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GENDER BOUNDARY NEGOTIATION WITHIN THE U.S.
IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: HOW TRANSNATIONAL BRIDGE-
BUILDING MATTERS

By

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B.A., National University of Rwanda, 1983
M.A. University of Notre Dame, 2008

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in Applied Sociology

Department of Sociology
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2018

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April 6, 2018

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DEDICATION

To my beloved Family:

Amir, Aden, Alanna,

Arlette, Alain

Adeodatus, Adolphe, Achille,

and Dancille

You are the whole world for me

Your unconditional support is awesome

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“The footprint of one person is narrow” (Congolese proverb), I am confident that mine is a large footprint due to walking in the footprint of many wonderful people. This Dissertation is the culmination of my family’s long journey that started 24 years ago today on April 6, 1994. I am so grateful to the Faculty guidance and collaboration at the University of Louisville and beyond during the Doctoral Program in Applied Sociology. Thank you to everyone who made this project possible for your invaluable contribution.

ABSTRACT

GENDER BOUNDARY NEGOTIATION WITHIN THE U.S. IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT: HOW TRANSNATIONAL BRIDGE- BUILDING MATTERS

Telesphore Kagaba

April 6, 2018

For the past several decades, social research about U.S. immigrant and refugee resettlement has focused on some of the ways federal and non-governmental organizations help immigrants and refugees integrate into mainstream society. Little research, if any, has explored how giving voice to immigrants and refugees is done in bridging transnational gaps and strengths in the process of their adjustment to the host country. This dissertation is grounded within transnational theory (Avenarius 2012, Levitt 2011, Peteet 1997) that argues that immigrants and refugees bring their experiences and cultures from their home countries, time in refugee camps, and other often traumatic experiences with them to the host country and a new culture.

The study focuses on an organization solely funded by private donations and located in a Midwestern medium size city of the United States. The model is to encourage immigrant and refugee parents, predominantly women enrolling in Welcome Home¹ programs, to set up and work toward their own goals. The Welcome Home Program offers parents from diverse cultural backgrounds a new social space characterized by on-demand family coaching. At the same time, the program offers opportunities to parents to learn financial literacy. The program also replicates the national literacy model that puts emphasis on parent-child interactions in promoting children's academic development. The social context thus created functions primarily as an opportunity for family units to think about themselves as active players in the process of their adjustment to the United States. This research explores constant gender negotiations immigrant and refugee women and men engage in and how they accommodate new expectations and opportunities with their experiences in refugee camps and their socialization in their home countries.

¹ This is a pseudonym for the agency to protect their confidentiality.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

It was a typical spring morning of 2016 in New Home², a Midwestern mid-size city of the United States at a local community center where Amina³ came three times per week for her General Education Development (GED) class, and to take a Welcome Home Center class every Tuesday. Her outfit that day was a long blue and white dress, a long blue coat, with hijab as usual since I first met her in September 2015. She stopped for a greeting and we had a short conversation as usual when we met. I was introduced to Amina's class at Welcome Home Center as an intern at the center six months earlier⁴.

In our conversation that morning, Amina said that an incident involving her 9-year old that occurred the day before worried her. She shared that some elementary

² This is a pseudonym for the city to protect confidentiality of the Agency.

³ This is a pseudonym to protect the research subject's confidentiality. All names in the dissertation are pseudonyms to protect people's confidentiality.

⁴ I conducted a program evaluation from September 2015 – May 2016 at a community center that offered 1-year family-based programs for legal immigrant and refugee parents. I also conducted preliminary data analysis and wrote an internship report during the summer 2016 – spring 2017. A version of the internship report was edited by Professor Patricia Gagné and published in *International Relations and Diplomacy*, November 2017, vol.5, No. 11: pp. 671-686

students increasingly harassed her son and a group of refugee students. Amina, almost crying, observed⁵:

The idea terrifies me that some people truly believe that some ties exist between my son and a country that he hardly knows. I am his mother. I know almost nothing of that country. My son was born and grew up here and he speaks good English. Honestly, it makes no sense to me given the fact that we are no longer living in any sort of refugee camp. Plus, we have been here enough (...) Why do people keep linking my son to that country?

