

Syrian Refugee Fathers' Perceptions of Identity and Family Dynamics in the U.S. after
Displacement

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Abstract

At the end of 2016, approximately 65.6 million individuals were displaced forcibly around the world because of generalized violence, persecution, violation of human rights, or conflict such as civil war (UNHCR, 2016). The purpose of this study is to: (a) explore Syrian refugees after displacement in the US, (b) give voice to refugee fathers, and (c) advance knowledge for marriage and family therapists, who are working with refugee families. Eight Syrian refugee fathers who were displaced in the last two years and living in Indiana, US shared their experiences through in-depth interviews. After transcribing and translating the interviews, thematic analysis, a flexible research tool that provides a reach and complex account of data, was used to analyze the data. Four main themes emerged from fathers: displacement stress, loss of extended family connections, experiences of isolation, and identity changes with provider role. A thematic map also is created illustrating how the stress of displacement and being far away from extended families profoundly influence provider identities and family interactions. In addition, the contextual model of family stress is used to customize fathers' experience of displacement. The inferences from this study provide guidance for marriage and family therapists, mental health practitioners, and organizations working with refugee families.

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General Audience Abstract

Just imagine you have to flee your home country, leaving all your physical and non-physical possessions and belongings or even members of your extended family behind, witnessing the death or missing of a significant or loved one, resettling in a new country and struggling to obtain a new social status, coping skills and suffering a stigma against your nationality. These are just a portion of the adversities that refugee fathers have endured (other family members suffer in different ways) in host countries such as the US. Syrian refugee fathers in this study were forced to live in a new country wherein they cannot speak the language and have to rely on their children to communicate with others. As the only providers of their families in Syria, they struggle with financial strains. Consequently, their wives (almost in half of the cases) have to work outside the home in order to cover the household expenses ideally; they could rely on their extended family's help and support if they were in their own country. Such experiences are stressful for Syrian refugee fathers with damaging effects for their identity as fathers and their family dynamics. Family therapists, mental health practitioners, and organizations working with refugee families can benefit from findings of this study to provide better services for their targeted populations.

Dedication

This is dedicated to those who either suffered or are suffering from systematically structured violence, terrorism and war, and to those whose voices have been silenced, I will be a voice for you and your plight. To all my brothers and sisters from Syria, Palestine, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan who are fighting against terrorism for the sake of Allah and their land, and those who were martyred in this way.

Acknowledgment

This work would not have been possible without the support of all helped me to write and finish this dissertation. I am especially indebted to the Syrian refugee fathers and their families who trusted me, let me in, and shared their stories and challenges with me. I had the honor of meeting and talking with one of the most vulnerable populations in the world and it helped me personally to be more knowledgeable of my privileges. I was humbled and better understand the very tough experience of Syrian refugee fathers through their own eyes. Professionally, I could see many similarities between myself as a Muslim Iranian and them as Muslim Syrians despite many political differences. I have become very passionate about refugee families and eager to be more involved in such a humanitarian work, a feeling I was not very sure about before starting this research project.

I am grateful to all of those with whom I have had the pleasure to work during this project. Each of the members of my dissertation committee has provided me extensive personal and professional guidance and taught me a great deal about scientific research. I would like to thank Dr. Erika Grafsky, the chair of my committee. She helped me a lot how to synthesize my thought while I was analyzing my data. As my mentor, she has taught me more than I could ever give her credit for here.

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بشوی اوراق اگر همدرس مایی که درس عشق در دفتر نباشد

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Refugeeism is a global phenomenon that has existed throughout world history” (Mock, 1998. p. 347). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 1951), “a refugee is a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (p. 6). The increasing number of refugees who are forced to immigrate are one of the most problematic issues of the world (Slobodin & Jong, 2015). Among all societal entities, family is affected the most by war, terrorism, or any significant change causing people to flee where they live.

Global Refugees

There has been an unprecedented increase in Global forced displacement in 2016. By the end of 2016, approximately 65.6 million individuals, 1 person every 3 seconds, were displaced or migrated forcibly across the world because of generalized violence, persecution, violation of human rights, or conflicts such as civil war. This number is 6.1 million more than 2014, in which the total number of forced migrants was 59.5 million (UNHCR, 2016) and it seems that this is a non-stoppable augmentative phenomenon (Urtzan & Northwood, 2016). In Syria alone, 12.2 million have been affected by the civil war, among whom 7.6 million had been displaced (UNICEF, 2015). In particular, because of the US attack to Iraq in 2003, almost 20 percent of Iraq’s population was displaced in 2007 and 2008. Likewise, during the Soviet incursion in Afghanistan in the 1980s, almost 50 percent of population was displaced within or outside the country. Also, as a result of genocide in 1994, less than half of Rwanda’s population, which is

more than 2.5 million, were displaced (Connor & Krogstad, 2016). In sub-Saharan Africa region, Nigeria, 47,700 individuals have been killed since May 2011 and 1.9 million is the estimated number of internally displaced population resulted from the sectarian conflict between Boko-Haram and the government. Nigeria's economy highly depends on its oil as the largest African oil producer; therefore, the political stability of Nigeria is very important to the security of the region and the US. Economic interests (Council on Foreign Relations, 2017). Furthermore, because of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more than 2 million people were displaced between 1992-1995 (Mollica, McInnes, Sarajlic, Lavelle, Sarajlic, & Massagli, 1999). The survivors of the war had to leave their homes and many stayed in overpopulated refugee camps with a lack of food, water, and poor sanitation (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1995; Wilmer, 1996).

Currently, Syria is experiencing a devastating refugee crisis in the world. The number of asylums and refugees from Syria had been increasing since 2011 to the present. In 2011, when the Syrian conflict broke, more than 700,000 Syrians have applied for asylum in Europe. To mention just one example, UNHCR (2015) estimated that 300,000 Syrians have applied for asylum in Serbia. By the middle of 2016, more than 1 million Syrians have been seeking asylum in Europe (Connor & Krogstad, 2016). Displacement outside of Syria borders, mostly in Europe and North America, is what we heard the most. On the other side, displacement inside Syria and neighboring countries such as Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, or Egypt is also very serious and much larger than the number of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe and North America. According to one estimate, about 4.8 million Syrian refugees live in these countries as of mid-2016 (Connor & Krogstad, 2016).

According to the universal declaration of human rights, refugees should be allowed to enter any country for the purpose of safety and a peaceful life (Slobodin & Jong, 2015). Many European countries experienced a considerable increase in the number of refugees traveling and sailing along the sea to reach Europe. A dramatic number of individuals have risked their lives and crossed the Mediterranean Sea in the hope of finding a safe land (UNHCR, 2015). Many host countries across the world, mostly in Europe and North America, are struggling with the consequences of this phenomenon and millions of issues that refugees bring by themselves to these host countries. Germany, for instance, experienced a huge number of refugees in 2015 mostly from Syria. Still more refugees poured in Germany in 2016 from other countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq. Almost 70% of the refugees and asylum seekers in 2014 were men between 18 and 35 years of age and in the first half of 2015, 47,000 refugees were individuals under the age of 18 (Leuzinger-Bohleber, Rickmeyer, Tahiri, Hettich, & Fischmann, 2016). In the United States, 84,994 refugees arrived in the fiscal year of 2016 and 46,371 refugees have arrived during the first eight months of the fiscal year of 2017, which is more than the number of refugees admitted over the same eight-month period of both 2016 and 2015 (CNSNews.com, 2017). These refugees are mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Iraq, Somalia, and Syria.

Generally speaking, terrorism and long-term wars often create a situation in which people and their rights are systematically and structurally violated, influencing families and individual (Nickerson, Bryant, Rosebrock, & Litz, 2014). The process of migration, especially for the purpose of seeking asylum, exposes people to traumatic experiences. It can be described at three levels of pre-migration, migration, and post-migration, each of which may contain experiences or

expose people to a wide range of traumatic experiences such as violence, rape, torture, or even natural disaster (Slobodin & Jong, 2015).

Refugee Fathers and Families

Immigration or forced immigration can provoke a variety of structural changes in the families. Family structure or family dynamics is an organized pattern of interactions, repeated transactions that become predictable. For example, language brokering in which children interpret from one language to their native language for their parents (Weisskirch, 2017) can influence the structure or dynamics of a family. Boundaries, an important concept in family systems, are rules regulating contacts (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). In addition, hierarchy is a boundary to distinguish the leader of an organization from the rest of the members (Piercy & Wetchler, 1996), which is another concept when family structure is considered. The family structure creates transactional patterns by organizing the ways wherein family members interact with each other. Such patterns can be seen only when the family subsystems interact with each other. The behaviors of family members are regulated by these transactional patterns and, as a result, they are maintained by two systems of constraint: generic and idiosyncratic (Kassop, 1987). Generic constraints are based on universal “rules”, such as the traditional hierarchical relationships between parents and children, and the idiosyncratic constraints are based on the unique “rules” that evolve in every family as the result of explicit and implicit negotiations among family members (Minuchin, 1974; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981, p. 78–79).

Within the family, the father is perceived to be an important member who enhances and maximizes the quality of life of children across the globe. Furthermore, fathers are considered important factors enhancing children’s’ socioeconomic welfare, which prevents developmental detriment of their children (Roopnarine, 2015). In particular, there are different expectations for

fathers across cultures that distinguish one society from another. For instance, Muslim fathers, either Arab or non-Arab, are expected to provide for their families and meet not only their material needs such as food and shelter but also their emotional and psychological needs. “Within an interdependent collectivistic system”, the role of a Muslim father is to provide and protect the whole family, which is mostly a function of patriarchal authority figure in the family (Hossain & Juhari, 2015, p. 377). From the family system standpoint, in general, the whole is greater or more than the sum of its individual parts; meaning a system, such as a family, is composed of interdependent parts (Boss, Bryant, & Mancini, 2017). If a part of a system or an individual member of a family changes, considering the importance of the patriarchal position and function of the father for Muslim families, the family may lose its equilibrium creating an atmosphere of tension for the whole system. From the family stress theory perspective, the way families react to a stressful event or the difference between the stress level of individual family members and that of the whole family, determines how functional the family is. With regard to the importance of fatherhood and this position for Muslim and Arab families, including Syrian particularly, it is assumed that the stress level of fathers can influence the functionality of their families. Within the Arab family dynamic, the father is perceived to be an essential member of the overall welfare of the family, meaning severe stressful events or his stress level can threaten “old Islamic perceptions of family harmony and economic stability” (Hossain & Juhari, 2015, p. 377). Family stress theory is the theoretical conceptualization of this research study. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how Syrian refugee fathers experience changes in their family dynamics and their role as father after displacement in the United States. In-depth interviews are utilized to elucidate the experiences of Syrian refugee fathers. The results of the

study are discussed through the framework of family stress theory to describe the impact of the findings and present implications for further research and practice.

Rationale for Qualitative Methods

Creswell (2009) believes that qualitative research is “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). Further, acquiring an in depth description of a phenomenon is the definitive goal of qualitative inquiry (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In this method, the researcher is able to “capture the ‘lived experience’ from the perspectives of those who live it and create meaning from it” (Padgett, 1998, p. 8). The explorative nature of qualitative methodology gives me tools and enough flexibility for this research as it attempts to answer questions about father’s experiences and meaning making processes when they look for a new individual and family identity within a new context. Due to the nature of my research question by which my “initial forays into the topic describe what is going on” (Creswell, 1998, p. 17), it requires an in-depth and rich exploration of the topic. In addition, due to my limited access to the Syrian refugee families, quantitative methods would be difficult for this study. For the purpose of this study, I, as a researcher, will play a role of “*active learner*” in order to see the world from my participants’ view and narrate their stories from their perspectives, not as an “expert” (Creswell, 1998, p. 18).

Statement of the Problem

The numbers of families who have to flee their countries due to civil war, structured violence, or terrorism are increasing. The available literature in this field has focused mainly on individuals’ mental health of survivors and their family members after displacement. Given the different cultural values and gender roles between Syrian refugee families and that of United States as a host country, it was pertinent to conduct a study that explored how forceful

displacement is perceived to affect the Syrian refugee fathers' identity and their families' dynamics and how Syrian refugee fathers perceive this change.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore how Syrian refugee fathers experience changes in their family dynamics and their role as a father after displacement in the United States. The central research question of *how do Syrian refugee fathers experience their family dynamics and identity as a father in the U.S. after displacement* guided this study.

Positionality: The Role of the Researcher

As a researcher, I am from Iran, which neighbors Syria in the Middle East. These two Muslim countries share similar socio-cultural characteristics. Thus, I am more familiar with their culture than other refugee communities in Indianapolis and this enabled me to communicate with them more effectively. Given the strong patriarchal emphasis within Syrian families and traditional sex roles in Syrian culture, and my identity as a male, I have chosen to focus on the father's experience.

As a Muslim family therapist came from the same region with similar religious background, empathically I think I must help my Syrian Muslim brothers and sisters. There is a Hadith or saying from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) saying that it is necessary to help an oppressed believer to obtain his/her rights and not be deserted and left on his/her own. This hadith and many others plus some verses of Quran have inspired me to utilize my specialty to help them and also affected my approach to this topic. The commands of helping the oppressed in the Quran are mentioned many times, for example, "Those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right, for no cause, except that they say: 'our Lord is Allah.' Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another? There would surely have been pulled

down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure. Allah will certainly aid those who aid his (cause) for verily Allah is full of strength and able to enforce His Will.” (Quran 22:40).

Though I share many insider characteristics with this population, I am also an outsider in several ways. For instance, I am different from this population because of an important political reason. When Arab Spring began on 17th December 2010 in Tunisia, a revolutionary wave of demonstration and protests and civil war happened in the Middle East (West of Asia)) and North Africa. Most of the revolutions have been either inchoate or confiscated mostly by those left from the previous regimes. Syria and Yemen are the two main countries in which civil war still continue and have made many individuals and families to flee the country. Iran is supporting the Bashar Al-Assad, the current president of Syria, to remain in power due to many political and logistical reasons. For those Syrian refugee fathers who are against Bashar Al-Assad, having an Iranian student asking them to participate in a research project may create some questions or make them skeptical or hesitant. In addition, a large majority of Syrians are Sunni Muslim and Christian. The researcher is a Shia Muslim and different from Syrians from such viewpoint. Thus, these issues may make it difficult to build rapport or a trustful relationship that is required before conducting any research that involves human subjects. I took several steps to attend to these potential barriers that are described in the following section. Further, it is also important to describe my relationship with other important contributors to my study. The interpreters I had developed relationships with were from Iraq and came to the U.S. under refugee circumstances. Iraq and Syria both are Arabic countries and have some sociopolitical challenges in common; the two countries had been attacked and occupied partially by ISIS. Therefore, it was very important

to recognize the ways in which I was both similar to and different from both the participants and the interpreters who were assisting me with the research process.

Outline of Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters along with an appendix section. This first chapter provides an introduction about refugees across the world and Syrian refugee families, the rationale for using qualitative research methods, statement of the problem, the purpose and research question, and a discussion of my positionality: the role and background of the researcher. Chapter two presents a comprehensive review of the literature. Chapter three describes the research methods including recruitment and sample size, data collection, analysis of data, and validation strategies used to increase the rigor of the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings from the study situated to highlight participants' perspectives and the themes that emerged from analysis. Chapter five, the final chapter, discusses the results of the study through the framework of family stress theory, as well as the implications, future research, limitations of the study, and lessons learned. Following references, there is an appendix section that includes copies of the internal review board approvals from Virginia Tech, informed consent forms, interview guide, tables, and figures.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

In this chapter, I discuss current literature on refugee families and individuals from two main perspectives. It can be argued that the problems and consequences of forced displacement can be categorized into two main groups: (a) mental health or psychological problems and their treatment in family members, and (b) family issues such as dysfunctional relations, and changes in interaction, dynamics, and structure of the families. Particular focus on studies related to family dynamics and process in refugee families are covered in the family issues. Building on previous research, gaps in family issues are highlighted and I emphasize how the proposed research study can contribute to an understanding of fatherhood and its cultural diversity. I conclude the chapter by presenting the theoretical frameworks that guided my research study.

Mental Health Issues

Witnessing the death of a family member may create horrific circumstances in which one is subject to severe grief. This is a situation to which many refugees are exposed multiple times (Momartin, Silove, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 2004). Consequently, in comparison to the general population, it is very likely that these families and individuals develop various kind of dysfunctional and psychological problems (Colucci, Minas, Szwarc, Guerra, & Paxton, 2015; Knipscheer, Sleijpen, Mooren, ter Heide, & van der Aa, 2015). The immigrants and refugees' experiences in each levels of pre-migration, migration, and post-migration, as discussed earlier, influence their mental health (Cardoso & Lane, 2016). Such experiences can be severely traumatic in which individuals and families expose to war, political violence, and natural disaster in their homeland or rape, murder, and extended residing in refugee camps (Pumariege, Rothe, & Pumariege, 2005). Further, there are numerus stressor related to obtaining a new social status and

acculturation process, or discrimination and poverty after arriving in the host country, post-migration phase, that influence refugees mental health (Pumariege et al., 2005). There is growing attention on how these stressors affect the immigrants and refugees mental health.

