to circumstances that necessitated recontextualizing the social practice of mothering.

Table 4
Divergent History – Circumstance

Sacrificing Karen ways of knowing in parenting	
<p><i>“I would say sometimes the mom, who’s usually at home, doesn’t really know to talk to their kids. You know how in a typical American family, if there’s any situation or any problem, they would normally talk to their kids face-to-face and deal with the situation together. But in this case in our culture we don’t have that. I’ve never experienced where my mom sat down with me and talked about things. I just grew up and just learned it on my own and I feel like a lot of the Karen youth are like that, just figuring out things on their own...I think it’s just in our culture. We just don’t have that in depth, real life conversation; we just learn it our way. Because a lot of kids, I remember my mom when she was growing up, she wasn’t always home. She was a boarder at school and her siblings were in the field working. My grandma would do household or work in the fields, so they don’t really sit down and talk about problems.”</i></p>	<p>Disparities related to level of education existed in the Karen community. As women discussed mothering, they described an integration of Karen inherent ways of knowing and formal education, together contributing to what they perceived to be effective mothering practices. One consequence of the intent to foster education and independence in children is that a woman’s lack of formal education was highlighted and as a result undermined her authority and legitimacy. Her culturally informed ways of knowing were then undermined as a result because of the relationship between of these two forms of knowledge.</p>
<p><i>“I see a lot of this. If there’s an argument between the child and the parents, sometimes the child will just run out of the home and go stay with friends or other people, without the parents knowing anything about it or knowing where the child is staying. Typical American families, if a child is missing for a certain number of hours you would call the police or something, but with the Karen community they don’t know that. They just think, OK, my son is out of the home. Maybe he’s at a friend’s house or somewhere. That’s their mentality, that the kid’s not running away.”</i></p>	<p>As the legitimacy of the Karen social practice of mothering was brought into question, references to the <i>typical American family</i> became important. Comparisons between the two approaches to mothering resided in the space of cultural difference. This way of thinking refigured mothering and the Karen collectivist narrative as ‘other’. The individualist narrative of the <i>typical American family</i> is taken up as normative.</p>

<p><i>“A lot of mothers don’t have the knowledge, they’re not educated. They have a lack of education, so when they’re going to teach [their children] they worry about, ‘I’m not educated. My children have already been in school. Maybe the reason or proof that they’re giving me is right.’ That’s the way, because right now we worry about earning, paying bills, finances the most. One of my friends told me when she came here, ‘My children are already 18, so I just let them go.’ I asked ‘Why?’ She said, ‘Because we’re here; you live in America now. People are 18; they can do whatever. I don’t care about that anymore.’ I’m not doing that. I’m not going to let them go.”</i></p>	<p>As Karen mothers recontextualize the social practice of mothering to align with dominant norms, the discourses of discipline and accountability to legal norms are interpreted and contribute to an evolving cultural lens.</p>
<p>Transcendence</p> <p><i>“It [substance abuse] is a problem, but I feel like it’s really hard to offer that service or that help to the community because they feel that it’s not a problem. They haven’t accepted the fact that it’s a problem, so it’s really hard to force them...I feel like a lot of the families, they don’t take this kind of stuff seriously. For example, if the kid is drinking, ‘oh, my kid was only drinking four weeks ago and now he’s stopped. He’s OK.’ I hear a lot of that. ‘Oh, he quit.’ But the kids are saying it to the parents. They believe them. Not like they’ve really stopped technically. They just lie. There’s not a lot of intervention or anything.”</i></p>	<p>Transcendence is a response strategy engaged by Karen mothers to disengage actively or passively from the experiences of daily life. These comments echo sentiments expressed by refugee women in the camps during conversations about youth and substance abuse. In the United States, organizations and health service providers supporting the Karen refugee community reported concern over the rising prevalence of substance abuse among Karen youth. It remains an issue however that has not been taken up by the community itself, and thus continues predominantly as a peripheral discourse.</p>
<p>Shifting Responsibilities</p> <p><i>“In my experience it seems like families worry about household issues, household finances. We just worry about how to earn money, how to pay the bills, how to handle this thing, how to handle that in the household, but we forget to take time, to take the opportunity to negotiate with the children.”</i></p>	<p>As families adapt and reconfigure to meet expectations of existing political structures and policy in the United States, there is an inevitable shift in focus on responsibility. The necessity of prioritizing financial matters undermined the stability and health of the family structure. For example, prior to resettlement a Karen family would not have needed to have a conversation about what time a parent would be home from work, and how that would coordinate with transporting a child home from school, and the supervision of the child at home.</p>
<p>Shifting Generational Power Dynamics</p> <p><i>“I do see a little tension. I feel like because the parents don’t know anything, the youth are taking advantage of that. For example, with schoolwork, if the child is not doing well, then they [the child] will blame the parents, like they’re not helping them; they [the parents] don’t know anything. That’s why they’re not succeeding in class. It’s really hard for a mom to support their child when they don’t really understand anything, especially with schoolwork or how the school system works. Sometimes the kids will take advantage of that. Because they go to school and they speak English, the parents see that they know more I guess.”</i></p>	<p>Children play an essential role in the mobility, linguistic brokering, and the navigation of culture for their refugee parents. These flipped social structures have resulted in a reorientation of generational dynamics. Mothering has taken up new meaning within this redistribution of power.</p>
<p>Shifting Patterns of Gender and Livelihoods</p> <p><i>“[Telling a story about a coworker] Ever since they came to America her husband worked in a different city, so she’s stuck home with seven kids. Her husband recently just moved back home, so right now she’s working, knowing that her husband is getting old, so she has to step up and find a job, work so that she can help pay the bills and be basically the man who works and pays the bills. Then her husband is home taking care of the kids...Also, a lot of the women are like, if they want to do something they will do it. They don’t let their husbands ruin their plans.”</i></p> <p><i>“R: If you compare the role of women as part of the community, living over there we don’t have to work hard to earn money, so</i></p>	<p>As patterns of generational dynamics have shifted so have the roles of women in the economic and financial empowerment of families. This has impacted the structure of the family in that all members must reconfigure their roles to meet the needs of the family, including the children. It has also impacted relationships between family members, when demands for communication increase as individuals assume new responsibilities.</p>

<p><i>we have time. We are gathering a lot of women to lead in the role of teaching culture. Living here, women can't take a role in the community any more because you have a busy life. You have a busy lifestyle. You have to take care of your family, so few of them will be giving the time to working in the community, helping out, really few. People are not willing to volunteer instead of earning money.</i></p> <p><i>I: So women are working more, is that why they have less time?</i></p> <p><i>R: The circumstances, the environment, everything is changing right now. Like I said, some families have both parents working. Some families, women are taking care of the children, being a housewife. I have seen when they have a meeting or maybe the health department has a meeting, we're calling our community women to come, yeah, they come. They're even bringing their children with them, but if we ask them to take a role, some people, they're just annoyed; they don't want to do it. Some people have a busy schedule and some people don't know how to access the community."</i></p>	<p>Evident in the discussions that referenced changing gender roles, particularly in the context of livelihoods, Karen women were actively making decisions for themselves. Ways to "care for the family" have expanded beyond managing the household. Within the identities of mother and wife, women are pursuing roles they believe will benefit the family. Frequently, this translated to working outside the home, which had implications not only for the family structure but also the ways in which women engaged in the community and cultural life.</p>
<p>Text in bold illustrates examples of Legitimation: Authorization, Moral Evaluation (discussed in Table 8)</p>	

Legitimation

As Karen women recontextualized mothering practices in response to the shifting context of migration, legitimation emerged as a way to reconcile this recontextualization with sources of perceived authority. This evaluation and justification of social practice is an integral element of transformation and addresses a key question guiding this inquiry relevant to how the Karen social practice of mothering is constructed in the space of cultural difference. Legitimation offers an idea of whose interests are represented in the discourses, and the influence of those interests in shaping the Karen social practice of mothering. According to Van Leeuwen (2007), there are four types of legitimation, three of which guide this closer level of interview text analysis - authorization, moral evaluation, and rationalization (Table 5). These mechanisms, through which women evaluate and justify shifts in their approach to mothering, helps to interpret the divergence of the migration narratives of mothers and their children diverged post-resettlement.

Table 5

Legitimation in the Karen social practice of mothering post-resettlement

Category of Legitimation	Subcategory	Scholarly Characterization	Karen Community Expression (excerpts drawn from Table 7)
Authorization	Personal	“Because I say so.” (p. 94)	“Also, a lot of the women are like, if they want to do something they will do it. They don’t let their husbands ruin their plans.”
	Impersonal	“The laws says that...” (p. 96)	“...you live in America now. People are 18; they can do whatever.”
	Tradition	“It is what we’ve always done.” (p. 96)	“I’ve never experienced where my mom sat down with me and talked about things. I just grew up and just learned it on my own and I feel like a lot of the Karen youth are like that, just figuring out things on their own...I think it’s just in our culture. We just don’t have that in depth, real life conversation; we just learn it our way.”
Moral Evaluation	Evaluation	“...communicate both qualities of actions or objects and command them in terms of some domain of values...” (p. 98)	“Living here, women can’t take a role in the community any more because you have a busy life. You have a busy lifestyle. You have to take care of your family, so few of them will be giving the time to working in the community, helping out, really few. People are not willing to volunteer instead of earning money.”
	Analogies	“...because it is like another activity which is associated with positive values.” (p. 99)	“Her husband recently just moved back home, so right now she’s working, knowing that her husband is getting old, so she has to step up and find a job, work so that she can help pay the bills and be basically the man who works and pays the bills.”
Rationalization	Instrumental: Means-Orientation	“The purpose is constructed in an action, and the action is a means to an end.” (p. 102)	“Typical American families, if a child is missing for a certain number of hours you would call the police or something.”
	Theoretical	“Theoretical legitimations provide explicit representations of ‘the way things are.’” (p. 103)	“A lot of mothers don’t have the knowledge, they’re not educated. They have a lack of education, so when they’re going to teach they worry about, ‘I’m not educated. My children have already been in school. Maybe the reason or proof that they’re giving me is right.’”
Categories and scholarly characterizations derived from Van Leeuwen, T. (2007). Legitimation in discourse and communication. <i>Discourse and Communication</i> , 1(1), 91-112.			

