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# Organizational collaboration and its impact on immigrants and refugees in Louisville.

Elizabeth Burdette Roberts
*University of Louisville*

ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION AND ITS IMPACT ON IMMIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES IN LOUISVILLE

By

Elizabeth Burdette Roberts
B.S., College of Charleston, 2014

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By the following Thesis Committee:


_____
Thesis Director
Derrick Brooms, Ph.D.


_____
David Roelfs, Ph.D.


_____
Aaron Rollins, Ph.D.

DEDICATION


This thesis is dedicated to my parents


Rev. James Burdette

and

Mrs. Marjorie Burdette


who instilled in me the importance of asking questions.

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ABSTRACT


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To understand the impact of collaboration on internationals' integration experiences, this study captures the stories of supporting organizations and Somali refugees in Louisville, KY. The study utilized in-depth interviews and participant observations to analyze the programs and services offered by three supporting organizations, the partnerships they have formed in the community, and the impact the partnerships have on the challenges immigrants and refugees face during the integration process. Non-profit organizations, tasked by the government and communities to support internationals in their integration, face limited resources and capacity, which local partnerships help alleviate. The collaboration relies on relational embeddedness and a shared mission or benefit. Findings demonstrate the necessity of a network of partnerships to meet the needs of this unique population, and the research has policy and programmatic implications for similar organizations and communities.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Immigration has shaped the United States since the birth of the country.

Traditionally, immigrants came to the United States through two coastal ports of entry,

Ellis Island and Angel Island. Today, both immigrants and refugees coming to the United

States settle in a wide range of states and cities through modern ports of entry which

include airports and land- and sea-based borders. In cities where a large immigrant and

refugee population is relatively new, the surge of foreign-born newcomers has a

significant impact on local communities and individuals, particularly if integration is not

a high priority in the community. On several occasions, the United States has been called

a "nation of immigrants," emphasizing how our population has been comprised of people

coming to U.S. from other countries ever since our nation was founded. Our society

thrives because of our ability to absorb newcomers in the past.

Currently, the issues of immigration and refugee resettlement are important not

only in the field of sociology but also in the greater society. The conversation is certainly

an essential one to have, but it is also a deeply dividing issue for many, both within

American communities and the field of study. Little is understood about the integration

process for refugees and immigrants outside of the idea that it is complex, challenging,

and differs for each individual and family. This research study will focus on

understanding the integration process for immigrants and refugees in Louisville, KY,

through a mixed-methods qualitative approach. The two questions guiding my study are:

(1) *How are organizations serving immigrants and refugees in Louisville connected* and

(2) *What are the outcomes of the organizational cooperation on their target population?*

Louisville saw a 242% increase in the foreign-born population from 2000-2010, per a Metropolitan Policy Program study (Wilson and Svajlenka 2014). Although the most recent census data available has Louisville's foreign-born population at 6.5% of the entire MSA, this number is likely higher due to underestimates of undocumented immigrants and the recent influx of refugees. At the time of the study, the Kentucky Office for Refugees anticipated that Louisville will receive nearly 2,500 refugees in the coming fiscal year, up by approximately 400 compared to trends from the past three years. This rapid increase may greatly impact the diversity of the city, but it does little to ensure that the community is offering needed programs and services, is welcoming and receptive to this population, or is prepared to assist with the integration process. The brunt of the responsibility for integrating internationals falls on supporting organizations, including refugee resettlement agencies and local non-profits.

For this study, it is important to address some of the terms used. "Immigrant" and "refugee" refer specifically to people who "voluntarily" immigrate to the U.S. and people who are resettled in the U.S. as refugees, respectively. When referring to both groups, I will use the terms foreign-born, internationals, or newcomers to be inclusive of both experiences. Receiving communities are those communities where immigrants and refugees settle. As integration is a key part of this proposal, I will differentiate the integration process from assimilation. Integration is an incorporation of newcomers into a receiving community that does not necessitate a complete (or even partial) transformation to the receiving community's culture. Assimilation, on the other hand, is an expected or

required transformation by the newcomer to the receiving community's culture. This study focuses on how newcomers integrate into receiving communities and how supporting organizations facilitate this process by providing services and forming partnerships in the community.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Current and recent literature surrounding migration studies highlights the differing experiences, the impact of government policies, the efforts of non-profit organizations, the purpose and function of social support networks, and the role of network analysis in understanding organizational collaboration. Overall, the trends in the literature frame this study and identify gaps that this research can fill.

*Diversity of Integration Experiences*

The many social identifiers that internationals bring to the United States have been shown to affect entrance and integration to the United States. First, there are important distinctions between refugees and immigrants in how they come to the U.S., but there are also distinctions in their experiences once in the U.S. (Cortes 2004; BenEzer and Zetter 2014). Kalena Cortes (2004) focuses on economic success to show that refugees eventually surpass economic immigrants because refugees have more reason to build country-specific human capital. Her study demonstrates how refugees tend to make greater gains improving their English skills and economic situation because, unlike economic immigrants, they often do not have the option to return to their home country.

Taking a different methodological approach, BenEzer and Zetter (2014) analyze refugee narratives to argue that the refugee journey is itself a unique process, time, and space in a refugee's life, presenting unique conceptual and methodological challenges for researchers. BenEzer and Zetter assert that comparing the refugee and immigrant experience in coming to the United States necessitates evaluating the transformative

effects of the actual refugee journey. These differences make it difficult to study cities with large groups of both refugees and immigrants, as Jamie Winders (2006) identifies in her case study of Nashville, TN. The mix of immigrants and refugees has complicated policies and services there, but several Nashville non-profit agencies have found ways to unite the two groups toward a common cause of changing programs and policies to reduce integration challenges.

Other researchers have addressed differences between genders. Women, according to Scott and Cartledge (2009), are more likely than men to assimilate, interviewing migrant women in Europe who are examples of "extreme" assimilation, meaning that they married someone from their new home. However, Ryan Allen (2009) counters this argument. Using data from adult refugees in Maine, he finds that while free case female refugees increase their social networks and economic stability over time, reunification case female refugees find their intimate social networks pulling them away from the labor market. Both free and reunification case male refugees increased their economic stability over time, likely because they face different social expectations than women.

For Somali families, the difference in gender roles begins with the fact that there are more female-headed households in the United States than in Somalia (Boyle and Ali 2010). Somali women are expected to work solely in the home in Somalia, but in the United States, we see that many women are employed outside of the home. Trends have shown that Somali women are more likely than Somali men to have attained employment in the United States and that Somali women emphasizing gender equality in areas such as household chores has strained spousal relations for Somali families (Boyle and Ali 2010).

Overall, it is important to consider the vast variation in experiences when studying refugees and immigrants in the United States.

*The Impact of Government Policies*

Governments play an important role in migration, forming and implementing policies that greatly affect the lives of internationals in the United States. Beyond entrance into the U.S., governmental policies shape the integration process. Julie Stewart (2012) points out that the federal government has historically been the gatekeeper for newcomers, but, as the federal government has not passed comprehensive immigration policies, many state governments have implemented their own policies. One of the most infamous is Arizona's SB 1070, which outlined strict anti-immigration enforcement and higher border security, paving the way for similar and counter bills in other states. For example, Stewart (2012) looks at a counter bill in Utah, HB 36, that allowed undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. A state government making such policies as these affects the lives of their immigrant and refugee populations because they open and close various opportunities available to U.S.-born people.

At the local level, police departments are a manifestation of how welcoming a community might be toward internationals, according to Linda Williams (2015). Because of the recent shift to community policing, Williams emphasizes the police departments' role in establishing how a community treats immigrants and refugees. Her study is one of the first to use the concept of "welcomeness" to evaluate the integration process, and she raises several questions about how dimensions of welcomeness could be extended to other agencies, what conditions shape the welcomeness of a community, and how immigrants perceive welcoming (or unwelcoming) practices. Welcomeness refers not

only to equal treatment of internationals regardless of status or ability to speak English but also to taking affirmative steps to make services available and accessible to newcomers. At the local, state, and federal levels, legislation and enforcement set the tone for receiving communities of refugees and immigrants.

*The Role of Non-Profit Organizations*

Typically, non-profit organizations are responsible for refugee resettlement in the United States. The State Department, once refugees are cleared for entry to the United States, shares the responsibility with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) who partners with nine national voluntary agencies: Church World Services, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Hebrew Immigration Aid Society, International Rescue Committee, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Lutheran Immigration Refugee Services, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and World Relief Corporation. Each of these national organizations has local affiliates working on the ground to resettle refugees.

Because these non-profit agencies have such an important impact on refugees when they are initially resettled, studies examine how they mediate between government and people, demonstrating that these agencies are crucial to ensuring a successful immigration, not only at the point of entry but also for the long-term integration (Mott 2010; Sidney 2014). They do this by supplementing social networks and economic assistance, which many recently settled refugees do not have. To measure the impact of non-profit organizations on movements of internationals in the U.S., Brown, Mott, and Malecki (2007) create profiles of urban areas to show how the existence of a strong network of non-profits working with the foreign-born population typically decrease the

odds of secondary migration, or, in some cases, intentionally increase secondary migration through purposeful dispersal policies. According to Brown et al.'s (2007) analysis, Louisville, KY, has similar refugee and immigrant population characteristics as more than ten other MSAs, including Boston, Jacksonville, Rochester, and Seattle to mention a few. Their focus, however, rests only on refugee resettlement agencies and does not take into account other organizations that support internationals.

Because networks seem crucial to ensuring positive integration experiences, Mullins and Jones (2009) use a network management approach to mapping how organizations work together to assist with the housing process for refugees. Their study, though, is limited in that it does not address the network's outcomes related to housing refugees. While government policies are certainly important, it seems that non-profit organizations in communities, including these refugee resettlement agencies, play a larger role in the success of refugees' and immigrants' integration.

*Social Support Networks for Internationals*

The research on non-profits' role in integration assumes that social support networks improve the integration experience. These support networks take various forms but are essential to understanding integration processes. Much of the literature on refugees and immigrants' experiences integrating focuses on social capital because it is often used as a causal factor in how much an individual has integrated. Studies have demonstrated that co-ethnic social ties decrease earnings for female refugees, likely because they feel those social ties pulling them away from the labor market; male refugees feel ties pulling them toward the labor market and social capital based in the host country may be primarily beneficial for them (Allen 2009). To further nuance the

impact of social capital on integration, Sorana Toma (2015) differentiates between bridging and bonding social capital, which relates to extended kin and close kin respectively. Bonding social capital may lead to strong ties and increased economic opportunities in the short-term while bridging social capital is more valuable in the long-term for refugees. Somalis tend to only have close kin in their receiving community, and they may attempt to construct a "family imaginary" with co-ethnics to supplement their limited social ties (Robertson, Wilding, and Gifford 2016).

Social capital can be essential to refugees' integration experiences because they typically do not have human or financial capital. Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola, and Reuter (2006) distinguish between host and ethnic sources of support in their study, focusing on the effect of perceived discrimination on psychological wellbeing and finding that host support networks (such as non-profit organizations based in the receiving community) mediate discrimination in positive ways and that ethnic support networks are only beneficial in some circumstances. Lamba and Krahn (2003) found in a study of refugees in Canada that most refugees had left family members behind and many planned to sponsor a family member to join them. Familial ties were important to these refugees in solving financial and personal problems, whereas they typically turned to extra-familial ties (often resettlement agencies and case workers) for help solving employment and health-related problems (Lamba and Krahn 2003; Forrest and Brown 2014; Makwarimba, Stewart, Simich, Makumbe, Shizha, and Anderson 2013).

We see a similar effect for Latino/a immigrants in a study by Potocky-Tripodi (2004) where co-ethnic social networks help with initial success finding employment but contact with government agencies helps with receiving public assistance. In this way, we

see that while pre-existing social capital from families and co-ethnics may be beneficial in some circumstances, when it comes to navigating cultural systems, it is important to construct social capital based in the host country as well. Somalis come from a country with a dense network of social ties based out of extended family and are arriving in a country with limited social ties (Lehman and Eno 2003). Reconstructing these social ties, especially in the absence of extended family, are important to all around well-being, including employment, mental health, housing, child care, family conflicts, language, and more.

*Organizational Relationships*

Within the United States' system of capitalism and the free market, competition among organizations is prevalent. Though the literature does not focus specifically on non-profits, we can infer that concepts applied to for-profit organizations are in some ways transferrable to not-for-profits. Competition – and ultimately the threat of extinction – drives organizational learning and adaptation (Greve 2003). For non-profits, the threat of extinction is less about being taken over by a competing organization and more about competing for limited resources, especially funding. Organizational change can be risky, which is a reason inertia has traditionally been celebrated and pursued, but Barnett (2008) asserts that there are different types of change, and, if pursued wisely, change can increase the organization's competitiveness.

On the other hand, organizational theory also addresses collaboration and partnerships among organizations. Gulati argues that collaboration is essential to leverage network resources, referring to "key external constituents including…partners, suppliers, and customers" (2007: 3). Gulati argues that partnerships can span a spectrum of

significance and that it is important to understand the nature and scope of interorganizational networks, but his definition of partnership involves conscious relationship among organizations in a network. To form and maintain networks relies on available resources but can lead to an expansion of available resources and capacity. He conceptualizes factors that allow for increased network resources and collaboration, such as pre-existing common partners and a strong cooperative spirit. Importantly, underlying the purpose of collaboration is the claim that organizations perform better with they have a higher relational and structural embeddedness.

Burt (2005) utilizes an even more narrow understanding of partnership in the sense that he defines it as a closed relationship that is, or should be, intentionally leveraged by a broker, which could include executives or street-level bureaucrats. Organizational literature considers the stakeholders in an organization when analyzing a partnership, network, or collaboration. The definitions of "stakeholders" vary in the literature, with Burt (2005) relying on a narrow definition and Post, Preston, and Sachs (2002) conceptualizing a broader definition that includes the resource base, industry structure, and social-political arena, which informs the boundaries of the organization and the partnering network. Within these varying definitions, though, there is a common understanding that partnerships are recognized by and have a non-negligible impact on both, or all, organizations involved (Gulati 2007; Burt 2005; Post et al. 2002).

Relational embeddedness refers to interpersonal ties and stands alongside structural, or social, embeddedness, which is a measure of indirect interpersonal ties (Granovetter 1992). These forms of embeddedness constrain actions and make resources available. Too much of either form of embeddedness, coined as "tight coupling," can be

excessively constrictive and too little embeddedness, or "loose coupling," can be limiting in terms of opportunities and resources (Granovetter 1992; Uzzi 1997). Burt (2005) addresses the delicate balance of determining the value of interpersonal relationships and organizational collaboration, arguing that organizations and individuals must weigh the ultimate cost and benefit of each relationship by looking at existing structural holes and redundant social ties. Social ties are an important form of social capital that can be, per Pierre Bourdieu (1986), transformed into economic capital. For example, interpersonal ties within and across organizations can increase access to new knowledge. Gulati (2007) asserts that relational embeddedness is a richer source of reliable information while structural embeddedness is tied more to reputation and trust. Overall, the literature suggests that relational and structural embeddedness are indicators of the quantity and quality of partnerships for organizations.