Several studies have focused on refugees' physical or psychiatric symptoms such as the rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety. Paxton, Smith, Win, Mulholland, and Hood (2011) reviewed studies of refugee children and adolescents who reported varying degrees of mental health symptoms and problems. The prevalence figures for PTSD ranges from 3 to 94%, for depression or depressive symptoms 3 to 47%, and for anxiety 3 to 95% (Cheung, 1994; Favaro, Maiorani, Colombo, & Santonastaso, 1999; Momartin et al., 2004; Weine, Vojvoda, Becker, & McGlashan, 1998). These studies also showed varied results regarding the effect of duration of stay in host countries and immigration status on healing from mental health problems such as PTSD, depression, or anxiety (Cheung, 1994; Knipscheer, Sleijpen, Mooren, ter Heide, & van der Aa, 2015; Raghavan, et al.'s, 2013). Some factors such as support groups or family support should be applied for interpreting these findings. In addition, such differences in various studies could be referred to cultural or situational differences and services in host countries and various psychosocial experiences refugees undergo before obtaining any legal status.

Moreover, a few studies showed that it is not uncommon for PTSD to co-occur with depression among refugees (Mollica et al. 1999; Momartin, Silove, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 2004). Additionally, refugees with severe traumatization may show high rates of suicidal tendencies and suicide attempts (Altunoz, Nunez, & Calliess, 2016), illustrating the comorbidity of PTSD and depression among refugees.

There has also been work to investigate the influence and effectiveness of various therapeutic interventions on refugees who experienced crises and trauma (Raghavan, Rosenfeld, Rasmussen, & Keller, 2013; Slobodin & Jong, 2015; van Wyk & Schweitzer, 2014). Further, many studies investigated and showed the importance and effects of multiple-family groups or engagement of families in the treatment and process of therapy as well as increasing access to mental health services for young refugees and refugees with PTSD (Colucci et al., 2015; Weine et al., 2008; Weine et al., 2003;).

In sum, most studies investigating mental health among refugees focus on the prevalence of PTSD, depression, anxiety, or their comorbidity, along with the effectiveness of different therapeutic models in treating those disorders. In spite of our knowledge about mental health disorder among refugees, their prevalence, and possible treatment, scholars have not investigated adequately refugees' mental health struggles and challenges systematically. From a family system and family stress perspectives, I believe that gaining knowledge about refugees' mental health status or prevalence of mental disorders among them is helpful when we can incorporate it into our knowledge regarding their family challenges and dysfunctionalities caused by traumatic experiences in their land and forced dislocation. Having such a multi-dimensional perspective help researchers and clinicians to understand this population in a comprehensive way. The field of family therapy has only a few recent articles on this topic (Ballard, Wieling, & Forgatch, 2017; Gangamma & Shipman, 2017; Gangamma, 2017; Patterson, Abu-Hassan, Vakili, & King, 2017; Utrzan & Northwood, 2017), and I hope I can contribute to the literature by adding more knowledge from more family-side-of-the-issue. Manjushree and Levin (2016) point out, family therapy in a global humanitarian context such as working with families, women, and children of refugees is a new world of endeavor to help the most vulnerable people in the world.

Family Issues

Refugee families who have been forcibly displaced have to face multiple losses such as moving out of their homeland, potential loss of significant family member(s), losing cultural and social identity and status, and many other resources that may disrupt “life cycle patterns of family interactions” (Mock, 1998, p. 348). They may also have to adapt the rules and norms to which they have become accustomed for a long time. In order to recover and adjust to the normal life, refugee families need to reacquire their own unique capabilities. Family dynamic, structure, and interactional patterns are the contexts wherein families shape themselves to function in a desirable way. Any changes in the structure or interactional patterns can be perceived as dysfunctional and a source of stress for the family, such as change in gender roles, or a positive change which can help the family to adjust effectively in their new environment. Such a change in structure of a family in which, for example, a child translates for his/her parents in various social encounters might be a positive reason for parents to be proud of their child. Moreover, refugee families may have many new prospects by coming to the host country, however, it can cause intergenerational tension. Young members of the families may have some dreams by immigrating to the host country and see this opportunity as a way to adopt a new life style which is against the family and older generations’ wills and heritage. In this section, generally I will reflect on a few studies on refugees, characterizing refugee fathers’ experiences and challenges in a new country, refugee parents and children challenges in the host countries causing intergenerational tension, and changes in the refugee family dynamics after the forced dislocation.

Fatherhood. Understanding the cultural significance of fatherhood, and the intersection of culture, the fathering role, and status as a refugee, is essential for the purpose of this study.

Thus, the next section provides a focused review of the fathering literature in the United States as compared to Arab societies, with a focus on Syria.

Fathering in the United States. At the beginning of the 20th century, fathers were expected to be a bridge between home and society and provide their families. However, expectations of fathers have changed over time, requiring more involvement in the lives of their partners and children, and increased emotional and physical support (Atkinson & Blackwelder, 1993). A significant shift in perception of fatherhood as a role of the patriarch has happened attributing to sociocultural context and socioeconomic factors that shape the modern conceptualization of fatherhood (Stubley & Rojas, 2015; Trahan & Cheung, 2018).

This contemporary style of fatherhood has started to emerge in the 1970s. “Androgynous fatherhood” is a notion used by Rotundo (1985) to describe this style of American fatherhood. As he describes, “a good father is an active participant in the details of day-to-day child care. He involves himself in a more expressive and intimate way with his children, and he plays a larger part in the socialization process” (Rotundo, 1985, p. 17). Rotundo (1985) further states that “a good father avoids sex-typing his children and makes as little distinction as possible between sons and daughters” (p. 17). He believes that the shifting expectations of fathers is a reaction to the reshaping and rethinking of sex roles in the United States since 1970 which is a reflection of a profound change in American values. The American society expects fathers to be more involved in their children lives as well as housework, as someone who shares a second shift with his spouse (Popenoe, 2009). By women’s increased presence in the labor force and the women’s movement in the 1970s, the differences between sexes were minimized and new set of ideals for manhood and womanhood has been created.

McFadden and Tamis-Lemonda (2013) believe that in order to understand fatherhood in the United States, three overlapping sociocultural forces should be considered. First, shared ideals, on which America was established, that is the values of freedom and equality. How citizens see the fatherhood and fathering role is the American ideal of equality, and freedom in this context means that “fathers and families have choices about the roles and responsibilities men have in family life” (p. 251). Second, economic opportunities, meaning within the United States free market economy, men earn the financial benefits by life style, employment, and educational opportunities. It means that majority of men, who are able to work, actively involved in labor market and support and provide their children and families economically (McFadden & Tamis-Lemonda, 2013). Third, cultural diversity. The United States has a free market economy and it has attracted many immigrants to this country; consequently, American fathers have very diverse backgrounds with different traditions and cultures. According to the first force, fathers in the United States have enough freedom and the right to act and live accordance to their belief systems and it makes this country diverse (McFadden & Tamis-Lemonda, 2013).

As a result of these factors, current American ideology expects men and women to share the time they devoted to outside employment, the care of children, and chores inside the household. If couples cannot share or do not reach to an agreement over sharing the roles, they are socially expected to negotiate and agree on a system or plan that suits the needs of family members in its best way (McFadden & Tamis-Lemonda, 2013).

Fathering in Arab Societies. In comparison to numerous studies on fathering conducted since 1970s in major Arab countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia Arab, or Kuwait, there is a dearth of scholarship focused on Syrian fathering. In addition, many of these studies and research that discuss fathers rely on child and mother perceptions of parental behavior or family processes

rather than on father report (Ahmed, 2013). Thus, the focus of this brief review will be on the general perception of fathering and fatherhood in Arab world.

Arab societies refer to the Arabic speaking people consisting 22 countries with a total population of 320 million people (Ahmed, 2013). The family is the cornerstone of Arab culture and, with regard to age and gender roles, is patriarchal and pyramidically hierarchal (Abudabbeh, 2005), within which men are the authorities. According to Sanders (1986), children learn from early age that men are superior to women and questioning of superiors' decisions or judgments is not appropriate. The father is described as authoritarian and stern, seen in awe and respect. In his review of fathering research in the Arab world, Ahmed (2013) found that studies on perception of fathers with a focus on parenting styles show that an important part of the Arab fathers' role is the position of authority figure.

Families in Arab countries face many difficulties that may affect the father's role in different ways. Ahmed (2013) describes that "the present generation of Arab fathers is often unable to fulfil its traditional fathering roles of educating their children and providing for children's needs" (p. 134) due to huge rate of emigration to other countries in order to maintain a job and support their family. While emigration has led to improvement of their socioeconomic status, father are not enough available for their children to play the traditionally-expected fathering roles and it had created some cultural and social problems for them.

Moreover, the role of fathers in urban families may be more flexible than rural Arab fathers (Ahmed, 2013) due to a few reasons. As mentioned above, huge number of Arab men, an estimate of ten million, mostly from urban areas, immigrate across Arab world for finding jobs (Ahmed, 2013), exposing them to different cultural, educational, social, and life style opportunities. Further, these fathers are not enough available for their children. Over mentioned

factor can lead to flexibility of urban families. In particular, Ahmed (2013), based on anecdotal evidence, believes that in countries such as Egypt and Lebanon, fathers are becoming more flexible than fathers in countries such as Iraq, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Libya, the Sudan, or Syria.

Given the differences that exist between the role of fathers in the Arab world and in the United States, it is likely that Syrian fathers may experience challenges in being a father in the United States after forced displacement. In combination with evidence of increased prevalence of several mental health issues (Raghavan, et al., 2013; Slobodin & Jong. 2015; van Wyk & Schweitzer, 2014) and the changes to family life commonly experienced by refugees (Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009; Titzmann & Michel, 2013) understanding the experiences of Syrian fathers is important for various reasons. It helps not only systemic therapist but also other mental health professionals to synthesize refugee fathers' mental health status and their family life issues, in context of their culture, in order to understand and help them effectively. It also help social service providers, law makers, or legal authorities to wear a multi-dimensional lens when providing social or judicial services to refugee families.

Refugee Fathers. Among studies inclusively focused on refugee families, there are very few researches reflected on refugee men and fathers. For example, refugee fathers' experience of role changes and its implications for health services (Riggs et al., 2016), the uniqueness of the difficult situation of refugee fathers (Papadopoulos & Gionakis, 2018), the meaning of fatherhood and challenges that refugee fathers face in host countries (Este & Tachble, 2013; Este & Tachble 2009), the quantity and quality of refugee fathers' involvement in their families and the impact of posttraumatic stress on it (Ee, Sleijpen, Kleber, & Jongmans, 2013), or challenges of cultural adjustment and raising children for Refugee fathers (Rezania, 2015).

Riggs et al.(2016) explored the experiences of Afghan fathers in promoting the health and well-being of their families in absence of their extended families. In their study, they found that Afghan fathers embracing and playing an important role in supporting their pregnant wives, such as accompanying them for the prenatal and postnatal care or even during the labor. Fathers in this study reported that taking care of a pregnant woman or attending the wife's labor might be considered dishonorable or shameful for men and they are not culturally expected to provide such support they do in Australia if they were in Afghanistan. Displacement, isolation, and being far away from extended families lead fathers to play different roles; some even can be against their cultural norms. Despite the fact that these fathers were positive about their interactions with health care and their new roles, Riggs et al (2016) realized that the provided care for this population was not really associated with the fathers' stresses regarding their adjustment to their new roles as well as issues related to settlement; requiring health professionals to pay more attention to the fathers' stressors.

In a case study, Papadopoulos and Gionakis (2018) worked with two fathers in order to not only draw attention to the specific predicaments refugee fathers face, but also illustrating their synergic approach to working with refugee fathers. While refugee fathers' distress and trauma are not overlooked, they believed that their synergic approach helps refugee fathers to identify their new and old strengths and resiliencies, helping them to more focus on their new positive experiences obtained by exposure to adversity in the host countries. They believed that "by collaborating synergically with the refugee fathers' strengths, in the context of their trauma, it is possible to heal their traumatic experiences and to activate their potential to the maximum." (Papadopoulos and Gionakis, 2018, p. 1)

Shimoni, Este, and Clark (2003) explored refugee fathers' family engagement from four different cultures in Canada. They could not see any intense risk of disengagement although refugee fathers were struggling with stress of acculturation, learning a new language, and employment. For example, one of their most important implications was related to their unemployment and underemployment which could be taken care of by helping fathers to learn English or providing other ways to enhance their chance of suitable employment.

Rezania (2015) also explored the challenges of refugee fathers in Canada and identified numerous problems they face including: role reversal in marital system, lack of extended family support, ignorance of fathers' ability in providing child care, marital issues, and parenting in regard to their new different sociocultural environment. Briefly, he tried to show how the Canadian government's services and policies can be of help to refugee fathers and their families in regard to the abovementioned challenges they face, with a wide glance to their limitations.

Language Brokering. Children can acculturate quicker than their parents through integrating into the educational system and it can create tensions among them, or the opposite, make them closer to each other and parents to be proud of their children (Deng & Marlowe, 2013). The intergenerational tension creates acculturative dissonance or acculturation gap, which is one of the main reasons language brokering occurs in families. Language brokering is the process in which parents with poor host language skills rely on their children to translate for them (Titzmann & Michel, 2013). For instance, a father may rely on his child to communicate to potential employers while searching for a new job. In some cases, for example, when refugee families do not have enough ethnic support network, greater intension or conflict is highly expected to occur (Dorner, Orellana, & Jiménez, 2008). Another example of this is my experience with my participants while I initiated to stablish rapport. One of the fathers I worked

with had six daughters from 6 to 25 year of old. Before asking my translators to join me for interview, I joined the family, few times, and communicate with the father through his two younger and the oldest daughter. Among a few first questions they asked me were if I can find a job for their father or if I know an 'old, experienced' physician who can be a primary care provider for one of their ill sisters.

Titzmann and Michel (2013) describe language brokering as the result of two processes: family dynamics and acculturation-related changes. Studies show that children who have a stronger child-parent relationship, or emotionally connected to their parents are more willing to engage in language brokering than those with poor parent-child relationship and see this work "as an intra-familial process of sharing chores and tasks that need to be done" (Titzmann & Michel, 2013, p. 76). There are also some contradictory studies in which findings show that role reversal (particularly language brokering) among immigrant families is associated with high level of family conflict (Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009). However, Trickett and Jones (2007) noted that youth who are engaged in cultural brokering, in which it may require some role reversal, experience a better family adjustment to their environment while the family can maintain their family satisfaction.

In another study, Hynie, Guruge, and Shakya (2012) explored family relationships in Afghan, Karen and Sudanese refugee youth aged 16 to 24 in Toronto through focus groups. Their findings showed that refugee youth are involved in many responsibilities such as language brokering, service navigation, or supporting their families financially and emotionally, while they were pursuing education and employment. Many of the youth experienced role reversal in the absence of a parent. Their result indicated that they play an important role of "resettlement champions" for their families (Hynie, et al., 2012, p. 24) that could increase the level of well-

being in their families. An interesting point in their study was the fact that these changes were not necessarily conflict provoking. Some factors such as low levels of family support or lack of time together are the contributing factors to family conflict (Hynie, et al., 2012).

In order to understand how role reversal and language brokering influence family dynamics, Deng and Marlowe (2013) explored the family dynamics of South Sudanese refugee parents in New Zealand. In their study, they found that children often acquire language and the culture of the host country faster than their parent and it may place them in the role of language broker, as it is discussed earlier, or an interpreter that can lead to role reversal and influence the family dynamics (Birman, 2006). They believe that supporting parents to learn English can help improve family dynamics (Deng & Marlowe, 2013). The other finding was related to the parents' concerns regarding South Sudanese culture and how they expect their children to maintain this heritage. They believe that "as children develop familiarity with the dominant culture and embrace some of the values that are in opposition to their parents' traditional values, intergenerational tensions may occur." (Deng & Marlowe, 2013, p. 426).

Role Reversal. As discussed earlier, there are also some studies that show role reversal among families of refugees and immigrants is associated with high level of family conflict (Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009). Language brokering in refugee families may lead to disruption of parental authority and role dissonance. When adolescents can speak and understand the host country language better than their parents, they may be allowed to have access to information such as their parents' bank accounts, insurance, or medical information (Dorner, et al., 2008), that may not be appropriate for their age. It means that adolescents' support is not limited just to translation but taking other responsibilities to help their parents and the whole family. As a result, parents may have to depend on their children to survive. This process creates a situation

wherein adolescents have to provide emotional and instrumental supports for their parents or they are assigned roles in the family normally reserved for adults; this involvement is called parentification (Titzmann & Michel, 2013). Parentification can change adolescents' status or position in their families and "undermine the traditional power relationship between parents and children and increases parental independence on their children" (Trickett & Jones, 2007, p. 143).

In order to understand how role reversal can influence families negatively, a focus group study was conducted on Arabic speaking migrant families in Melbourne, Australia. Renzaho, McCabe and Sainbury (2011) investigated parenting, role reversals, practices related to the family dynamics, and cultural values to see how their participants negotiate them in their new environment. They found that their participants from Sudan, Iraq, and Lebanon have a collectivist culture wherein state interference in parenting is less than the individualistic culture of Australia and experience difficulties with raising children. This is quite similar to the findings of other studies. However, their findings suggested two more issues: "parents' fear of state intervention to separate the family, affects their perceived ability to enact boundaries for their children... and the role of the youth in exerting their agency." (Renzaho et al., 2011, p. 421). They found that the youth know their parents perceive the state intervention as a threat and use their parents fear to control the parent-child relationship and it influences their family dynamics (Renzaho et al., 2011). They believe that because children are able to learn the language and customs of a new culture before their parents such an intergenerational tension is anticipated.

Cheng Koh, Liamputtong, & Walker (2013) interviewed 10 Burmese refugee young women to investigate how they experience parental expectations before and after displacement. Their results indicated that the participants experienced changes in parental expectations after the resettlement that led to role reduction and expansion; causing changes in family dynamics.