Authorization traces the voices of authority in discourse. In the interview excerpts presented, Karen refugee women are positioned within a geographical space, inherited culture, cultural context of the resettlement community, and gender. Legitimation cannot be decontextualized therefore considering the relative power between these identities is fundamental. Despite the positioning of a refugee woman by structures and systems that surround her, Karen women pursued livelihood opportunities they themselves deemed necessary to care for their families. At times, these decisions contradicted what members of the Karen community spoke about with regard to cultural norms and embedded

traditions. This contradiction reflected the context of shifting power structures in the Karen community post-resettlement.

Post-resettlement Karen women engaged with codified and uncoded United States legal structures. These structures, for example the legal status automatically conferred with the age of 18 years in the United States, holds an authoritative position through impersonal authority... "*you live in America now.*" This statement implied a position within which the social practice of mothering was legally compelled by the status of a minor. The role of law impacted the Karen social practice of mothering across a hybrid cultural space. In addition to shifting cultural norms women also navigated fixed legal structures. Examples of discourses which contained these fixed elements included discipline, education, and substance use. Women also referenced the discourse of child rights. These references were not directly associated with the legal rhetoric in the United States, but rather were remnants of discourses mothers encountered in prior circumstances such as the refugee camp. As a result of the fixed elements of these discourses, mechanisms involved in the transmission of culture were interrupted. This in turn disrupted relationships central to the health of the family structure.

The statement '*it's just in our culture*' referenced, through traditional authority, a much deeper transition in communication practices within families. This participant considered family communication patterns sustained in Karen culture through generations prior to resettlement. These same patterns were enacted in her family and in her relationship with her mother. But post-resettlement these strategies of communication positioned Karen adolescents to be "*figuring things out things on their own*", a departure from collectivist norms. The decontextualization of communication

practices arranged in opposition the legitimacy of ‘what we’ve always done’ with the legitimacy of cultural rootedness.

Legitimacy through moral evaluation, a type of justification that evokes moral affect, is represented in language describing choices women make in the day to day. The departure from the role of managing the home and reprioritizing financial matters over an active role in the community is justified through actions that the authorizer, in both passages a mother observing other mothers, communicates as legitimize. The approval is not overt, but uses subtle language, referencing the domains of care and support of the family to engage a moral quality. Similarly, in considering a woman working outside of the home as the primary income earner, the authorizer leverages the relative power that is evoked through the cultural norms of masculinity and transfers the associated qualities to legitimize this shift.

Rationalization is the least concrete category of legitimation. Means orientation describes legitimacy arising through the purpose of an action. For example, in the relevant passage in Table 8, actions concern the broader purpose of keeping a child safe, a fundamental role of a mother. The speaker referenced the expected response of a “typical American family” as the means of comparison to the response of a Karen mother when a child is missing. “Like legitimations, purposes are constructed in discourse in order to explain why social practices exist, and why they take the forms they do (Van Leeuwen, 2007, p. 101).” And like social practice, purpose can shift across a culturally hybrid space. In the refugee camp, where socially constructed patterns of mothering mean a network of mothering support, a child whose whereabouts are unknown for several hours is not considered dangerous. In contrast, in the culture of resettlement this

same scenario may be cause for alarm. The participant's statement reflects this cultural difference.

Karen ways of knowing extend beyond experience and education, though the two were consistently referenced by Karen women as elements of this knowing. Theoretical rationalization helps to justify the Karen way of knowing for example, as a fundamental truth. In the selected passage, the legitimacy of a mother's way of knowing is discredited due to the level of formal education of a child superseding that of his or her mother. As the social practice of mothering is recontextualized, that which comprises knowing in motherhood is also shifting.

Women engaged legitimation as they identified the positions of authorizers, the primary sources of influence on the shifting social practice of mothering. These findings reflect that in many instances it was the voice of Karen women/mothers themselves that were dominant in the recontextualization of mothering post-resettlement. Karen women negotiated numerous challenges in this context. Compelling within their narratives were descriptions of the mechanisms through which they designed futures for themselves and their children despite these challenges. A close examination of legitimation reveals that Karen women convey agency as they take up and enact discourses relevant to the transformation of the social practice of mothering within a hybrid cultural space. However, there are fixed structures within these discursive spaces that women cannot influence. These structures, inherent to the context of resettlement, position Karen mothers as outsiders, and leave them marginalized.

Structures within which the Mothering Identity is Negotiated

On September 24, I visited Da Noe in her apartment for the second time. When I arrived, posted on her door, was a written notice placed by the apartment manager indicating that the participant and her family were in violation of the lease because of the number of individuals living in the two-bedroom apartment, and the presence of mattresses on the living room floor. The note was posted only in English, which Da Noe did not speak. Nor did she read. For the Karen entering the United States as refugees, one of the starkest transitions is the negotiation of their position within the legal discourse.

There is a system of legal practices in place in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. This system was enacted through a hierarchy of positions held by members of the refugee community, typically but not always Karen men. A Thai national occupied the highest position in the structure. Though the camps were bound within the national (Thai law) and international (UNHCR) legal frameworks this camp-based system influenced day-to-day activity in the camp. Rules and standards were disseminated through the hierarchy, and into the camp sections. Discussions and consequences of legal transgressions were negotiated face to face and at relevant levels of the hierarchy. Karen women in the camps perceived themselves as rights holders, and actively engaged with the camp legal system when they deemed it necessary (Hoffman et al., under review).

Karen women post-resettlement reacted to the actual and perceived differences in the systems of law and governance from what they experienced in the refugee camps and post-migration experienced in the United States legal system. As one participant

reflected, these shifts corresponded to the repositioning of women in the Karen community, and reflect the role of law in culture.

Here in America it's a developed country. You have your rights. Women have more rights here. Some women start working since they are resettled in the United States. When they start working they earn money. They see themselves having more. They can do it, compared with over there, you can do nothing. You have to stay at home. You don't have a job that you can really work to earn money, to be powerful. But here, you start working; you earn money by yourself, so you feel confident. I can do! The resources are here and we are learning. Here, everybody has a right to do everything and women have more rights than men here. That's the way women have become powerful here...they don't have to rely on their husbands any more. They can do by themselves.

The negotiation of evolving norms and social practices is universal in culture.

Inarguably the experience is heightened as a newly resettled refugee navigates the space of cultural difference. The United States legal framework is a fixed social entity. The implication of this is that a refugee woman transitioning into this framework is beholden to a system made by and for a dominant majority. This intersection is represented prominently where the Karen social practice of mothering and the discourses of discipline in the post-resettlement community interact. Within the space of cultural difference, as these systems come into contact with each other, discipline is recontextualized. In Table 6, I use excerpts of interview text to deconstruct the recontextualization of mothering from the standpoint of discipline through the levels intratextuality, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity (Fairclough, 1992; Linell, 1998).

Table 6
Levels of Recontextualization of the Discourse of Discipline

Level	Definition	Representative Passage	Interpretation
Intratextual	“Intratextual recontextualizations occur at a 'middle-range' level; conversational episodes or textual paragraphs are usually not entirely unanchored in available contexts, and some involve the recontextualization of an	<i>I remember one time my teacher [in the refugee camp school] forgot his stick and so he was like, 'I need somebody to go and find me a stick.' So me and my friend are like, 'OK, we'll go find it.' Me and my friend were saying, find a thicker stick because if you find a thinner stick, then when the teacher whips it goes</i>	Within the same stretch of dialogue, this participant recounts two enactments of the discourse of discipline, one in the context of the refugee camp and one in the context of the United States post-resettlement. In doing so, she

	element from a previous episode or context space to the new one.” (p. 146)	<i>into your skin and leaves some marks. If you get a thicker stick it doesn't hurt that much. So I remember that, but every time I think about it I just giggle, just thinking about how clever we are to figure out between the two different types of sticks...I grew up with my parents always hitting me when I misbehaved or for not listening.</i>	decontextualizes discipline to portray physical punishment as normative in the Karen practice of mothering. Additionally in this passage she portrays the mechanisms through which Karen adolescents resist the normative forms of discourse.
Intertextual	“...relating different specific texts, discourses and conversations, each anchored in its specific contexts.” (p. 147)	<i>Discipline of children is changing. You can't beat, can't harm your children in any way. That is a culture that we've been carrying for a long time. Harm here, it's different in America. Our culture is different from American, so you can't harm them; you can't hurt them anywhere in the body. You can't say something really mean to them. It's frustrating, too, because the children know the culture, so they know exactly that the parents can't do that to them...Karen population has a lack of knowledge. We don't have education, so how to make a right thing to discipline our children, we don't know; we have no idea. That's a problem.</i>	Here the participant shapes the Karen social practice of discipline with: 1. The broader United States context of the rights of children (specifically the agency of youth in summoning this discourse as a tool in the dynamics of power). 2. The discourse of Karen ways of knowing (and the role formal education had in determining the level of knowledge of an individual).
Interdiscursive	“...occurring at more abstract and global levels and concerning relations between discourse types.” (p. 147)	<i>My son is right now really getting in trouble. We just call the police and just giving, take responsibility now. Whatever illegal things he does, whatever he's to be charged, I am giving permission totally, right away to the police or to the law to give him a sentence...We can't handle it anymore. It's hard for us to handle it by ourselves because he's violent...so that's the best way.</i>	To counter shifts in the balance of power as youth summon aspects of the discourse of child rights to avoid discipline, mothers have engaged a new form of power through authority (the police). Parents are engaging the United States law enforcement system as a new channel of discipline.
Categories and definitions adapted from Fairclough, N. (1992). Intertextuality in critical discourse analysis. <i>Linguistics and Education</i> , 4, 269-293.			

In discussions with women, the recontextualization of the discourses of discipline happened along a continuum. In recontextualization the levels intratextuality, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity represent the relationships between context, social practice, and discourse through different perspectives proposed by the speaker. Through this closer examination, it is possible to conceptualize the natural history of the Karen discourse of discipline. Findings in this process provide important context for challenges

Karen mothers discussed in relation to parenting youth post resettlement in the United States as they situate their values around United States law.