To make network analysis more relevant for community partnerships, Provan, Veazie, Staten, and Teufel-Shone (2005) reframe key terms, concepts, and issues from network analysis into questions that can be utilized in a community setting. Their questions include evaluating the sustainability of ties based on whether they are based on personal relationships or more formal agreements, outlining expectations at the basis of the partnerships, identifying the costs and benefits of the partnerships, and understanding the level of trust within the partnership, ultimately applying concepts of organizational theory traditionally used in for-profit terms to the non-profit sector. Provan et al. argue that network analysis has been largely inaccessible for those involved in communities beyond the business world. Their article gives an overview of network analysis and will be used in developing the themes for this study.

In current literature, the evaluation of social capital and social support networks for internationals is prevalent but is not located in the United States or it utilizes quantitative analyses of census data. Current research lacks personal narratives and a comprehensive understanding of forms of social support. The importance of social support networks in the integration process will inform my study. Social support often takes the form of family and co-ethnic relations, providing social capital to people with limited human and financial capital.

As noted, the literature is currently missing in-depth studies of the effects of networks of government, non-profit organizations, and communities on the integration process for immigrants and refugees. There is a lack of research with qualitative data about immigrants' and refugees' experiences integrating into U.S. cities. This is because much of the research is focused on entry to the United States and/or quantitative data about immigrant and refugee groups. These gaps will inform my research.

I used an inductive approach, basing my predominant theoretical framework on the actual data obtained. This approach offers "an *interpretive* portrayal of the studied world," enabling me to glimpse the integration process from an emic perspective and gather rich data (Charmaz 2014:17). Corresponding to the inductive approach, I used iterative inductive analysis, a "succession of question-and-answer cycles" that will allow me to identify trends, verify those trends, and confirm the findings (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:431).

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

To explore the research questions, I utilized a mixed-methods approach, focusing on three organizations that provide programs and services to immigrants and refugees in Louisville, KY: Americana Community Center, an independent non-profit; Kentucky Refugee Ministries, a refugee resettlement agency partnered with the national Episcopal Migration Ministries and Church World Service; and Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services, a refugee resettlement agency and local affiliate of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. These organizations were selected because each provides a wide range of comprehensive services targeted primarily at the immigrant and/or refugee population in Louisville.

*Research Organizations*

Americana Community Center was founded in 1990 by the current Executive Director, and its stated mission is to provide holistic services to Louisville's refugee, immigrant and underserved population to build strong and healthy families, create a safe and supportive community and help every individual realize their potential. Americana's target populations include refugees who have been in the U.S. for three or more months, recent immigrants, and low-income U.S.-born individuals. The organization is an independent non-profit that receives no federal funding. Instead, their primary funding comes from local foundations and corporations and individual donors. The organization is strictly non-religious and is not affiliated with any national organizations. Americana has a small staff of less than ten full-time individuals and ten to fifteen part-time individuals.

Catholic Charities of Louisville is a large umbrella organization with nine smaller departments, one of which is Migration and Refugee Services, or MRS, the focus of this study. Catholic Charities of Louisville is affiliated with the Archdiocese of Louisville and Catholic Charities, USA, a national, private human services network in the United States. While Catholic Charities, USA, was established in 1910, the local Migration and Refugee Services component was founded in 1975. The mission of Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services is to provide refugees with the support and assistance they need in order to become self-sufficient, involving, organizing, and bringing together the agency, church, and community resources necessary for successful resettlement. The target population served by Catholic Charities MRS is newly resettled refugees, as assigned to them by the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Kentucky Office of Refugees. Catholic Charities primarily relies on federal funding through their affiliates and is, as the name and mission suggest, connected to the Catholic Church. The staff working in the MRS department include approximately twenty-five full-time individuals and five part-time individuals.

Kentucky Refugee Ministries, or KRM, was founded in 1990 as a non-profit organization in Louisville. Its stated mission is to provide resettlement services to refugees through faith- and agency-based co-sponsorship in order to promote self-sufficiency and successful integration into our community. The organization's target population, like Catholic Charities, is newly resettled refuges who are assigned to KRM. KRM is affiliated with Episcopal Migration Ministries and Church World Services, two national voluntary agencies (VOLAGs). While not directly affiliated with a religious denomination, the organization has strong connections with Protestant faith communities,

especially Presbyterian churches because of the founder's religious preference. KRM has

offices in Louisville and Lexington, and the office in Louisville has over sixty full- and

part-time staff members. KRM's funding comes primarily from federal sources with

some local community funders.

*Research Methodology*

After identifying the organizations, I interviewed staff members from each: three

from Americana Community Center, four from Catholic Charities, and three from

Kentucky Refugee Ministries. These interviewees were initially sampled using purposive

sampling, which led to snowball sampling as I asked each interviewee to recommend a

colleague. Each interview lasted between forty-five minutes and one hour. While my goal

was to interview one director-level staff member at each organization, I was unable to get

a response from one of the organizations' Executive Directors. The other eight interviews

were with "street-level bureaucrats," or people who are providing direct services to

participants (Lipsky 2010). These semi-structured interviews focused on the

organization's services, partnerships, and experience with "successful" and

"unsuccessful" partnerships (see Appendix A).  I was primarily interested in

understanding the work of the organizations "from the inside," which semi-structured in-

depth interviews allowed me to gain (Charmaz 2014:24).

The interviewees at the organizations were largely female and young apart from

those in executive positions who were male and older. This is fairly representative of the

organizations' staffs. Many of the interviewees had worked or interned at one of the

home organizations other than the one where they were currently employed. Their

experience working with immigrants/refugees ranged from a year and a half to more than

twenty years. The interviewees included caseworkers, directors, program directors, grant coordinators, program staff, and outreach coordinators.

During this interviewing process, I took advantage of three collaborative events that interviewees suggested I attend, conducting participant observation and recording field notes for each. Two events were hosted Americana Community Center and one was hosted by Kentucky Refugee Ministries and Catholic Charities. Each event focused on community collaboration and there were numerous partners in attendance at each. The participant observations allowed me to begin triangulating the data from my interviews, confirming what partnerships and collaboration look like for the three home organizations.

The first event I attended was at Americana Community Center on the evening of November 15th. It was a quickly put-together event in response to the recent election of then-President-Elect Trump, designed to demonstrate the community's support for immigrants and refugees and to catalyze collaboration around this issue. It was an informal and conversational gathering. Those in attendance included staff from all three home organizations and several of the partnering organizations. The second event was the Quarterly Community Consultation meeting held at Jefferson Community and Technical College by Catholic Charities and Kentucky Refugee Ministries on the morning of December 16th. The meeting was led by staff at both organizations, with a formal agenda followed by time for questions from the audience. The audience was comprised of people from some of the partnering organizations and important businesses in the area. The final event was a brainstorming session held on the morning of January 19th at Americana Community Center but organized by faculty from a local college. The conversation was

informal and I was more of a participant than an observer at this event only. Staff from all three home organizations and several partnering organizations were in attendance.

The final step was to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with five Somali refugees who had participated in programs offered by at least one of the home organizations. I used snowball sampling with this population, asking for recommendations from staff at the organizations I interviewed. While I faced some resistance from a few staff members who cited that they frequently get interview requests and have stopped facilitating that for their participants, I was able to use my previous experience working within the network of organizations and with Somalis to connect to interview participants. The interviews lasted between twenty and forty-five minutes. I chose to focus on Somali refugees because my research showed that each of the home organizations has worked continuously with this population since the 1990s. I narrowed my sample of immigrants and refugees to this population to find people with more closely similar experiences and to eliminate other potential variations. These interviews focused on experiences coming to Louisville, what programs and services were helpful for them, and the challenges they still see for immigrants/refugees (see Appendix B). These interviews provided a different perspective on the impact of organizational collaborations for a small sample of the target population of participants. My qualifying criteria for Somali interviewees was that they were born in Somalia and identified ethnically as Somali, had been in Louisville for at least five years, and had utilized services from at least one of the supporting organizations.

The Somalis I interviewed included two men in their twenties and three women in their thirties. All except one of the men had families. Only one interviewee worked full-

time and two were currently unemployed. Their English language skills varied vastly; while I needed an interpreter to interview two of the women, one of the men is an interpreter for one of the agencies. The time they have been in the U.S. ranged from eight to twenty-one years. Because the interviews focused on the participants recalling what programs and services helped them since initially resettling in the U.S., it is likely that recall bias affected the data collected from these interviews. Despite this, the data demonstrates which programs and services are significant enough in their integration experiences to leave a lasting effect. Two of the interviewees came directly to Louisville, KY, and the others were secondary migrants. The secondary migrants had all spent time in Seattle, WA, and in Minnesota, which provided an important comparison for the integration experience in Louisville versus other areas with larger Somali populations.

All interview participants gave informed consent and signed a consent form before beginning the interview (Appendix C). For two Somali participants with limited English proficiency, I utilized an interpreter for the duration of the interview. All the participants except one gave me permission to audio-record the interviews to transcribe later. Names and identifiers of the staff members and refugees interviewed have been redacted for confidentiality purposes. If I publish this research, I will use pseudonyms for the supporting organizations, as well. For the organizational staff interviewees, I conducted the interviews at their offices, where the programs and services are also offered. This allowed me to also understand the capacity of the organization and how they offer their programs and services. For the refugee interviewees, I conducted one at the office of a religiously-based organization where the interviewee worked, three at Americana Community Center where they were participating in English classes, and one

at Kentucky Refugee Ministries where the interviewee worked as an interpreter. The location of these interviews was essential to ensure they were in a familiar and comfortable environment, especially because none of the refugee interviewees had ever participated in a research study before.

I used an inductive approach, basing my predominant theoretical framework on the actual data obtained. This approach offers "an interpretive portrayal of the studied world," enabling me to glimpse the integration process from an emic perspective and gather rich data (Charmaz 2014:17). Corresponding to the inductive approach, I used iterative inductive analysis, a "succession of question-and-answer cycles" that will allow me to identify trends, verify those trends, and confirm the findings (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:431). To do this, I used the ATLAS.ti software to identify codes and themes appearing in the interviews and field notes. I focused most heavily on the interviews with organization staff, relying on the interviews with refugees and the field notes to verify the themes arising in the other interviews. After the initial coding, I created families within ATLAS.ti to group similar codes and identify the largest themes that would become the focus of my findings.

It is important to understand the socio-political climate at the time of data collection. Approximately half of my interviews occurred prior to the election of President Donald Trump, whose platform included policies that many of my interviewees considered anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim. Because of this, the tone of interviews changed and are markedly pre- and post-election results. All the interviews, though, occurred before executive orders in the first month of the Trump administration that halted all refugee resettlement and banned travel to and from seven countries, one of

which was Somalia. The following findings are a snapshot of organizational collaboration at the time of the study.

*Researcher Positionality*

My interest in this research stemmed from a year serving at Americana Community Center as an AmeriCorps VISTA prior to beginning my research. During my time at Americana, I did form connections that I leveraged in accessing the other two supporting organizations during my study. However, I had greater ease of access and increased familiarity of Americana Community Center because of my prior experience there. Throughout the research process, I relied solely on the data obtained from interviews and participant observation for this study and used inductive analysis to ensure my findings were rooted in the data regardless of my position as a researcher.

Furthermore, my social identifiers are important to note. Being a young, white woman meant that I was similar to most of the street-level bureaucrats I interviewed and dissimilar to the Somali refugees I interviewed. The organization staff therefore likely felt very comfortable with me. Indeed, there was a high level of familiarity with the interviewees, especially when I mentioned that I had previously worked at Americana Community Center. In many ways, this allowed me to gain credibility with the interviewees. On the other hand, my dissimilarity from the Somali interviewees was somewhat of a limitation. They certainly viewed me as an outsider and a few of them, particularly those who had lower levels of English, expressed suspicion of my intentions for interviewing them. I did feel I was able to navigate the difference to an extent because of prior experience working with internationals and the reference from organization staff. However, it is possible that because I am white and in some ways associated with the

supporting organizations, the Somali interviewees were more reserved in responses about programs and services that did not work.

My status as a graduate student opened doors for me in several instances. For example, a couple of the organization staff, especially director-level individuals, were hesitant to agree to an interview until I told them I was a graduate student. Because of the socio-political climate, I anticipate that they were receiving an increase in requests for interviews, and in contrast to this, my status as a graduate student legitimated my request. While I explained to the Somali interviewees that I was a graduate student doing research, it did not seem to have much of an effect outside of reassuring them that I was not a journalist. In this way, the Somali interviewees seemed to be more responsive to my questions. Overall, my position as a researcher certainly has both costs and benefits, but I was able to navigate these to arrive at the following findings.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS


Using these methods, the primary themes that arose centered on the
comprehensive services provided by supporting organizations, the challenges
internationals face, the value of partnerships, and the areas where internationals' needs
are not being met. Through these themes, I will argue that supporting organizations
provide programs and services based on the actual needs of refugees and immigrants in
their communities and that supporting organizations collaborate to expand their limited
capacity.

*Toward Self-Sufficiency: Programs and Services Supporting Organizations Provide*

The supporting organizations I studied served refugees and/or immigrants by
providing programs and services either during the initial resettlement period – usually
three to eight months – or beyond the initial resettlement period. As refugee resettlement
agencies, Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services and Kentucky Refugee
Ministries are limited by their funding agencies to serving refugees, asylum-seekers,
parolees, and secondary migrants for a limited resettlement period. Their programs and
services focus on immediate self-sufficiency and rely on a team of caseworkers, case
managers, and specialists addressing employment, housing, and more. Americana
Community Center, as an independent non-profit, chooses to serve refugees, immigrants,
and low-income individuals, with a focus on foreign-born families. Their programs and
services seem to pick up where the refugee resettlement agencies must leave off because
of staff and funding limitations, focusing on more long-term self-sufficiency and fewer

direct services. Americana Community Center has a smaller staff and thus provide less intensive services. Despite these differences, all three supporting organizations provide programs and services with similar goals and based on the unique challenges of being an international in the U.S. (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. A comparison of the programs and services provided by the supporting organizations.
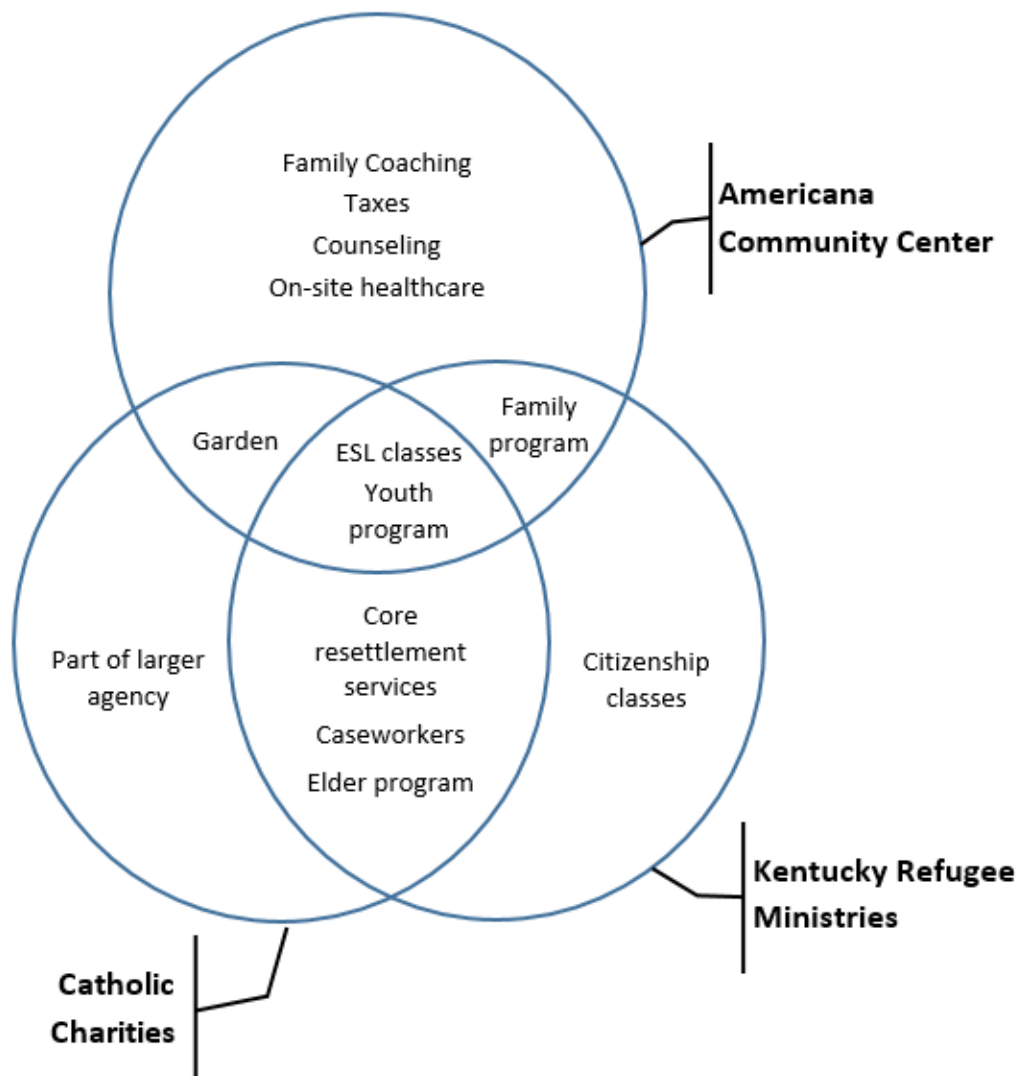
The two refugee resettlement agencies I studied – Catholic Charities and

Kentucky Refugee Ministries – provide core resettlement services, which are standard for

every refugee resettlement agency who receives funding from the Department of

Homeland Security. A staff member at Catholic Charity described the core resettlement

services as such, "So we provide those resettlement services from airport pick-up,

orientation, housing to referral to public benefits and referral to an employment program.