Moreover, Cheng Koh, et al (2013) asked their participants if the resettlement influence the parent-child relationship. Their findings indicated that some changes after the displacement such as role reversal, for example language brokering, led to temporary changes in family dynamics, caused “intergenerational acculturation conflict” in their families (Cheng Koh, et al., 2013, p. 297).

Working with refugee families and effectively conceptualizing their struggles requires a systemic approach– that is, a perspective in which all members of the family are involved in the process of healing. Such a viewpoint helps to illustrate the fact that families see the consequences of war through a family lens (Weine, Vojvoda, Hartman, & Hyman, 1997). The family is an identity in some cultures, which consider it as the most important social institution (Weine et al., 2004); thus, the well-being of members depends on the family. Recent scholarship has suggested that addressing family issues in therapy could be effective for family members and individuals to heal from psychological distress (Colucci, et al., 2015, Manjushree & Levin, 2016). Mendenhall and Berge (2010) believe that the family plays an important role for the survivors of trauma in a recovery process. Thus, not only is the family at center and a core for some cultures, but it can also be an important social institution for refugees during the crisis (Daneshpour, 2017; Weine et al., 2008).

Family scholars and clinicians should investigate different socio-cultural aspects of refugee families such as their experiences as they go through all the aforementioned difficulties and the ways these struggles influence family dynamics and interactional patterns of refugee families. Therefore, the purpose of my study is to investigate the Syrian fathers’ experiences of displacement and changes that might take place in their role or identity as a father and their family dynamics. I have chosen Syrian refugee families because, according to the UNHCR

(2016), Syria is experiencing the most recent refugee crises in the world and the number of asylum seekers and refugees from Syria has been increasing from 2011 to the present.

Consequently, as it is discussed briefly in the literature review, there is not enough research or study on Syrian refugees focusing on their family dynamics and on fathers particularly. In addition, many studies on other refugee populations or nationalities such as Somali, Congolese, Karan, Iraqi, and etc. that worked on family dynamics interviewed either both parents or youth and adult children. This study contributes to the burgeoning literature on refugee families by focusing on fathers and fatherhood to explore the unique experience of forced displacement and its influence on family dynamics through the eyes of fathers.

Gaps in the Literature

The literature in the sphere of family issues, which is the main focus of my study, largely emphasized language brokering and role reversal in/between the parental system and sub-system of children after displacement. While, it is important to acknowledge how fathers perceive their role after displacement. It is also important to know how other factors such as extended family and stress of being isolated from it affects this role and the perception of it, yet this process is not reflected in the research as often. This may be related to the lack of attention to parental system and meaning of fatherhood; mainly due to feminization of refugees in the last couple of decades.

Theoretical Orientation

Family Stress Theory

Given the challenges refugee families face, family stress theory is a theoretical perspective that provides a more focused conceptual framework to understand the experiences of these families. In an attempt to further contextualize, less linear, how families respond to stress,

and with more focus on meaning and perception, Boss, Bryant, and Mancini (2017) proposed the contextual model of family stress. Families are part of a larger environment and not living in vacuum, meaning families' culture, genetics, place in the developmental life cycle, and familial structure, values, and beliefs strongly influence families (Boss et al., 2017). These factors affect the stressors, the family resources, and the meaning family attach to the event and determine whether a stressor will lead to coping or precipitate a crisis (the outcome) for any given family. Boss categorized these factors into two groups: (a) the external context, of which the family has little or no control, and (b) the internal context, over which the family has control and is capable of modifying (Boss et al., 2017).

The contextual model in family stress theory is relevant to the refugee families and their circumstances in the United States. The family' external context influence the family's internal context and they all together make a network of interactions between the dimensions. Within the external context, historical context, Syrian families have experienced war and political terrorism started in 2011 when Salafi jihadist terrorist organization, called themselves 'Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham' (ISIS or Daesh), started to occupy different parts of Syria. Syrian culture, in cultural context, defines the rules for Syrian families for problem solving and coping with the stress caused by war and terrorism regardless not living in Syria. Due to war in Syria, the Syrian economic has been weakened and influenced the family's economics in a way that make it impossible for them to live in their country. From developmental standpoint in external context, every single family members of Syrian refugees have been influenced by war and displacement, individually and collectively, in their own life cycle and it will affect them through the rest of their life. Finally, hereditary context indicates how Syrian families are resilient under the

pressure and also the experience of ongoing dislocation influences their recourses or abilities for having more resiliency in coping with stress.

Within the internal context, on which the Syrian families do have control, form and function of the family's structure will be questioned. This factor or dimension of Syrian families is the main focus of this study that the researcher eagers to know, using a more systemic perspective, how the Syrian families' structure, their boundaries, role assignments, membership, and family rules, looked like before dislocation and how it has been influenced by the war and displacement (the stressors). In order to provide a complete description of structural component within internal context and see how Syrian refugee fathers can be conceptualized in this context, the ABC-X model provides readers with more explanation. According to Hill (1958), there are reasons some families thrive in response to stressors whereas other families struggle. Within stress theory, the support that families receive and the meaning they assign to the stressful event are the two moderating variables explaining the differences in how families respond to a stressful event and determine whether a crisis will follow (Sullivan, 2015). Hill proposed and defined the ABC-X family crisis framework to focus on stressful life events, and also bridge the family sociologists' work to that of practitioners (Boss et al., 2017). In this model, A (the stressor or provoking event) interacts with B (the family's resources or strengths), which in turn interact with C (the meaning or definition attached to the event by the family), then produces X (the outcome: coping or crisis). Stressors are the life events of sufficient magnitude to cause change in the family system. Stress is not inherent in the event itself, "but rather is conceptualized as a function of the response of the distressed family to the stressor and refers to the residue of tensions generated by the stressor which remain unmanaged" and crisis refers to "the amount of

incapacitated-ness or disorganization in the family where resources are inadequate.” (McCubbin, Joy, Cauble, Comeau, Patterson, & Needle, 1980, p. 857).

Applied to Syrian refugee families, war, terrorism, and forced displacement to the United States are toxic, stressful events with enough significant magnitude that provoke change in the Syrian family system (the A factor). Further, “the *type* of stressor event influences the *degree* of stress experienced.” (Boss et al., 2017, p. 36). The stressors can be categorized by source (internal or external), type (normative, developmental, predictable or catastrophic, situational, unexpected), duration (chronic or acute), and density (cumulative or isolated). Thus, the experience of Syrian refugee fathers can be characterized by this classification of stressors events and situation in order to help the researcher to understand the fathers’ experience of war and dislocation. The Syrian refugee family resources include the individual, familial, and community strengths at the time of stress or crisis (the B factor). Relationship skills, the spirit of cooperation in the family, network and social support, education, or resilience (Boss et al., 2017) are the resources that Syrian families might have at the time of stress. The Syrian fathers’ perception of war and forced dislocation and its influence on their family’s dynamics is an important factor indicating how they think or view what they experience (the C factor). By focusing on social construction of meaning or perception of Syrian fathers, the researcher hopes to capture both cognitive and affective process of family stress management (Boss et al., 2017). If family stress results in crisis, it may lead to a deviation in the system or equilibrium and perceived overwhelming, a severe pressure on individual or the system, or an acute change in the family system making it immobilized or incapacitated (the X factor). The family might not be able to function as before, at least for a time, causing many changes and deviations in family dynamics. (Boss et al., 2017).

Another dimension in internal context of the contextual model of family stress is psychological context. The potential application of psychological context for the stress of Syrian refugee families is when their perception, definition, or assessment of displacement is questioned. The way Syrian fathers describe their perception of displacement and its influence on their family dynamics determine or indicate their families' ability to problem solving strengths and mobilize defense mechanism (Boss et al., 2017). Further, the Syrian refugee families' values and beliefs (philosophical context) regarding the displacement and its effect on their family dynamics (structural context) is within the scope of researcher's curiosity. The researcher wants to know how Syrian families' values and beliefs form and shape their perception of their displacement and its influence on their family dynamics in order to cope or precipitate a crisis.

The family external and internal contexts in family stress theory are complementary and consistent with family systems theory in which the family is viewed and understand in a network of relationships and environmental factors. Particularly, the structural component of internal context is relevant to family system theory in which the dynamics of the Syrian families' will be of focus. Therefore, family systems theory is also utilized as a complementary theory, providing the researcher with more tools to conceptualize Syrian refugee fathers' experiences of forceful displacement.

Family Systems Theory

Family Systems Theory originally emerged from General Systems Theory (Becvar & Becvar, 2009). Family systems theory assumes that "the human is a product of evolution", and there is natural process that regulate human behavior and behaviors of other living existence in a same manner (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 3). General systems theory holds that all parts of a system are interconnected, that systems can be understood as a whole, and that all systems affect

themselves through environmental feedback (Bertalanffy, 1968; Mead, 1934; Becvar & Becvar, 2009). Family members' interactions have patterns that are predictable and maintain a family's equilibrium, or "homeostasis". I believe such interactions are influenced by environmental factors such as war or structural violence, leading the loss of equilibrium. Families must adapt to each other's behaviors to maintain homeostasis, and they often do this by absorbing anger and anxiety in individual members of the family system (Bowen, 1966).

The principles of family systems theory include the existence of boundaries in families; boundaries between family members serve to include or exclude elements of the system. Boundaries also shape subsystems or alliances in the family. Within these subsystems, each family member has a role that helps maintain the functionality of the system. Certainly, refugee families are vulnerable systems, which might lose their functionality by mixing the roles, and changing members' positions and boundaries in the family. Family systems theory understands families as having unspoken family rules that shape behavior. These rules are repetitive and mostly implicit (Becvar & Becvar, 2009). Bowen (1966) argued that individuals could not be understood in isolation, and that the family system must be understood in order to understand its individual members. A family systems theorist would further hold that the family systems change as it moves through the family life cycle (Bowen & Kerr, 1988). The family systems concepts of family dynamics, structure, and interactional patterns will be explored through the experiences of Syrian refugee fathers. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, family systems theory and family stress theory provided guidance for developing questions to explore the experiences of Syrian refugee fathers in the United States and will serve to inform sensitizing concepts for interpreting the findings and discussion.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Qualitative, in-depth individual interview is employed for this study. Participants included 8 fathers from Syria, dependent upon data saturation. Qualitative research is “a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 4) and is intended to “capture the ‘lived experience’ from the perspectives of those who live it and create meaning from it” (Padgett, 1998, p. 8). As this study attempted to answer questions about people’s experiences and meaning making processes—specifically, refugee fathers’ understanding and experience of their lives in a new country and their family dynamics—I believe that the explorative nature of qualitative research is appropriate for this study.

Research Design

Sampling and Recruitment. There is no specific recommendation for sample size for most qualitative methods (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). Given the purpose of the study and the intent to gather rich, in-depth data, I recruited eight Syrian refugee fathers who were forcibly displaced for participation in my study. I continued to recruit more participants, if needed, until saturation was reached. However, since saturation can reflect the quality or depth of data, I committed to the quality rather than the quantity; that contradicts the advantage of large sample sizes (Roy et al., 2015).

I used several recruit strategies to reach Syrian fathers to inform them about the study. I talked with Refugee and Immigrant Services at Catholic Charities Indianapolis, a non-profit organization that serves refugee families in Indianapolis, Indiana. The center provided me with a few Syrian families’ contacts information. Before giving me the contacts, one of the staffs talked

with families and described the purpose of my study to convince and persuade them for participation. Then I started to contact and meet them. I met a few fathers at least once in order to get to know each other and built a trustful relationship. My first experience of meeting a Syrian refugee father was when I met a father at his house. He offered me Arabic coffee which is very caffeinated and if one has not gotten used to it already, it can make them highly sick. I was offered three cups of coffee during the whole two hours meeting with a Syrian refugee father and I drank all of them; this meeting was not an interview but one in which I tried to take an opportunity to know him and he knows me and built a relationship. A few hours later, I became over caffeinated and severely sick to the extent that I needed to go to the emergency room. One of the reasons I did not reject the cups of coffee was my intention to build rapport and establish a friendly trustful relationship with my first participants— as it was my first time to talk with a Syrian refugee father. I should not drink the coffee with my potential participants and make myself severely sick just because I wanted to establish rapport. Instead, I could have focused on other aspects such as taking my shoes off when I entered into their house or not shaking hands with the women in the house such as the spouse or daughters.

I also used these potential participants to reach other Syrian fathers, using a snowball strategy for recruitment. In addition, I participated in Friday prayer at local mosques where most of Syrians usually attend to worship, in order to be known for the community and consequently recruit more Syrian fathers. Materials advertising the study were made available in both English and Arabic. The program directors in the mosques were given the materials to distribute and whoever is interested in the study contact me directly or tell the program directors and he contacts me. Where we met depended on my participants' convenience. I met and interviewed all of my participants in their home.

Data Collection Procedures. Before each interview begins, I went over the informed consent form verbally (see Appendices A and B), and described the study, its voluntary nature, privacy and confidentiality principles, the right to withdraw at any time, and the fact that all of the conversations will be audiotaped. In addition, they were offered to have information and referrals for mental health professionals after the session, in case they want to process their experiences further.

All sessions were conducted by an interpreter and me as interviewer. All of the participants in this study spoke in Arabic. I recruited two volunteers who could speak Arabic fluently and committed to help for any translation work. I assured participants that no personal information is collected against their will and that they do not have to talk about anything they feel uncomfortable to share. Every interview was recorded on a digital recording device, and all the translated transcripts were only available to the researcher. Each interview lasted about one or one and a half hour, and each participant received a \$10 gift card for his participation.

Interview schedule. Influenced and inspired by family system theory and family stress theory, this study mainly attempted to address this central question: How Syrian refugee fathers experience their family dynamics in the U.S. after displacement? A semi-structured interview schedule guided the flow of conversation for each interview (See Appendix F). Questions addressed the internal and external contexts of Syrian refugee families (fathers) from family stress theory standpoint in order to understand how fathers experience the forced displacement and its influence on their family life and family dynamics. Through the more structural viewpoint of the internal context, the researcher addressed the following areas systemically: *How was the family life of Syrian refugee fathers look like before moving to the United States? What aspect of their family life has been affected the most after the displacement? How do war and*

coming to the US affect or change their family life? How different do Syrian refugee fathers interact or treat their spouses and children? What changes have they perceived in their family members' interaction after resettling in the US, and how do they perceive and experience these changes? What do they think of their role as Syrian fathers? How do they think about American fathers and their roles? What challenges do they see as being a father in the U.S.? What do they think is the main reason for their family conflict after their dislocation? How do they solve their family conflicts/problems? Is there any challenge in their family life that they think is out of their control and is affecting their family life? How do they make sense out of war and family? (See table 1 for theoretical focus and interview questions). Following the spirit of qualitative research and the notion of the researcher becoming “more than an instrument of data-collection” (Oakley, 1981, p. 48), I followed and ran each interview by listening with enthusiasm and authenticity and worked to create a sense of safety and trust by connecting with the participants.

Table 1

Interview matrix

| Theoretical Focus | Research Questions | Interview Questions |
|--|--|---|
| Family System Theory & Family Stress Theory | 1. How do Syrian refugee fathers who are forcefully displaced in the US define and experience their family dynamics after dislocation? | 1. Family life in Syria 2. Family life in the US 3. War and Family 4. Forced displacement and family |
| Family System Theory | 2. How do Syrian refugee fathers see their family dynamics? | 5. Changes in family dynamics 6. Being a father in the US 7. Fathers' identity and role |
| Family Stress Theory | 3. How do Syrian refugee fathers define and experience war and forced dislocation? | 8. Family resources 9. The meaning of war and dislocation for fathers 10. Fathers' coping/crisis |

Data Analysis. The verbatim transcripts of the interview are the primitive data source for most in-depth interview analysis. The interview data were translated and transcribed by the

interpreters and researcher. The interpreters translated interviews and then reviewed and confirmed each other's translated transcripts. Each line was numbered for easy reference. I included date, time, and location of the interviews. Each interview was assigned a number and participants were given a pseudonym (See table 3).

Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), was the approach I used to analyze the data. One of the beneficial qualities of thematic analysis which, at some points, distinguish it from other forms of qualitative analysis is its flexibility. "Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data." (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). Some steps or phases in thematic analysis are similar to other forms of qualitative analysis and they are not necessarily unique to this method. In general, thematic analysis is about searching across the data, for example interviews, in order to find repeated patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, when the researcher begins to notice and look for patterns of meaning, the process of analysis is started. This process is a "*recursive*" movement between the steps which develops through the time (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86).

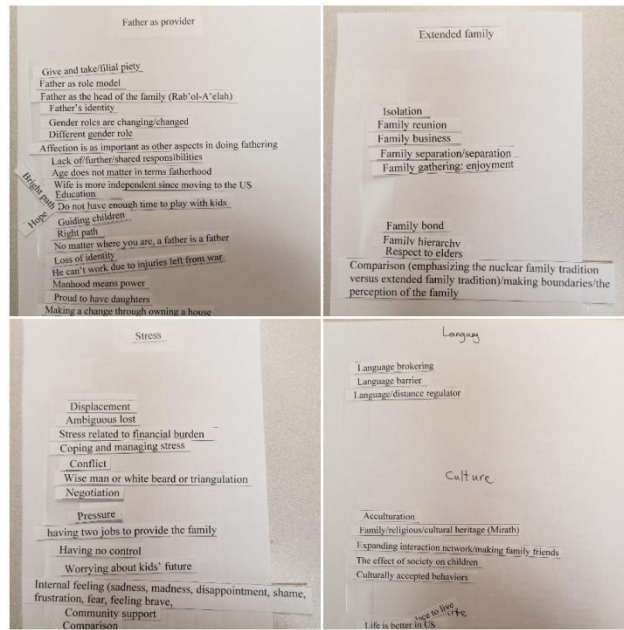
Familiarizing yourself with your data. Becoming familiar with the data is the first step of most qualitative research approaches and includes becoming immersed in the data. I immersed myself in the data to the extent that I was familiar with the depth and breadth of the content. I read the data repeatedly to search for meanings and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During this phase, I began taking notes and marking ideas for coding that I went back to in subsequent steps. After this, I began the more formal coding process which continued to be developed and defined throughout the entire analysis and writing up of the analysis.