Within the social practice of mothering, the discourse of discipline was quite prominent in discussions and presented a significant challenge to mothers of adolescents who were engaging with new peer groups, experimenting with drugs and alcohol, and positioning themselves within flipped family structures. Karen women clearly designated shaping the behavior of youth within the scope of parenting. Mothers were responsible for teaching and interacting with children around behavior, which traditionally in Karen culture included physical punishment. Fathers were perceived as enforcers of behavior. One participant reflected on the impact of her husband working in a remote city during the week. She said, *“Sometimes I feel frustrated to discipline them and sometimes I think about if my husband lived with me, stayed with me close to me, that he can handle those difficult situations...but they [her 3 adolescent children] just do whatever they want.”*

Even when the traditional family structure remained intact, challenges persisted. One participant reflected on her role as a family advocate with the organization Head Start. She said, *“I feel like it’s a struggle for them [Karen mothers] to know the American way of lecturing the kids and also maintaining the cultural parts.”* Inherent to this struggle was tension, generated as families situated their norms and values around fixed legal structures. Health implications for the community, the family, and the mother arose from this tension, *“...that affects our health, too. We start having stress, depression, because we’re thinking too much. We don’t have a way to resolve the feelings.”*

Transformational Spaces

In the pursuit of peace (*“Finding peace, connecting, being in a safe environment, being connected with God [reflecting on what is most important]”*) and together,

“Living together, sharing the experience, sharing the challenges, supporting together, it’s important. Sharing everything together, when you have a problem the other one will give a give a hand to help you... We would be worried about the children, but living together we know exactly what’s going on in the family, so helping each other.”

women identified spaces of transformation in the post-resettlement context. Culture is becoming. Within the processes of becoming women articulated, they also identify moments where the outcomes of peace and together are tangible. In these spaces of transformation, the intent was for trust within families to be cultivated, fears to be mediated, where caring and caretaker identities (of children and/or of culture) held a prominence. Figure 1 is a representation of the model Karen women constructed as they discussed the spaces within which their ways of knowing in mothering were honored and the health of family and community structures were most visible. This figure shows that when filtered through a transformational space, response strategies they engage to support health post-resettlement are successful in facilitating connection (which leads to trust), communication, and protection. Fear was a constant presence in women’s minds as on a day-to-day basis they both observed and were active participants in shifting norms of mothering in response to their children’s needs. Transformational spaces that women engaged with served to mitigate these fears. As women talked about the characteristics of these spaces, what they describe is the capacity of a space to absorb a portion of the responsibility, anxiety, unknown, and burden of carrying a culture through to the next generations of its members.

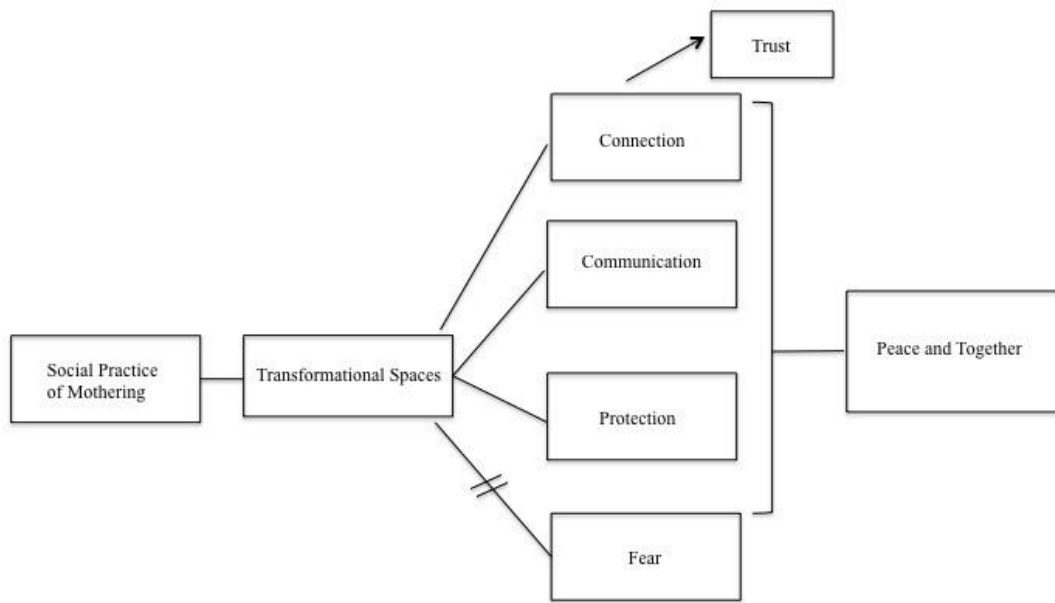


Figure 1. Mechanisms of transformation. Factors Karen mothers describe that influence the spaces they construct and engage with to sustain a cultural connection while thriving within the space of cultural difference.

Church. The most prominent of these spaces women discussed assumed a physical form. The role of spirituality and religion as a source of strength and resilience among Karen refugees is established (Hoffman & Robertson, 2016). However, in this study context the church served as a physical gathering space, where families would come together after a busy week of work and school. Ways Karen culture was enacted by members of the congregation within the space held significance for the women.

Common among Karen refugee families resettled in the Twin Cities metro area is for the husband/father to live and work in a different city than the primary family home, during the week. In Minnesota the rural meat processing industry is an enticing economic opportunity. This industry drives secondary migration among diverse groups of immigrants in the state. Remote livelihood opportunities served as a common factor motivating a family decision to divide. Members of the study cohort as well as

statements made in conversation with local organizations supporting the Karen community confirm that this living arrangement has placed significant strain on families, and has contributed to a rising prevalence of divorce in Karen marriages. Sunday is a day reserved for gathering and connection, and the space for this is the church. Male family members return home, and young children through older adolescents attend with their families.

“We stay connected by going to church. Most of our resources are shared in church. We mostly see each other when we’re at church. During the weekdays we’re so busy with our other things like work and school, we don’t really have time to connect, but when we go to church that’s where we see each other and talk about stuff.”

The church is a space to share and disseminate resources of a more complex nature as well. One resettlement organization locally is exploring the engagement of pastors as formal partners in supporting the mental health of Karen refugees, specifically identifying, counseling the individual and family, and referring for services. The church is frequently an initial point of contact for couples who are experiencing divorce and addressing legal and custody issues that surround formally ending a marriage. The church is an institution where change is negotiated communally within a strong presence of inherited culture and a network of support.

As I was recruiting study participants in partnership with a local organization supporting Karen resettlement, the case-managers I worked with asked that I reserve weekends, in particular Sundays, for families to be together. It is a sacred time for the community. Beyond the opportunity to connect, individuals view the church as a space in which the Karen culture is cultivated and protected. At church, all members of a family wear traditional clothing. The expectation is that Karen is spoken. A focus of

Sunday school is that Karen culture is shared with the children. For mothers I spoke with, this characteristic of the church experience created a shared responsibility of conveying traditions and history with the next generation of Karen.

“And Sunday, that has to be supported by the parents, too. Sunday school, come to Sunday school and learn how Jesus... When we teach the bible, we also teach our culture, so we include it [our culture] in a Bible story as well. That’s the way we can resolve it right now [referencing growing tension in the community between adolescents and their parents].”

Dinner. The family dinner served as a space of transformation primarily as it fostered a way of communicating within a family that was not necessary prior to resettlement. In the refugee camps, generally families were home together. Livelihood opportunities were less widely available. Day laborers working outside the camp were usually not away from the home every day or multiple days at a time. Children frequently accompanied parents to trainings and meetings. And the social network was wide, which meant that children always had a place to go. The necessity of setting aside time in the day to check in with one another was foreign. These practices carried through resettlement, and have challenged families who have not modified how they interact with one another.

“It’s really hard, from a parent perspective, especially for those who don’t speak the language or understand the norms of the new environment. It’s really hard for them to sit their kids down and talk to them one on one, because either parents are at work or kids are at school, and then when they come home they’re not ever together.”

Women also recalled ways inherited culture served them in their transition. One woman, who was very reserved during our conversations, spoke easily about her love of cooking and how she taught her daughters traditional Karen cooking. Another woman shared advice that was given to her by her parents,

“[Her parents taught her] *‘If you want to teach your children, teach them when they are eating.’ When we have a meal together, that is the best thing and I’m doing that. Whenever we have a meal together, I tell them, ‘you have to be good children to your mother. Otherwise, you will see the result, a bad outcome.’ I use the time to teach my children. It is helpful for my family.*”

The realities of life in the United States post-resettlement require families to communicate about facets of their day-to-day life that were not even considerations in the refugee camp. Family structure, mechanisms of social support, and the physical barrier of the camp itself framed interactions much differently than Karen families experience post-resettlement. These spaces of transformation that women have identified exist within the space of cultural difference. Through transition, traditional practices do not disappear to be replaced by entirely new practices. Rather, a hybrid cultural practice emerges. Through this “transformative moment (Bhabha, 1994, p. 347)” social practices are reconstructed to answer the question of “where do I belong in the present? (Bhabha, 1994, p. 351).”

Living spaces. As mothering interactions are filtered through transformative spaces, new ways of communicating are evolving. What has emerged for women is a connection within themselves and their families, or at least a space for connection to grow. It was apparent as we walked through apartment complexes where large numbers of Karen families were living, how interconnected the space was. One of the women referred to her apartment complex “*as my community*” because of the shared resources and connections she perceived existing there. In an apartment complex where two women from the cohort lived, each of them in separate conversations referenced a Karen woman (also living in the apartment complex) who would read letters for the women

living there. She did not charge for this service, but did it to help women who had come to the United States after her negotiate their place.

There were types of conversations happening within living spaces that were not only reshaping the ways parent-child generations perceived each other, but also influenced the diverging migration histories. One woman reflected on the importance of having conversations with her children about her past, what had caused her to leave Burma and migrate to live in the refugee camp in Thailand. Her hope was they understood that what happens in life is a “*plan of God*”. That often, one has to face a challenge before it is possible to find happiness. She talked about her doubts of whether they realized this or not, because they had not faced a situation like what she had survived. She said, “*They are listening; they’re just quiet listening, but I don’t think they are realizing.*” But these conversations opened a space for understanding and dialogue that was safe, and connectedness to history and culture.

Uncertainty

The uncertainties expressed by women represented concerns about the future of the Karen culture in the context of the changing roles and expectations of both mothers and their youth. Participants reflected on women in their community who struggled, as well as the challenges they themselves faced. Though the intent of this inquiry was not to focus on the experiences of sadness or loss experienced by the participants or the community, it would be a disservice not to acknowledge the difficulties that women chose to share. These portions of discussions with women also served to describe the space of cultural difference, where tension and fear were rooted.

One of the ways participants reflected on the struggle of women in the community was to reference *“dragging along the tradition.”* In an interview, one participant discussed a recent suicide in the community. This was a woman who *“lived under the control of her husband, so endured everything, did everything that her husband needed, not fighting back.”* The narrative this participant recounted contained her value for pursuing change in response to the circumstances that surround you. But at the same time, change in the context of migration and resettlement can happen so quickly, which can be destabilizing. Another participant alluded to this saying, *“My life changed here. I have not considered what’s happening, so I just consider what happens day-by-day, how I deal with it day-by-day.”*

Though individual reactions to change varied, change was a theme consistently present as women expressed uncertainty. One woman, talking about her children said,

“My children are not respectful. They changed. They are not in love with their Karen traditional clothes anymore. We always wearing Karen clothes when we go to church. So my children now, and people, are changing. People are not like or not interested to wear their traditional clothes anymore. For my children, when they see other people wearing, or their friend, you know, who convince him, you should wear...sometimes I see he’s wearing.”