Uh, health screenings and [inaudible] services, such as school registration for the

children, plus cultural orientation" (Interview 2).

The other major service provided by these organizations is cash assistance and

longer-term, employment-focused services through Wilson Fish funding. Beyond those

standard services, they are able to provide additional programs based on the needs of the

people being served and available grant funding, which, for both resettlement agencies,

includes a youth program, a family program, a joint elder program, and mentoring

programs. These programs and services are limited to the initial resettlement period,

which is 90 days for most refugees and can be up to 240 days for refugees with more

intensive casework needs. Clients, as they are called by organization staff, are assigned to

a specific agency and caseworker by the Office of Refugee Resettlement. One of the staff

at Catholic Charities described the initial services in this way:

> We have a team of caseworkers and they handle a lot of initial stuff, like when
> they first arrive, airport pickups, make sure that families have apartments. We
> have a housing coordinator and that's his whole job, to find apartments for people
> before they arrive. And then, they go through, the families go through a series of
> orientations their first week. We also offer cultural orientations every Friday,
> English classes every day, um, then we have our youth services team. We have a
> whole employment team, um, that does, they just have connections with local
> employers to help find our clients jobs and get ready to seek a job. Um [pauses]
> then we have our whole donation center with all of that stuff. (Interview 1)

The structure of the organization – divided by different programs and services – holds true for both Catholic Charities and Kentucky Refugee Ministries. In this quote, the interviewee describes the extensive service offerings, which are often compartmentalized to the point that people involved in one program, such as the youth program, may not be as familiar with the other programs and services. The services, as the interviewee points out, include case management, housing, cultural orientations, English classes, donations, and employment services. The network of programs and services is designed to support refugees in their resettlement and prepare them to become self-sufficient in their new hometown.

Americana Community Center, as an independent non-profit, offers programs and services that are not mandated by a federal agency or limited by the resettlement period. The programs and services seem less focused on meeting initial needs and more on equipping refugees and immigrants to deal with long-term challenges. One staff member described the battery of services like this:

> We provide a lot of educational and social resources for the participants in our programs. So we have adult English as a Second Language classes, we have GED classes, we have, uh, Family Education where children get homework help or specific programming related to kindergarten readiness in tandem with their parents attending an ESL program and a parent education program. We have an after-school program that helps children with homework and college readiness and just general enrichment. We have a garden club, not a garden club, sorry, a garden, a community garden where people can come and participate in that way, grow food, sell food if they choose. We have a Fiberworks program where women can come together, learn English, learn a fiber art, um potentially sell whatever they make or use whatever they make at home. [Someone knocks on the door asking for the interviewee and she says she'll come in a little bit.] That's the other thing. People just come in whenever they want. There's no schedule. (Interview 7)

Other programs and services mentioned by the staff included counseling, free tax assistance, on-site partners, and coaching, which is when participants (so called by

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organization staff) work alongside a Family Coach to set and achieve personal goals. Participants are not assigned to the agency but learn about the programs and services primarily through word of mouth in the immigrant and refugee community.

All three organizations strive to provide comprehensive programs and services informed by the actual challenges immigrants and refugees face. Because of this, sometimes the way programs and services are offered changes:

> Interviewee: But, also it was right when ORR (Office of Refugee Resettlement) started to emphasize the need for holistic needs management. So we were switching from an employment model to a holistic self-sufficiency model. Um, so they created this new, um, document or I guess paradigm called the family self-sufficiency plan which previously had been called by the resettlement entities the resettlement employment plan. And now it's the family self-sufficiency plan.
> Researcher: Did the focus shift too?
> Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. And um before it was a pretty wide open template. It was like, what are you going to do to help this family become self-sufficient? I'm going to help them find a job, they're going to take English classes and good luck. That's the plan (Interview 6, Kentucky Refugee Ministries)

In this quote, the interviewee explains how the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the federal office overseeing resettlement, made an ideological shift from employment as the end goal of resettlement to a more holistic, self-sufficiency model. The new model removes the assumption that simply being employed full-time is an indicator of self-sufficiency for recently resettled refugees, which is a misperception the interviewee discussed at length. The other organizations went through similar processes, basing what they did and did not offer on the actual needs they observed in the lives of their clients or participants.

When I asked the Somali interviewees about programs and services that were helpful to them, they focused most on the initial needs. One participant, a married Somali man in his 20s who came to the U.S. as a high schooler, stated:

[Supporting organizations] play a good role, especially when we came the first week. They gave us an orientation, like how to live, how to save money, what are the things you're going to need, how to pay your bills. They teach us how to get a medical card, how to get your social security card, identifications, they help you out how to get those informations. That is the only place you need to go sometimes to get information. They were really helpful. It was pretty tight. There's so many people. I understand they have a limited time to help people, but at that time, it was not a lot of people like now so we had a chance to, and yeah, it is a place if you need help, you go and ask for help and they help you out. They will help you for a period of time and after that, you have to help yourself. (Interview 10)

Here, the interviewee notes that the supporting organization was a one-stop shop for getting help or answers. He also discusses the orientations and assistance in getting necessary identification and government benefits. However, he also points out that he was fortunate to come to the United States when he did because there were not as many refugees coming at that time, which meant his family received more personalized attention. As a result of increased resettlement, he notes that the organization's time and staff are more limited, and there is a need to take personal responsibility for one's integration rather than relying solely on the organization. Limitations such as these are important to understanding why home organizations form such an elaborate network of partnerships. Supporting organizations strive to offset the challenges internationals face by connecting them to resources and know-how, and it is essential to understand some of the difficulties associated with being a foreign-born newcomer as the challenges are the reasons underlying these programs and services.

*The Challenges of Being an International*

While challenges ranged from broad issues such as living in poverty to very specific issues, such as new technological systems complicating enrollment in government benefits, I have chosen to focus on the most frequently mentioned challenges

according to both organization staff and Somali participants. The ones not addressed here

– lack of resources in schools for ESL students, cultural barriers, limited access to

resources, domestic violence, childcare for parents working or attending English classes,

employment, bullying, and English classes not being offered at times when people are not

working – are incredibly important and should be included in future research. Here, I

focus on housing, Medicaid, language, and transportation, which, as aforementioned,

were the most salient challenges, but an analysis of these challenges also conveys a larger

sense of why supporting organizations are important and why supporting organizations

provide the services they can and partner to provide other services.

*Finding housing*

For both organization staff and Somali interviewees, housing was mentioned as an

issue at varying levels. Housing is a challenge that the three organizations seek to address

through their programs and services. As previously mentioned, the refugee resettlement

agencies directly address housing needs by finding housing for refugees when they

initially enter the United States. Americana Community Center addresses housing issues

more indirectly, through the Family Coaching program offered, where a Family Coach

helps participants overcome barriers to self-sufficiency, including issues like housing.

One of the challenges with housing is that, structurally, housing in Louisville is

not built to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee families. A staff member who has

worked at Catholic Charities for two and a half years explained this challenge, saying:

> We see housing as a big struggle lately. Because so many of our families are large
> families. They have more than an average of 2.5 children. Our apartment
> complexes just are not built for that. You know, you can find like a three-bedroom
> apartment, but if you have 10 people in your family, you need more than a 3-
> bedroom apartment. So what ends up happening if we can't put people in a 3-
> bedroom apartment because their family is too big, they end up in a house. Which

is fine, but the houses that are affordable to rent are like in this neighborhood which is not safe and it's not, they also end up further removed from communities where they could have more support. (Interview 1)

Many of the refugee and immigrant families coming to Louisville have more children than the average American family or live with extended family members. This is an important cultural difference that local apartment complexes, as noted, were not built to accommodate. The issue of housing structure limitations also came up during the Quarterly Community Consultation meeting I observed. During one of the presentations about the arrivals from the past quarter, one caseworker explained that where refugees are being resettled has spread out across Louisville because of larger families arising, which made it more difficult for them to find safe, affordable housing for rent. Because refugees and immigrants arrive in the U.S. with no credit history and with unique challenges, such as not knowing how to work a stove or being familiar with what the rental process involves for the tenants, landlords are often hesitant to rent to them, which forces supporting organizations to resettle families wherever they can.

Another challenge with housing is that it is expensive. Even though Louisville is a refugee resettlement city largely because the cost of living is low, life in the United States is still more expensive than many internationals are prepared for. Individuals who spent significant time in refugee camps are not accustomed to paying a monthly rent in addition to the other costs of life in the U.S. One of the Somali interviewees, a young married man who started an informal local group to help other young Somalis, explained it this way:

> Yes, housing is one big deal. Right now, what we find, I find, we find out that Newport, northern Kentucky, last year 43 Somali families got housing in Newport. After one year, they moving back. Some of them move back already. But in Louisville, it's tough to get voucher, like Section 8 voucher. Like right now, I know this guy, I met him last week, he has 10 kids. He's sick himself. His apartment is like $700, his gas is like $300. He has to pay $1000 a month and he's

always sick, he can't walk, and I was trying to get him housing and I applied for him in northern KY and they accept the application, it's a long process, but he has to move because in Louisville, if you apply for stuff, it's very competitive. (Interview 10)

The expenses of housing may catch up to individuals after their cash assistance and "welcome money," which is the stipend provided to families during the resettlement period, are exhausted. Here, the interviewee references the expense of renting a house, but also the difficulty of getting housing benefits, such as Section 8 vouchers. Circumstances such as having a large family may exacerbate the difficulties of receiving such benefits, which is why he discusses families moving to Newport, where there is less competition for housing.

While the Somali interviewees were not aware of or concerned with the difficulty of finding an appropriately sized house or apartment, several interviewees did express feeling isolation as a result of their housing. One interviewee, a young Somali man in his 20s who now works as an interpreter for Kentucky Refugee Ministries, expressed this difficulty like this:

When the, the agency looking for a house, it's hard for them to place them in the same community, like same people that speak same language. When people place in a place that they don't have anybody speak that language, just everybody speak different language, they feel like isolated. They say, "This is not where I wanted. I don't understand these people what they saying. They're mad at me." I don't know. Most of the people in here, they move to Minnesota. That's the most prevalent community of Somali in, there in Minnesota. It's like, it depends on where they place people, like to feel comfortable. (Interview 14)

The interviewee does recognize the difficulty of placing refugees in neighborhoods around other people who speak their language, but she goes on to say that this can be isolating. Internationals may not understand American cultural norms of having limited communication with neighbors and thus feel even more isolated. While Louisville does

have a significant Somali population, Minnesota is well-known for its large Somali

population and many Somalis relocate there after coming to the U.S.

While many of the limitations associated with finding housing for refugees and

immigrants are out of the scope of the supporting organizations' work, challenges such as

these do shape the programs and services being offered, as we see with core resettlement

services including housing assistance and with Family Coaching addressing such

challenges. As many refugees and immigrants have no credit history, larger families,

little knowledge of the city, and limited English skills, supporting organizations act as a

middle man, connecting internationals to resources to meet this basic need. The

supporting organizations in this study strive to address challenges associated with

housing by incorporating housing-related services into their core programs.

*Accessing Medicaid*

Along the theme of having difficulty utilizing public benefits, Medicaid was a

challenge mentioned by almost every staff member interviewed. More broadly, it seems

that the Department of Community-Based Services (DCBS) in Kentucky has systems in

place that appear flawed to the organizations' staff. A staff member at Catholic Charities

who has worked providing direct services to refugees and now focuses on community

outreach discussed the partnership that had faded with DCBS when I asked about

challenges that still needed to be addressed:

> I think the Medicaid system. You're probably going to hear that from everybody.
> That's definitely the number one thing. I think, you know, we made a lot of
> headway with that program until recently when the new government of Kentucky
> wanted to change the whole program. So after 2 long years of fighting, I really
> felt like we were finally at a good system. We had a system in place to make sure
> that our clients could get through the glitches of the Medicaid, or KYNECT
> system. And unfortunately all of that just went away this year, which is a real

travesty, it's a real shame. So that's definitely, I think, the number one thing. (Interview 5)

Here, the interviewee blames the flawed system, referencing DCBS's move away from a case management model and toward the "Team Kentucky" model, where whichever staff member at DCBS was available to resolve an issue would. On paper, this shift sounds like it would be effective, but interviewees pointed out that the model did not work on the ground, that overall accountability regarding the resolution of issues decreased, and that the time organization staff and internationals spent on the phone with DCBS or at the DCBS office increased. Another example of the flawed system mentioned was a shift to a new online "hub" that connected all records systems. A woman who has worked with refugees for over eight years at a variety of local organizations expressed her frustration in this way:

Human error is no longer a factor because we've got this hub. But I've literally had this happen, I went to the food stamp office with a couple to apply for Medicaid, the husband's cleared but the wife's did not, based on the hub. Immediately we went to social security office across the street. The wife's says cleared, the husband's did not. Because it's just, like we'll apply for a family of 10, mom and dad are approved, 6 of 10 children are approved but two of them are pending verification of their legal status. And that holds up the whole case for food stamps, for KTAP, for Medicaid. So, most cases, they eventually get approved and backdated but right now what's been going on according to our Medicaid access coordinator, 339 cases on our currently pending, should have been approved list, dating back to April. From April to now, 340 separate Medicaid cases. We probably have like 10 KTAP or SNAP cases that should have been approved but are not that we're like constantly trying to follow up on. And it's difficult to keep up with that. (Interview 6, Kentucky Refugee Ministries)

In this quote, the interviewee expresses frustration with a switch to a new system ("the hub") that uses technology to verify legal residence. While this is intended to reduce human error, it has increased the number of pending cases of Medicaid. She later discusses that this new technology combined with a new system for managing cases that

is team-centered rather than caseworker-centered makes it difficult even for the

organization staff who are experienced with the system to navigate applying for

government benefits.