Generating initial codes. Through generating initial codes, a feature of the data that is interesting to the researcher may appear (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the most basic element in the data that can be assessed regarding the phenomenon in a meaningful way (Boyatzis, 1998). When working through this process, I organized my data into meaningful groups. My categorizations were both theory-driven in which I code the data with informed by family system theory and family stress theory and what emerged inductively from the participants. I attended to data from each interview in order to identify interesting segments that may form the basis of themes or repeated patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To code my data, I wrote notes on my transcripts and highlighted the potential patterns. Further, after identifying the codes, I matched them with data extracts that illustrated that code.

Searching for themes. At this stage, a broader level of themes was re-focused (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, I started to analyze my codes through which I combined different codes to form overarching themes. In other words, I sorted different codes into potential themes and then collated all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. I used visual representations to sort the different codes into themes (See Figure 1). At this phase, I started to think and consider the relationship between codes, between themes, and between different levels of themes.

Figure 1

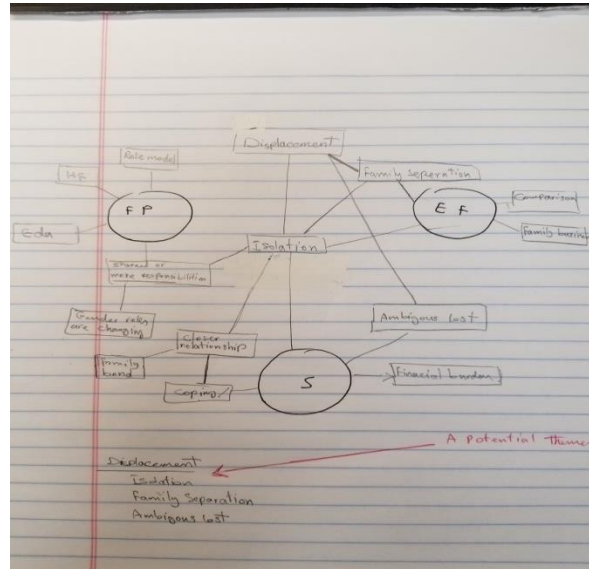
Sorting codes into potential themes through visual representation



Reviewing themes. This step requires the refinement of the themes identified from the previous step. There are two levels of reviewing and refining the candidate themes at this phase (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Reviewing at the level of the coded data extracts, I read all the collated extracts for each theme and then considered whether they appear to form a coherent pattern. After the candidate themes formed a coherent pattern, I moved on to the second level. I refocused on my theme, created a new theme, and found a home for those extracts that did not work in an already-existing theme, or removed them from the analysis. Then I created a “candidate thematic map” (See Figure 2) in which my candidate themes adequately captured the contours of the coded data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 91).

Figure 2

Candidate Thematic Map



Level two is similar to the level one, but in relation to the entire data set. At this level, I considered the validity of individual themes in relation to the entire data, while I tried to see my candidate thematic map accurately reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole. I also coded any additional data within themes that might be overlooked or missed in earlier phases. Creating a thematic map and developing it over the time as I was making connection between the themes helped me to have a better understanding of my findings. I updated my map throughout the analytic process. It helped for navigating and writing the discussion section of this study.

Defining and naming themes. After gaining a satisfactory thematic map of data, I defined and further refined the themes that had been presented for my analysis, and analyzed the data within them. In another word, I identified the nature of what each theme was about and determined what aspect of the data each theme captured. Further, for each theme, I went back to the data extracts in order to organize them into a coherent and consistent account with accompanying narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to fit each theme into the broader overall story about my data, in relation to my research question, I considered the themes themselves and each theme in relation to the others. For further refinement, I also identified the

sub-theme for each theme. In this step I was able to define what my themes were and what they were not with clarity.

Producing the report. This step includes the final analysis and write-up of the report. At this final stage, I attempted to make sense of the complicated story of my data, through developing a final thematic map, in a convincing way that the merit and validity of my analysis be visible to the readers (See Figure 3). This thematic map is built based on my theoretical orientation leading my study. My theoretical orientation, family stress theory and family system theory provided a framework that informed initial coding, the creation of themes, the thematic map, and the discussion of my findings. Therefore, my theoretical frameworks were important tools navigating me through the whole project. As it is apparent in figure 3, a coherent, logical, and concise story emerged within and across themes (See Chapter 5 for an in-depth discussion about this story). I also provide data extracts, with vivid examples (e. g., see Table 2) to illustrate the prevalence of the themes.

Figure 3

Final thematic map

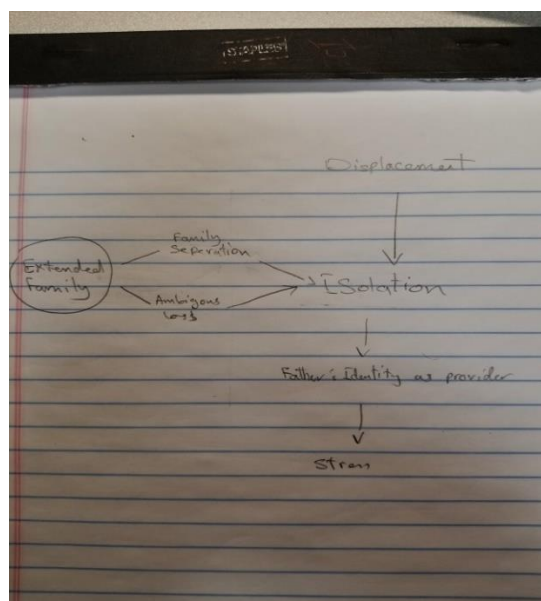


Table 2

Overarching themes and sub-themes with examples of data extracted

| Overarching themes (frequency) | Sub-themes | Examples of data extracted |
|---|--|--|
| Displacement (54) | | We were in one world and now we are in another ... it [displacement] makes me feel like I am in a different universe. |
| Extended Family (29) | | Our life changed completely... after the war, there was no support at all. But before that, I used to help my brother and he did so for me, there was family support. |
| Fathers' Experiences of Isolation (16) | Family separation | War is like somethings that happens and you can't change it or have control on it. I have a sister in Germany, one in Turkey, and one in Saudi Arabia. It just tears apart families. |
| | Ambiguous loss | I was very happy with my family until the war happened... Before the war, we used to get together but when the war happened... I have not seen some of my relatives for about 8 years and do not know if they are still alive or died... |
| Father's identity as a provider (20) | Father as the head of the family (Rab'ol-A'elah) | Father is number one in family in Syria. Any problem happen we go back to the father. Because father has a brain. |
| | Gender roles | In Syria, the man loves to work... women are not supposed to work, so a man works extra hours if needed to provide for his family. |
| | Education is a Path to a Bright Future | They are my children and I am responsible for them. I want them to receive a good education and I am open to whatever needs for them to learn and be knowledgeable. |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Give and Take | Here, once the parents are older they [the children] don't care for them or anything. Just like we turned out like our parents, they will turn out like us. You harvest what you plant. If you plant cucumbers you'll not harvest tomatoes, you'll harvest cucumbers |
|---------------|--|

Reflexivity, Trustworthiness and Rigor

An important component of qualitative research is the researcher's reflexivity or "the ability to examine one's self" (Padgett, 2008, p. 18). In addition to strategies to increase rigor, it is important for the researcher to engage in reflexivity. In order to understand the participants' meanings and explore how they organize their behavior, the researcher needs to learn how to wear the participants' shoes and see the world from their lens (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991). In addition, we can determine the prosperity of a qualitative study when the researcher can fully capture the emergence of emic data, reflecting the participants' feelings, thoughts, and understanding of the studied phenomenon (Cho, 2017). My role as a researcher was to guide participants in a way that they can discover their own way of narration regardless of their theories or hypothesis about their lives. I tried to make sure the participants feel safe and engage in the process, and provide them a sense of control over every session.

An important component of qualitative research is the researcher's reflexivity (Padgett, 2008). The practice of examining myself or being reflexive can be challenging, especially in the face of my biases as a researcher and countertransference issues. Although a researcher cannot be completely neutral, the training I have had in managing therapy sessions helped me as a researcher to be vigilant about how I was interacting with participants in person as well as on paper when transcribed data was being analyzed. As a Muslim and new father who has lived in

the US and Canada for several years, there were a few occasions while interviewing my participants where I was aware that I was different from my participants, politically or as a result from living in North America for a longer period of time. As part of our time together, the fathers occasionally discussed their political point of view or blamed the ongoing politicians and policies in Syria. In such situations, I usually tried to not go into detail and discussed the matter in a more surface level, to avoid expressing a particular opinion that may diverge from the fathers' perspectives. Furthermore, these fathers were in the US around two years and this period of time had exposed them to some challenges. On the other hand, this time might not be an adequate frame for them to realize the difficulties they may face in the future, particularly with their children as they were adjusting to the dominant culture. The fathers were focused on their current struggles and were not thinking about the influence of being Muslim within a Western society wherein the dominant culture is not supportive of their religious background. Such difficulties can pave the path for potential conflicts. However, despite asking direct questions about marital or family conflict after displacement, all of the fathers denied any conflict. These reactions made me skeptical and I began asking myself 'how are not they experiencing any conflict despite all these traumatic experiences or difficulties they have been faced from fleeing their home to settling in a foreign new country?' Concurrently, given my positionality as an immigrant Muslim father, I was keenly attuned to the experiences and struggles of my participants and this undoubtedly shaped how I interacted with the data of this study. These are a few of the biases I experienced throughout this study.

I took two steps to minimize my biases and countertransference issues as a researcher. First, I kept a research journal where I documented my observations, feelings, and thoughts throughout the research process. Sometimes I shared my thoughts with the interpreters to see if

they had the same perspective, or to consider how we can ask the questions differently to get more details. Secondly, I debriefed with my faculty advisor and consulted the social service provider who worked with refugee families. These check-in sessions served various functions for me including processing what transpired during data collection and checking my observations, ultimately helping me to better evaluate the research process.

Trustworthiness is a concept coined by Guba and Lincoln (1985) to substitute the meanings of validity and reliability in qualitative research. The concepts of credibility, transferability, and dependability refer to strategies to strengthen the rigor of the study in different ways. Credibility is a methodological concept that is comparable to establishing internal validity in quantitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). A credible study presents faithful descriptions of people's experiences, which is enhanced when researchers engage in reflexivity and document the subjectivity of their interpretations. Credibility is further established when data is taken back to participants (member checking) to verify that the researcher's interpretation is truly reflective of their experiences. This was achieved through a second, brief, session with my participants in order to further explore participants' experiences, after my initial interpretations. I also debriefed with my chair several times as well as my interpreters after every interview and once after the analysis of data for the purpose of establishing credibility.

Transferability is comparable to applicability in quantitative research and depends on whether or not research findings can be contextualized outside of the study and on whether or not other people find the data applicable to their own experiences (Sandelowski, 1986). I tried to achieve transferability in my study by purposeful sampling, asking fathers to provide rich descriptions, and probing them to expand on their meaning systems. The second brief session I had with fathers also increased the transferability of the findings.

Dependability is comparable to consistency in quantitative research. To maintain a sense of dependability, the research process should be audited (Guba & Lincoln, 1985), which means another researcher could clearly follow my decision trail and arrive at the same or comparable conclusions. I increased the dependability of my study by employing a code-recode strategy a few times and asked my chair advisor to examine my interpretations. In order to make sure dependability is achieved, I documented the research process and decisions that clearly indicated the contributing motivation. I tried to make my biases and assumptions clear, made notes about the contextual factors influencing the data, including how my themes emerged and evolved, and what were my orientations to the data. I also tried write important statements and nonverbal behaviors during the interview sessions as much as I could. I read, reviewed, and checked transcripts multiple times and look for obvious mistakes that were made during transcribing. I compared the data with codes and also wrote my memos about codes and their definitions to make sure there was not any drift in the meaning of the codes.

Ethical Issues. I took various steps to protect the participants' privacy and confidentiality. First, I applied for ethical clearance to this study from Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board. I did not ask the participants about their personal and demographic information; the voluntary nature of their participation and disclosure were highly emphasized during the interviews. In addition, in approaching the participants, I used written informed consent in both Arabic and English with their signature and explained the written informed consent form and before obtaining their permission. The written informed consent included a brief description of the study, identification of the researcher and the sponsoring educational institution, privacy and confidentiality principles, explanations on voluntary participation and ability to withdraw from the study at any time without any adverse consequences, and potential risks and benefits

associated with participating in the study (Padgett, 2008). I informed the fathers that their voices would be audiotaped on a digital recorder and that the recordings are translated and transcribed by the interpreters and researcher exclusively.

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this research study was to understand how Syrian refugee fathers experience changes in their family dynamics and their role as father that occurred after displacement in the United States. The findings presented in this chapter illustrate the connections between the main themes in order to illuminate patterns within the data intended to capture Syrian fathers' experiences.

Participant Demographics

The fathers in this research study ranged in age from 35 to 50. All fathers were White Middle Eastern from Syria. They were all married and had between three and six children. The number of years in the US after displacement ranged from one and a half to two years. A summary of participants' demographics is presented in table 3.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

| Fathers' Pseudonyms | Age | Race | Relationship status | Number of Children and their gender | Number Years in the US |
|---------------------|-----|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Amir | 50 | White (Middle Eastern) | Married | 4 (2b* & 2g**) | 2 |
| Assad | 42 | White (Middle Eastern) | Married | 4 (2b & 2g) | 2 |
| Omar | 46 | White (Middle Eastern) | Married | 4 (3g & 1b) | 2 |
| Abdul | 40 | White (Middle Eastern) | Married | 3 (b) | 1.5 |
| Mohammad | 52 | White (Middle Eastern) | Married | 3 (b) | 2 |
| Othman | 59 | White (Middle Eastern) | Married | 4 (3b & 1g) | 2 |
| Ahmad | 45 | White (Middle Eastern) | Married | 3 (g) | 2 |

| | | | | | |
|-------|----|---------------------------|---------|-------|---|
| Fazil | 45 | White (Middle Eastern) | Married | 6 (g) | 2 |
|-------|----|---------------------------|---------|-------|---|

*boy, **girl

Situating the Interviews

Over five months, I communicated with the Arab and Muslim community across Indianapolis by visiting the mosques, schools, and even participating in a wedding ceremony in order to know the community and also be known to the community. I was also connected with a few refugee organizations to obtain information such as how many Syrian refugee families are living in the Indianapolis area where they usually are resided. After receiving contact information and meeting some Syrians in person in the community, I started to communicate with them on a deeper level to establish rapport. During this recruitment phase, I talked with 15 Syrian fathers, eight of whom agreed to participate in an interview.

During the interviews, which all held in their houses as their home was their first choice in terms of the place of interviews, I was greeted by fathers and asked to sit in the living room as their families were more comfortable in other rooms. Their spouses usually were in the house but stayed at a room or kitchen and not appeared during the interview. However, sometimes their children were coming to see what we were doing and then disappeared. We usually began the discussion with drinking a cup of tea and a casual conversation until they were ready to start the interview. On a few occasions, some fathers offered Arabic coffee during the interview which usually made the whole meeting very relaxed and comfortable. A few of the interviews were concurrent with the holy month of Ramadan¹ so that fathers asked if we can meet and have the interview after the Iftar², which was around 9:30 pm, meaning we had to meet around 10 pm.

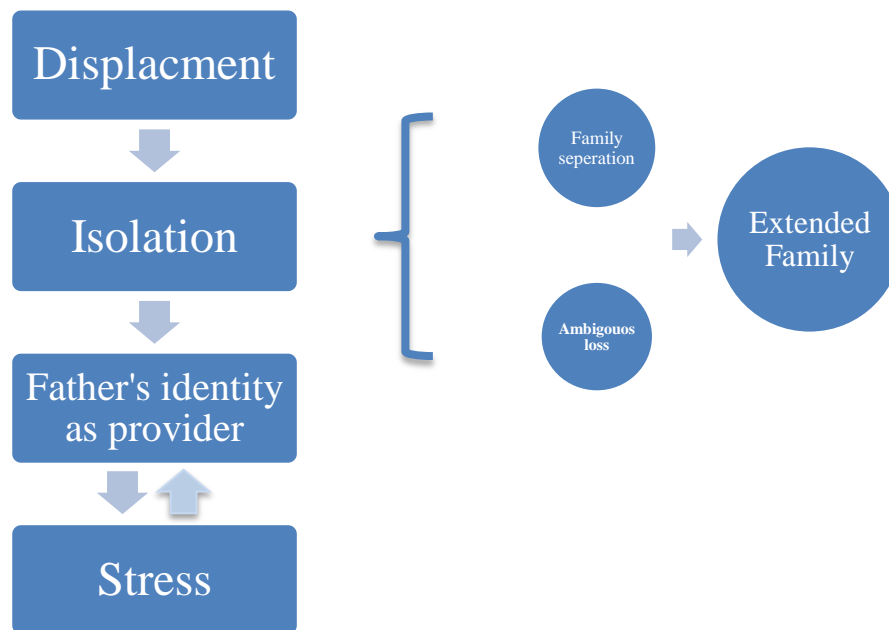
¹. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, and is observed by Muslims worldwide as a month of fasting to commemorate the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad according to Islamic belief.