Unlike Amina's son who was not enrolled in the Children Academy segment of Welcome Home Program, her younger daughter was attending Children Academy⁶. In previous open-ended and semi-structured interviews at the community center where I worked as an intern, Amina shared her own story about her migration trajectory to the United States. Her family fled their village when she was a small child. It took several months until her family was able to reach a United Nations – sponsored refugee camp in a neighboring country. Her mother passed away in the refugee camp when she was 5 years old, and she was raised by her maternal grandparents as her father was married to another wife. She grew up in the refugee camp. At age 15, Amina came to the United States with her grandparents, six aunts and uncles. Her father passed away in the refugee camp just before she relocated to a Midwestern mid-size city.

Amina is representative of thousands of other immigrants/refugees living in the U.S. today. For instance, among the 84,994 refugees that arrived in the United States in 2016⁷, more than 72 percent were women and children⁸. Immigrants/refugees relocating

⁵ The comment was made in relation to the election of U.S. President Donald Trump.

⁶ Children attending the Children Academy are beyond the scope of the current study.

⁷ The U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Office (PRM) periodically publish statistics from the Refugee Processing Center, such as a

in the United States for resettlement often have little memory of life in their homelands. The current study builds on data collected during the internship to outline major trends related to an analysis of immigrant/refugee parents' constant gender boundary negotiation strategies (Gerson and Peiss 1985) in multiple spaces and cultural settings during their displacement (Peteet 1997).

Bridging Transnational Gaps during the U.S. Resettlement

Like Amina, many immigrant/refugee parents came to the United States from various parts of the World. Usually defined by nationality⁹ during the resettlement process, these parents from each nationality often identify themselves by language, tribe, religion, race and/or ethnicity. Their social interactions in the host country often represent movements back and forth between the native culture of their homeland and the new culture in host country as population migration is not a linear and irreversible switch from people's native community membership to the host country. What immigrants / refugees bring and continue to receive from their homelands affects their experiences in their host countries (Levitt 2011). The literature on transnationalism emphasizes both continuity and change from the culture of origin (Avenarius 2012, Epstein 2007, Gerson and Peiss 1985, Levitt 2011, Paterson 2006, and Peteet 1997).

summary of annual refugee admissions. These statistics can be available on the website at <http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/>.

⁸ These statistics can be available on the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Office (PRM) at <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/releases/factsheets/2017/266365.htm>.

⁹ The subjects of the current research come from seventeen nationalities. For methodological purposes to protect their confidentiality, they are identified throughout the dissertation by their geographical regions of origin, such as Southeastern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle-East, Central America, and Eastern Africa.

During their initial adjustment to the host country, these immigrant/refugee parents engage in social exchanges, such as with other immigrants/refugees, and resettlement program workers that can self-identify in terms of class, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity. These parents simultaneously utilize their own pre-existing gender boundary negotiation strategies. For instance, parents who used to deal with tribal or religious differences in their homelands are expected to navigate a social context characterized by cultural norms and mores based on their own tribal and/or ethnic differences, various experiences during their displacement, national differences with other immigrant/refugee communities, and the U.S. culture. In so doing, they engage in bridging multiple simultaneous transnational cultural gaps to the host country.

Research Background

Set within my program evaluation, U.S. refugee resettlement practices and social theory, my dissertation uses gender perspectives to focus on program efficacy features enhancing human agency for immigrant/refugee parents, predominantly mothers attending Welcome Home programs. The goal of this dissertation is to understand how, at the end of their migration trajectory, these immigrant/refugee parents, mostly women, make sense of their adjustment process to the United States. The study focus is twofold. First, my dissertation provides an in-depth analysis of these parents' learning experiences, such as how they navigate new opportunities offered to them during the process of their adjustment to the United States. Second, the study explores how immigrant/refugee parents, predominantly mothers engage in gender boundary negotiations (Abu-Lughod 1993, Gerson and Peiss 1985, Peteet 1997) and "do gender" (West and Zimmerman 1987).