Again, we see organizations acting as a liaison between internationals and the

larger community. Refugees and immigrants may not know about resources such as

Medicaid or may struggle to access them because of cultural and linguistic barriers.

Organization staff supports them in these efforts by helping them troubleshoot flawed

systems and educating them about government benefits.

*Learning the language*

While the language might seem like the most obvious challenge internationals

face in the U.S., the issue goes beyond simply having to learn English. All the Somali

interview participants identified the language barrier as the first and most prominent

challenge for them. Without knowing English, even the simplest of daily tasks becomes

overwhelming, which one interviewee addressed, saying, "Yeah, the English language

was pretty difficult. We wanted to learn how to drive and things like that but it was the

English language, a serious language barrier. It was one of the toughest challenges"

(Interview 11). This 30-year-old Somali woman resettled in the U.S. nine years ago but

still had to rely on an interpreter during the interview. She has focused more on working

to support her four children than on learning the language and at the time of the interview

had only been taking English classes for about four months.

Without English, it is difficult to become more integrated and self-sufficient in

their new hometown. And while all three supporting organizations provide adult English

as a Second Language classes, the language barrier permeates the entire society. For

immigrants and refugees, not knowing the language escalates other issues. One of the street-level bureaucrats, a woman in her 20s who has worked at Americana Community Center for five years, said:

> So we have varying income here, but a lot of people that we work with have limited income, but on top of that, they have the additional barriers, cultural and language barriers, that constantly put them at the back of the line when they are trying to access social services. So on top of the fact that they are people in poverty, they are less able to advocate for themselves and to also get these resources that are extremely limited. Whereas you or I, if we want to apply for food stamps and we're income eligible, I could do it on the internet, I could do it on the phone, I could go to their office and I could talk to anybody there and tell them what I was there for. Most of the people that I work with, they cannot use the phone, they cannot use the internet because it's not in their language or they don't have the skills to use those things, or if they go into the office, it may be a really long time before anyone is able to understand anything they want. So automatically, you're put at the back of the line. Like no matter what you're looking for. And it's just, it's working twice as hard to get half as far. And I know that that is a saying that we apply to a lot of marginalized groups, but I think that um maybe you're working twice as hard to get a quarter as far or maybe a third as far in that situation. (Interview 7)

This staff member at Americana Community Center explains that there are already numerous challenges for people who are low-income and are trying to access services and opportunities; these challenges are compounded by an actual or perceived inability to speak English. Individuals with limited English proficiency may not, because of their language limitations, be able to take advantage of different methods for accessing services.

The challenge of not speaking English is not just the responsibility of immigrants and refugees. Under Title VI, a clause of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 cited by many of my interview participants, organizations receiving federal funding are obligated to provide language access and interpretation. One of the interviewees who works in youth

services at Kentucky Refugee Ministries recounted an example of the reluctance to

provide language access that they see in many community agencies:

> We're still not where we need to be with language access. Um, I say that from schools to some community clinics. You know, most of the major clinics and hospitals, they have language services available but there's some, you know like through Medicaid you get assigned a PCP and you may get assigned to Dr. Lewis Clark, I don't know who that is. And Dr. Lewis Clark is like, 'I don't, you know, and I'm not planning to provide language support.' And then this family's like, 'Ok, what do we do?' So just stuff like that. (Interview 8)

The interviewee notes that schools and some clinics do provide interpretation, but

systems like Medicaid do not ensure that English language learners will be connected

with service providers who are willing to provide interpretation. Several staff members

described having to educate service providers about this right to language access,

implying that ignorance about it made for a good excuse to turn away immigrants and

refugees.

By offering English classes, providing interpreters, and educating community

agencies about language access rights, supporting organizations are able to directly meet

the needs of refugees and immigrants and equip the community to do so in the long run.

*Using public transportation*

A final challenge to be discussed is transportation. Unable to get a driver's license

until they have mastered basic English skills, refugees and immigrants rely initially on

public transportation. Louisville, as a medium-sized city, has a public bus system, TARC,

but the organization and refugee interviewees expressed challenges with utilizing the

transportation system. One woman in her 30s who works at Catholic explained the

challenges this way:

> I think the public transportation system would also, I get, a city this size is really hard I understand because there's only a limited amount of buses and staff that can

be poured into a system that isn't utilized by a lot of the population, but when it's utilized by 99% of all the refugee population, at least initially, um, just the time that it takes to get to a job, their job prospects are severely limited based on where they live in the city and if they can get to the job on time and if the bus even runs. Some of our clients walk like 2 miles just to get to the nearest bus stop to come to our ESL class. And I understand that refugees, even though it's growing and the immigrant population is growing so much in Louisville, it's not a majority population obviously so I understand from that point of view that the bus system may not be able to expand as readily as we want it to, but that's always a, that's always a need. We just wish there were more routes, that there were more times that buses would come, that they would be able to come possibly more on time to help our clients get to places they need to go on time, but again, I know all of that is impossible to dictate, but that's something I would like to see if possible. (Interview 5, Catholic Charities)

Here, the staff member acknowledges that the majority of the city's population are not relying on the public transportation system, but that since all immigrants and refugees rely on it initially, challenges in the system should be addressed. One challenge she highlights is the limitations of bus routes to transport people from certain parts of the city to other parts, especially as housing options run out and the organization is forced to resettle people further away from bus routes. Another challenge is that the transportation system is not timely, which can make it difficult to find and maintain employment. This staff member states that it is "impossible to dictate" changes that would improve the system, but other staff at the three organizations pointed out that TARC tries to include their voices in any changes being made to the system. Many interviewees also included TARC as a partner.

However, this "partnership" did not seem beneficial to the Somali refugees I interviewed. Transportation was a challenge all of them talked about. One 34-year-old Somali woman who has been in the U.S. since 2004, reflected on having to walk and wait in the summer heat and winter cold as she utilized public transportation. She had no car and no one to take her to work. She told me, "If I think about those struggles, I will start

crying" (Interview 12). Lack of transportation was very tough for her across aspects of her life.

Another interviewee recounted a more light-hearted story about how it is difficult to use the bus system without knowing the language, the city, or the cultural norms. A Somali man who seemed highly integrated because of his level of English proficiency and ability to attain a bachelor's degree in the U.S. recalled when his life was very different:

> The first time I [got] lost for three hours. My bus put me on a street I never know, and where I'm from, if you need help, you just do like this [makes waving gesture] and somebody will stop for you. I was doing this for like two hours and nobody stopped. [laughs] I was like, people are rude here, you know. Uh after two hours and a half, I didn't have no phone and the bus dropped me somewhere I never knew and cars are just going on and on. Nobody stopped for me. I don't know what to do. And then this one guy pulled over, he showed me where to get the next bus. I thought he was going to pull over and show me how to go home but he showed me at least the bus was on the other side. Because I was on the same side that the bus dropped me. So it was a struggle. I left home at like 11am and get home 7pm, that's how long, it took me hours and hours to get home. (Interview 10)

Even though the interviewee laughed as he recounted getting lost trying to use the public bus system, finding yourself in a place you don't recognize because of a bus system you do not fully understand without the language skills to express what you need could be dangerous and terrifying. This challenge may be addressed in cultural orientations or during case management, but none of the interviewees talked about ways the organizations are seeking to address this challenge, which may be partially because organization staff feel there is nothing they can do to remedy the issue, that it is systemic and beyond the scope of their work.

The challenges explored here impact internationals and supporting organizations directly. For internationals, the challenges outlined here make integration difficult. For

non-profit agencies supporting these individuals, the challenges inform the services and programs they provide. The challenges also highlight some of the flawed systems that make it difficult for the organizations to provide the support internationals need.

*"We cannot run our programs without them": The Necessity of Partners*

After exploring the programs supporting organizations provide and the challenges that internationals face, it is important to understand how the supporting organizations leverage a network of partners to expand their limited capacity. I allowed respondents to define "partnership," and respondents consistently referred to their partnerships with a loose understanding. The definition of "partnership" that emerged included any organization, agency, or individual that helped the supporting organization or clients in some capacity. As will be explored, partnership did not necessitate reciprocity or a recognized relationship – formal or informal – with the partnering organization in the traditional sense, and the staff interviewed had a broad, sweeping conceptualization of what comprised a partnership. The emergent definition of partnership according to the organization staff spanned the spectrum of intensity and involvement to include any agency that in some way also provided services to internationals or provided resources to the supporting organization.

As such, supporting organizations would be unable to address challenges such as finding housing, accessing Medicaid, learning the language, and using public transportation without partners in the community who provide resources and various forms of capital. To understand these partnerships, this study analyzes partnerships with three institutions as three case studies that demonstrate what makes a partnership work. This study also analyzes how partnerships are formed and maintained and what the value

of partnerships will be moving forward. Through this analysis, it is evident that

collaboration is essential to supporting organizations as it expands their capacity to

enable refugees and immigrants to more easily integrate into their new community.

*Key Partners in Supporting Refugees and Immigrants*

Each of the organizations has an expansive network of partnerships with banks,

churches, employers, ethnic community groups, government agencies, healthcare

providers, institutions of higher education, K-12 institutions, housing entities, local

businesses, and other non-profits. These partnerships seem to provide resources that are

limited for the home organizations. Partnerships included on-site and off-site partners.

Some partnerships were distinctly defined and highly collaborative, such as the

partnership all three organizations have with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS),

while other partnerships are loose and informal, such as referrals made to Family Health

Centers. Overall, though, these expansive networks allow the home organizations to

create a network of services and support for immigrants and refugees across the city.

Here, I highlight partnerships with three different institutions that demonstrate examples

of the various partnerships formed as well as what makes the partnerships work.

*"Biggest" partner: the public-school system*

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) was mentioned as a partner by every

staff member I interviewed. Several references were made to JCPS being their "biggest"

and "strongest" partner. The three organizations work almost exclusively within Jefferson

County, or the Louisville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and they partner with the

school system to enroll children in school and provide English as a Second Language

classes to youth and adults. The partnership with JCPS is an example of a collaborative, on-site partnership for all three organizations.

A staff member at Americana Community Center said JCPS was an "invaluable partner" and that the relationship with them in terms of providing programs and services is very reciprocal:

> We cannot run our programs without them and there's a true give and take to running those programs, especially when it comes to Family Education. Um, it's really a partnership. So we do a lot of the coordination with that program with them. So we set up the waitlist and identify who's going to be in that program and check in with them regularly and JCPS teachers are implementing the program, they're, you know, providing the parenting, providing the kindergarten readiness skills. Some of our teachers are doing the homework help, some of the JCPS teachers are doing the other parts, so we meet monthly to shore up those things and make sure we're on the same page and that, you know, we're all getting what we want out of it or like reaching people in the ways we've decided we want to reach people. (Interview 7)

The program the interviewee mentions, Family Education, is perhaps the most collaborative program described to me, with half of the staff employed by JCPS and half employed by Americana Community Center. The interviewee has spent all five of her years at Americana Community Center working with this program. This is a long-standing partnership dating back to when Americana Community Center was founded, according the Executive Director, and it is maintained by regular meetings, constant communication, and a formal memorandum of agreement. Part of why this partnership works well, according to the organization staff, is that there is a mutual benefit involved for both the organization and JCPS: the organization is able to provide services that meet participants' needs and JCPS is able to reach a larger number of people by going through this organization.

The partnership with JCPS is expansive for the organization, encompassing not only collaborative programs but also fulfilling referral and off-site needs. At Catholic Charities, a director-level staff member with more than ten years' experience at the organization explained the relationship with JCPS in this way:

> So for JCPS, as we said, we work with Adult Ed as a contractor but also kind of more so than a contractor, you know, after our clients start working, they still want to continue English language classes and this is, of course, not feasible for them to come, it's not close to where anyone lives. So we kind of refer on to them and they're very helpful. So, uh, also for all of our school age children, we have an extremely amazing relationship with their Newcomer Academy, ESL program registration. They're really, really good. They come down here and do all that. (Interview 2, Catholic Charities)

Similar to Americana Community Center, JCPS is an on-site, contracted partner. However, JCPS's Newcomer Academy, the program for K-12th grade English Language Learners, is also considered a crucial partner. The partnership allows organization staff to more smoothly navigate the school system, handle school registrations for newly resettled youth en masse, and liaise between teachers and parents who do not yet speak English. The interviewee points out that JCPS comes on-site to do school registration, which alleviates difficulties transporting newly arrived families to the ESL Intake Center. In some ways, this partnership goes beyond a mutual benefit and focuses on bridging the gap in what the home organizations are able to provide.

This form of partnership aligns closely with theoretical understandings of partnering because the relationship between JCPS and the supporting organizations is recognized by both organizations and there are expectations of what each agency will offer the other. There was not great variability in the way that the three supporting organizations partnered with JCPS based on the data collected. However, while Catholic Charities and KRM refer clients to the on-site program provided by JCPS, Americana

Community Center staff collaborate with JCPS staff to design and implement programs. In this case, the partnership intensity is greater and more integral for Americana Community Center than the other organizations. Beyond this, though, the partnership with JCPS does not always fit into conventional understandings of a collaborative relationship.

The Somali interviewees confirmed that the organizations helped them enroll youth in school, take English classes, and facilitate conversation between families and school staff. A couple Somali participants also presented the idea that the relationship they had with their ESL teacher through the school system was important beyond the classroom. One young Somali man who came to the U.S. as a high schooler with only his siblings described being a teenager and the primary caregiver for his family this way:

> The only place I could get a job was Walmart and I have to, I applied, I took my ESL teacher to Walmart and I said, 'Can you apply for me a job here?' and she did it. And after that, I was coming there every day to the manager and saying, 'Hey, can you give me job?' [laughs] I was the guy that comes, I would come to the store, that's how I got my job, the supervisor, I would ask, 'Who's the supervisor?' and they would show me. And I was like, 'Hey, I need a job. I will wait right here. I need a job.' That's how she gave me a job. (Interview 10)

The ESL teacher, in this example, went above and beyond traditional duties and expectations to help her student. While the supporting organizations have staff focused on employment opportunities, they may be limited by staff and time in what they are able to offer, especially for a teenager looking for a job. In the interviews with both male Somalis, their ESL teacher was the one who helped them apply for their first job, perhaps because the ESL teacher is more accessible than a caseworker and works more closely with the individuals on a day-to-day basis. While this is not an example of a formal

relationship with JCPS, it demonstrates the way partnerships rely on staff at both

partnering organizations to creatively collaborate as they are able.