² Iftar or Fatoor is the evening meal with which Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast at sunset. Muslims break their fast at the time of the call to prayer for the evening prayer. This is their second meal of the day; the daily fast during

Fathers described the impact of war and displacement and how coming into the US affected their families in various ways. They reflected on how they see their identity and role as a father after residing in the US had been changed. In order to provide a rich understanding of the Syrian fathers’ experiences after displacement, excerpts from the individual interviews have been woven together to present a collective representation of this experience. For these Syrian fathers, displacement from their country to the US has resulted in a sense of isolation, manifesting from experiences of ambiguous loss and separation from their extended family. The loss of extended family ties has had a profound influence on the father’s identity as a provider and experiences of stress, as they adjust to their life in the US.

Figure 4

Representation of overall experiences of displacement and its effect on Syrian fathers



Ramadan begins immediately after the pre-dawn meal of Suhur and continues during the daylight hours, ending with sunset with the evening meal of Iftar.

Displacement

Fathers experienced displacement similarly, but described it differently. Almost all the fathers left Syria as soon as the war took place with all of their family members. Most of the families lived for a few years in Jordan before being moved to the US. Some of the family members had to stay longer in Jordan due to many reasons such as getting married while they were in Jordan, which made the process of applying for refugee status difficult as a family; they had to apply separately because they created their own families. For example, one the fathers mentioned “the thing that has affected us the most is that I left two of my sons in Jordan who are married there were not able to come to the US with us.” Jordan is located at the south of Syria and the border between the two countries measures 233 miles. The fathers described that living in Jordan, they basically were living in a refugee camp in Jordan, was similar to Syria mainly because Jordan is also an Arabic country and a very close neighbor of Syria. In order to see how the social or economic situation of these two countries are similar, one of the fathers were describing his financial difficulties and the fact that he is not able to work in the US by stating “here, in the US, you have to worry about so many different aspects of life, unlike the condition in Jordan (refugee camp) ... you have to pay rent, utilities, buy a car and pay for insurance.” Or he mentioned “in Jordan, it was also hard but you can find other ways to support your family like opening a booth (like in Syria)...”

Amir, 50 years old with 4 children, was amazed by the differences between Syria and the US by stating that displacement changed everything in his life as if “we were in one world and now we are in another” or “it [displacement] makes me feel like I am in a different universe”. In addition, displacement creates some feelings in fathers leading to feeling of isolation such as

“loneliness”. Mohammad, 52 years old with 3 children, also had a similar experience of displacement:

The first few month of coming here I felt like I am in a new world; we were like look at these birds here, what are these birds! These birds do not even exist in Syria ... by the way, things are always much more beautiful when we had a larger gathering. So that’s what I love. It’s very difficult to get back to those days. Everyone is in different countries.

Fathers’ Experiences of Isolation

Syrian fathers described a sense of isolation from losing interaction with people from their communities and extended families. Some of them used to make that interaction through either a personal or individual business or a family business. For example, Amir had a restaurant in Syria with many employees working for him. He mentioned that he tried to establish a same business in Indianapolis as soon as he was displaced in the US, but he was deceived by his partners and had to leave the business, which made him feel more isolated and disappointed. In general, he described his experience of isolation:

I live now a little lonely. I used to see up to 200-300 people a day. But here I feel that I am a little disappointed, because I don’t have those interactions anymore. Definitely my life 100% has changed. I had interaction with the world. I had a restaurant in Syria and was handling several people a day and I communicated with them all the time but I do not have that here, that’s a struggle because I can’t communicate with anyone.

The other side of his experience of isolation was related to the fact that he was not able to communicate with others due to language barriers. He was wondering if it is too late for him to learn and speak English, he mentioned,

My children have most likely adapted, but for me it is hard to learn the language at this age or adapt to the culture and people here... I feel it is tough for me because I can't have a conversation with someone without having a translator.

Amir also had some language barriers at home where two of his children were learning English at school at very young age. Despite his efforts to "enforce" Arabic by talking Arabic to them, he needed his older children to translate the younger children language for him:

...it bothers me, because I have to be able to communicate with them directly instead of waiting for my other son to ask him to come translate for me what my younger son (his brother) has said ... But I wish there was not that barrier. I feel like that little aspect is missing ... they can't communicate in Arabic but I try to reinforce Arabic a lot by speaking to them in Arabic ... this all I can do.

The loss of a family business was an isolating experience for several participants. Omar, 46 years old father with 4 children, expanded a family business with his four brothers. He was injured during a terrorist attack in Syria and receiving disability benefits from the US government. He described his experience of isolation by stating,

I am actually prohibited from working, because I was shot in my spinal cord and the bullet is still in there on the nerve... there, I had my family, parents, siblings, cousins beside us during hard times, but here from my and my wife's side, we lost everyone, there's nothing and no one who can help us and be with us.

Not only was their family business destroyed and was he separated from his family, but Omar also lost a chance to work in the US due to his disability, resulting in an extended feeling of isolation.

In Syria, extended family was indispensable. There is no such distinction between nuclear and extended family as there is in the US. All members of a family provide each other with financial, emotional, or parental supports, through family businesses, living together, or having family gathering and meeting frequently in which they can share their concerns and solve their various problems together. Assad, a 42 years old father with 4 children, used to have a family business with his brothers:

Our life changed completely. Back in Syria, after the war, there was no support at all. But before that, I used to help my brother and he did so for me, there was family support. But here I am all alone. An organization here helped me for a couple of months but everyone is on their own.

For Arab families, including Syrian, extended family is the most important social group wherein when an individual is born he or she will ever belong and provides protection, food, shelter, and more importantly, reputation and honor (Clark, Silverman, Shahroui, Everson-Rose, Groce, 2009). The meaning of *family* is not fully captured for some Syrian fathers unless the extended family is included. Omar described,

We used to live in the same building altogether... siblings next to each other, the ladies around each other, a family house in a sense... we always had gatherings everywhere all the time... When you go to a house here, you see just that person and his immediate family; I can't feel that like a *family*.

Family Separation. All of the fathers described the impact of separation from their extended families and other significant people in their lives. Fathers described realizing how they and their family are affected by war and separated across the world. Assad described how war had impacted his family and how he does not have any control:

War is like somethings that happens and you can't change it or have control on it. I have a sister in Germany, one in Turkey, and one in Saudi Arabia. It just tears apart families.

For example, my family are everywhere because of the war.

Othman, a 59 years old father with 4 children, had a similar experience. When they left Syria almost 8 years ago, they were in a refugee camp in Jordan where two of his sons got married and have not been able to join the whole family when applying for refugee status in the US. The fact that he had not been able to see his sons makes him sad:

The thing that has affected me the most is that I left two of my sons in Jordan who are married there and they were not able to join us when we were moving to the US... the only time I would be relax is when I can see my whole family together.

Abdul, 40 years old father with 3 children, experienced displacement for many years until he was moved to the US and actively trying to reunite his family. He described financial burden as one of the obstacles he is facing in order to reunite his family and reestablish the family:

...the most important thing is that my family and friends need help but I can't help them.

I still have two brothers in Syria, my parents and two more brothers and one sister are in Jordan. I also have one brother and one sister in Indiana and one brother in Tennessee. I know they all need help... I can't help them because whatever I make goes to my rent.

It seemed that Abdul's feeling regarding the family separation rooted in his definition of family constructed by general Syrian culture and his identity as a provider; fathers' identity as a provider will be discussed as a separate theme. As discussed earlier, the definition of family may not fully captured for Syrian fathers unless the extended family is included. They used to have family business as well as spending most of their times with each other or even live together necessitating them to support and provide for each other.

Mohammad described what the family means to him before the separation and how he missed those days:

...the one that has affected the family the most is the big gathering, you know, we came from such a big family to small family now. Things are always much more beautiful when we have a larger gathering. So that's I love. It's very difficult to get back to those days. Everyone is on different countries.

Ambiguous Loss. War and displacement caused significant distress and unresolved feelings around those who missed, killed, or left behind. Some of the fathers described a feeling of ambiguous loss by which they either did not have definitive information about some of their family members who were missing in Syria or were wondering whether they will be able to see those families who were left in Syria. Some of the fathers described remembering those days with their families. Omar described how his family life has been changed since his family is displaced and his life ruined by war:

...a time like this in Ramadan, you would find the house full. There would always be a gathering. Everything differs in that sense, also we used to own our houses, but here everything is different... There was of course a better life for us, but the war ruined everything ...the war took everything away. I don't have any more stores, cars, my house got bombed. Nothing is left. Everything we achieved and prepared for our children's future disappeared.

Abdul was also experiencing stress mainly because of his wife's unhappiness, "We do not have any problem or treating each other differently, but I just notice that my wife is under lots of pressure because she can't see her family." During the interview, I noticed that Abdul's wife appeared frustrated when talking to her daughters as well as Abdul. At first, I thought it

might be because of my intrusion, in their house after the Iftar for the interview, taking their family time. However, Abdul mentioned that she is very anxious because she has not been able to see her family for a few years and even some of them were missing, so she is not feeling well. He stated that he sometimes took the children out the house late at night to make her calm. He also pointed out to a sense of isolation by losing many of his own friends including a very close one, creating a vague feeling of sadness for him. He described:

One of my best friends was killed in Hallab, we do not know who killed him ... it hurts me when I see my friends were killed. I still remember all of my friends and all the family gatherings we had. I used to have lots of friends but now I just know 4 or 5 of them but do not have any clue where others are! I still remember them and think about them even though I am away from Syria.

Ahmed, 45 years old with his three daughters, and Amir mentioned vague feelings about their relatives and the fact that they still do not know their location after almost eight years.

Ahmed stated:

I was very happy with my family until the war happened and everything changed. Before the war, we used to get together but when the war happened we got separated and I have not seen some of my relatives for about 8 years and do not know if they are still alive or died ... my wife's uncle and her brother, we do not where they are...

Amir similarly described,

... So many changes occurred after the war. A lot of things happened in war that does not permit me to keep contacting with our families because people got arrested, some people got killed. ...even though some people were not arrested, some people have gone

missing, I do not have any way to keep contacting them because I do not know what happened to them.

With respect to the fathers' definition of *family*, not only had fathers lost family support, but they were also feeling that they cannot support and help their family the way they want to. It seemed that this also impacted the fathers' identity, as they perceived themselves responsible to their entire family as the head of their household culturally.

Father's Identity as a Provider

Fathers described their role as “the head of the family” or what is called “Rab'ol-A'elah” in Arabic; a role defined by the Arab and Syrian culture. Fathers considered themselves responsible to provide everything for their families such as shelter, clothes, foods, and education. A few fathers pointed to gender role differences in their families defined by the larger Syrian culture in which men work outside and women stay home to take care of children. Providing a good education for children and making sure that they will be on a “bright path”, or “Al-tariq ol-mashreq Al-motaleq” (الطريق المشرق المتألق) in Arabic, were crucial for the Syrian fathers. Moreover, being a good role model for the children made them sure about their future and that they will be on right path.

Father as the head of the family or Rab'ol-A'elah (رب العايله). Fathers reported that they are the head of their household and this is what a man or father in Syrian culture look like. Amir described his role as a man and a father as “the leader of the family”:

The father is the head of the family and the leader of the family. Father in Syria is a big thing. Having the title of father is like having a title of a king. They are head of the household. He takes care of the family and he makes a decision for the entire family. And the family respects the father. Father is a respectable figure in Syria.

Assad reported similar characteristics for his role as a father by stating, “Father is number one in family in Syria. Any problem happen we go back to the father. Because father has a brain. Father is head of the household.”

Othman also mentioned similar qualities for his identity as a father and called himself the “godfather of the house”. He described his role and position in the family by stating, “I am in charge of everything is going on in the house and my family should ask me if anything needs to be done. I am the one who provide things for the family”. Abdul also mentioned his own characteristics as a father who leaves early morning for work to make money and when he gets back home in the evening, his kids meet him and ask for anything they may need or money. Such a role, wherein he is constantly providing, and receiving demands from all members of the family is the essence and meaning of fatherhood.

Being displaced forcefully and living in a new country while trying to obtain a new social status, interact and work with new people, and rebuild what has been destroyed in a very short period of time can be very stressful. With respect to their identity as a provider, fathers were trying to stick to their role caused them experience stress after displacement. Assad was struggling with finances and long hours jobs which makes him tired and anxious.

I am very tired here. I worked different serval jobs now working in plastic company.

There is a very hard life here... I (his personality) changed a lot because I have lots of commitment right now and expenses today. I am struggling because I feel I need to work all the time. Here there is a lot of thinking, lots of responsibilities about which you need to think. Mentally I am tired. I used to work eight to five in Syria, took a day off on Friday and went out with family. My main concern here is my kids.

Omar was experiencing a hard time at the moment due to injury in his back and leg from the war in Syria. He was not allowed to work but eligible for receiving government assistance for his disability which hardly covered all his family's expenses. He mentioned that he used to work long hours back in Syria but he has to stay at home all day now because he cannot work:

It can be difficult for a Syrian I am a father of four (children), and we struggle with finances. I receive \$750 as aid per month in addition to food stamps ... but there is not a way for me to save to provide for my kids when they ask for something

The absence of extended families and lack of their support and presence to help is another layer of stress that makes fathers' experience of displacement and refugeesim even more stressful. Omar compared his current situation with the support from his extended family he used to have in Syria by stating:

I only receive \$750 per month and that's it, but there [in Syria] if I needed help with anything there were family and people to count on. If for example my rent was short, I could ask someone to help me pay the rest and they would just go and pay the whole amount. But here there's no one!

Gender Roles. Some fathers pointed out to some gender role differences within their marital system reflecting an emphasis on their identity as the provider, head, or leader of the family. Omar mentioned that, for example in the case of conflict or disagreement in family, "what the father says is what goes ... does not matter what the final say is, if the father says yes, it is yes". In addition, there is mentality for Syrian families wherein women are not supposed to work outside of the house; he reflected on it by stating,

In Syria, the man loves to work. For instance, women are not supposed to work, so a man works extra hours if needed to provide for his family everything they need. They try to

provide a good house, food, sustenance, etc. In general, they strive to comfort their families and provide for them until the last breath. Yes, this description fits my role there as well. We have just this mentality that a man is a responsible person... We just seek out work, we do not want our wives go to work, or our kids to work.

Ahmed also emphasized that a husband responsibility is to not allow his wife work outside of the house and model this for the next generation by not allowing his daughters to work outside of the house. Due to financial challenges fathers faced after displacement, the wives of some fathers' had to work outside of the home to financially contribute to the household. Experiencing this cultural conflict could be stressful for fathers. Even some chores such as paying bills, buying groceries, or giving rides to kids to the daycare or school are considered "man's jobs" because it requires interaction outside of the house that may conflict with some fathers' value systems. Fazil mentioned that he used to do all the chores because he had enough time, but here, he has to share some of those responsibilities with his wife. He wished he was more financially stable and had enough flexibility in terms of time; he said "If we go back to Syria, she won't be responsible there as she is here ... we are forced to live like that ...I am happier with what we were in Syria."

Omar was also not satisfied that his wife had to work in order to afford the living cost for the whole family. Changing gender roles was impacting his identity as the provider and head of his family that basically adds another layer of stress:

There in Syria we never depend on the wife financially, she almost never works outside the house. Men are responsible for providing for their family and the wife's role consists of maintaining the house and taking care of the children. But now, it is a different condition. I do not like her to work, because it is not her responsibility... I do not like to

rely on the government assistance and I can't depend on myself. I used to be independent, whereas here I am dependent and can't get buy and I am so much depend on my wife which I wish I really did not need to.

Education is a Path to a Bright Future. The fathers' role as a provider also extends to education. Fathers felt strong responsibility and have an "ambition" for their children's future. For some fathers, like Amir and Fazil, one of the reasons they chose to come to the US was to make sure their children will have a good education. Amir stated,

They are my children and I am responsible for them. I want them to receive a good education and I am open to whatever needs for them to learn and be knowledgeable. I actually came here for the sake of their education.

Being responsible for ensuring their children have a good education is a means through which fathers feel "proud" about their role as a father. Mohammad and Othman mentioned that they are most proud of seeing their kids be "well educated" or "have a good education and good life". The fathers' role goes beyond and encompasses their children's life in general. Ahmad mentioned one of his challenges in the US as a father is to provide his children with a good education in order to have a good life later on. He mentioned that he is trying to "keep them in a right path by sending them to university and graduate and then have a good life after that".

Fathers were also proud of their children for translating for them whenever they needed to navigate such institutions such as a bank or hospital. The father's felt that this role for their children reflected a way they could help their parent, demonstrating respect. In addition, they were happy seeing how their children were progressing in school and able to learn English. As Assad mentioned, "I am happy to ask her (her daughter to translate for him) ... We are very proud that they are learning English. We all help each other." Mohammad had a similar

experience as well, “The fact that my children can learn and speak English faster than me and my wife is a beneficial thing because I learn through them too. Actually, I am proud of them.”