There are two voices represented in this passage. One voice is of concern for traditions that are drifting out of a cultural consciousness. The second voice is as a mother acknowledging that the point of influence for her children is shifting away from her and towards a peer group.

As this discussion illustrates, similar to the space of cultural difference, the perceptions of change can be paradoxical. For example, a participant pointed out that families in the Karen culture are now geographically spread out because of work. This impacts the notion of togetherness that is so central in the community. It also reveals that

individuals are assuming characteristics of individualist culture, such as independence and self-sufficiency. She went on to reason,

“Sometimes it’s hard to say that we’re a whole, just because some families are spread out because of work. From my perspective, how I see the Karen community is that we’re united, but sometimes it’s also difficult because of work and different beliefs and different opinions and views on things. I don’t know how to say this. I feel like it’s just like any other community, for example, the Somali community or the Mexican community. I think once they have settled here, like for certain years, that they know how to stand on their own. That’s when they start to spread out and then try to do on their own, to be on their own.”

And though women discussed having arrived recently as a refugee as a position of vulnerability and instability, the community itself drew strength from that experience, *“I feel like how the community is still united, is still together, is because of the new arrivals.”*

Envisioning Futures in the Day to Day

What has been constructed and deconstructed both in partnership with the women I have interviewed and in my independent analyses of data, is relative. Life in the United States is different than it was in Thailand; life in Thailand was different than it was in Burma. This reflects the constant shifting of norms as Karen women reposition themselves as agents in a hybrid cultural space. And, it reflects that women focus less on what and how mothering has evolved at the various points in their migration, than what they must do to support their families and position their children to thrive on a day-to-day basis. This being said, women continue to envision their futures through the lens of the day-to-day. These futures inhere a vision of return to Burma, in particular because of the dynamic political context and election results from the November 2015 national vote.

We are still thinking our land, it’s the most peaceful and we have a plan of bringing the youth generation who have education to build our community, to build our Karen people to become stronger, sustaining. Yeah, we’re still thinking

about that. If Aung San Suu Kyi becomes prime minister, of course she has full knowledge. She has experience and she has a wise heart, real kindness to every ethnic group...I would be the first to go back.

These visions also communicated a sense of a place in the United States.

I: When did you stop seeing yourself as a refugee?

R: Years ago I started to have a feeling. I started thinking I'm not a refugee any more.

I: Does that mean that you are home?

R: Yes

Ways of reckoning the present with the future are not necessarily reflective of norms circulating in the Karen community, regarding the intent to return to Burma or the perception of oneself as a refugee. What these visions do reflect are individuals rooted in the present as a result of a diversity of mechanisms that generate stability from which to navigate the day to day. Rooted within this hybrid space, women made decisions regarding their role in the family and ways they negotiated a recontextualized social practice of mothering.

Discussion

The last time that we met, Eh Hser asked the question, “*What about the new generation that’s coming?*” This question originated from a place of sadness that over time the traditions of Karen inherited culture might vanish. And it came from a place of hope that the generation of young mothers who came to the United States as refugees would empower their children through knowledge and opportunity. Her vision was that the youth would build on the strengths of a community rooted in a respect for the Karen historical narrative.

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the recontextualization of the social practice of mothering from the perspective of Karen refugee women from Burma. These

women have repositioned their identities both as women and as mothers within the evolving social structures of the post-resettlement context. In this analysis I consider ways that mothers engaged with relevant cultural, social, and legal discourses to achieve the outcomes of peace and together, and ultimately the health of their families. I document these shifts within the context of cultural hybridity, and the liminal space of cultural difference. What has emerged is a discussion of response strategies that women engaged to mitigate the burden of transition for their families and adopt new roles within the family structure. These response strategies facilitated the navigation of the liminal space between collectivist and individualist cultural norms. To build a platform for this work, women identified spaces of transformation within which connection, trust, and communication were supported.

As women described ways they enacted these response strategies in day-to-day life I documented paradoxical findings. The paradox surfaced in the narrative of *in-between* that women framed. As Karen women living in the refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border, they perceived their position as *in-between*, “neither here nor there”. Post-resettlement, these circumstances shifted, and a consistent feature of discussions with women in the cohort was the articulation of agency in describing choices made for themselves and their families. And as each woman described the choices she was making, she also described how she was able to evaluate and justify the choices based on the circulating discourses and structures she encountered in the post-resettlement context. This legitimization of the response strategies a woman engaged to shape her narrative post-resettlement is a representation of resiliency, as women negotiated the space of cultural difference through the practice of mothering. But as women positioned their children

within this narrative, it became apparent that while in some respects Karen youth were quicker to adapt than their adult counterparts, it was the youth who were now *in-between*. This position was apparent as mothers described their reliance on their children as linguistic and cultural brokers. And it was apparent as mothers reflected on the duty they perceived to facilitate the transmission of inherited Karen culture to their children, who would then sustain it through to the next generation of Karen.

Karen mothers valued the responsibility of transferring inherited Karen culture to the generation of youth coming of age in the United States. The women held this responsibility possessively, though it weighed on their experiences. Women frequently referenced the “*good way*” for Karen children. To be *good* was to succeed in school, care for younger siblings, and help with housework. Adults relied on their children for translating bills, official documents, and school reports rather than burdening a neighbor or going to a community-based organization for assistance. Guiding youth to wear traditional dress to church and speak respectfully with members of the community were fundamental practices in mothering. Successfully raising a *good* child was another form of legitimation for a mother.

As women assumed non-traditional roles in the economic and financial position of the family, social structures flipped. As youth learned English, became mobile, and acculturated more rapidly than their parents, the balance of power in families changed. And, as youth engaged with new networks of peers, sources of influence shifted away from the traditional family structure. These factors characterized the space of cultural difference for youth. As women discussed this space from their perspective, they envisioned a more fearful future for their children. Gang involvement, substance abuse,

and truancy are among the issues organizations supporting the Karen refugee community post-resettlement reported as emerging behaviors among Karen adolescents.

As shifting discourses influenced the social practice of mothering, women acknowledged that the traditional mechanisms of discipline and perspectives on the rights of the child were challenged by the United States legal system. The source of tension is not that refugees have never encountered a legal system. The tension has evolved from the fact that law has never encroached on a Karen family in the way that it does post-resettlement in the United States. And as mothers navigated this positioning of legal structures, the codification and fixed nature of the legal discourses, they reflected on a sense of powerlessness. Frequently within this state of perceived powerlessness, women allowed the resistance of youth to transpire unrestrained. And thereby, they accepted the behaviors. This strategy echoed the passive transcendence women engaged living in the refugee camps, when they perceived their position as *in-between* (Hoffman et al., under review).

Bhabha (1994) raises the question of how strategies of empowerment emerge from the contradictions within the interstices of cultural hybridity (p. 2). Karen women responded to this question with their descriptions of spaces of transformation. Through the points of connection that are cultivated within these spaces, a cultural consciousness grounded in the health of individuals, families, and the community is supported.

Limitations

The primary limitation in the collection and analysis of this data was the necessity of working with an interpreter. The interpretation process poses a problem within an ethnographic case study design because meaning intrinsic to the nuances of language is

lost. Though I engaged a skilled interpreter who I have worked with previously and vetted findings through a Karen cultural consultant, it can still be argued that it is the interpreter's understanding that I analyzed. However, the reflexivity that came to define the interpreter and my relationship as research partners, as well as the convergence of this data with what I previously collected in the refugee camps, support the perspectives expressed in this manuscript as being those of the participants (Gee, 1996).

Implications

The United States hosts the largest refugee resettlement program globally (UNHCR, 2016). Consequently, support structures to identify, prepare, and transport refugees from the country of asylum to the United States are robust. Domestically, the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration functions to assist refugees 30-90 days post-arrival, during which time refugees are eligible for housing assistance, case management, and cash assistance (PRM, 2016). The Office of Refugee Resettlement administers a mosaic of services to refugees including cash assistance, health assistance, and other social services, typically spanning the first eight months post-arrival (ORR, 2016). These structures exist because despite the fact that less than one percent of refugees are resettled worldwide, the United Nations views resettlement as a durable solution to displacement. However, funding allocated for United States refugee resettlement is not indefinite. Most major mechanisms of support for refugees terminate within one year of arrival. And as the refugee health literature matures it has become apparent that the impact of resettlement persists beyond both the resources and metrics aligned with the described structures. In many ways, the resolution of circumstances that initiate the flight of a particular refugee group establishes a new source of challenges for

refugees. The health consequences of resettlement are sometimes most evident in individual, family, and community dynamics over time.

In recent months, the Karen community in the Twin Cities has responded to a series of events prompting urgent dialogue around the mental health of its refugee community members. The Karen Organization of Minnesota, along with community and health-service partners, is responding to concerns about the increasing use of alcohol among both Karen adults and youth. Finally, the results of this inquiry will inform programs that address the needs of mothers and parents in supporting the acculturation of youth and the health of families.

Each generation of migrants has unique needs. As the Karen refugee community negotiates the space of cultural difference, mothers are integral partners in the identification of strengths and spaces within which these strengths can be engaged. Mother-child experiences are inherently tied. This is the case through war and conflict. And, as these results substantiate, the continued connection between a mother and her children is foundational in healing.

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Chapter 6

Synthesis

*Note: References for Chapter 6 Synthesis included in cumulative bibliography

Introduction

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore resilience, identity construction, and the recontextualization of mothering within the narratives of Karen women refugees from Burma. Inherent to this exploration were the interconnectedness of familial relationships and the importance of community structures in supporting the health of these relationships. In this final chapter I synthesize the findings of this eleven-month ethnographic case study period. To begin I consider findings from the research I conducted in two refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border as well as in the Twin Cities, Minnesota metro area with a cohort of Karen women post-resettlement. Specifically I will discuss the *Inside* and *Outside* figured worlds, the third space, the recontextualization of mothering and spaces of transformation – all of which Karen women engaged as response strategies to negotiate social, cultural, political, and legal systems they encountered through migration. Next I reflect on the relevance of the human rights framework as it relates to my own becoming as I interacted with the discourses of human rights through my doctoral studies and as a participant in this research. Additionally, I will discuss the parallels through which the human rights framework impacted my approach to the study of the migration experiences of Karen refugee women. Finally I reflect on the direction that I anticipate evolving this work, to build a program of research.