*Addressing a highly specialized need: healthcare providers*

The list of health care providers who were considered partners was lengthy at

every organization. Providing healthcare is a need that the supporting organizations are

not equipped to address, mostly because their focus is different. This reason in

conjunction with the unique challenges surrounding healthcare indicate the high level of

importance in partnering with health care providers. Across the board, the Family Health

Centers were held in great esteem in terms of their partnership with the organizations. A

staff member at Catholic Charities, who, before taking on her current position that

focuses on capacity building, specialized in connecting refugees to health services, said:

> Yeah, so we use three different health clinics for refugee health screenings, so
> that's Family Health Centers, especially at Americana Community Center, but we
> have a good overall relationship with all the Family Health Centers. Because
> that's where we send our clients for primary care because they're really seen as the
> model for kind of providing, um, on a large scale, culturally and linguistically
> appropriate services to our clients and with other primary care providers in
> Louisville, that's been kind of a challenge, um, access to interpreters is really not
> something that's generally provided by primary care providers… They really took,
> it can be hard sometimes to find a provider who's willing to work with this
> population because they're just not comfortable with the language or cultural
> barriers. It's, they're, they just don't have the capacity. So sometimes there's
> apprehension with providers to work with our clients. (Interview 3, Catholic
> Charities)

Family Health Centers, a network of clinics across Louisville, provide off-site services to

immigrant and refugee clients. All refugees are required to under an initial refugee health

screening, and, as the interviewee mentions here, Family Health Centers is the primary

provider of health screenings for the supporting organizations. One of the clinics is

located at Americana Community Center in an adjacent trailer. Interviewees pointed to

this one especially as a partner likely because many refugees and immigrants live in the Americana Community Center area—and can access this clinic quite easily.

The partnership between Family Health Centers and the three supporting organizations contributes to the emergent understanding of partnership. Even though the extent of their relationship is referring out, it initially seemed unusual that interviewees considered healthcare providers to be essential partners. In this instance, there is not a true relationship at the organizational level, and it raises the question of whether the healthcare providers would also consider the supporting organizations partners.

Importantly, Family Health Centers, as mentioned in this quote, are the model for providing "culturally and linguistically appropriate services." This is a recurring concern mentioned by staff, and this interviewee focuses on the willingness to provide these services, which implies that other health care providers who do not provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services are making the choice not to do so or do not have the capacity to do so. This apprehension she identifies is a challenge brought up by several interviewees: agencies and businesses in Louisville are unsure about how to work with refugees and immigrants and tend to refer clients back to the home organizations, undermining the already limited capacity and the formation of partnerships.

While mutual benefit and reciprocity were recognized as key elements to a successful partnership for all three organizations, when asked about successful partnerships, one interviewee noted that this is not always the case. After working as an intensive case manager at Kentucky Refugee Ministries, one of the interviewees recalled her experience partnering with health care providers:

> I mean, probably our health care providers are up there, although I think they're better to us than we are to them. [laughs] Yeah, cause they're just infinitely

patient. We're trying to get the Medicaid approved and they're just taking losses. You know, so, I don't know if that's perfectly reciprocal because they're giving more to us, but it fits their mission. (Interview 6)

The interviewee acknowledges that reciprocity is important but that healthcare providers are able to provide much more than expected and even required of them. For example, the challenges associated with Medicaid would seem to make health care less accessible for refugees and immigrants, healthcare providers like Family Health Centers are willing to work with the population in spite of the guarantee that they will be reimbursed for services provided. In this quote, the respondent suggests that there is at least a shared understanding of the roles that the supporting organizations and healthcare providers play, which nuances the emergent definition of partnering. Because they have a similar mission to the home organizations, the supporting organizations and healthcare providers are partners despite the absence of shared benefit.

*Interpersonal relationships: the police department*

As noted in the literature review, government decisions at all levels are significant. The police department in Louisville (LMPD) demonstrates that decisions on a smaller level and individual relationships can also play a significant role. All three organizations described their relationship with LMPD as a partnership, but the staff at the different organizations specified that the partnership only goes as far as relationships with individual officers and districts. An interviewee from Kentucky Refugee Ministries with 8 years' experience supporting immigrants and refugees in various capacities recalled:

LMPD is increasingly partnering, but really just with one. You know, there are all these different districts and each district is like its own universe. So the Americana Community Center area, district 4, Lamont, you probably know him…But we've got a lot of folks in district 6. We've had some contact with them, but nothing as promising as, not proactive, more like our clients are having a really, really big problem and it's come to this where I have to call you because

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they're not getting responses from police when they call because they're being harassed, you know. And then they kind of respond. (Interview 6, Kentucky Refugee Ministries)

The partnership with LMPD is not long-standing but increasingly a target for supporting organizations. The Kentucky Refugee Ministries staff member here describes how the relationship with District 4, the area near Americana Community Center where many internationals live, is good, but they have not been able to foster as much communication and partnership with other districts, like district 6 where internationals do not have as much of a presence. When the partnership does not flourish with LMPD, organization staff find themselves having to intervene on behalf of clients/participants more often than when there is a standing partnership. For this staff member, having a partnership with LMPD means more than a relationship with staff; it also means responding directly to refugees' and immigrants' needs out in the community.

A staff member at Catholic Charities echoed the importance of building relationships with staff at partnering organizations:

> We have really close relationships with the police department. Louisville Metro is um, it's like, it's like a lot of things, community organizing, or you know, who's the most useful, like knowing someone really high up might be nice but are they going to get stuff done. So as far as Louisville Metro, we have a really key community resource officer in the 4th division where a lot of our clients live, that's in the South-end by Americana Community Center or it goes over to Park's Point, which butts up against Shively. And we have a really great community resource officer who's been just instrumental in [laughs] just like dealing with other divisions. He's just awesome. So we've kind of organized some peace walks, and some orientations, and he's one of those guys that's like, like, uh, for like language access, everyone talks about language access but he's like doing language access, which is really amazing. So he's really good. (Interview 3, Catholic Charities)

The interviewee expresses having a relationship with the same specific district mentioned previously by a Kentucky Refugee Ministries staff member and that this relationship has

allowed them to better navigate other districts. She also emphasizes how important a relationship with a street-level bureaucrat can be in terms of maximizing benefit.

Overall, the relationship with individuals in LMPD indicates that personal relationships lead to and help maintain strong partnerships. Partnerships such as these are not necessarily formed at the organizational level, but still better enable supporting organizations to offer comprehensive programs to meet the needs of refugees and immigrants. While the relationship does not exist at the organizational level, the interpersonal ties were significant enough for the staff at the three supporting organizations to consider it a partnership.

For these three institutional examples, the variability in the level at which the supporting organizations partner is minimal. Staff at all three organizations described similar relationships with the partnering agencies, which would suggest that the impact of the programs and services provided is comparable for all three. The value of partnerships such as these for supporting organizations and internationals is clear, but it is also critical to understand best practices for forming and maintaining partnerships that work.

*Forming and Maintaining Successful and Practical Partnerships*

Successful and practical partnerships are essential to being able to provide for the wide range of needs of refugees and immigrants, and the nature of these partnerships is an important aspect to understand. Based on responses from the organization staff, partnerships are formed about equally by the home organization and by the partnering organization. The way partnerships form can depend on several factors, such as gaps in capacity, pre-existing relationships with staff, and recognition of a shared benefit or mission.

A staff member at Catholic Charities who focuses on community outreach explained how sometimes partners reach out to the organization and sometimes the organization reaches out to partners, "So it just depends on where we feel like the need is, if there's a hole in our capacity, you know, which organization, which company could fill it? We'll reach out if they have not already approached us. So it just kind of depends" (Interview 5). The supporting organizations are usually in the best place to recognize the gaps in their capacity and reach out to partners to fill them, but because their gaps often include staffing and time limitations, they are not always able to focus on this. Instead, the organization staff may be more focused on providing direct services or on making it work in spite of limited capacity.

The home organizations seem to form partnerships when the internationals' need is higher or the organizations are unable to do their job because of the gap in capacity. An Americana Community Center staff member who works directly with participants and partners through her position explained how she often has to educate community agencies and partners about their responsibilities to serve refugees and immigrants:

> Sometimes, so for, for example, when I've had issues before where uh federal, people who were for the state office are not clear on what the guidelines are for the services that should be provided to an undocumented immigrant. So most of the time, they receive absolutely no benefits, no services under Medicaid, under food stamps, anything because they do not have any legal right to those tax dollars, is the line of thinking. However, women who are pregnant and going to give birth to a United States citizen have the right to prenatal care and a certain amount of prenatal care, so it's uh 6 weeks of prenatal care in your third trimester is usually what it comes to and getting that covered and making sure people are given that resource because it is their right is something I've definitely, I've advocated for in the past, helped people to get their resources. (Interview 7)

The interviewee focused on this education of community agencies when asked about the types of advocacy the organization does, but her perception that the responsibility to

reach out to and educate potential partners falls on staff at supporting organizations is echoed in others' responses as well. Americana Community Center is unique from the refugee resettlement agencies because they serve undocumented immigrants as well as refugees, which complicates access to benefits and services. This quote demonstrates that even the individuals and agencies administering federal services do not fully understand or know the policies regarding who is eligible. Internationals who are in need of those services but already face limited cultural and linguistic knowledge certainly cannot be expected to know what benefits they are guaranteed, and so the burden of supporting not only internationals but also other service providers seems to fall on the supporting organization staff.

On the other hand, some partnering organizations are able to recognize that they can fill capacity needs for the supporting organizations and reach out to them. One example mentioned by both Catholic Charities and Kentucky Refugee Ministries staff is WIC. One Kentucky Refugee Ministries staff member stated:

> We're actually working with, this is a good one to highlight, we actually got contacted by WIC because between Catholic Charities and Kentucky Refugee Ministries we all take families to WIC all the time, you know, to register. And it's so much transportation and time. So WIC actually reached out to us to say, hey, we might want to do some site-based registrations and they actually wrote a grant to do it and we're waiting to hear back from that. But for them, it's just this interesting thing, like why would they want to do it? But they said that of, when they look at their numbers, they said some of their most consistent and faithful clients are refugees and the state has taken notice of that. So for us, it's really beneficial. For Catholic Charities, it's really beneficial. But then for them, they said it could open up doors where they could do more research, they can, because they were like we want to figure out why is this so successful. (Interview 8)

WIC sees both the need for the supporting organizations and the opportunity to create a partnership that could be a national model, which would benefit them as well. The shared benefit and awareness of capacity gaps have led to the formation of a local partnership.

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Granted, this partnership is dependent on potential funding, but it is a good example of the way partners reach out to organizations.

However, the formation and maintenance of partnerships are not always such a happy story. When those key elements – mutual benefit, pre-existing relationships, and need-based – are missing, partnerships are not successful. When the mutual benefit is not in place, partnerships can easily fall apart or are more difficult to maintain. One of the staff members at Americana Community Center who provides direct services to participants said the following:

> When the aims are identical or similar, so we both want this like, have the same objectives, um, when we both have the same amount of investment and accountability, that's nice. Like sometimes you find yourself in a situation where you really need somebody, they don't need you that bad, they like will fall apart on you and it really, it can really affect you but doesn't affect them. (Interview 7)

Sometimes, as the interviewee acknowledges, partnerships can simply be a non-starter. If an organization reaches out to a partner, but the partner does not recognize a shared benefit or mission, it may never get off the ground. An example of this also emerged in an interview with a Kentucky Refugee Ministries staff member who works with youth:

> You know, I'll be honest, we are, I've been trying to work with some of the early childhood folks at UofL to get involved with our family center to do some research and maybe just have students doing practicum hours there, um, and this is, by unsuccessful, I'll send emails and they'll say yeah that's a great idea and then we can never nail them down for a meeting. So I feel like we don't have a lot of groups, thankfully, I mean Louisville's an awesome city, but we don't have a lot of groups that are just like, no I don't want to work with you. But we do have a lot of busy people and it's not high on their priority list and so like for that one, for example, that's still something we want to do because that would be awesome to have you know research for grants and just to know, yeah. (Interview 8)

As the interviewee notes here, potential partners are not likely to directly say no to a partnering opportunity, but if it isn't a priority for the potential partner, it isn't going to work. As we saw before with healthcare providers not needing the partnership with the

supporting organizations yet still providing for them, partnerships can work without shared benefit if there is still a shared mission. But without both elements, the partnership is likely to be a non-starter or fail quickly. Without being based on practical, actual needs of the targeted beneficiaries, a similar outcome is likely. A staff member at Americana Community Center, who has been with the organization for eight years and, for the past six years, has managed all partnerships and overseen programs, said:

> They have to be able to take initiative and bring an idea to us that one, will work here, that's based off the needs of the participants and not necessarily someone coming in and wanting to offer something that will not be useful or helpful to our program participants. We've turned partners down before because it's just not something that we saw as a need or that our participants thought was a need. So what's the point in having that program if no one's going to show up to it? (Interview 9)

This quote reflects the limited capacity of non-profits. Because they face limited time and staff, a partnership that is not essential is perceived by organization staff as pointless and a waste of already limited time and staff. Forming and maintaining partnerships does demand those resources, and if the partnership will not in return meet needs of the participants or organization, some members wondered and questioned why put forth the effort? This practicality was mentioned by staff at all three organizations.

One exception to partnerships being formed by partners or by the supporting organizations was the quarterly community consultations. This partnering opportunity was a match mandated by funding agents for the two refugee resettlement agencies. Perhaps because this is an unconventional method of forming partnerships, the organization staff were surprised by its success, as I saw in several interviews. One such reaction from a director-level staff member was:

> So every quarter, it's actually turned out to be a really good thing [tone registers surprise]. At the time, it was another one of those things, like how are we going to

do this, how are we going to get people to meet with us, you know, on top of everything else. But we, Catholic Charities, Kentucky Refugee Ministries, and KOR kind of alternate hosting, you've probably been to one before. So we're going to have another one here in December and Catholic Charities is spearheading the planning process, so that's our mechanism for kind of fostering those partnerships, getting new people in the fold, providing ongoing education and communication kind of with the community. And there's like a required invitee list for that, people who have to attend. And actually last quarter's consultation, everybody came. It was amazing. (Interview 2)

This match-made partnership has led to, according to staff at Kentucky Refugee Ministries and Catholic Charities, increased awareness in the community, new partnering opportunities, and strengthened partnerships with groups like government agencies: Congresspersons, local government official, and police officers have attended these meetings. This was the only example of an obligatory partnership that came up during the interviews other than the joint elder program (also a mandated match by Kentucky Office for Refugees), but it seems to have been successful because it engages the community in the actual needs of both the supporting organizations and the refugee/immigrant population in Louisville. For example, I observed the way these meetings address challenges for organizations and refugees/immigrants during the meeting I attended when a presenter asked those in attendance to keep the resettlement agencies in mind if they knew anyone who was a landlord and could thus assist with the housing challenges. When the interviewee says that "actually…everybody came," it seems to imply that he did not expect that the community would be willing to attend a meeting to learn more about the growing international population. However, the community was willing to at least learn more, which has positive implications for the supporting organizations and internationals.

The most successful partnerships form based on filling gaps in capacity, inter-

agency relationships, and shared benefit or mission. Unsuccessful partnerships lack one

or several of these aspects. It is apparent to the staff I interviewed that community

support and partnerships are essential, and several of them noted that they are only going

to become more important moving forward.

*"Moving forward…partnerships are going to be even more critical": It Takes a Village
to Resettle a Family*

As discussed throughout this study, partners provide additional resources that

meet capacity gaps for the supporting organizations. The resources can include space,

staff or volunteers, time, funding, and direct services. The following quote is one of many

where a director-level staff discussed how partners provide resources that enable them to

be more successful in achieving their mission:

> We work really closely with Passport. So they are definitely like the lead in terms
> of Medicaid providers, MCOs, um, the lead in terms of working with our clients.
> They have great language access. They actually do um care coordination for our
> clients beyond just having them as someone who they see as getting money from.
> So Paige Kolag is, I'm not sure if you know her, but she is the Passport refugee
> case manager and so she's actually on site 4 days a week and she provides medical
> case management to our clients and then they actually just hired another care
> coordinator to do, to help our clients connect to primary care and to set up
> appointments and help with transportation. So a lot of our clients go onto
> Passport, so as you can imagine, that's a huge help getting our clients medical
> case management, especially beyond like that initial kind of like resettlement
> period. (Interview 2)

Passport, a health insurance company, helps Catholic Charities provide a service they are

unable to provide: medical case management. Other partners – JCPS, Family Health

Centers, district 4 in Louisville Metro Police Department – similarly meet needs of the

organization. A network of partnerships increases the range of services available to this

high-need population.