On the other hand, some of fathers expressed their concerns regarding their children’s future. Abdul was worried about his daughters and was not sure how he can handle all his new responsibilities in the US in order to make sure his daughters are going to have a bright future:

I realized that I have a lot of responsibilities here that was not like that in Syria. I keep thinking and worrying about my daughters and wondering how they will be growing up in this country that is not relevant to their religion and culture.

Give and Take. One of the reasons for providing the family, as mentioned by fathers, was to be provided for in the future. That is, fathers were concerned about their own future, when they are old and unable to work and may need help to live. They believed if they can provide for their children, their children will reciprocate in the future. Indeed, this is an essential part of their identity as a father that makes them sure they are fulfilling their roles and the expectations. Amir described how “American families” are not close enough to each other, specifically when the children grow up, and he wished there was a stronger bond between the children and their parents. He mentioned that if they were close enough and fathers cared enough about their children, parents would be taken care of when they get older. Therefore, he believed if American fathers want to be taken care of in future, when they get old, they need to be close and care enough about their children:

Here, once the parents are older they [the children] don’t care for them or anything. Just like we turned out like our parents, they will turn out like us. You harvest what you plant. If you plant cucumbers you’ll not harvest tomatoes, you’ll harvest cucumbers.

Abdul shared a similar feeling by stating, “When a father reaches to 45 or 50/55 year old, the kids work and provide their parents as they (parents) someday were providing them. Like say now it’s my time to comfort and your time to work”.

The give and take process might be starting sooner than usual due to displacement for some fathers and their families. If care reversal used to be related to the time when parents get older and adult children start taking care of them, it seemed that displacement accelerated this process in some ways when children provide for their parents by helping them with translation whenever was needed. Othman was proud of his children and it seemed that the give and take was evident for him through his children’ language brokering:

I can’t speak English but my kids do speak English and I am very happy for it, I am very impressed and proud of my kids. I also like them to be around to talk to my boss asking him if I need to take a day off and they are able to translate and if I need to go to a pharmacy and pick up some medication, they are there to help to translate.

In sum, refugee fathers were struggling with very new challenges after their forced dislocation. Financial strains and new responsibilities in the US, at least in the first few months or years of their displacement, were perceived to be very stressful. The loss of extended family ties was also perceived to be an impetuous of stress because of the feelings of isolation so commonly experienced by Syrian refugee fathers. Participants’ identity as a father and provider were impacted by adjusting to life in the US and trying to maintain their cultural values. For some, these struggles were unexpected before moving to the US, as they thought they will be having a more comfortable life. Fazil encapsulates, “It was easier in Jordan. I thought when I came to America it is going to be over and there will be a better situation. But when I came here I saw that it is more difficult.”

Chapter 5

Discussion

By now, you have an in-depth understanding of how Syrian refugee fathers experience displacement and the impact on their family dynamics and their own identities as fathers.

Findings from this research study inform researchers, practitioners, and other service providers and administrators who work with refugee families. This chapter is divided into five sections: situating the study, implications, limitations, lessons learned, and conclusion.

Situating the Study

This is a unique study from several standpoints. One valuable aspect of this research is its focus on fatherhood. The issue of refugees, specifically from Syria, has created a controversial debate in Europe and the US recently, wherein the feminization of refugees has been observed (Papadopoulos & Gionakis, 2018). The media shows footage and images of refugee women and children and feminization is a central aspect of the new age of international migration and globalization (Donato & Gabaccia, 2016; Papadopoulos & Gionakis, 2018). A scene about a refugee father we might see is the Syrian refugee father who was trying to pass the border while holding his little son and a Hungarian camerawoman tripped him, which sparked global outrage. Similar to many other human crises and political issues across the globe, the women's voices are more silenced, due to gender inequity in the sociopolitical structure of their societies in which women may be less-than-whole citizens or restricted to use their strengths, than men that make the feminization of refugees significant. However, such a phenomenon should not propel us to overlook the vulnerability and torment of refugee men. Regardless of their political positionality, there is a need to identify, recognize, and appreciate the experiences of refugee fathers (Papadopoulos & Gionakis, 2018) and their roles and identities within families. There are a few

studies on refugee fathers, as discussed in literature review, exploring fathers adopting new roles (Riggsm et al., 2016), role reversal (Titzmann & Michel, 2013), fathers' engagement in child rearing and the challenges of cultural adjustment (Ee et al., 2013; Rezania, 2015), as well as some case studies focusing on dramatic experiences of refugee fathers (Papadopoulos & Gionakis, 2018). This study has addressed a gap in the literature in illuminating the experience of Syrian refugee fathers, providing further exploration of role adjustment of refugee fathers and specifically how a father's identity as a provider is affected by displacement to the US. Further, novel findings emerged from this study about how the loss of family ties influences identity as a father and family dynamics.

Understanding Fathers Experiences through Family Stress Theory

Given the challenges that Syrian refugee fathers face, as discussed in chapter two, family stress theory provides a valuable conceptual framework for understanding Syrian refugee fathers' experiences. According to Hill (1958), there are reasons some families thrive in response to stressors whereas other families struggle. Within stress theory, the support that families receive and the meaning they assign to the stressful event are the two moderating variables explaining the differences in how families respond to a stressful event and determine whether a crisis will follow (Sullivan, 2015).

The contextual model of family stress (Boss et al., 2017) provides a framework to understand fathers' experience of forceful displacement. Particularly, as explained in chapter 2, the fathers' experiences can be conceptualized in the internal context in contextual model of the family stress theory wherein the ABC-X model is an appropriate framework to be applied to the refugee fathers. Therefore, the following articles mainly discuss and conceptualize fathers' experiences by the ABC-X model in the internal context of the contextual model of family stress

and then address other components of internal context, such as psychological and philosophical, and finally the external context.

Applied to Syrian refugee fathers, following Syrian civil war and terrorism after 2011, the forceful displacement or migration to the US is factor A, a stressful event with significant magnitude for Syrian refugee fathers that can provoke change in their families and also their perception of themselves. One of the main findings of this study was the significant influence of the loss of extended family ties on Syrian refugee fathers. Feeling isolated following forced dislocation and absence of extended family, and their lack of support, as factor A, was reported by fathers to be a significant stressful event. For example, most of the fathers used to have family businesses with one or more of their close family members such as their father or brother(s), or were taking over the elder generation's positions to continue a family business. However, the war and forceful displacement destroyed their businesses. This was not just an economic impact on these fathers', but also a loss of family connection and reliance that was tied into multiple aspects of their lives, including their roles as providers for their family and the resources from which they could rely on. Este and Tachble (2009) reported similar results in their study with Sudanese refugee fathers in Canada, in terms of the lack of social support and isolation experienced mainly due to not having their immediate and extended families with them. However, the aspect of family business, as a means to keep the familial ties and intensify the impact of extended family, was not reported.

Este and Tachble (2009) also reported how Sudanese refugee fathers experienced unemployment or underemployment and how this affected their identities as heads of the households and undermined their views of themselves as leaders or heads of families. This parallels the findings of this study, which shows almost all the fathers as struggling with the

hardship of low paid jobs, long hours, or multiple jobs, and still finding it difficult to provide for their families as they did in Syria. They reported that it is their responsibility to provide their families with shelter, enough food, and clothes as well as non-materialistic or emotional needs. They also reported that they wanted to spend more time with their children, but could not due to the long-hours or having more than one job.

One of the valuable contributions of this study is how fathers processed or thought they could handle such difficulties. For example, a main concern fathers shared was about their struggles in paying rent. They repeatedly mentioned that if they were in Syria and had housing difficulty, other families and friends would have helped them easily, or they could handle the situation through their immediate families and friends without stress. This finding shows the impact of extended and immediate families on fathers' way of handling difficulties related to their roles as heads of the households.

Furthermore, such financial struggles prompted the fathers to rely on government assistance such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program called SNAP. Some of the participants mentioned that they are not sure if Syrian government had a similar program, but if they did, it would be for needy or poor people in Syria. Still having this mentality, it might be difficult for fathers to accept their current positions as those who have to rely on such assistance. In other words, it may be appropriate to ask immediate families for help but not the government because it can change their perception of themselves as a good provider. This study extends the findings identified by Este and Tachble (2009) by providing further evidence of the significant impact of lack of social support and financial stressors and demonstrating how the loss of extended family ties are interwoven with multiple aspects of a father's identity and associated stressors.

Considering the Boss's classification of stressors events and situations (e. g., See Table 3), the fathers' stressful experience of war and dislocation is categorized as external, meaning their stressors originated from the external context on which the fathers did not have any control. In addition, fathers' experience of war and displacement is classified as catastrophic and unexpected, in which the fathers might expect the war would expand throughout Syria, resulting in near total loss of possessions, savings, their home, and most tragically, sometimes their friends and family members. Consequently, the concept of ambiguous loss, which comes from Boss' contributions to family stress theory (Boss et al., 2017) is also relevant to the fathers' experience. The fathers in this study described having to leave Syria when the war started and not knowing what happened to some of their immediate and extended families and friends; some of them got arrested or are missing, others were killed. The participants shared that thinking about and remembering those who were killed, when and where they were buried, or searching for clues about those who were arrested or are missing is distressing for them and their family. Moreover, these ambiguous losses were the result of circumstances beyond their control; they did not freely decide to be displaced and separated from their loved ones.

The duration of the stressor is also important to consider in family stress theory. In this study, displacement was experienced as a chronic stressor. Despite living in the US for at least two years, father reported experiencing ongoing challenges or stressors such as separation from their immediate and extended families or new responsibilities and financial strains. Further, the chronic stressful experience of displacement, family separation, and ambiguous loss is the result of larger contexts beyond individual actions, making their experiences and stressors visible and apparent to others. It is also cumulative, wherein several stressors occurred simultaneously or precipitously, starting with war, loss of a member(s) of the family, feeling danger and leaving the

city and/or the country, residing in another country such as Jordan for a few years in a refugee camp, and then moving and adjusting to life in the US.

Table 4

Classification of Stressors Events and Situations

| Source | |
|---|---|
| Internal: Events that begins with someone inside the family, such as addiction, suicide, violence, or running for an election | External: Events that begins with someone or something outside the family, such as floods, terrorism, or loss of job |
| Type | |
| Normative, Developmental, Predictable: Events that are expected during the life course, such as birth, puberty, adolescent, marriage, aging, menopause, retirement, and death | Catastrophic, Situational, Unexpected: Unforeseen events or situations, such as a young child dies |
| Ambiguous: Events or situations that remain unclear, such as facts about the status of a family members remain unclear or are unavailable | Clear: Facts are available, such as the family knows what is happening and how it will turn out |
| Volitional: Events or situations that are wanted and sought out, such as freely chosen job changes, collage entrance, or a wanted pregnancy | Nonvolitional: Events or situations not freely chosen, such as being laid off, fired, divorced, or being given up for adoption |
| Duration | |
| Chronic: A situation of long duration, such as diabetes, chemical addiction, or discrimination and prejudice | Acute: Events that lasts a short time but is stressful, such as broken leg |
| Density | |
| Cumulative: Events or situation that pile up, one after the other, so there I no time to cope before the next stressor occurs, such as families worn down by multiple unresolved stressors | Isolated: One event that occurs by itself or alone with no other stressor; it is easily pinpointed |

Note: Classification of Stressors Events and Situations. Adopted from Family stress management: A contextual approach (p. 51) by P. E. Boss (2nd Ed), 2002, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. Copyright 2002 by SAGE publication, Inc. Adopted with permission.

The fathers were utilizing resources at the time of the stressor, factor B, in order to cope with the consequences of displacement and adjustment to life in the US. Fathers were using resources such as cooperating with each other as a family, accessing resources through agencies

that assisted refugees such as Exodus Refugees, communicating with external resources such as social supports through their new friends, and connecting with the mosque near to where they were living. Language brokering was one such family process that served to mitigate stressors associated with language barriers. Despite the potential negative consequences of language brokering (Cheng Koh et al., 2013; Dorner, Orellana, & Jiménez, 2008; Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009; Titzmann & Michel, 2013), fathers reported that they are proud of their children who are able to translate for them whenever is needed. They see language brokering as a way that children can support and honor their parents and their collective family adjustment in order to overcome the struggles of living in a new country. This finding is consistent with Trickett and Jones' (2007) report that youth who engaged in cultural brokering, which entailed some role reversal, experienced a better personal family adjustment and a higher overall family satisfaction. Furthermore, as Hynie and colleagues (2012) showed in their study with Afghan, Karen and Sudanese refugee youth in Toronto, the refugee youth's involvements in family's endeavors such as language brokering, increased well-being in their families. As seen in this study too, such a role reversal not only does not provoke conflict, but is considered as an asset for the family to survive in the host country.

Syrian fathers' perception of displacement and its influence on their identity as a father and their family dynamics represents factor C. Participants in this study expressed distress and feelings of isolation at being separated from their loved ones. Several expressed that the first thing comes to mind when they think about war and subsequent experiences is the fact that they have been separated from their extended families, scattered around the globe. Fathers tried various ways to change this situation; however, the difficulty in affording the cost of living in the

US has made them unable, as they reported, to either help their families to reunion or see them again.

The fathers in this study reported some changes to equilibrium of the family, factor X, because of the stress of displacement and loss of extended families. For instance, several fathers described role changes in their family system to which they were either not accustomed when they were in Syria or were not congruent with their social and cultural values and norms. Despite strong and traditional gender roles, financial strains prompted the wives of half of the participants to work outside the home at some point since their displacement in Indianapolis to help provide for their families. This finding is consistent with much of the existing literature on refugee families. Lamb and Bougher (2009) reported that most of the immigrants and refugees experienced such role changes when they resided in industrialized host countries. Similar findings have been reported for Chinese immigrant parents in Canada (Qin, 2009), Chinese-mainland and Chinese-Canadian parents (Chuang & Su, 2009), immigrant fathers from Mexico and the Dominican Republic (Tamis-LeMonda, Kalman, & Yoshikawa, 2009), and Sudanese refugee fathers in Canada (Este & Tachble, 2009). Role changes can add another layer of stress for a Syrian refugee father and influence his identity as breadwinner and head of his household. As noted in the findings chapter, participants in this study expressed that they did not want their wives work outside of the home and preferred to have them at home to take care of the children. Therefore, the finding of this study is consistent with above-mentioned research showing the experience of role changes within the refugee and immigrant families can be stressful for fathers.

The contextual model of family stress (Boss et al., 2017) can be utilized to further contextualize Syrian fathers' experience of displacement, with more focus on meaning and perception (e.g., See Figure 1). One considers this connotation, "Individuals and families do not

live in isolation” (Boss et al., 2017, p. 26), Syrian fathers and their families are part of a larger environment including their culture and familial values and beliefs that strongly influence their experience and their perception of stressful events (Boss et al., 2017). These factors affect the factors A, B, C, and the meaning family attach to the event and determine whether a stressor will lead to coping or precipitate a crisis (the outcome) for any given fathers and their families. Boss and colleagues (2017) categorized these factors into two groups: (a) the external context, of which the family has little or no control, is consist of five dimensions: culture, history, economy, development, and heredity, and (b) the internal context, over which the family has control and is capable of modifying, is composed of three dimensions: structural, psychological, and philosophical.

The contextual model of family stress is relevant to the refugee fathers and families and their circumstances in the United States. Considering the historical dimension within the external context, Syrian father and their families experienced war and political terrorism starting in 2011, which prompted displacement. Furthermore, the influence of Syrian culture defines rules for Syrian families for problem solving and coping with the stress. Despite asking directly if they had experienced marital or family conflict after displacement, all of the participants mentioned that they had not; it seemed to the researcher and translators that fathers were not willing to talk about this private sector of their family life. Some participants described that the strategies they used to solve conflict when they were in Syria was only slightly modified when they were in the US. For instance, a typical practice was to ask an elder member in the extended family, known as a wise man, to mediate and talk with the couple to solve the issue. Without the ability to rely on extended family members, now some fathers mentioned that they may go to the mosque and ask the imam or sheikh or a new friend to whom they trust to provide this role. This is a form of

triangle, a concept in family system theory, in which one person, the third person, joins with an unstable dyadic relationship in order to stabilize the relationship and help them to solve conflicts (Guerin, Fogarty, Fay, & Kautto, 1996). In general, these strategies are influenced by their religious context, as the Quran says, “If ye fear a breach between them twain appoint (two) arbiters one from his family and the other from hers; if they wish for peace Allah will cause their reconciliation: for Allah hath full knowledge and is acquainted with all things.” (An-Nissa 4:35).

From the developmental standpoint, every single member of a Syrian refugee family has been influenced by war and displacement, individually and collectively, given where they are in their own life cycles. For the fathers in this study, they were mostly in their forties and fifties, married, and had at least three children when they experienced the war and displacement and subsequent acclimation to life in the US. Therefore, considering the developmental context, these fathers have various and different resiliency and coping skills to deal with stressors; it could be different if they, for instance, were divorced or single, newly married, or were in their sixties or seventies. As an example, if fathers were in their sixties or seventies, they might not have new stressful responsibilities of fathers in this study who were in their forties; they might be displaced in the US without their children so it would be less likely for them to experience financial strains or worried about their children’ future, as the fathers in this study did. On the other hand, it could be more difficult for one in his seventies to adjust to a new life after forced displacement in the US than a father in his forties.