Findings

Findings presented in these chapters evidence the assertion that identity is not fixed. This fluidity of identity exists for every individual. However, for those displaced

from their homes, in transit, or who have reconceptualized peace, together, and home, the refiguring of identity in the course of becoming is heightened. The act of becoming is more present when an individual must ask the question “who am I?” every day because of constant shifting contexts and continual repositioning within these contexts.

Within the narratives I document in this research, through this process of becoming, women refugees constructed spaces that offered moments of stillness in the movement. These are spaces of reconciliation, healing, and unity. I characterize the movement around the spaces, and the spaces themselves within four broad categories of findings – figured worlds, the third space, the recontextualization of mothering, and spaces of transformation. Within these categories, I identify response strategies women engaged to navigate migration, promote the resilience of interpersonal connections, and cope individually and collectively with the challenges inherent to cultural transformation.

Inside/Outside Figured Worlds

A figured world is a model constructed by the social and cultural collective, through which actors can efficiently interpret and engage or disengage from relevant roles and identities (Gee, 2014; Holland et al., 1998). They function as tools of inquiry within critical discourse analysis as they reconcile the nuances in language, narrative, and text with broader experiences rooted in the world (Gee, 2014). Thus figured worlds provide a structure for the exploration of identity, a dynamic and positional notion. Participants in figured worlds situate their own positions and practices as they consider their alignment with the typical. As a result, figured worlds are also dynamic, evolving

based on subtle movements in surrounding contexts that occur as social practices are repeatedly played out and their function within the collective evolves.

Women constructed the *Inside* and *Outside* figured worlds of the refugee camp as they described the response strategies they engaged to negotiate within the discourses of migration. *Outside* was characterized by the equilibrium gained through the pursuit and achievement of livelihood opportunities, primarily by working outside the camp as day laborers in surrounding farms. Work opportunities in the camps were limited and from the perspective of inherited culture it was not the role of a woman to work outside the home. The opportunity, for example, to gain income to pay school fees or buy fish or eggs contributed to the ways Karen women perceived their agency.

Karen women characterized *Inside* in two prominent ways. First, as they shared the strategies they engaged to overcome the challenges of migration and transition, the mechanisms they discussed often served to temporarily escape the experiences of daily life. I termed this transcendence and in the analysis reflected on active and passive strategies of transcendence. Women also communicated a sense of impermanence, as they perceived their states of being from the perspectives of self, place, and time. In chapter 4, I capture and analyze visual images of impermanence, in addition to the experiences women narrated.

Third Space

The third space represents a convergence of multiple histories, where those individual histories can no longer be articulated but rather a new knowledge is produced (Rutherford, 1990). Karen women engaged the third space as a bridge to move between

the discourses of forced migration and their futures as they envision authoring them to achieve peace and together in their families and communities.

This navigational space was relevant to the experience of waiting in the refugee camp. Waiting is a significant facet of migration. In the context of the third space, waiting is an active process as Karen women constructed meaning through the negotiation of inherited culture and the discourses of migration, protection, and livelihoods. Within the third space women negotiated between the *Inside* and *Outside* figured worlds, partially or temporarily assuming identities characteristic of the *Inside* or the *Outside*, or both.

Women characterized the third space by movement, position, and periodically distress as the third space encompassed the destabilization inherent to transformation. Within this space Karen women authored and improvised ways to sustain peace, position their children in ways that empowered them, and protect their own wellbeing.

Recontextualization of Mothering

I discuss in Chapter 5 that discourses and social practices exist in a dynamic relationship in that social practices are constructed through relevant discourses, while simultaneously social practices act on and transform those same discourses. This process is recontextualization. Prominent experiences articulated by women during the second phase of data collection referenced a shifting Karen social practice of mothering. Response strategies women engaged to navigate the various social, cultural, and legal structures they encountered post-resettlement were relevant to their experiences as mothers during this transition.

In the chapter, I consider four facets of recontextualization that women discussed that served to produce context, evaluate and justify the shifting norms and practices, and shape into discourse the response strategies women engaged to negotiate the shifts in mothering practices. The first two themes I discuss produce the context within which Karen women situate themselves as mothers post-resettlement. These include the ways that women articulated the liminal space of cultural difference, and women's descriptions of divergent migration narratives between themselves and their children during the resettlement transition. The third theme is response-oriented as women begin to identify the structures within which the mothering identity is negotiated post-resettlement. The recontextualized discourse of discipline emerged in these conversations and drew into the scope of resettlement experiences the legal structures women encounter in their migration trajectories. Finally, women articulated spaces of transformation, moments of stillness in the movement.

Spaces of Transformation

As the idea behind the recontextualization of mothering emerged in the second phase of data collection, understanding the response strategies that women engaged to mitigate the burden of transition within their families and adopt new roles within the family structure that facilitated navigating the space of cultural difference became a predominant focus of the analysis. Within the spaces women described, the intent was for trust within families to be cultivated, fears to be mediated, where caring and caretaker identities (of children and of culture) held a prominence. Within this context, Karen women discussed the spaces within which ways of knowing in mothering were honored

and the health of the family and community structures were most visible. When filtered through a transformational space, response strategies they engaged to support health post-resettlement were successful in facilitating connection (which led to trust), communication, and protection.

Fear was a constant presence in women's minds as on a day-to-day basis they both observed and were active participants in shifting norms of mothering in response to their children's needs. Transformational spaces that women engaged with served to mitigate these fears. As women talked about the characteristics of these spaces, what they described was the capacity of a space to absorb a portion of the responsibility, anxiety, unknown, and burden of carrying a culture through to the next generations of its members. Church and dinner-time were the most important spaces of transformation that women identified.

Nursing and Human Rights

Nurses have four fundamental responsibilities: to promote health, to prevent illness, to restore health and to alleviate suffering. The need for nursing is universal. Inherent in nursing is a respect for human rights, including cultural rights, the right to life and choice, to dignity and to be treated with respect. Nursing care is respectful of and unrestricted by considerations of age, colour, creed, culture, disability or illness, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, politics, race or social status (ICNCE, 2012).

I believe that at the center of the relationship between nursing and human rights is human dignity. The work of nurses in human rights is situated within the spaces between relevant, circulating discourses of human rights, and the efforts of the organizations engaging in advocacy from local to international levels working to produce change. Human rights ideas are enacted in the work of nursing. And there remains opportunity to

develop these ideas within nursing, for example to pursue an approach to social justice grounded in the obligations put forward by the International Council of Nurses Code of Ethics that integrate principles of economic, social, and cultural rights (ICNCE, 2012; Pavlish et al., 2012).

In the refugee camps, in observing the impact of the Karen Women's Organization (KWO), I was able to connect my notion of human rights work with the approach to access, agency, and identity this organization facilitated. This group worked to acknowledge and support the voice of women through their experiences in the camp. Additionally the KWO was forward thinking as they engaged with discourses of return.

In many circumstances, as women discussed the response strategies they engaged to navigate displacement, the unique space of the refugee camp, and mothering post-resettlement they drew from human rights discourses encountered at various points in their displacement and migration. And with some purpose, they have held on to these discourses, recontextualizing them across their migration experiences. These elements of discourse relevant to the human rights framework have become integrated into the construction of response strategies that facilitate the negotiation of the social, cultural, political, and legal structures they encounter. This reinforces the meaning of these response strategies, in particular the transformational spaces where the processes of coping and becoming are reflective of the relationship between structure and agency, where a woman expresses her resistance to a system that in its design, represents a majority she is not a part of. As Karen refugee women have redesigned their position

within these systems, not only is the spirit of human rights relevant, but the enactment of these principles as women actively shape their futures.

Research Implications

As the political process in Burma evolves through tripartite negotiations and reform, an organized return program for the refugees remaining in the nine camps on the Thai-Burma border is impending. A concerted effort is underway to build a strategy for the return and reintegration of the population with implementation scheduled to begin within two years (UNHCR, 2014). Though varying in timeline, scope, program structure, actor dynamics, and socio-political contexts, tripartite agreements governing return protocols generally follow common broad principles. These include the assurance of protection for refugees, the right to return with dignity, and non-refoulement (Lumpp et al., 2004; Zieck, 2004). The United Nations, the country of origin, and the country of asylum may negotiate frameworks elaborating on these principles and assurances. Additionally, it is the mandate of involved state and non-governmental actors to remain active in continuous evaluation of the success of implemented return programs (Zimmermann, 2012). It is within these assurances that the framework of human rights carries forward. A longitudinal evaluation of the experiences of Karen return migrants through their return in terms of their experiences of health, security, livelihoods, land rights, and education would provide an important mechanism of evaluation for the processes implemented.

Findings in this dissertation highlight the importance of the identification of mechanisms correlated with the transmission of intergenerational trauma in refugees,

with a particular emphasis on those that demonstrate a protective effect on family cohesion. The development of community-based coping interventions focused on addressing the challenges women face in the role of mother through migration will approach a broader understanding of what flows through the connection between a mother and her child, how this connection shifts through migration, and in what ways displacement impacts the resilience of the relationships.

Final Reflection

I close my dissertation with an excerpt from the narrative with which it was opened.

“We are still thinking our land, it’s the most peaceful and we have a plan of bringing the youth generation who have education to build our community, to build our Karen people to become stronger, sustaining. Yeah, we’re still thinking about that. If Aung San Suu Kyi becomes prime minister, of course she has full knowledge. She has experience and she has a wise heart, real kindness to every ethnic group...I would be the first to go back.”

To me this quote typifies the spaces women constructed to achieve moments of stillness, to usher transformation, and for negotiation within the spaces of cultural difference. As these women envisioned their futures, the futures were centered on the youth in the community. In these moments, the balance they created was such that it was as though they were both looking forward and backwards simultaneously. I found this to be an extraordinary perspective, and I am grateful to have witnessed it.

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Appendix A. Copyright Permission for Manuscript 1/Chapter 3



Sarah Hoffman <hoff0742@umn.edu>

Copyright Form Reminder: International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care

Charles Watters <C.Watters@sussex.ac.uk>
To: "hoff0742@umn.edu" <hoff0742@umn.edu>

Sat, Jul 18, 2015 at 5:44 AM

Thanks Sarah. I can confirm there should be no problem using the paper for this purpose.