However, several staff members spoke about the steps that still need to be made related to community engagement, which emphasizes the recognized impact partners can have on integration efforts. One interviewee at Kentucky Refugee Ministries explained:

> Um, other big challenges are you know just really like you know some families arrive and they do really well and other families need long-term services. And I don't know if this makes sense or not but it's just like really doing making sure that community partners have everything they need to serve clients well. Because many times they want to refer people back to us when it's a service they need to be providing. And I don't mean that in a bad way at all, you know? It's just, um, I think community partners need to be more empowered to really serve clients well…I think sometimes there's hesitancy sometimes when they're unsure or their staff don't have the cultural competency to make an informed decision often. Um, yeah. Does that make sense? As the numbers of refugees continue to rise, I think that's what they need. They need more, um, community organizations, clinics, I think just across the board, people need to have more cultural competency and awareness and really know how to serve refugees well. (Interview 8)

Because the organizations are limited, unable to provide entirely comprehensive, long-term services to ensure complete integration, community partners can help them meet these aims. Part of the reason partnerships are so diverse – on-site or off-site, collaborative or referral-based – is to optimize the capacity to serve refugees and immigrants. When community partners feel ill-equipped to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services or lack the confidence to do so, the partners ultimately increase the workload for the organization staff.

All the organization staff discussed being limited in the political and legal advocacy they could do because of their non-profit status. For the most part, staff said they could do absolutely no advocacy beyond the individual level. Partners mediated this limitation in some circumstances, such as when large political changes were happening, as this Kentucky Refugee Ministries staff member indicated:

> It was when KYNECT was being cut, I think a lot of people individually made phone calls. It's such a fine line, you can appreciate it. Different people may say,

hey, you know, and, we, it was other people coming in the building, it was healthcare providers coming in the building and saying this is about to happen, you know, you might want to advocate for this. (Interview 8)

Partners warned the organizations about upcoming political changes. Similarly, since the election of Donald Trump as president and executive orders halting refugee resettlement, partnering organizations have addressed concerns and helped advocate for the organizations, as I saw at all three of the community meetings I attended. Concern about political changes came up during these meetings and partners spoke about ways they could advocate on behalf of the supporting organizations and refugees and immigrants.

Organizational staff members recognize the impact partnerships can have on filling gaps such as limitations on political advocacy and building a community of support. One interviewee said the following about how partnerships might look different in this political climate:

Around partnerships, mm, I will say moving forward I think partnerships are going to be even more critical than they have been before, um, on all levels, you know. And I think more relationship building and awareness and even really just working to build community between our refugee community and the Louisville community even though they're a part of it, just like that mom who was like everybody has their door closed, how can we be bridge builders in those communities because those are the people who make refugee resettlement successful, by being good neighbors, um, but moving forward, despite what's going on politically [referring to the presidential election results] I think us encouraging, building more partnerships, building bridges is going to be one of our top priorities. You know. (Interview 7)

Partnerships increase the bridges in the community, connecting immigrants and refugees to programs and services and potentially protecting supporting organizations and internationals from policies that may be harmful. Supporting organizations view partnerships as evidence that the community values and supports internationals and as the potential to withstand an unsupportive political climate. Partnerships are so crucial for

supporting organizations because they expand the organization's ability to serve internationals. Supporting organizations could only do a fraction of the work they do without the community's support, as evident from this study. However, even with an extensive network of partnerships, there are still challenges that internationals face that are not being addressed.

*"Stretched and limited": Unmet Needs in the Community*

Partnerships are not always successful in addressing challenges faced by immigrants and refugees or in bridging supporting organizations' capacity gaps. Challenges still exist, according to interview participants, that need to be addressed. The challenges were often presented as partnerships in the work, likely to present the supporting organization and partners in a more positive light, but unmet needs also included unsuccessful partnerships. Here, I highlight the absence of partnerships with diverse faith communities, unsuccessful partnerships with government agencies and other non-profits, and a mismatch of services provided and actual needs of internationals. These unaddressed challenges should, and in some instances, already do, inform the work that supporting organizations, partners, and receiving communities do in the future.

One challenge is the over-representation of Christian faith communities in volunteering at the organizations and co-sponsoring families. A significant number of refugees and immigrants coming to Louisville are not Christian, and the organization staff interviewed see this as an opportunity to diversify partnerships. A staff member focused on community outreach at Catholic Charities said the following:

> So we have many church sponsors that work with one particular family and kind of help them through the whole resettlement process for 3 months and then after 3 months, they can decide if they want to continue the mentoring relationship. But I really want to expand that because most of our clients are not the same faith as

these churches and I think it'd be really great to be able to pair them with somebody or group that more aligns with their faith so, I mean, that aspect doesn't really matter, but I think that'd be a really great cultural and religious connection to make. (Interview 5)

Both Catholic Charities and Kentucky Refugee Ministries have a Christian background, and it seems that their outreach to non-Christian groups to help with refugee resettlement is recent and has not led to any partnerships at the time of the study. The diversification of partnerships with faith communities may be an important step to ensuring that refugees and immigrants feel they have a strong support network. This unaddressed challenge – at this point – leaves an unmet need in the form religious support for internationals.

Another challenge arises when partnering organizations are, like the supporting organizations, limited in their own capacity. This seemed to be especially true with government offices, such as the food stamp office. A "street-level bureaucrat" at Kentucky Refugee Ministries explained the issue in this way:

They've done a lot, in the past, I mean, since I've been involved, there's been significant staff turnover. But not like at the management level. It's more like their model. Their personnel model has changed a lot. Like they switched from having a case management system like ours where you would go to the food stamp office, you have a case worker, their name is on your documents, when you go back, you talk to that person, they know your history and story to like, no, like in the past two years, they transitioned to team Kentucky and they didn't want anybody to specialize in anything. (Interview 6)

Staff turnover and a new model of providing service have limited the ways the Department of Community-Based Services is able to provide for refugees and immigrants, which has also further limited the capacity of the supporting organization. The reason Medicaid and other benefits access continue to be a challenge for refugees and immigrants is likely because the "partnership" between DCBS and the supporting organizations is tenuous and rife with limitations on both ends. Instead of bridging a

capacity gap, it simply introduces new gaps, such as uninsured refugees and

internationals who are eligible for food stamps but cannot seem to get enrolled. When the

partnership is unsuccessful and thus does not expanding the capacity of the

Supporting organizations also frequently partner with other non-profits, which has

a similarly problematic result. In talking about referring participants to a local non-profit

that provide support to victims of domestic violence, one interviewee at Americana

Community Center who focuses on capacity-building said:

> And I know they're also stretched and limited with what they can provide because they have staffing issues as well but they're just not responsive and it's just really frustrating when there are people in a domestic violence situation, they're in desperate need of resources and the one agency that is set up to address that doesn't respond to you so you have to figure out other ways to help them. (Interview 9)

The interviewee acknowledges that they too have limitations – few staff members and

limited resources – but points out that these limitations mean more work for an already

overworked staff at a supporting organization. Because the partnership is unable to

provide consistent help, the staff member describes the partnership as "unsuccessful."

Another challenge brought up only by Somali interviewees is that English and

citizenship classes are only offered on weekdays, often only at times when people are

traditionally working. Learning the language is essential but is often bypassed out of the

necessity to work full-time. One Somali interviewee who resettled in Louisville, KY, in

2008 highlighted this problem and a possible solution:

> Yeah, right now, one of the programs is the English program, the ESL, which is very limited to places that they get, especially in, I know Americana Community Center is a big deal when it comes to ESL, a lot of people went there. But it, at least this program needs to be improved to more days. People always say that the days they do this program is the weekdays and everybody goes to work weekdays. Everyone has a family to feed so people like to do this thing on the weekend. So most of the agencies, they close on the weekends. So we used to offer ESL

program, the Young Somalis, for almost 2 years, but we ended up couldn't afford it anymore so we stop. We didn't have enough, so it's more like these programs need to happen on the weekends. Because most of the Somali people, they work factory jobs which is like Monday-Friday, so they have time on the weekend and Saturday, Sunday, all of them have time. And that's when I would say is the best time to teach them English. Also, citizenship too is the same way. (Interview 10)

Kentucky Refugee Ministries and Catholic Charities offer English classes only for the first few months of the internationals' transition until people get jobs, and Americana Community Center offers English classes Monday-Thursday in the morning and evening. This interviewee's critique of these programs is that people cannot attend the classes because they need to work and spend time with their families. Other Somali interviewees mentioned similar concerns, and some of the interviewees with more limited English skills spoke specifically about how they had not taken English classes because they had to work to provide for their families.

Another Somali interviewee, a 28-year-old man who came to Louisville with fourteen family members in 2005, captured the catch-22 that many refugees and immigrant find themselves in with learning English and having a job:

I mean, you know first you like, when you here in new country everywhere when you in a new place there is a lot of things you don't know and the most important the language. If you don't know the language you don't know anything and you cannot tell your feeling or what you need or no one. Coming was hard for us to first find a job was the big, it was the biggest part. Especially all the people who want a job who want to provide for their rent and for their bills. It's very hard to live this country because you don't get enough support here for like anybody else. They are really scared for that, just they tell you, like, you need to pay your bills and the person doesn't have a job. It's like, how is that going to be possible and then the next place they say like, "we'll find you a job." "We will try to help you at job, but you got to learn English." "You got to pass the interview." People think like, wow. A lot of people get stressed for that you know. (Interview 14)

The demands of a new life in the United States are stressful: you need English to get a job and you need a job to pay the bills but it is difficult to take English classes if you have to

work. Because the "welcome money" and support for new refugees is ultimately finite, there is pressure from day one to find a job, which is an additional stressor for newcomers, as the interviewee notes. Unfortunately, many newcomers face the dilemma of choosing English classes or a job and must choose to work. This hinders their ability to learn English in the long term and thus their ability to successfully integrate.

Another challenge faced by the supporting organizations specifically is that as refugee resettlement and immigration was expected to grow at the time of the interviews, all three organizations were concerned about outgrowing their spaces. One interviewee at the director-level explained:

> Right now we have a big challenge because [laughs] the clinic is a trailer that was supposed to be temporary for one year, and now ten years later... So we are in a good, it's a headache, it's a good headache but it's a headache because I cannot see any solution. The idea originally was to move the clinic to the third floor. Actually, when we did renovations, we put the pipes to be easy access to the clinic if the clinic was there because we were counting that the Catholic church and the Catholic people of this town would be willing to share the empty school that is there for 10 years, no, for 16 years now, for adult education. So we were thinking, we can move adult education to this empty school that is the other side of the fence and have the clinic there and everyone would be happy. The priest refused to let us use the building…This is totally speculation. I don't really know. But the reality is that this is an empty school that was empty in 1992, 2002, what am I talking, and we are 2016 and the school is still empty. Nothing is going on there, nothing is, the building isn't used. (Interview 4, Americana Community Center)

Here, the interviewee discusses challenges with a temporary solution that never transitions to a permanent solution in terms of the on-site Family Health Centers clinic. However, embedded within the interviewee's points are also that the organization has repeatedly tried to partner with a nearby Catholic parish to no avail. This partnership has been unsuccessful, according to the interviewee, largely because of miscommunication

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and difficulty in finding mutual benefit. Space is an example of limited capacity that partners are only able to address to an extent.

Other needs that are currently not actively being addressed include transportation challenges, bullying in schools, cultural barriers, and isolation, especially related to housing. With transportation, some of the difficulty to address the challenges is that, increasingly, the refugee resettlement agencies are having to resettle people in new parts of the city. Otherwise, many cities Louisville's size struggle with reliable public transit because it is only used by a small percentage of the population. Bullying and cultural barriers are difficult challenges to address because they involve so much education on the part of the larger receiving community. The three organizations expressed a desire to provide cultural competency training to the community but are too limited to do this on a regular basis. Their outreach efforts are secondary to their direct services to refugees and immigrants.

With isolation, part of this challenge is inherent in the structure of our communities. However, supporting organizations are currently not doing anything to directly address this. As a result, it largely falls onto the refugees and immigrants to find and form their own social support network. All the Somali interviewees discussed this, while only one of the organization staff did (and the one who did mention it came to the U.S. as an immigrant). It is interesting that this piece is missing from the organizational services because, as the literature points out, the social support networks are an important factor in self-sufficiency and integration.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION


Based on interviews with organization staff and Somali participants and

participant observations, this study explores how organizations collaborate to ease the

integration challenges faced by refugees and immigrants in Louisville, KY. The primary

challenges that arose from the data included difficulties finding housing, accessing

Medicaid, learning the language, and getting transportation. Supporting organizations

provide comprehensive services to alleviate these and other challenges for refugees and

immigrants, and many of the programs and services provided would not be possible

without an extensive network of collaborations that include the public-school system,

healthcare providers, and the police department. While Somali interviewees discussed

ways to improve organizations' services and challenges they continue to face in

integration, the impact supporting organizations have had on their experiences to date is

marked. Overall, the data demonstrates how essential it is to form and maintain

relationships to increase the capacity and resources available to the supporting

organizations.

My findings are consistent with other studies that focus on immigrant and refugee

integration experiences, especially regarding who refugees and immigrants rely on to

solve problems within their social support networks (Lamba and Krahn 2003; Boyle et al.

2010; Forrest and Brown 2014; Makwarimba et al. 2013; and Potocky-Tripodi 2004). As

per the literature, I found that co-ethnic and family support systems are limited for

foreign-born individuals, and as such, supporting organizations provide help that bridges

gaps in social capital, especially related to housing, employment, and healthcare. In this way, supporting organizations are the initial and primary liaison between internationals and the receiving community, as Tamar Mott observes (2010). However, they would be less effective as liaisons without the partnerships that expand their limited capacity. The findings, though, challenge studies in the literature that focus on refugee resettlement agencies or VOLAGs as the predominant intermediaries working with internationals in local communities. By omitting any mention of other community-based organizations or key partners, the implication seems to be that they are non-existent or unimportant. This study contributes to the literature a more in-depth look at how non-profit organizations – not limited to only refugee resettlement agencies – form partnerships and the contributions partners make to the provision of services.

While it was clear from the interviews that Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Catholic Charities, and Americana Community Center do partner in some ways, they are not the predominant partners in the collaborative network, according to my data. To an extent, this demonstrates that they have similar limitations and the value of partnering with each other does not meet the needs that drive collaboration. This aligns with Burt's (2005) theory that redundant social ties are not as beneficial as social ties that bridge existing structural holes. As anticipated, the three organizations have significant overlap of partners, which demonstrates a similar lack of resources. The similarities in partnership and lack of resources imply that the three organizations have high levels of structural embeddedness; however, the data did not provide insight into the structural embeddedness and levels of trust of the supporting organizations. The need for partnerships and an organizational network is not discussed in-depth in the literature

about non-profits, especially those that serve immigrants and refugees, except in Mullins and Jones's study about using a network management approach to provide housing to refugees (2009). The literature on organizational theory focuses heavily on the formation and maintenance of partnerships as they relate to corporations and firms.