Within the internal context, Syrian fathers described how their family has been impacted by displacement. As previously discussed, fathers reported that they had to make some changes in their family roles to cope with financial strains and adjustment to life in the US. For instance, the fathers described how their children contribute to the family by translating for their parents

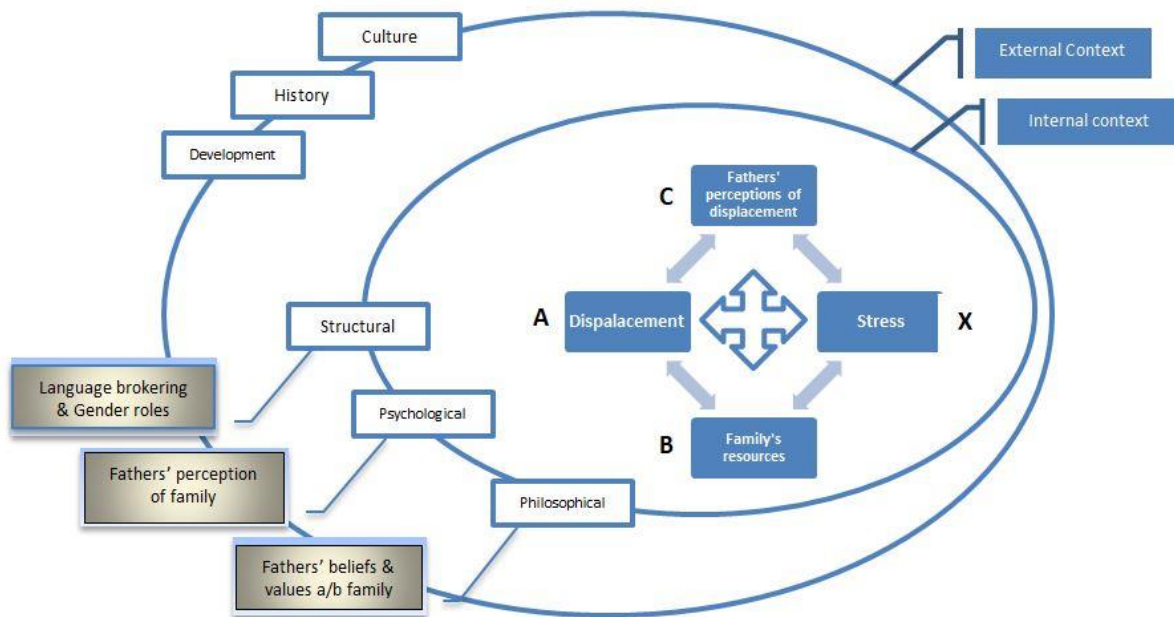
who do not read or speak the English language. Such a practice is a form of cultural or language brokering wherein children provide support for their parents that might not be defined as a typical responsibility for children; this involvement is called parentification. As it is mentioned in the literature review in chapter two, parentification can change adolescents' status or position in their families, if the boundaries become flexible allowing children to change their positions in the family, and "undermine the traditional power relationship between parents and children and increases parental independence on their children" (Trickett & Jones, 2007, p. 143). However, none of the fathers in this study reported that language brokering undermined or weakened the traditional parent-child relationships. In fact, several of the fathers' described that they considered it as strength or something that they can be proud of.

Other dimensions in internal context of the contextual model of family stress are psychological and philosophical contexts. The potential application of psychological context for the stress of Syrian refugee families is when their perception, definition, or assessment of displacement is questioned. It also influenced the way they perceive or define *family*. They reported that the perception or definition of family is beyond just parents and children but included their extended families. This perception determined their problem solving skills and defense mechanisms by maintaining their role as provider through working hard, even having more than one job or working in long-hours jobs to not only take care of their own families, but help their extended families who are not in the US. They reported that they try to strengthen their marital ties. Some feel they have gotten closer to each other as a couple; because they know they only have each other in order to create a safe and comfortable environment. The father's belief and values, the philosophical context, strongly promoted family ties and their identity as provider. This internalized value system affected their abilities to cope with stressors and their

perception of less than ideal choices, such as the case of having their wives work outside of the home in order to cope with financial strains.

Figure 5

Customized Figure of the Contextual Model of Family Stress



Note: The Contextual Model of Family Stress. Adopted from Family stress management: A contextual approach (p. 40) by P. E. Boss (2nd Ed), 2002, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. Copyright 2002 by SAGE publication, Inc. Adopted with permission.

Implications

Marriage and family therapists, other mental health professionals, organizations, agencies, and NGOs working with refugee families, first of all, should revisit their ideology regarding the degree of vulnerability of each family member in the family system. It will be valuable to have adequate knowledge and cultural humility and sensitivity toward each family member’s role and identity. More specifically, in regard to Syrian refugee families, it is highly recommended to consider the complex and overlooked experiences of refugee fathers. In other

words, they should pay more attention to gender role differences when working with families of Arab origins such as Syrian and identify who is responsible for what and who can talk about what and with whom. It is very helpful to familiar themselves with literature on fatherhood with regard to cultural differences and wear a non-western lenses when family gender roles are accounted. Considering the diverse origins and experiences of Syrian refugee fathers, family therapists and those who work with refugee families should take time to learn about how refugee fathers understand and relate to their specific cultural context. It is also valuable to identify the ambiguities in the space between the culture of the host country, here the US, and Syrian culture and the different expectations they have for fathers. That is, it is not appropriate to impose the U.S. centric view of fatherhood to other fathers coming forcefully to this country as refugees.

The multitude of narratives about fatherhood identity, cultural values and norms, and other salient parts of their experiences should be considered from the lens of the fathers, their family members, and the person working with them. This person also needs to unpack his own positionality and address cultural differences. Fathers may be reluctant to share their full stories, for example talk about their family relationships or if there is any family conflict, if they do not know the person due to cultural issues or if this person displays an implicit bias or lack of awareness regarding these differences.

Using family stress theory, which encompasses family system theory within itself, particularly helps family therapists to identify refugee fathers' stressors and their perceptions of them in order to help them use their resources, strengths, and resiliencies. Furthermore, as identified in this study, Syrian refugee fathers play a significant role in their families. This role cannot be overlooked even if family therapists work with other members of the family. That is, using a systemic perspective helps to see refugee families as a whole while emphasizing on the

value of each member. In addition, family therapists who work with Syrian refugee fathers should be aware of family hierarchy and its structure and boundaries. Syrian fathers should be respected as the heads of their households and considered a significant member of the family if we aim to address any family issues. Further, family or marital conflict is perceived to be a sensitive issue for Syrian refugee fathers and they may not be willing or comfortable to talk about it. Therefore, family therapists need to be mindful of this fact when they approach fathers regarding this matter if they have not established a trustful rapport. Clinicians can utilize a variety of techniques to address family conflict covertly without labeling it as such. It may be beneficial to focus on the process of negotiating or resolving different perspectives on issues than on particular areas of disagreement or conflict.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study was the fact that the researcher was not able to speak the language of the participants. I was fortunate to have interpreters to translate my conversations with the fathers and transcribe the interviews. However, relying on an interpreter disrupted the typical interviewer-participant relationship that one expects in interview research and there are potential limitations as a result. First, it is likely that there were occasions during the interviews that were overlooked or did not capture all aspects of the conversations. In order to minimize the risk of having a partial story, I discussed with the translator directly or re-interviewed fathers to ensure their whole stories were accurately reflected by adding missing parts to the final transcripts.

Furthermore, there were a few times when the interpreter and I felt that the fathers were trying to keep some parts of their feelings, thoughts, or narratives hidden. Although I met each father at least once before the actual interviews in order to build a rapport and trustful

relationship, some clues betrayed discomfort in sharing their whole story. For example, through one of the interviews, despite denying any argument, the participant's wife called him very aggressively to do something for her while she knew her husband was in the middle of an interview. Moreover, in Arab culture, including Syrian, it might not be seen as appropriate for a man or father to disclose feelings or family issues, such as family conflict or any discrepancies in the family with a stranger; as it took place with my participants despite asking direct questions about any marital or family conflict. Middle Eastern men have pride in their role as the strong father who never breaks. Their role is to protect their family and if life pressure made them fail they may not admit it. The following passage is an interpreter's feedback after one of the interviews in which a father denied having any problems in the family.

I think it is not realistic to believe that for the period of two years, starting a new life, struggling with new language [to] not have any problems within the family. In my opinion this giant move can take a toll on a family and the pressure definitely is high and therefore causes the person to be agitated and short tempered sometimes. Parents and kids will, without a doubt, face lots of challenges. I mean our kids were born here and we try to protect them with our hands and teeth from the influence of western society. We try to keep their Islamic identity and help them embrace it. So, imagine a child coming out of war to a western and open society. He said that his kids are older than 14 so they are okay. I say this is the critical age when the children can deviate from the right path. I agree with him the father figure back home is strong, tender, the bread maker, the strong shoulder of the family. His main goal is to protect and provide a good life for his family, but also I agree with him that the word of the father is the word that goes at the end.

Another issue related to this limitation is the fact that participants of this study were the fathers who were dislocated and resided in the US within the last two years. Refugees who have been in a host country, such as the US, for a longer time or a shorter duration differ. Two years of living in a new country as a refugee, someone who did not come to a host country by his or her choice or freely, may not be an adequate time to adjust and may need more time to see the reality of where he and his family must live. Even if they have not experienced any family conflict yet, according to Deng and Marlowe (2013), as soon as children develop their communicational skills and get familiar with the dominant culture, which can be in opposition to their families' heredity, tensions are expected to occur. This process takes time and two years is not enough time for the refugee fathers to experience intergenerational tensions.

Finally, only the fathers' perspective was included in this study. It will be valuable for further research on refugee father's experiences to include perspectives from multiple members of the system; a more systemic standpoint. In particular, mothers could provide valuable information about the father's role in their family and how they perceive changes after displacement. Including both parents could illuminate how they make parental decisions together or rely on each other to cope with challenges and how they pass on their cultural values and heritable roles as they start a new life in the US. On the other hand, from an individual point of view, interviewing female refugees would have some benefits. One considers the feminization of refugees, the ones who might have suffered the most in Syria were women and children, especially young women and girls. Some were abused and raped just for being females of the opposite parties. Syrian female refugees went through trauma and lost the most. Usually the ones who lose the most are also the ones who hold deep hurt, immense emotions and want to vent and talk. In addition, in many instances the role of Syrian women after they become

refugees changes. Before the war, women were usually bound to housework, but after the war they have started to do men's work, because men were killed or kidnapped, or some even had to fight. Therefore, Syrian women have the possibility to be the decision-makers and breadwinners in facing all the challenges of a new country. They need to be heard too.

Future Research

Future studies could investigate and explore the experience of other members of the Syrian refugee families to have a better insight and understanding regarding fathers' experiences. That is, in order to reflect on fathers' role and their identity as father, we may need to hear their spouses or children's narratives as well. In addition, studies could focus on more dyadic relationships and explore parents' experiences of displacement and difficulties of these families after displacement. Considering a more systemic lens and multitude of narratives regarding refugee families, mothers and children's experience of displacement can be a complementary research to the findings of this study.

Furthermore, longitudinal studies wherein Syrian refugee fathers and families can be studied over a period of time and their changes and their experiences could be traced would provide valuable information for agencies and clinicians working with refugee families.

Conclusion

Refugee families go through many traumatic experiences as they flee their countries and relocate, sometimes across the globe. Each member of the family may experience dislocation differently based on their whole family cultural system or their positionality within the family. Syrian refugee fathers as providers and heads of the households experience displacement as a stressor event that may cause separation from their extended families and feeling isolated afterward. Furthermore, financial difficulties starting from the beginning of their presence in the

host country may affect their identities as fathers and cause a role changes in their family systems despite their cultural background and personal aspirations. Understanding the experiences of fathers and their challenges helps those working with refugee fathers to address the needs of whole family more effectively.

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Appendix A

IRB Approval



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 North End Center, Suite 4120
 300 Turner Street NW
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
 540/231-3732 Fax 540/231-0959
 email irb@vt.edu
 website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 25, 2018
TO: Erika L Graftsky, Saeid Kianpour
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)
PROTOCOL TITLE: Understanding Syrian Refugee Fathers' Perspectives of Their Family Dynamics in the U.S. after Displacement
IRB NUMBER: 18-286

Effective May 25, 2018, the Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5,6,7
 Protocol Approval Date: May 25, 2018
 Protocol Expiration Date: May 24, 2019
 Continuing Review Due Date*: May 10, 2019

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Invent the Future

| Date* | OSP Number | Sponsor | Grant Comparison Conducted? |
|-------|------------|---------|-----------------------------|
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* Date this proposal number was compared, assessed as not requiring comparison, or comparison information was revised.

If this IRB protocol is to cover any other grant proposals, please contact the IRB office (irbadmin@vt.edu) immediately.

Appendix B

English Informed Consent

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Understanding Syrian Refugee Fathers' Perspectives of Their Family Dynamics in the U.S. after Displacement

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Investigator(s): | <u>Dr. Erika Grafsky</u> | <u>erikagrafsky@vt.edu 540-808-5535</u> |
| | <i>Name</i> | <i>E-mail / Phone number</i> |
| | <u>Saeid Kianpour</u> | <u>saeid@vt.edu 832-744-536</u> |
| | <i>Name</i> | <i>E-mail / Phone number</i> |

I. Purpose of this Research Project

The purpose of this research study is to learn about the family dynamics of Syrian refugee families in Indianapolis, Indiana from the perspective of Syrian fathers. This study is conducted by Saeid Kianpour, as part of his doctoral dissertation and the results of the study will be used for his dissertation project and publication. His faculty advisor and the primary investigator of this study is Dr. Erika Grafsky at the Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech. The knowledge gained from this study will allow family therapists, refugees and immigration service and other organizations to have a better understanding of refugee families, as well as suggest ways programs can improve refugee families' wellbeing. Participation will involve one interview with Saeid, lasting approximately 1.5 hour where you will talk about your family experiences. Fathers must be 18 years of age or older and relocated in the last 1 or 2 years and currently living in Indianapolis, Indiana. The total number of participants in this study will be approximately 6 to 12 Syrian refugee fathers.

II. Procedures

You will be asked to complete a one-on-one, in-person interview with Saeid. When the interview starts, the researcher will ask the questions one by one for you and translators will be present to translate my questions from English to Arabic for you. This is a one-time interview taking approximately 1 and a half hour long. The interview can take place anywhere you feel comfortable either in your home or at a private room in Eman School or Catholic Charities Indianapolis. Saeid (the researcher) will use a digital voice recorder to record the interview/discussion. After the interview, the recording of the interview will be transcribed and any identifying information about you or the subject will be anonymized.

III. Risks

There are several factors that lead to this research study having a potential for risk to you:

1. You will be interviewed and will discuss personal information in relevance to your role as a father as well as your family as refugees in the US. There is a potential that you may feel uncomfortable speaking about your experiences or explaining information about your family.
2. As this study deals with political issues in your country causing you to leave Syria, seeking for help, and starting a new life in the US, you may be emotionally reactive while reflecting and discussing your experiences as a father.

3. There is a potential for you to feel pressured to answer all the questions designed for the interview.
4. You may experience heightened relationship problems, which were previously dormant or unacknowledged, due to the nature of interview questions.
5. There is a potential for individuals associated with the project (e.g. researcher, translators) to share confidential information that was collected during this research study with others.

You may benefit by feeling heard and affirmed when discussing your experiences as a refugee father. This may be the first opportunity you will have to express the effects of forceful displacement on your family. If the investigator identifies a need and interest, you will be provided referrals to further resources (e.g. therapeutic services), that could potentially benefit your individual and family well-being. However, no promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate.

While there is a risk that the researcher and translators would share confidential information as a result of your participation in this study (see 5 in section III, above), we will take a number of steps to minimize this risk.

First, translators will sign a confidentiality agreement with Saeid and Dr. Graftsky, stating they will not share any information they are privy to about the subject or their family as a result of their participation with this research study. This is important since the translators will be present for the interview and will have access to the audio recordings and transcripts.

Second, the data we collect from you will not be stored in a way that will identify you. The data and results from this study will be confidential. No individual identities will be used in association with any reports or publications resulting from the study. All audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews will be assigned ID numbers and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Participants' names will not appear in the interview transcripts, and research information collected will be kept in locked files at all times. Your name will be associated with the data, through a key, which will be kept in a locked file separate from transcripts and audio recording device. At no time will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. After the study is completed, the audio recordings will be destroyed.

The results of the study will be used for research and educational purposes only. The information collected will remain confidential and may be used in future publications, i.e., journals, articles, and/or presentations. Such publications may be created with the intent of contributing to the field of family therapy about refugee families and their lives, as well as implications for training and programming.

In some situations, it may be necessary for an investigator to break confidentiality. If a researcher has reason to suspect that a child is abused or neglected, or that a person poses a threat of harm to others or him/herself, the researcher is required by Virginia State law to notify the appropriate authorities. The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study's data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the

protection of human subjects involved in research.

You will be paid \$10 for completing interview sessions. You will receive this sum, even if you choose to withdraw part way through the study.

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

Should you withdraw or otherwise discontinue participation, you will be compensated for the portion of the project completed in accordance with the Compensation section (VI) of this document.

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study's conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at irb@vt.edu or (540) 231-3732.

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_____ Date _____
Subject signature

Subject printed name

(Note: each subject must be provided a copy of this form. In addition, the IRB office may stamp its approval on the consent document(s) you submit and return the stamped version to you for use in consenting subjects; therefore, ensure each consent document you submit is ready to be read and signed by subjects.)