Please see the following guidelines: http://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/authors/writing/author_rights.htm

Best of luck with your future endeavors.

best wisehs

Charles

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Appendix B. University of Minnesota Study IRB Approval

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

*Human Research Protection Program
Office of the Vice President for Research*

*D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC 820
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Office: 612-626-5654
Fax: 612-626-6061
E-mail: irb@umn.edu or ibc@umn.edu
Website: <http://research.umn.edu/subjects/>*

March 19, 2015

Sarah J Hoffman

RE: "Exploring the construction of response strategies to support health among Karen refugee women"
IRB Code Number: **1502P63371**

Dear Ms. Hoffman

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) received your response to its stipulations. Since this information satisfies the federal criteria for approval at 45CFR46.111 and the requirements set by the IRB, final approval for the project is noted in our files. Upon receipt of this letter, you may begin your research.

IRB approval of this study includes the Thailand and United States consent forms received March 13, 2015.

The IRB would like to stress that subjects who go through the consent process are considered enrolled participants and are counted toward the total number of subjects, even if they have no further participation in the study. Please keep this in mind when calculating the number of subjects you request. This study is currently approved for 35 subjects. If you desire an increase in the number of approved subjects, you will need to make a formal request to the IRB.

For your records and for grant certification purposes, the approval date for the referenced project is March 6, 2015 and the Assurance of Compliance number is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003). Research projects are subject to continuing review and renewal; approval will expire one year from that date. You will receive a report form two months before the expiration date. If you would like us to send certification of approval to a funding agency, please tell us the name and address of your contact person at the agency.

As Principal Investigator of this project, you are required by federal regulations to:

- *Inform the IRB of any proposed changes in your research that will affect human subjects, changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received.
- *Report to the IRB subject complaints and unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others as they occur.
- *Inform the IRB immediately of results of inspections by any external regulatory agency (i.e. FDA).
- *Respond to notices for continuing review prior to the study's expiration date.
- *Cooperate with post-approval monitoring activities.

Information on the IRB process is available in the form of a guide for researchers entitled, *What Every Researcher Needs to Know*, found at <http://www.research.umn.edu/irb/WERNK/index.cfm>

The IRB wishes you success with this research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at 612-626-5654.

Sincerely,
Jeffery Perkey

Digitally signed by Jeffery Perkey
DN: cn=Jeffery Perkey, o=University of Minnesota, ou=Library, email=perkey@lib.umn.edu, c=US
Date: 2015.02.26 15:16:13 -0500

Jeffery Perkey, MLS, CIP
Research Compliance Supervisor
JP/bw

CC: Cheryl Robertson

Appendix C. University of Minnesota Change in Protocol Approval

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Route this form to: See instructions below	Revised October 2013
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Change In Protocol Request

Instructions:

Use this form when submitting change requests to approved IRB protocols. This form is for use when the changes are initiated by the PI. Do not use this form to respond when changes are requested by the IRB. Please do not use this form when responding to changes requested in a stipulation or deferral letter.

The UMN IRB reviewed and APPROVED this submission including all attachments listed on this form by expedited review.
By Jeffery Perkey on Jul 16, 2015

Submit this form to the Human Research Protection Program:

U.S. Mail Address: or
Human Research Protection Program
MMC 820
420 Delaware St. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0392

Electronic Submission:
Submit to: irb@umn.edu
PI must submit request using
University of Minnesota e-mail
Account.

IRB Protocol Information

IRB Study Number:	1502P63371
Principal Investigator:	Sarah Hoffman
Primary Study Title:	"Exploring the construction of response strategies to support health among Karen refugee women"
Date of this Submission	March 6, 2015
Study Includes	<input type="checkbox"/> Drug(s) / Biologic(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Device(s)

Indicate the type of change(s)	Additional information/requirements
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change(s) to Study Procedures/Protocol Amendment Protocol Version , Dated	<p>Does the change affect study design, change the study endpoint(s) or change the statistical method?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>Is this protocol under Masonic Cancer Center's Cancer Protocol Review Committee (CPRC) review?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, CPRC #</p> <p>If "Yes" is checked for <i>both</i> questions above, this submission (Change in Protocol form and any supporting documentation) must be reviewed by CPRC (CCPRC@umn.edu) prior to review by the IRB. CPRC will forward this submission to the IRB after CPRC approval. Submission to CPRC must meet the IRB signature requirement (signed by the PI or sent from the PI's x.500 UMN email account).</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Closure to Accrual	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment changes/Advertisements	Attach a copy of the revised material (flyer, script, etc.) with the submission
<input type="checkbox"/> Revised Investigator Brochure	Version , Dated
<input type="checkbox"/> Updated consent form	Include both an updated form with changes highlighted and a "clean" version
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	Briefly Describe:

1. Briefly summarize the change(s). For protocol amendments, do not say "See summary of changes provided with amendment." Rather, summarize the nature of the significant revisions.

Instead of recruiting only adult Karen women refugees resettled in the US within the last year, I am proposing to interview Karen women refugees resettled for any amount of time. My goal will be to recruit a diverse sample, including women resettled within the last year as well as those resettled in the 2-3 year range and the 4 or more year range. My sample size remains 10-15, and my age range will be the same.

2. Describe the rationale for the change(s):

This change was made in consultation with the Karen Organization of Minnesota, my primary community partner organization. We discussed that Karen refugee women face different challenges across different phases of resettlement. So to fully understand the responses engaged to navigate challenges associated with migration, it will be more effective to open up my original proposed time since resettlement.

3. How will these changes affect the overall risk to subjects in this study?

It will not change overall risk at all.

4. Do the changes to the study prompt changes to the consent form(s)?

No.

Yes. If yes:

- Attach a copy of the revised consent form(s) with changes tracked or highlighted as well as a clean copy.

4.1 Will currently enrolled subjects will be notified of the changes?

No

Yes, explain below how they will be notified (i.e. subjects will be re-consented with the updated form once approved, subjects will be provided with an information sheet, subjects will be told of changes at next study visit, etc.).

5. List and attach all documents included with this request, including version dates:

No additional documents are included with this request.

Principal Investigator's Signature

Date

Cancer Protocol Review Committee (CPRC) Use Only:

Appendix D. University of Minnesota Change in Protocol Approval

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Route this form to:
See instructions below
v2.0

Revised
August 2015

Change In Protocol Request

Instructions:

Use this form when submitting change requests to approved IRB protocols. This form is for use when the changes are initiated by the PI. Do not use this form to respond when changes are requested by the IRB. Please do not use this form when responding to changes requested in a stipulation or deferral letter.

Submit this form to the Human Research Protection Program:

Electronic Submission:
Submit to: irb@umn.edu
PI must submit request using University of Minnesota e-mail Account.

The UMN IRB reviewed and APPROVED this submission including all attachments listed on this form by expedited review

**Clinton
Dietrich**

Digitally signed by Clinton Dietrich
DN: c=US, st=Minnesota, l=Minneapolis,
ou=Human Research Protection Program,
email=dietr006@umn.edu, o=University of
Minnesota, cn=Clinton Dietrich
Date: 2015.11.12 08:29:11 -0600

IRB Protocol Information

IRB Study Number:	1502P63371
Principal Investigator:	Sarah Hoffman
Primary Study Title:	"Exploring the construction of response strategies to support health among Karen refugee women"
Date of this Submission	March 6, 2015
Study Includes	<input type="checkbox"/> Drug(s) / Biologic(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Device(s)

Indicate the type of change(s)	Additional information/requirements
<input type="checkbox"/> Change(s) to Study Procedures/Protocol Amendment Protocol Version _____, Dated _____	<p>Does the change affect study design, change the study endpoint(s) or change the statistical method?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p>Is this protocol under Masonic Cancer Center's Cancer Protocol Review Committee (CPRC) review?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, CPRC # _____</p> <p>If "Yes" is checked for both questions above, this submission (Change in Protocol form and any supporting documentation) must be reviewed by CPRC (CCPRC@umn.edu) and stamped as approved or acknowledged prior to review by the IRB. Please note that submissions not approved by the CPRC will be returned to the PI.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Closure to Accrual	
<input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment changes/Advertisements	Attach a copy of the revised material (flyer, script, etc.) with the submission
<input type="checkbox"/> Revised Investigator Brochure	Version _____, Dated _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Updated consent form	Include both an updated form with changes highlighted and a "clean" version
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	Briefly Describe: _____

1. Briefly summarize the change(s). For protocol amendments, do not say "See summary of changes provided with amendment." Rather, summarize the nature of the significant revisions.

I would like to interview one of my study participants more extensively. She was involved in founding a prominent human rights organization that continues to work for the rights of women on the Thai-Burma border. Her narrative represents the characteristics of resilience that are present in many of the women I am working with in my dissertation. She is also very articulate and willing to express her ideas. I've talked with her about meeting further and she is interested in doing this. She has recently written about her life history for a church celebration, and mentioned sharing this with me as a starting point for this work. I believe this work will involve 2-3 additional meetings of approximately 1-2 hours each. I will compensate her as was proposed in my original IRB submission. She will remain anonymous. I will edit the conversation only to make it flow as a narrative. I will have the narrative translated into Karen, so that it is possible for members of the community to read.

2. Describe the rationale for the change(s):

My research is a series of ethnographic case studies describing experiences of resilience, identity construction, and mothering. This participant's narrative is the most effective ways to communicate the ways Karen refugee women navigated the challenges encountered through the course of migration. Including her experiences in more detail will enrich and deepen the findings. I will use the narrative to introduce the data and analysis from my research in the refugee camp on the Thai-Burma border and interviews conducted in the United States with Karen women.

3. How will these changes affect the overall risk to subjects in this study?

I do not anticipate increased risk to the participant. There is a possibility that if community members who know the participant opt to read the paper, they will recognize who she is based on her experiences. Because she has opted to write her life story for the church she belongs to already, I feel that this event would not result in harm to the participant.

4. Do the changes to the study prompt changes to the consent form(s)?

No.

Yes. If yes:

- Attach a copy of the revised consent form(s) with changes tracked or highlighted as well as a clean copy.

4.1 Will currently enrolled subjects will be notified of the changes?

No

Yes, explain below how they will be notified (i.e. subjects will be re-consented with the updated form once approved, subjects will be provided with an information sheet, subjects will be told of changes at next study visit, etc.).

5. List and attach all documents included with this request, including version dates:

No additional documents are included with this request.