It is important to understand that the purpose of organizational collaboration in the study is to increase the capacity of the supporting organizations to provide comprehensive services to refugees and immigrants. The top partners mentioned by organization staff – public schools, healthcare providers, and police departments – indicate that the most important partners provide services and access to resources that the home organizations cannot provide because of their limited resources. These resources are both tangible and intangible. For example, like Gulati's (2007) argument in favor of leveraging network resources, a partner warned a supporting organization that healthcare policy was about to change in a way that would negatively affect clients. This exchange of information is an intangible resource that alleviated the work of supporting organizations and relied on relational embeddedness. A tangible resource provided by partners is the on-site English classes. Partnering organizations provide teachers and curriculum at their own expense, which would be costly for supporting organizations. Sharing resources in this way relies on a shared mission: JCPS's Adult and Continuing Education program need to provide classes to a wide range of students and the supporting organizations can provide students who need those classes. As findings from my study demonstrate, networks are thus strongest when there are interpersonal relationships and a shared mission.

As mentioned previously, the organization staff conceptualize partnerships in a broader sense than organizational theorists, particularly Burt, Greve, Post et al., and Gulati, do. While these authors inform my analysis of the findings, the interviewees have their own, emerging definition that is perhaps more generous because they rely so heavily on partnerships. Indeed, the supporting organizations stand to benefit from having a larger network, and thus, defining partnerships broadly prevents the exclusion of would-be partners and stakeholders. The hope underlying the emerging definition seems to be that organizations who may be able to expand the services provided to internationals would provide those regardless of a formal recognized and reciprocal partnership. For example, while the services provided by the DCBS office would likely not be sufficient for organizational theorists to consider them a partner, by including DCBS in their network, the supporting organizations convey a desire to work with the benefits office and to have a shared stake in the integration of internationals. The emerging definition may be transferrable to other non-profit organizations, as organization theory does little to specifically include these firms, but it would require further research to make such a conclusion.

As findings from my study demonstrate, the most successful partnerships hinge on inter-agency staff relationships and shared mission and benefit, while unsuccessful partnerships lack shared expectations or a shared commitment to serving the population. Ranjay Gulati (2007) asserts that the way networks are governed helps minimize the costs of forming and maintaining relationships to maximize benefits. He also notes that relationally embedded networks were more beneficial for organizations, which was apparent in my study in that all the staff interviewed identified relationships with staff at

other agencies as the primary way partnerships are formed. Furthermore, supporting organizations seem to have systems in place for managing partnerships, which was mostly through formal agreements and scheduled meetings with larger, more integrated partners, like JCPS who provide an on-site and collaborative service, and through informal means with less integrated partners, like the police department who provide an off-site and non-collaborative service. These systems allow the supporting organizations to manage their extensive networks without overextending their capacity.

Greve (2003) also offers insight into the formation of partnerships when he conceptualizes different types of organizational problem-solving, where street-level bureaucrats are likely to be proactive in solving problems if they have free time and directors are likely to be primarily reactive in solving problems as they arise. The data from my interviews supports this argument but shows that street-level bureaucrats in supporting organizations often do not have the time to engage in problem-solving, which may be why many challenges are viewed as the result of a flawed system and ultimately the fault of someone outside the supporting organization.

The Somalis I interviewed were not aware of the elaborate network of partnerships formed to provide programs and services to them. As we can see in their explanation of the programs and services that helped them, they credit assistance primarily to the supporting organization, to their own personal actions, or to a helpful community member who was usually a co-ethnic. We can see that the impact of the organizational collaboration is extensive – from the interviewees with near fluent English to the descriptions about the comprehensive services provided during the initial resettlement period including enrollment in benefits like Medicaid – for the refugees

interviewed. The interviewees' lack of awareness of the networks underlying the programs and services indicates that the partnerships are highly embedded and are as essential as the organization staff claimed they were.

The interviews with Somali respondents confirmed quantitative findings in the literature that extra-familial ties are invaluable in addressing employment and health-related problems (Lamba and Krahn 2003; Allen 2009; Potocky-Tripodi 2004). Supporting organizations expand the connections needed to increase self-sufficiency and integration, and this study contributes qualitative accounts of the role these organizations play as well as a new perspective on the organizations that comprise host support networks. The responsibility does not fall solely on refugee resettlement agencies but also on community-based organizations and community partners.

Partnerships are, as interviewees indicated, essential to offering programs and services that equip refugees and immigrants to overcome the challenges of integration. This study responds to gaps in the literature by providing an analysis of the ways supporting organizations can provide comprehensive social support to refugees and immigrants and by demonstrating the effects of partnerships on integration experiences. The results of this study have important implications for partnerships, services for internationals, and future research.

While my study is limited by difficulties related to my target sample populations and by the methods I used, it provides important implications for supporting organizations, potential partners, and individual community members. As I have noted, it takes a strong network of partnerships to provide comprehensive services and programs to refugees and immigrants and there are clear action steps to take away from this study.

*Limitations*

My study is limited in that it is not generalizable to all refugee and immigrant groups or to all communities because of the sample size of fifteen interviews and focus on one specific city. Thus, the findings are transferrable rather than generalizable. In spite of the small sample size, I was able to reach theoretical saturation and identify larger trends that may be applicable to other locales and supporting organizations. As previously noted, Louisville's foreign-born population has similar characteristics to other medium-sized cities, especially those located in the manufacturing belt and those with significant refugee and immigrant populations. The challenges that the internationals and supporting organizations face are certainly not unique to this location or time. Non-profit organizations across the U.S. – even those with federal funding – constantly face limited capacity, and newly settled refugees and immigrants face limited social capital as the literature continuously notes regardless of location.

Additionally, there were limitations with researcher positionality and data collection. I did face some difficulties in interviewing Somali refugees to understand the impact organizational collaboration has on program beneficiaries. As a white, U.S.-born woman, I faced some reluctance and skepticism from Somali interviewees. Especially as current events unfolded, such as news of a knife attack at Ohio State University by an 18-year-old Somali man and the Trump Administration's travel ban, they expressed worry about why I was interested in interviewing them. I navigated these difficulties by relying on snowball sampling and interviewing them in locations where they felt safe and organizational staff could facilitate the interview. Snowball sampling is a potential limitation in that I relied on organization staff to recommend Somali interviewees,

creating potential for bias in favor of the organizations. However, I would not have been able to gain access to this population without referents, and the mixed methods design mitigates this limitation to an extent. Many of the interviewees also had contact with more than one of the supporting organizations, which helps ensure they were able to discuss the impact of the various programs and services they utilized without significant bias toward one organization.

For several Somali participants, I had to rely on an interpreter. During those interviews, I found that some of the questions were difficult to translate and that the presence of the interpreter hindered the flow of the interview. I also found that it was challenging for the Somali interviewees to recognize the distinct programs and services provided to them. Furthermore, interviewing different refugee and immigrant populations may have yielded different findings, especially in terms of the benefits of programs and services and the challenges they face. While challenges such as these limit my findings, because I utilized the interviews with Somalis to check and confirm the organizational perspective, the findings remain useful and have practical implications to ease integration experiences for internationals.

A final limitation that emerged is that the theory would have predicted that if the three supporting organizations were structurally embedded, there would be higher levels of trust among them. However, findings related to structural embeddedness did not surface and I was unable to analyze the effects of this form of embeddedness on interorganizational relationships, specifically regarding collaboration among the three supporting organizations.

Given these stated limitations, the findings and conclusions are transferrable and can inform individuals, organizations, and communities consisting of and who work with refugee and immigrant populations. Furthermore, this study is a snapshot of how organizations collaborated during the time of my data collection. As I discuss below, the political climate has changed significantly since my study concluded, which may have significant effects. Despite these changes, I do believe the long-standing existence and structure of the organizations at the center of my study means that there will not be drastic changes in the near future. Additionally, non-profits are highly likely to continue to have limited capacity and thus need to form partnerships in order to meet the diverse and increasing needs of immigrant and refugee communities. The ongoing challenges of internationals and supporting organizations underlie my findings and are unlikely to be significantly affected by changes in the socio-political climate. Rather, I anticipate that the shifting political climate will increase the challenges of internationals and supporting organizations, which will result in increased need to form and maintain partnerships.

*Implications*

The findings of this study contribute narratives from supporting organization staff members and refugees regarding integration experiences, including an in-depth analysis of the challenges of being a foreign-born individual in the U.S. and the critical contributions of supporting organizations and partnering agencies. Current literature on refugees and immigrants is largely quantitative or places them rather than the supporting organizations at the center of the study. This study demonstrates the importance of understanding the role of non-profit organizations who provide services and programs that address the challenges of being an immigrant or refugee in the United States. The

findings also indicate that refugee resettlement agencies are not the sole intermediaries between the government and local communities on behalf of the target populations. Local, grassroots organizations, like Americana Community Center, can and do have significant impact on the long-term integration of internationals, as do businesses and agencies who partner with the supporting organizations.

The current field of literature that addresses organizational collaboration focuses primarily on corporations and rarely considers how and why non-profit agencies collaborate. This study demonstrates the importance of understanding and leveraging collaborations to address the challenges non-profits and internationals face. The study takes important concepts from organizational theory and demonstrates how they are also relevant for non-profit organizations and for providing services to immigrants and refugees.

The findings analyzed here are timely and have programmatic and policy implications. As I have shown, organizational collaboration is essential to offering the comprehensive services needed to help refugees and immigrants integrate into their new hometowns. Organizations serving these populations should identify the ways their capacity is limited and form partnerships to address those gaps. Furthermore, while the organization staff members were largely aware of the challenges facing refugees and immigrants, some challenges did arise during the Somali interviews that were not brought up by staff. Increased awareness of challenges from the perspective of participants could be an important step in improving programs and services. Alternately, agencies and businesses in communities with significant immigrant and refugee populations should consider the ways they can form partnerships with supporting organizations to expand

their capacity. Partnering organizations should keep in mind that training staff to be culturally and linguistically prepared to serve internationals prevents unnecessarily increasing the workload for supporting organization staff.

Furthermore, organizations and businesses in communities with international populations should be mindful of the impact their programs and services (or lack thereof) have on alleviating or creating challenges for this population. As demonstrated in the findings, housing companies and local landlords should consider the opportunity of leasing to refugees and immigrants. Housing developments should build housing that intentionally accommodates larger families with the assurance that refugee resettlement agencies will have clients to resettle there. Because the literature puts such emphasis on the importance of forming strong social support networks in integration, efforts should be made to remedy isolating housing practices.  In terms of policy, local governments could work with agencies to establish policy to provide more readily available and adequate housing for these populations. The challenges associated with housing should be considered by community members, agencies, and cities.

The agencies who allocate Medicaid and other public benefits should bear in mind that refugees and immigrants will likely utilize these services for their initial resettlement period, when they struggle to apply for services over the telephone where they may not be understood because of a language barrier or online which may be inaccessible to individuals with limited computer skills. Organizations accepting Medicaid and other benefits should advocate for more accessible benefits and follow the model set by providers outlined here, offering culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Similarly, government policies at state and federal levels should recognize the impact of

limiting access to healthcare for all their constituents, including foreign-born individuals, as I saw direct impact of state decisions on healthcare by switching to an online and phone-based Benefind system, which has increased challenges for supporting organizations, partner organizations, and refugees and immigrants.

As language is the first and most prominent challenge for internationals, any organization receiving federal funding must recognize that they are mandated to provide language access as needed and that they cannot turn someone away simply because they cannot understand them. Organizations providing English classes should explore the option of offering evening and weekend classes rather than weekday classes when many foreign-born individuals are working.  Public transit companies should be engaged in conversations about where refugees and immigrants are being resettled and getting jobs, providing routes that are helpful and considering the option of bus schedules in other languages. However, it could be highly difficult for public transit companies to bear the full brunt of this responsibility. Local governance should provide additional resources and support to enable agencies to make linguistically appropriate services available in the community. All community agencies and businesses must understand and attempt to address the challenges faced by newcomers because as we see in the literature, a community that is welcoming is more likely to thrive (Williams 2015; Brown et al. 2007; Mott 2010; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al. 2006).

Individual community members should recognize the intense challenges newcomers face and the crucial role they can play in receiving refugees and immigrants. Individuals' roles in fostering a welcoming community can include getting involved in community councils, community-based organizations, and coalitions, which have the

power to be more effective in changing the environment of the receiving community. As Williams (2015) notes, individuals in communities can embrace a welcoming approach to positively impact the integration of refugees and immigrants. Individual community members can volunteer at and donate to supporting organizations, can advocate for policies and politicians that are pro-immigrant and refugee, and recognize the cultural differences present in their community. For example, the Somalis interviewed talked about experiencing isolation because of cultural differences and their religious practices. Individuals living in communities with foreign-born populations should seek to learn about and be open to other cultural practices, which could be an important initiative for local government, community-based organizations, and coalitions to undertake. Louisville has many agencies who work with internationals and/or partner with the supporting organizations featured in this study, but despite the large and growing foreign-born population in the community, there are currently no coalitions in the area focused on this population.

Local governments can have a significant impact on the integration of refugees and immigrants by cultivating a welcoming city. As Williams (2005) notes, my findings suggest that a commitment to welcoming leads to greater number of partners and ease of integration. The constituents at the local level may represent a higher percentage of foreign-born residents than the state, and as such, local government can develop policies and practices that accommodate these individuals. Interviewees expressed concern about the direction the state and federal governments are moving regarding immigrants and refugees, and as Stewart (2012) shows, laws and policies at both levels will have a significant impact – positively or negatively – on individuals and organizations. As I

observed in my interviews, state and federal governments can take direct and indirect actions to affect immigrants and refugees.

*Future research*

Throughout the study, questions and topics for potential future research emerged. Closely related to my study, it will be important for future research to deepen the understanding of the partner networks by using network mapping and analysis. Research framed in a network analysis context could be useful for practical application by non-profit organizations, as Provan et al. (2005) explain in their article. Additionally, because my study focused on the organizational perspectives of the research questions, future research should more thoroughly examine how immigrants and refugees understand the programs and services provided and the partnerships that make them possible. Similar studies should be replicated in other cities to compare how supporting organizations offer programs and services in different locations, which will help in identifying best practices.

With a similar focus on the foreign-born perspective, it came up several times during my interviews and participant observations that supporting organizations staffed by U.S.-born individuals do not understand the in-group dynamics of international communities. Future research should seek to understand how family dynamics shift as children learn English faster than parents and as many women work outside of the home for the first time. Ideally, this study would be longitudinal. Furthermore, my research suggested ethnic leaders naturally arise in the communities as some integrate more quickly and can then help others in the community navigate language and cultural systems, forming a microcosmic but non-negligible representative democracy. These leaders often have one foot in the ethnic community and one in the world of supporting

organizations, which may limit the trust the community has in them. Exploring the dynamics of ethnic leaders in the communities from multiple perspectives is important to innovate ways that supporting organizations form partners and offer programs and services.