Appendix C

Arabic Informed Consent

جامعة ولاية فرجينيا للتكنولوجيا

تعهد بالموافقة للمشاركين

في مشاريع البحوث التي تنطوي على مواضيع الإنسان

عنوان مشروع البحث: فهم وجهات نظر الآباء اللاجئين السوريين لأوضاع العائلة في الولايات المتحدة بعد الانتقال إليها

الباحثون:

الباحث / سعيد كيانبور
البريد الإلكتروني: saeid@vt.edu
رقم التليفون: 8327445363

الدكتورة/ إيركا جرافسكي
البريد الإلكتروني: erikagrafsky@vt.edu
رقم التليفون: 5408085535

القسم الأول: الغرض من هذا البحث

الغرض من هذه الدراسة البحثية هو التعرف على الأوضاع الأسرية لعائلات اللاجئين السوريين في إنديانابوليس بولاية إنديانا من وجهة نظر الآباء السوريين. تم إجراء هذه الدراسة من قبل "سعيد كيانبور"، كجزء من رسالة الدكتوراه الخاصة به، وسيتم استخدام نتائج الدراسة في مشروع رسالة الدكتوراه والنشر. والدكتورة/ إيركا جرافسكي هي مستشاره في هيئة التدريس وتعتبر المحقق الأساسي في هذه الدراسة في قسم التنمية البشرية وعلوم الأسرة، جامعة فرجينيا للتكنولوجيا. وستتيح المعرفة المكتسبة من هذه الدراسة للمعالجين السوريين واللاجئين ودائرة الهجرة والمنظمات الأخرى فهم أفضل لأسر اللاجئين السوريين، فضلاً عن اقتراح الطرق التي يمكن بها للبرامج تحسين حياة ورخاء هذه الأسر. ستشمل المشاركة مقابلة واحدة مع "سعيد كيانبور"، تستمر لمدة ساعة ونصف تقريباً حيث سنتحدث عن تجارب عائلتك. يجب أن يكون عمر الآباء لا يقل عن 18 عاماً وأن يكون قد تم ترحيلهم خلال العام أو العامين السابقين. و يعيشون حالياً في إنديانابوليس بولاية إنديانا. سيكون العدد الإجمالي للمشاركين في هذه الدراسة ما بين 6 إلى 12 من الآباء السوريين.

القسم الثاني: الإجراءات

سيطلب منك إجراء مقابلة شخصية مع سعيد. عندما تبدأ المقابلة، سيطلب عليك الباحث الأسئلة واحدة تلو الأخرى، وسيكون المترجمون حاضرين لترجمة الأسئلة من الإنجليزية إلى العربية. هذه مقابلة لمرة واحدة تستغرق حوالي ساعة ونصف الساعة. يمكن أن تتم المقابلة في أي مكان تشعر فيه بالراحة سواء في منزلك أو في غرفة خاصة في مدرسة الإيمان أو الجمعيات الخيرية الكاثوليكية في إنديانابوليس. سيستخدم سعيد (الباحث) مسجل صوت رقمي لتسجيل المقابلة. بعد المقابلة، سيتم نسخ تسجيل المقابلة وأي معلومات خاصة بك أو بالموضوع بعد اخفاء هوية صاحبها.

القسم الثالث: المخاطر

هناك العديد من العوامل التي تجعل هذه الدراسة البحثية قد تنطوي على احتمالية حدوث مخاطر لك:

1. ستتم مقابلتك وسوف تناقش المعلومات الشخصية المتعلقة بدورك كأب وبعائلتك كلاجئين في الولايات المتحدة. هناك احتمال أن تشعر بعدم الارتياح أثناء التحدث عن تجاربك أو شرح معلومات عن عائلتك.
2. بما أن هذه الدراسة تتعامل مع القضايا السياسية في بلدك التي تسببت في تركك لسوريا، وطلب المساعدة، وبدء حياة جديدة في الولايات المتحدة، فقد تتأثر عاطفياً حينما تناقش تجاربك كأب.
3. هناك إمكانية لتشعر بالضغط للإجابة على جميع الأسئلة الموجهة اليك أثناء المقابلة.

4. قد يتبين لك أثناء المقابلة بعض المشاكل في العلاقات ، والتي كانت غير واضحة أو غير معترف بها سابقاً ، وذلك بسبب طبيعة أسئلة المقابلة.

5. هناك احتمالية أن يقوم بعض الأفراد العاملين بالمشروع (مثل الباحث والمترجمين) مناقشة هذه المعلومات السرية التي تم جمعها خلال هذه الدراسة البحثية مع الآخرين.

القسم الرابع: الفوائد

قد تشعر بالتحسن عند مناقشتك لتجاربك كأب لاجئ. وقد تكون هذه هي الفرصة الأولى التي سيكون عليك فيها التعبير عن آثار اللجوء القسري على عائلتك. إذا استطاع الباحث تحديد متطالباتك واحتياجاتك ، فسيتم تزويدك بالمزيد من الموارد (مثل الخدمات العلاجية) ، والتي يمكن أن تفيدك أنت وأفراد عائلتك للاستمتاع بحياة أفضل ، ومع العلم أنه لم يتم تقديم أي وعد أو ضمان للمنافع لتشجيعك على المشاركة.

القسم الخامس: مدى المحافظة على سرية المشاركة وهويتك

في حالة أن هناك خطر مشترك الباحث والمترجمون بمعلومات سرية نتيجة لمشاركتك في هذه الدراسة (انظر 5 في القسم الثالث أعلاه) ، سنتخذ عددًا من الخطوات لتقليل هذه المخاطر.

أولاً: سيقوم المترجمون اتفاقية سرية مع الباحث (سعيد) و الدكتورة/ إيركا جرافسكي ، يتعهدون فيها بعدم مشاركة أي معلومات خاصة لديهم حول موضوع المقابلة أو أي معلومات خاصة بكم أو بعائلتكم. هذا أمر مهم لأن المترجمين سيكونون حاضرين للمقابلة وسيكون بإمكانهم الوصول إلى التسجيلات الصوتية والنسخ.

ثانياً: لن يتم تخزين البيانات التي نجعلها منك بطريقة ستحدد هويتكم. ستكون البيانات والنتائج من هذه الدراسة سرية. لن يتم استخدام أي هويات فردية في أي تقارير أو منشورات ناتجة عن الدراسة. سيتم تعيين أرقام تعريف سرية وتخزين جميع التسجيلات الصوتية ونسخ المقابلات بشكل منفصل عن أي أسماء أو تحديد مباشر للمشاركين. لن تظهر أسماء المشاركين في نسخ المقابلة ، وسيتم الاحتفاظ بمعلومات البحث المجمعة في ملفات سرية في جميع الأوقات. سيرتبط اسمك بالبيانات ، من خلال رقم سري ، والتي سيتم الاحتفاظ به في ملف مغلق منفصل عن النصوص وأجهزة تسجيل الصوت. لن يقوم الباحثون في أي وقت بإصدار نتائج محددة للدراسة لأي شخص بخلاف الأفراد الذين يعملون في المشروع دون موافقة كتابية منك. بعد الانتهاء من الدراسة ، سيتم تدمير التسجيلات الصوتية.

سيتم استخدام نتائج الدراسة لأغراض البحث والتعليم فقط. ستظل المعلومات التي يتم جمعها سرية ويمكن استخدامها في المنشورات المستقبلية مثل المجلات ، المقالات أو العروض التقديمية. يمكن إنشاء مثل هذه المنشورات بقصد المساهمة في مجال العلاج الأسري حول عائلات اللاجئين وحياتهم ، فضلاً عن الآثار المترتبة على التدريب والبرمجة.

في بعض الحالات ، قد يكون من الضروري أن يقوم المحقق بكسر السرية. إذا كان لدى أحد الباحثين سبب للاشتباه في أن الطفل يتعرض للإساءة أو الإهمال ، أو أن شخصاً ما يشكل تهديداً بالآخرين أو نفسه ، فإنه يلزم على الباحث في ولاية فرجينيا أن يخطر السلطات المختصة بذلك. قد يقوم مجلس مراجعة المؤسسات في جامعة فرجينيا للتكنولوجيا بمشاهدة بيانات الدراسة لأغراض المراجعة. وهذا المجلس مسؤول عن الإشراف على حماية الأشخاص المشاركين في البحث.

القسم السادس: التعويضات

سيتم دفع 10 دولارات لك لاستكمال جلسات المقابلة. ستحصل على هذا المبلغ ، حتى إذا اخترت الانسحاب جزئياً خلال الدراسة.

القسم السابع: حرية الانسحاب

من المهم أن تعرف أنك حر في الانسحاب من هذه الدراسة في أي وقت بدون عقوبة. أنت حر في عدم الإجابة عن أي أسئلة تختارها أو تستجيب لما يُطلب منك بدون عقوبة.

يرجى ملاحظة أنه قد تكون هناك ظروف قد يحدد فيها الباحث أن الموضوع يجب أن لا يستمر.

إذا قمت بالانسحاب من المشاركة ، فسوف يتم تعويضك عن جزء المشروع المكتمل وفقاً لقسم التعويضات (القسم السادس) من هذا المستند.

القسم الثامن: سئلة أو استفسارات

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة حول هذه الدراسة ، يمكنك الاتصال بأحد الباحثين الذين تم ذكر معلومات الاتصال الخاصة بهم في بداية هذه الوثيقة.

إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو مخاوف بشأن سلوك الدراسة أو حقوقك كموضوع بحث ، أو تحتاج إلى الإبلاغ عن إصابة أو حدث متعلق بالبحث فيمكنك الإتصال بمجلس مراجعة المؤسسات بجامعة فيرجينيا للتكنولوجيا علي 5402313732 أو علي البريد الإلكتروني : irb@vt.edu

القسم التاسع: موافقة الموضوع

لقد قرأت نموذج الموافقة وشروط هذا المشروع. ولقد تم الإجابة على جميع أسئلتي. أقر بهذا أعلاه وأمنح موافقتي الاختيارية:

تاريخ _____

توقيع _____

إسم الموقع المطبوع _____

(ملاحظة: يجب تزويد كل شخص موقع بنسخة من هذا النموذج. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، يجوز لمكتب مراجعة المؤسسات بجامعة فيرجينيا للتكنولوجيا ختم موافقتك على وثيقة (مستندات) الموافقة التي ترسلها وإرجاع النسخة المختومة لك لاستخدامها في مواضيع الموافقة ؛ لذلك ، تأكد من وثيقة الموافقة التي ترسلها جاهزة للقراءة والتوقيع عليها من قبل أشخاص.)

Appendix D

Recruitment Material

Flyer

This is a research study titled “Understanding Syrian Refugee Fathers’ Perspectives of Their Family Dynamics in the U.S. after Displacement”, aiming to learn more about the Syrian fathers’ perspective on their family dynamics. This study is conducted by Saeid Kianpour, as part of his doctoral dissertation. His faculty sponsor is Dr. Erika Grafsky, Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech. The knowledge gained from this study will allow family therapists, refugees and immigration service and other organizations to have a better understanding of refugee families, as well as suggest ways to create programs that can improve refugee families’ wellbeing. We are looking for fathers who are 18 years of age or older from Syrian refugee families, relocated in the last 1 or 2 years as refugees, and currently living in Indianapolis. Each interview is confidential and will last approximately 1.5 hour wherein the father will talk about their family life experiences after displacement.

Saeid Kianpour (the researcher)

Phone #: (832)744-5363

Email: saeid@vt.edu

All the participants will receive a \$10 gift card after the interview.

هذا بحث و دراسه صليه تطبيقه بعنوان : ديناميكية العائلة في تكوين العائلة للاسر السوريه المهاجرة بعد استيطانهم في الولايات المتحده الامريكه وبالخص المهاجرين الذين استوطنوا في مدينة انديانابولس ولايه انديانا يقوم بهذا البحث طالب الدراسات العليا سعيد كيانپور كجزء من بحثه العلمي للحصول على درجة الدكتوراه تحت إشراف الدكتور هاريكا جرافسكي بقسم التطورات الإنسانيه و علم الاسره بكلية فرجينيا البوليتكنيك التابعة لجاسعه فرجينيا بالولايات المريكه المتحده والمعلومات التي سوف نجمعها وندرسها من هذا البحث سوف تساعد الجهات المختصة والمسئولة عن الهجرة وتشمل الجهات المسئولة عن استيطان المهاجرين وفهم احتياجات المهاجرين للعمل على تحسين الخدمات للمهاجرين وتقديم المساعدات التي تعمل على تهيئه المهاجرين للنجاح في حياتهم الجديده في هذا المجتمع الجديد لإنجاز هذا البحث سوف يكون هناك مقابله شخصيه للأفراد الذين يرغبون في الاشتراك في هذا البحث نحن نبحث عن أولئك الذين يتراوح أعمارهم من ١٨ عاما فما فوق من العائلات السوريين المهاجرين. الذين جاءوا كمهاجرين في آخر سنة أو سنتين الأخيرة و يعيشون في انديانابولس. المقابله سوف تكون لمدة ساعة ونصف وفيها سوف نسال عن تجاربك في العمل وفي الحياه الاسريه خلال مرحلة الهجرة والاستيطان وسوف نقدم لك كرت بملغ رمزي مقداره ١٠ دولارات امريكه. شكرًا لكم على المشاركة في هذا الاستفتاء

سعيد كيانپور

تليفون رقم (832)744-5363

العنوان البريدي saeid@vt.edu

التصل بي على هذا الرقم
(832)744-5363
سعيد كيانپور

التصل بي على هذا الرقم
(832)744-5363
سعيد كيانپور

التصل بي على هذا الرقم
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سعيد كيانپور

التصل بي على هذا الرقم
(832)744-5363
سعيد كيانپور

Appendix E

Interpreters Confidential Agreement



Department of Human Development
and Family Science
386 Wallace Hall (0416)
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
540/231-4794 Fax: 540/231-7012
www.humandevlopment.vt.edu

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

Title of Project: Understanding Syrian Refugee Fathers’ Perspectives of Their Family Dynamics in the U.S. after Displacement

Investigator(s): Dr. Erika Grafsky erikagrafsky@vt.edu 540-808-5535
Name E-mail / Phone number

Saeid Kianpour saeid@vt.edu 832-744-536
Name E-mail / Phone number

Purpose of this Research Project

The purpose of this research study is to learn about the family dynamics of Syrian refugee families in Indianapolis, Indiana from the perspective of Syrian fathers. This study is conducted by Saeid Kianpour, as part of his doctoral dissertation and the results of the study will be used for his dissertation project and publication. His faculty advisor and the primary investigator of this study is Dr. Erika Grafsky at the Department of Human Development and Family Science, Virginia Tech.

Confidentiality of any and all participant information is an important part of this study. Saeid and Dr. Grafsky have taken several steps to ensure that the information shared by participants as a result of their voluntary participation in this study is kept confidential. One of these steps is requiring anyone affiliated with this project who will be privy to participant information to sign a confidentiality agreement:

As a translator on this project, I agree to treat all participant-related information with strictest confidence and will not reveal any information of any kind associated with this project to any source.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

If you have any questions, please contact Saied or Dr. Grafsky using the contact information at the top of this document.

Appendix F

Data Collection Materials**Interview Schedule**

I'm interested in hearing about your family, your role as a father, and how your family life has changed since moving to the US.

1. To start, tell me about your family when you lived in Syria.
 - 1.1. How would you describe your family life before you came to the US?
2. How has your family life changed since moving to the US?
 - 2.1. Potential Probe... (*Point to work, family gatherings, extended family...*)
 - 2.2. What aspect of your family life has been affected the most?
 - 2.2.1. Potential Probe... (*Point to social, cultural, economical...aspects*)
 - 2.3. How do you treat your wife differently since moving to the US?
 - 2.3.1. How does she treat you differently?
 - 2.4. How do you treat your children differently since moving to the US?
 - 2.4.1. How do they treat you differently?
 - 2.5. How are you (yourself) different since moving to the US?
 - 2.5.1. What parts of you are similar/different from before?
3. What does being a man look like in Syria?
 - 3.1. What does being a father look like in Syria?
 - 3.2. How do you see your role as a Syrian father?
 - 3.3. What about your role as a father are you most proud of?
4. What does being a father look like in the US?

- 4.1. Do you see any differences between Syrian fathers and American fathers?
 - 4.1.1. How is it different?
- 4.2. What are the challenges of being a father in the US?
- 4.3. What is the most difficult part of being a father in the US?
5. When a conflict or disagreement happens in your family, how do you solve it?
 - 5.1. Is there anything different in how you would have solved it previously?
 - 5.2. What do you think is the main reason you have conflicts or disagreements in your family now?
 - 5.3. Do you know anyone to whom you usually refer for help to solve this conflict?
 - 5.4. What happens to you when you experience conflict or disagreements in your family?
6. What do you think about war and your family? How are they related to each other?
7. If you could change one thing about how your family gets along since being in the US, what would it be?

Appendix G

SAGE Publication's Permission

Saeid <saeid@vt.edu>

Ask for permission to adopt a table

permissions (US) <permissions@sagepub.com>
To: Saeid <saeid@vt.edu>

Tue, Aug 28, 2018 at 11:31 AM

Dear Saeid,

Thank you for your response. Both the figure and the table you requested were originally published in the second edition of this book, so please properly credit this version (*Family Stress Management*, Second Edition by Pauline Boss (2002), 9780803973909). The table labeled "Classification of Stressor Events and Situations" is found on p. 51 as Table 3.1 in the second edition of the book. Additionally, the figure labeled "The Contextual Model of Family Stress" is found on p. 40 as Figure 3.1 in the second edition of the book.

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