Principal Investigator's Signature

Date

Cancer Protocol Review Committee (CPRC) Use Only:

Appendix F. Translated Informed Consent Form – United States

CONSENT FORM
လိာ်အတၢ်ဟ့ၣ်ခွဲး-လိာ်တၢ်အၢၣ်လိာ်ဟ့ၣ်တၢ်ရဲၣ်
UNITED STATES
ကီၢ်အမဲရကၢ

Exploring the construction of response strategies to support health among Karen refugee women
တၢ်ယုသ့ၣ်ညါတၢ်ဆီလိာ်ပာ်လိာ်တၢ်စီဆၢတၢ်မၤရဲၣ်ကျဲၤတဖၣ်လၢကဆီၣ်ထွဲမၤတၢ်အိၣ်ဆူၣ်အိၣ်ရၢလၢပုၤကညီၣ်ပိာ်ပုၤဘၣ်ကီၢ်ဘၣ်ခဲတဖၣ်အ
ကျဲအဂီၢ်.

Oral Script:တၢ်ကွဲးလၢတၢ်ကဘၣ်ကတီၢ်အီၤ

“You are invited to be in a research study. The purpose is to understand the how Karen women
living in the US adjust and respond to challenges they face as refugees. I am specifically interested
in the actions you take to support your health, as well as the health of your family and community.
You were selected as a possible participant because of your experiences. As we read this form
together please ask any questions you have. Your participation is completely voluntary and you
will not be punished in any way if you decide not to participate, or if you choose to participate and
change your mind at a later time. I will now read the description of the study that has been prepared
by the researcher.”

“နဘၣ်တၢ်ကွဲးမ့ၢ်န့ၢ်လၢတၢ်ယုသ့ၣ်ညါတၢ်မၤလိတခါအံၤန့ၢ်လီၤ.တၢ်ပညိၣ်ကွၢ်စီမ့ၢ်ဒ်သိးတၢ်ကနၢ်ပာ်အါထီၣ်ပဲပုၤကညီၣ်ပိာ်ပုၤတဖၣ်လၢအိၣ်မ့ၢ်တၢ်
လၢကီၢ်အမဲရကၢပုၤဘၣ်ယးတၢ်ရဲၣ်ကျဲၤဒီးစီဆၢတၢ်ဖဲအထံၣ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ကီၢ်တၢ်ခဲလၢအမ့ၢ်ပုၤဘၣ်ကီၢ်ဘၣ်ခဲဖိတကၢဒလဲၣ်န့ၢ်လီၤ.တၢ်လၢအထူးန့ၢ်ယတၢ်သး
ခဲလိာ်လိာ်ဆီဆီန့ၢ်မ့ၢ်တၢ်ကွၢ်ထွဲလိာ်န့ၢ်တၢ်အိၣ်ဆူၣ်အိၣ်ရၢ.ယုဒီးန့ၢ်ပုၤဟံၣ်ဖိ,န့ၢ်ပုၤတတၢ်တဖၣ်အတၢ်အိၣ်ဆူၣ်အိၣ်ရၢတဖၣ်အဂ့ၢ်န့ၢ်လီၤ.န့ၢ်မ့ၢ်တၢ်ပုၤတ
ကလၢဘၣ်တၢ်ယုဒီးရုထၢထီၣ်အီၤမ့ၢ်လၢန့ၢ်အိၣ်ခဲဒီးနီၢ်ကစၢ်တၢ်လဲၤစီဖျိန့ၢ်လီၤ.ဖဲပယးသကိးလိာ်တက့ၢ်အံၤအခါဝံသးစ့ၤသံကွၢ်တၢ်သံကွၢ်တဖၣ်လၢန့ၢ်အိၣ်ခဲ
သံကွၢ်အီၤတဖၣ်န့ၢ်တက့ၢ်.န့ၢ်တၢ်မၤယုၣ်မၤသကိးတဘျီအံၤကမ့ၢ်တၢ်
ဘိဘိ.မ့ၢ်တၢ်မ့ၢ်န့ၢ်ယုၣ်ထၢလၢကန့ၢ်လိာ်ပာ်ယုၣ်မၤသကိးတၢ်ဝံဆီတလဲကွၢ်တၢ်ပာ်သးလၢခံန့ၢ်တၢ်တဖၣ်န့ၢ်တၢ်ကမ့ၢ်ဘၣ်.န့ၢ်သက့.န့ၢ်မ့ၢ်တၢ်လၢန့ၢ်က
မၤယုၣ်မၤသကိးက့ၢ်တၢ်လၢခံသ့ဝဲန့ၢ်လီၤ.ခဲအံၤယကဖးပျါထီၣ်တၢ်မၤလိအဂ့ၢ်အကျိၤလၢအဘၣ်တၢ်ကတၢ်ကတီၢ်အီၤလၢပုၤယုသ့ၣ်ညါတၢ်ဖိတဖၣ်
န့ၢ်လီၤ.”

This study is being conducted by:တၢ်မၤလိတခါအံၤန့ၢ်ဘၣ်တၢ်ရဲၣ်တၢ်ကျဲၤအီၤလၢ
Sarah Hoffman, PhD (c), University of Minnesota, School of Nursing, hoff0742@umn.edu

သရၣ်မ့ၢ်စၢရၢပးမဲ(Sarah Hoffman, PhD) (c), လၢယဲဝဲလၢမဲနံၣ်စီထၣ်အဖၣ်စီမိ (University of Minnesota)
ဘၣ်ယးဒီးကသံၣ်သရၣ်မ့ၢ်တၢ်မၤလိ(Minnesota, School of Nursing)လိပရၢမ့ၢ်ဝဲ hoff0742@umn.edu န့ၢ်လီၤ.

Background Information;တၢ်ဂ့ၢ်တၢ်ကျိၤအတၢ်ခဲၣ်စီဂံၢ်ထံး

The purpose of this study is: To understand the how Karen women adjust and respond to the
challenges they face as refugees, specifically the actions women take to support individual health,
as well as the health of family and community.
တၢ်ကွၢ်စီလၢတၢ်မၤလိတခါအံၤန့ၢ်ဒ်သိးပကနၢ်ပာ်အါထီၣ်ပဲပုၤကညီၣ်ပိာ်ပုၤတဖၣ်လၢအိၣ်မ့ၢ်တၢ်ကနၢ်ပာ်အါထီၣ်ပဲပုၤကညီၣ်ပိာ်ပုၤတဖၣ်လၢအိၣ်မ့ၢ်တၢ်
ကီၢ်တၢ်ခဲလၢအမ့ၢ်ပုၤဘၣ်ကီၢ်ဘၣ်ခဲတဖၣ်လၢ,လိာ်ဆီဒၣ်တၢ်ဖဲအသ့ၣ်ဘၣ်ကွၢ်ထွဲလိာ်အနီၢ်ကစၢ်,အဟံၣ်ဖိဖိဒီးအပုၤတတၢ်တဖၣ်အိၣ်ဆူၣ်အိၣ်ရၢအခါန့ၢ်လီၤ..

Procedures:တၢ်မၤအကျိၤအကွၢ်တဖၣ်

If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:
Participate in up to three individual interview sessions. The sessions will last 60-90 minutes. Your
name will not be connected to your responses, so no one will no the answers you gave. The
discussions will be recorded using an audio recorder to enable the researcher capture all the
information. If you do not feel comfortable with the recording, the discussions may also be
documented through note taking or summarized after the interview.

နမူနာတိုက်လီလီ(နသးမုလီပလီ)လာနကပတ်ယုတ်လာတံမာလီတခါအံနပကသံကွါနလာနကဘဉ်မာတံသုတ်တဖဉ်ဒ်လတ်အသီးအံနပလီ. နကဘဉ်ဟ်ယုတ်မာသကိးလာတံသံကွါသံဒီးအကတီဝဲအမံနံးယုဆံဒီးစံဆံနပလီ.နကဘဉ်နပလီလာတံထံဉ်လီလီသံကွါသံဒီးလာသုတ်တခါကတီဝဲ၆၀-၉၀မံးနံးအတီပုနပလီ.ယကယုကတီသကိးတံဒီးနအသီတဘျီမဲယတံသံကွါမုါအိဉ်ထီဉ်လာနတံစံးဆာတဖဉ်အယီနပလီ.နမံးတဘဉ်တံဟ်ပျါလာနတံစံးဆာအဖီခိဉ်ဘဉ်,လာတံနပအယီမတကမးတသုဉ်ညါတံလာနစံးဆာတဖဉ်နပဘဉ်.လာတံကတီသကိးတဘျီအံးတံကဖိဉ်ယဉ်နတံကလုလာတံဖိဉ်တံကလုဒ်သီးပုယုသုဉ်ညါတံဖိတဖဉ်ကမးနပဘဉ်တံဂုါတံကရီမဲလတ်အဂီလာအလီတံလီဆဲးနပလီ.နမုါတဘဉ်သးမုတဖဉ်တအံဉ်လာတံဖိဉ်တံကလုတခါအံးအဖီခိဉ်ဒီးတံထဲသကိးတံအဂုါကဘဉ်တံကွဲးနိဉ်အီလာလံဉ်တံကွဲးနိဉ်ကွဲးယါအမုယုတဖဉ်တံကကွဲးကျါတံကုအီမဲတံထံဉ်လီလီထဲသကိးဝဲအလီမံနပလီ.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:တံလီဘဉ်ယိဉ်ဘဉ်ဘီဒီးတံနဘျီနပလီလီလာတံမာလီတခါအံးအဖီခိဉ်
The study carries minimal risk. Some of the questions we are asking could be upsetting and you have the right to skip any of the questions for any reason or withdraw from the study at any time.

တံမာလီတခါအံးအတံလီဘဉ်ယိဉ်ဘဉ်ဘီဒီးတံနဘျီနပလီ.တံသံကွါသံဒီးတဖဉ်တဘျီကကဲထီဉ်တံသးတဖဉ်လာနဂီလာသုတ်အယီနမုါအံဉ်ဒီးစီကပတ်ကွါတံသံကွါမုတဖဉ်နအံဉ်ဒီးထုးကွါနသးလာတံမာလီတခါအံးဘဉ်ယံးတံမာလီတခါအံးသုတ်ထီဘီနပလီ.

The benefits to participation are: There are no direct benefits to participation.
တံနဘျီနပလီလီလာတံမာလီတခါအံးအဖီခိဉ်ဘဉ်ဘီဒီးတံနဘျီနပလီလီလာဘဉ်နပလီ.