Finally, during my study, significant changes in the political climate indicate that research focused on internationals and supporting organizations will continue to be needed. In November of 2016, Republican nominee Donald J. Trump won the presidential election on a platform that was largely anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim. Interviewees spoke of tension and concern because of the presidential election, and two of the three community meetings I attended were a direct reaction to the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim political rhetoric at the national level. To date, President Trump has signed two executive orders – on January 27, 2017, and March 6, 2017 – halting refugee resettlement for 120 days and halting travel to and from predominantly Muslim countries, including Somalia. Of the two anecdotes given as "evidence" that the executive order calls for actions that protect the U.S. from foreign national terrorist, one describes a Somali man who came to the country as a refugee and was later sentenced to time in prison after attempting to detonate a bomb. The policies and rhetoric promoted by the Trump White House actively endorse fear of refugees, immigrants, and Muslims and have drastically cut funding to refugee resettlement agencies, such as Kentucky Refugee Ministries and Catholic Charities. The future of these organizations is uncertain for the first time in decades. Because of the political rhetoric and climate, Somalis face double stigmas from being refugees and Muslims.

My research indicates that federal policies can be offset by local communities and supporting organizations, and community partnerships will be as important if not more important in coming years. Challenges for international newcomers may increase and the integration experiences may become more diverse and complex. Supporting organizations may need new partners to expand an increasingly limited capacity. In the face of a changing social and political climate, we must understand the role of supporting and partnering organizations in helping refugees and immigrants integrate into their new hometowns. We must be aware of and sympathetic to the difficulties internationals face, and we must be committed to fostering welcoming communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Supporting Organizations Interview Guide

**Introduction**

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed. As I mentioned, I am a student at UofL researching immigrant and refugee experiences adjusting to U.S. culture. I am especially interested in challenges they have and programs that assist them with those challenges. This interview should take about an hour and is fairly informal. I have some specific questions to ask you, but feel free to speak candidly.

This interview is confidential. Anything you tell me will not be connected to your name or identity. This interview is voluntary, meaning you can stop at any time if you are uncomfortable. If there is a question you don't want to answer, just tell me and we'll skip it. I'm going to record this interview so I can transcribe it later if that's ok. If there are any questions you don't want to answer on the recorder, tell me and I can turn it off. Is all of that clear? Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

**Demographics**

(Gender presented)

Country of origin

Race/ethnicity

How long have you worked with immigrants/refugees? How long in Louisville?

Other than this organization, where have you worked? What was your position there? Tell me more about what you did there.

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

How did you get involved with working with immigrants/refugees in Louisville?

What about it interested you?

**ORGANIZATION EXPERIENCE**

How does [your organization] help immigrants/refugees? What programs and services do you offer?

How do immigrants/refugees learn about these programs and services?

*Probes: advertising for them, referral from other organization, word of mouth*

Who does your organization primarily help?

*For example, just refugees? From where? Low-income only?*

What types of partnerships does your organization have with other organizations that work with refugees/immigrants?

> *Probes: resettlement agencies, government agencies, funders, churches, landlords/housing, JCPS*

What partnerships/relationships with other organizations help you offer programs and services?

What is your organization's relationship with partnering organizations like?

> Do you provide overlapping and/or supplementary services?

> Do employees from both organizations know each other well?

> How do your organizations communicate? (Does one report to the other?)

> Has your organization had any negative experiences working with this organization?

Tell me about your organization's work with political advocacy. Why do you think your organization does (does not do) political advocacy? What is that experience like?

> *Probes: rallies, policy development, work with political organizations*

Tell me about your organization's work with legal advocacy. Why do you think your organization does (does not do) legal advocacy? What is that experience like?

> *Probes: citizenship, green cards, taxes, traffic tickets, juvenile delinquency, or criminal behavior*

**CHALLENGES AND NEEDS**

What do you think are the greatest challenges for the immigrant/refugee communities in Louisville that still need to be addressed?

> *Probes: Housing, healthcare, citizenship opportunities, employment, language, cultural barriers, education*

What needs to happen for these challenges to be addressed, in your opinion?

Do you feel Louisville is a welcoming city overall? What about Louisville is welcoming/unwelcoming?

What changes could be made to make Louisville more welcoming?

**Conclusion**

That's all of my questions. Is there anything I missed? Anything else I should know? Do you have any questions for me? Great, thank you so much. This has been very helpful. If I have any other questions for you, is it ok if I follow up via email? Thank you.

Appendix B. Immigrant/Refugee Interview Guide

**Introduction**

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed. As we discussed, I am a student at UofL researching immigrant and refugee experiences adjusting to U.S. culture. I am especially interested in experiences in Louisville. This interview should take about an hour and is fairly informal. I have some questions here that I am going to ask you, but I really want you to feel comfortable just talking about your thoughts and experiences.

This interview is confidential. Anything you tell me will not be connected to your name or identity. No one except me will know that it was you who said any of this. Do you understand that? This interview is voluntary, meaning you can stop at any time if you are uncomfortable or don't want to answer a question. If there is a question you don't want to answer, just tell me and we'll skip it. Are you comfortable with me recording the interview? It's just for me to listen to and make notes. No one else will listen to it. If there are any questions you don't want to answer on the recorder, tell me and I can turn it off. Do you understand that? Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

**Demographics**

Age

(Gender presented)

Country of origin

Tell me about your family.

Did you come to US as immigrant, refugee, or asylee? Tell me a little about that process.

How long have you been in the US?

How much did you know English before coming to the US?

**ADJUSTING TO U.S. LIFE**

Tell me about what it was like for you when you first moved to the United States.

*Probes: Housing, education, transportation, cultural differences, language, employment, healthcare, discrimination or unwelcoming attitudes, citizenship, paperwork/documents*

How did you come to Louisville? (*Probes: direct or via another city, with a resettlement agency*)

What help did you receive when you arrived? (*Probes: payment for air fare, help with housing/furniture, people met you at the airport*)

Did you have friends or family already here? Who? How long had they been here? How did they help you?

How did you find a place to live? How did you find a job? What transportation did you use at first? How did you enroll your children in school? What was this experience like for you? (Follow-up after each)

Think back to when you first arrived here. Compare it to your life now. How has your life changed? (*Probes: economics, employment, education, language, transportation*)

What have been the challenges in adjusting to life here?

> *Probes: housing, education, employment, family dynamics (gender and children), interactions with people, education, safety, language, thinking about family back home*

When you first arrived in the U.S., how did it fit your expectations of what life would be like? How did it not meet your expectation? Can you give me examples?

What experiences have you had in the U.S. where you have felt unwelcome because you are from another country (are immigrant/refugee)? In what ways have you felt pressure to fit into U.S. culture? (*Probes: media, classmates, co-workers, teachers, comments made in passing*) Can you give me an example?

Has anyone in your family experienced unwelcomness? How did you react?

**SUPPORT SYSTEMS**

Tell me about the support you had when you moved here.

> *Probes: Family, friends, ethnic community, host community, resettlement agency, other organization, religious group*

Do you feel there is a supportive community of people from [your home country] in Louisville? What experiences do you have any experiences only being around people from your ethnic group? Tell me about those experiences.

How has having other people around who are "like you" impacted you? Do you feel that is a supportive community for you? (*Probes: language, acceptance, traditions, culture, understand experiences coming here*)

What programs helped you? How so? (*Probes: family problems, mail, legal help, education for self or children, connection to other services, healthcare, employment, transportation*)

What is the most memorable experience you've had with one of these programs?

It's important that programs and resources for immigrants and refugees are meeting real needs and work for you. Because of that, I'd like to understand what programs didn't work for you. That doesn't mean these programs will be cut, but your feedback can help us improve the programs. Were there any programs that didn't work or that need to be improved?

When you came to the U.S., was there anything that you needed or wanted help with but didn't get? What programs or services did you wish were there to support you when you first arrived?

**Conclusion**

That's all of my questions. Is there anything I missed? Anything else I should know? Do you have any questions for me? Great, thank you so much. This has been very helpful. If I have any other questions for you, is it ok if I follow up? Do you have any friends who might be interested in participating in an interview? Thank you.

Appendix C. Informed Consent Form

**Subject Informed Consent Document**

Organizational Collaboration and Its Impact on Immigrant and Refugee Experiences

**Investigators:**
Derrick Brooms 118 Lutz Hall, Dept of Sociology Univ of Louisville / Louisville, KY 40292
Elizabeth Roberts 116 Lutz Hall, Dept of Sociology Univ of Louisville / Louisville, KY 40292

**Introduction, Background, and Procedures:** You are being invited to participate in a research study by participating in an interview about the integration experiences of immigrants and refugees in Louisville, KY. There are no known risks for your participation in this research study. The information collected may not benefit you directly. The information learned in this study may be helpful to others. The information you provide will be used to discuss trends in the integration process as well as identify the impact of collaborative networks on integration experiences. The interview will take approximately one hour to complete and will use open-ended responses. Your responses will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

**Confidentiality:** Total privacy cannot be guaranteed. While unlikely, individuals from the Department of Sociology, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), the Human Subjects Protection Program Office (HSPPO), and other regulatory agencies may inspect these records. In all other respects, however, the data will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Should the data be published, your identity will not be disclosed.

Your information will be kept private by transferring the audio-recording of the interview to an encrypted flash drive immediately following the interview. The recording will be completely destroyed after the recording is transcribed, with redacted names, locations, and other identifiers. The transcription will also be kept on an encrypted flash drive.

**Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Taking part in this study is voluntary. By completing this interview you agree to take part in this research study. You do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to be in this study you may stop taking part at any time. If you decide not to be in this study or if you stop

taking part at any time, you will not lose any benefits for which you may qualify.

There are no foreseeable risks, although there may be unforeseen risks. The possible benefits of this study include programmatic and policy implications for organizations that serve immigrants and refugees. The information may not benefit you directly but may be helpful to others. You will not be compensated for your time, inconvenience, or expenses while you are in this study.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research study, please contact: Derrick Brooms at dr.brooms@louisville.edu.

**Research Subject's Rights, Questions, Concerns, and Complaints:** If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Human Subjects Protection Program Office at (502) 8525188. You can discuss any questions about your rights as a research subject, in private, with a member of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). You may also call this number if you have other questions about the research, and you cannot reach the research staff, or want to talk to someone else. The IRB is an independent committee made up of people from the University community, staff of the institutions, as well as people from the community not connected with these institutions. The IRB has reviewed this research study.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research or research staff and you do not wish to give your name, you may call 1-877-852-1167. This is a 24-hour hotline answered by people who do not work at the University of Louisville.

**Statement of Consent:** This informed consent document is not a contract. This document tells you what will happen during the study if you choose to take part.  Your signature indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in the study.  You are not giving up any legal rights to which you are entitled by signing this informed consent document.  You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

_____
Subject Name (Please Print)        Signature of Subject     Date Signed

_____
Printed Name of Legal Representative     Signature of Legal     Date Signed     Relationship of Legal
(if applicable)                          Representative                          Representative to Subject

_____
Printed Name of Person Explaining Consent Form    Signature of Person Explaining    Date Signed
                                                          Consent Form


_____
Printed Name of Investigator          Signature of Investigator        Date Signed



List of Investigators:                          Phone
                                                Numbers:

Derrick Brooms                                  (502) 852-8026
Elizabeth Roberts                               (803) 517-2954

CURRICULUM VITAE

# Elizabeth Burdette Roberts

(803) 517-2954
ebroberts24@gmail.com

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**EDUCATION**

**M.A.**   Sociology, University of Louisville
*Organizational Collaboration and Its Impact on Immigrants and Refugees in Louisville*
Derrick R. Brooms (chair), David Roelfs, Aaron Rollins

**B.S.**   Sociology, College of Charleston Honors College
Thesis: *Fostering College Students' Moral Development through Volunteerism and Voluntourism*
Deborah Auriffeille (advisor)

**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

Sociology of Race and Ethnicity          Urban Sociology
Immigrant Communities                    Organizational Theory
Volunteerism

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Graduate Teaching Assistant**
*University of Louisville*, January 2016-May 2017
Plan and implement weekly discussion sections for SOC 210: Race in the U.S. course under the guidance of Dr. Derrick Brooms and Prof. Andrea Koven, make and proctor exams, manage students' grades

**Graduate Research Assistant**
*University of Louisville*, August-December 2016
Transcribe interviews under advice of Dr. Patricia Gagne and assist with participant recruitment

**Student Instructor**
*College of Charleston Honors College*, January-May 2013
Created and led curriculum for an Honors course and Alternative Break trip on community-based research under the guidance of Trisha Folds-Bennett and Mary Pat Twomey

**RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

2016 "Leveraging Social Capital in a New Home: Immigrants, Refugees, and Integration," Qualitative Pilot Study, Patricia Gagne

2014 "Religiosity and Volunteering in College," Independent Study, Brenda Sanders and Laura Mewborn

2013 "Manufacturing Community: The Case of an Urban Hat Store," Ethnography, Deborah Auriffeille

**PRESENTATIONS**
*Conference Presentations*

2017 "Organizational Collaboration and Its Impact on Somali Refugees," *North Central Sociological Association* (Indianapolis, IN)

2017 "Organizational Collaboration and Its Impact on Immigrants and Refugees in Louisville," *Graduate Student Regional Research Conference* (Louisville, KY)

2014 "Fostering College Students' Moral Development through Volunteerism and Voluntourism," *Moore Student Research Conference* (Charleston, SC)

*Assorted Presentations*

2017 3-Minute Thesis Competition, *University of Louisville*
2017 Brown Bag Presentation, *University of Louisville Sociology Department*
2016 ATLAS.ti Demonstration, *SOC 618: Qualitative Methods*
2016 "Summer So Bae," *Sonnets on a Sunday*
2014 Be the Movement Student Proposal Showcase, *College of Charleston*
2013 in!Genius at the College of Charleston

**ACADEMIC GRANTS, HONORS, AND AWARDS**

2017 Graduate Research Fund, *Graduate Student Council*
2017 Research Fund, *Graduate Network of Arts and Sciences*
2014 Bishop Robert Smith Award, *College of Charleston*
2014 School of Humanities and Social Sciences Scholar, *College of Charleston*
2013 Critical Languages Scholarship, *U.S. Department of State*
2013 College of Charleston Hall of Leaders, *Alternative Spring Break Program*

**FELLOWSHIPS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

2017 Member, *North Central Sociological Association*
2016-17 Sociology Representative, *Graduate Network of Arts and Sciences*
2015-17 Member, *Sociology Graduate Student Association*
2014 Member, *Alpha Kappa Delta Sociology Honors Society*
2010-14 William Aiken Fellow, *College of Charleston Honors College*

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2016  CrossRoads Anti-Bias, Anti-Racist Education Workshop
2015  ATLAS.ti Demo for University of Louisville, Department of Sociology

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Community Liaison AmeriCorps VISTA**
*Americana World Community Center*, August 2014-2015
Foster a welcoming community for Louisville's foreign-born population through ethnic leaders' meetings, a proposal for a state welcoming office, and social media initiatives

**Bonner Senior Intern**
*College of Charleston Bonner Leader Program*, August 2013-May 2014
Managed program of 30 diverse students based out of a national service and leadership foundation

**Writing Lab Consultant**
*Center for Student Learning*, August 2011-May 2013
Tutored students one-on-one to identify their writing strengths and weaknesses

## LITERARY PUBLICATIONS

2013  "27 Million," *Miscellany: The Literary and Art Journal of the College of Charleston*, Charleston, SC
2013  "Healing for my mother," *Miscellany: The Literary and Art Journal of the College of Charleston*, Charleston, SC

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Americana Ambassador**
*Americana World Community Center*, February 2016-Present
Member of young professional ad-hoc board and Presentable Pitch Committee

**Bonner Leader Program**
*College of Charleston*, August 2010-May 2014
Engaged in sustained volunteering with local non-profits and developed personal leadership skills