Compensation:တံဟုဉ်မာမာကုတံ
You will receive compensation: နကဒီးနဘဉ်ကုတံဟုဉ်မာမာကုတံ,

Participants will receive a \$15 gift card to a local grocery store at the completion of each interview.
ပုယုယုမာသကိးတံတဖဉ်ကဒီးနဘဉ်ဝဲဘဉ်တံဟုဉ်ကနလာအမုါဝဲဘဉ်(giftcard)၁၅ဒ်လုဉ်နပလီ.လာကလဲသုတ်တခါအံဉ်ကျဲးမဲတံသမံးသမံးအီဝဲဘဉ်အလီမံနပလီ.

Confidentiality:တံမုါနပလီဒီးအတံဘဉ်တံဘာ
The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. Study data will be encrypted according to current University policy for protection of confidentiality. I am the only individual who will have access to the tape recordings if you agree to have our conversation recorded. The recordings will be destroyed as soon as I have transcribed the interviews for analysis.

တံမာနီဉ်မာယါလာတံမာလီတဘျီအံးနပတံကပတ်အီဘဉ်ဘဉ်ဘာဘာနပလီ.တံဂုါတံကရီတနီလာပမုါဘဉ်ရုလီဟ်ပျါထီဉ်အီ(နတံဂုါတံကရီတခါခါလာအအိဉ်ပျါထီဉ်,နနီဉ်ကမုါနပပတတနပယုတ်လာတံဟ်ပျါအပုယုဘဉ်)ဒီးလုတကုတံတဒးဟ်ပျါနမံးနသုဉ်ဘဉ်.တံယုသုဉ်ညါအလံဉ်တံမာနီဉ်မာယါသုဉ်တဖဉ်ကဘဉ်တံဟ်အီဘဉ်ဘဉ်ဘာဘာဒီးပုလာကလဲနကွါဝဲဘဉ်လံဉ်တံမာနီဉ်မာယါတဖဉ်သုနပကမုါဘဉ်ထဲပုလာတံမာလီအပုယုသုဉ်ညါတံဖိတဖဉ်အံးနပလီ.ဟုဉ်မီမီအိဉ်ဝဲဒီးအတံဘျီအတံသိဉ်တံသီလာကယံတံဂုါတံကရီမဲလတ်ကဘဉ်တံဟ်နပလီလာတံဘဉ်တံဘာလာတံနပနီဉ်သုနပလီ.ယဲယကမုါဝဲဘဉ်ပုယုထဲတကလာကဖိဉ်နတံကလုတခါအံးမဲနအံဉ်လီလီတံလီလီဒီးဟုဉ်အစွဲးနပလီ.ဒီးတံဖိဉ်တံကလုတခါအံးကဘဉ်တံမာဟးဂီကွါအီမဲယကွဲးကုကုတံသမံးသမံးလံဉ်ဒီးယုသုဉ်ညါနီဉ်မးတံလာအအိဉ်ကျဲးလီလီအသးတဖဉ်ဝဲအလီမံနပလီ.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: တော်ဖိုင်သးမာကလိလောတော်မာလိတဘျီညါအံး

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or the Karen Organization of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

တော်ပင်ယုင်မာသကိးတော်အံးကမုင်ဝဲဒင်တော်သးအိင်အတော်မာန့လီၤ. နမုင်ဆာတ်ဝဲလၢနကပင်ယုင်မာသကိးတော်မုင်ဂၤ. တော်ပင်ယုင်မာသကိးတော်မုင်ဂၤ. တဘျီအိင်ထီင်တော်ကိတ်တဲကဲထီင်တော်ဘျီဒီဘၣ်ထံးလၢနတော်ဘၣ်သ့ၣ်ဒီးမဲနဲဖိထိုင်အဖျိုင်မိမိမဲအံးမုတမုင်ဆါဆူညါမုတမုင်လၢနတော်ရဲလိာ်မုင်လိာ်သးမဲအံးမုင်ဂၤ. ဓါဆူညါမုင်ဂၤဒီးမဲနဲဖိထိုင်ဖျိုင်မိမိမိ (the University of Minnesota) ဒီးအမဲရကၤပုၤဘၣ်ကိဘၣ်မဲကမံတံင် (American Refugee Committee) ဒီးပုၤကညီအတော်ကရၢကရိလၢမဲနဲဖိထိုင် (Karen Organization of Minnesota) အပုၤဘၣ်န့လီၤ. နမုင်ဆာတ်ဝဲလၢနကပင်ယုင်မာသကိးတော်န့ၣ်-န့ၣ်ဘၣ်တော်ခွဲးတော်ယံလၢလၢပုၤပုၤလၢနမုတမုင်အံးဒီးမဲဆာတ်သံကွၢ်ကိးဖျိုင်ဒီးဘၣ်န့ၣ်သ့ဝဲဒီးနမုင်အံးဒီးပင်ပတၢ်ကွၢ်တဘျီလၢလၢသ့ဝဲဒီးတော်အံးတမာဘၣ်ဒီနတော်ရဲလိာ်မုင်လိာ်သးဒီးတော်နီတကပုၤဘၣ်န့လီၤ.

Contacts and Questions: တော်ဆဲးကျဲးဆဲးကျဲးဒီးတော်သံကွၢ်သံဒီး

The researcher conducting this study is: Sarah Hoffman. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at The University of Minnesota, School of Nursing, 512-470-7128, hoff0742@umn.edu. You can also contact Dr. Cheryl Robertson from the University of Minnesota, School of Nursing at 612-624-5412, rober007@umn.edu.

ပုၤယုသ့ညါတော်မိလၢတော်မာလိအံးန့ၣ်မုင်ဝဲဒင်သရၣ်မုင်စာရၢပီးမဲ (Sarah Hoffman) န့လီၤ. နမုင်အံးဒီးသံကွၢ်တော်သံကွၢ်တမံလၢလဲအံးသ့ဝဲန့လီၤ. ဒီးနတော်သံကွၢ်အိင်ထီင်လၢမဲန့ၣ်ပအံးဒီးဟ့ၣ်ဂံၢ်ဟ့ၣ်ဘၣ်န့ၣ်လၢနကဆဲးကျဲးဘၣ်အဝဲလၢမဲနဲဖိထိုင်အဖျိုင်မိမိ (University of Minnesota) ဘၣ်ယးကသံၣ်သရၣ်မုင်အကွီ (School of Nursing) မဲ (၅၁၂-၄၇၀-၇၁၂၈) ဒီးအလီပရၢမုင်ဝဲ hoff0742@umn.edu န့လီၤ. ဒီးပုၤအဂၤတကၤကမုင်ဝဲဒီးကထၢၣ်မုင်ဆၢၣ်ရံၣ်ရီဘးခါ (Dr. Cheryl Robertson) လၢမဲနဲဖိထိုင်အဖျိုင်မိမိဘၣ်ယးကသံၣ်သရၣ်မုင်အကွီမဲ (၆၁၂-၆၂၄-၅၄၁၂) ဒီးအလီပရၢနီၣ်ဂံၢ်မုင်ဝဲ rober007@umn.edu န့လီၤ.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.

နမုင်အံးဒီးတော်သံကွၢ်သံဒီးလီၤဆီလၢတော်မာလိတခါညါအံးအဖိစိင်ဒီးကတိၤသကိးတော်ဒီးပုၤအဂၤတကၤလၢအတမုင်ပုၤယုသ့ညါတော်မိတဖၣ်န့ၣ်ပဟ့ၣ်ဂံၢ်ဟ့ၣ်ဘၣ်န့ၣ်လၢနကဆဲးကျဲးဘၣ်ပုၤဘၣ်မုဘၣ်ဒါမဲ Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota ၅၅၄၅၅. လီၤထဲမိနီၣ်ဂံၢ် (၆၁၂) ၆၂၅-၁၆၅၀ သ့ဝဲဒ်န့လီၤ.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

နကဒီးန့ၣ်ဘၣ်မုင်ကိးတော်ကွဲးနီၣ်ကွဲးယါတော်ဂံၢ်ကျိၤတဖၣ်အံးအတော်ကွဲးဒီးလၢနကပင်ယုင်မာသကိးတော်မာနီၣ်မာယါလၢနဂီၢ်အသးစ့ၣ်ကိးန့လီၤ.

Statement of Consent: တော်ပင်ဖျါအတော်ဟ့ၣ်ခွဲး

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

ယမးဘၣ်တော်ဂံၢ်ကျိၤလၢအအိင်ဖျါတုၢ်လဲသးလၢတော်မိစိင်တဖၣ်အံးဝဲလဲန့လီၤ. ယသံကွၢ်သံဒီးဘၣ်ယဲတော်သံကွၢ်တဖၣ်ဒီးယဒီးန့ၣ်ဘၣ်ယဲတော်မိးဆာတဖၣ်လၢလၢပုၤပုၤလဲန့လီၤ. ဒီးယဟ့ၣ်အဖျိုင်လၢယကန့ၣ်လီၤပင်ယုင်မာသကိးတော်လၢတော်မာလိတခါအံးအပုၤန့လီၤ.

Appendix G. Summary of Research to Karen Refugee Committee



Sarah Hoffman <hoff0742@umn.edu>

Karen study information

1 message

Sarah Hoffman <hoff0742@umn.edu>
To: z_blooming@hotmail.com
Cc: "Chuck Schumacher (arcumphaf@csloxinfo.com)" <arcumphaf@csloxinfo.com>

Sun, Feb 1, 2015 at 8:27 PM

Dear Mr. Zan and members of the Karen Refugee Committee,

My name is Sarah Hoffman. I am a student at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing in the United States. In late April through early May I will be working with the American Refugee Committee (ARC), spending 3 weeks conducting field observations and interviews in the Nu Po and Umpiem Mai refugee camps. This experience will inform my PhD dissertation, which will focus on the resettlement experiences of Karen women in St. Paul, Minnesota. I've copied my ARC contact Chuck Schumacher on this email.

Attached is a 1-page summary of my research for your review. I will also be submitting the full study to the IRB at the University of Minnesota. Outside of what I've included in this email, please let me know if you need any additional information. I am also happy to send approval from the IRB if you'd like. The data collection that I am proposing in Thailand is preliminary research, and will only inform my doctoral thesis.

The primary reason for my travel to Thailand and data collection in the camps is that given the longevity of the camp experience, refugees migrating to the US have often spent a majority, if not all of their lives in the camps. Preliminary data collection in the camps including interviews and observations of the environment, interactions, and culture will serve my ability to accurately represent discussions of identity, resilience, and health among resettled Karen refugees in Minnesota.

Thank you so much for your consideration. Please let me know if there is any additional information that I can provide.

Sarah

Proposed_Work_Thailand_Hoffman.docx
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