Drawing on the contemporary sociological viewpoint that gender is plural and situational (Bem 1993, Collins 2000, Connell 2002, Kimmel 2005, Kimmel 2014, West and Zimmerman 1987), my dissertation examines strategies that immigrant/refugee parents utilize to adjust their ways of “doing” gender and how they make sense of gender boundaries thus created in multiple spaces and cultural settings (Abu-Lughod 1993, Gerson and Peiss 1985, Peteet 1997). The meanings of social exchanges during migration and in their host country depend on various spaces and times that these immigrant/refugee parents occupy. The current analysis explains participants’ adjustment process and how providing a shared social space for setting and working toward goals helps immigrants and refugees from diverse backgrounds adjust their gender boundary negotiation strategies with respect to internalized gender scripts and ideology in multiple spaces and cultural settings they navigate. The goal of this research is to examine how asking Welcome Home Program participants to set their own goals might work to preserve native cultures while helping parents adapt to the demands of their new home.

Drawing on “typical” experiences (Abu-Lughod 1993) of immigrant/refugee women from diverse backgrounds, my dissertation remains mindful of their personal stories and voices that often constitute their individual and collective experiences. The current study is an in-depth evaluation of features that builds on participants’ justifications for and interpretations of their individual and collective actions in the process of creating symbiotic relationship between program efficacy and participants’ human agency. Feminist anthropologist Abu-Lughod (1993) argues against tendencies of generalizing women’s experiences in ethnographic writing about Third World women and minority group women. The author recommends that telling stories of non-Western

and/or minority group women by a “Western” researcher entails being mindful of these women’s conditions, including political, socioeconomic and cultural implications of their gender systems. For instance, to make an in-depth analysis of women’s experiences from diverse non-Western backgrounds would require being aware of the standpoint and the power of cultural differences of researchers and their subjects. Generalizing women’s experiences could risk producing homogeneity, coherence, and timeliness of women’s experiences. The concept of cultural backgrounds could also mask the fluidity of group boundaries, discourse, and social practices (pp.5-14).

Pragmatic Gender Boundary Rule-Bending

My dissertation builds on four sociological viewpoints. First, gender is critical in understanding social dynamics in society and the role of social stratification around which all social institutions are organized. From this perspective, gender identity is defined as the equivalent of detailed behavioral expectations about each sex category as prescribed by social norms in a given social context (Epstein 2007). Second, gender is socially constructed in the sense that gender identities are a fluid assemblage of meanings and behaviors that people construct from social values, images, and prescriptions they find in the world around them (Connell 2002, Kimmel 2005 & 2014). Gender is not something that is naturally produced in people’s minds from their early childhood but instead reflects the gender polarization prevalent in the larger culture. Gender-differentiated treatment continues as the child grows up; gender-appropriateness is reinforced through expectations that results in praise and reinforcement for gender-appropriate behavior (Kimmel 2005: 235). Third, gender is something that individuals do, and do recurrently, in interactions with others. Individuals are constantly performing

activities and exhibiting traits that are prescribed for them (West and Zimmerman 1987 & 2002).

Gender is the product of social interactions rather than a component of static identity that individuals take with them into their interactions. Gender is an institution that can be challenged (Lorber 1991) and doing so reveals the assumption of gender boundary fixedness. Within a context of unspoken assumptions in the U.S. culture that gender is binary, functional gender boundary fixity/fixedness is assumed to be where typical male and female activities can occur. From this perspective, there is a way of validating gender boundaries if variations in “doing gender” do not go too far. In patriarchal societies for instance, there are specific expectations about how far variations in gender performativity can go to remain in the patriarchal context of the acceptable (Kandiyoti 1988).

From a symbolic interactionist viewpoint, gender identity is neither a fixed and permanent attribute nor inherent in individual personalities. Individuals are constantly “doing” gender in the sense that they are performing activities and exhibiting social traits that are prescribed to them, and potentially challenging (e.g. rejecting or contradicting) these prescribed traits/roles within socially acceptable identity boundaries. “Doing” gender consists of being socially accountable as far as managing social contexts where social interactions take place to constantly ensure that gender performance meets culturally approved standards also known as internalized gender scripts and ideologies, with the potential to bend the “rules of the game” as far as bending the rules remains within the acceptable social limits (Caldwell 1978, Kandiyoti 1988, Lorber 1991). To “do” gender is not always to live up to normative conceptions of femininity or

masculinity; it is to engage in behavior at the risk of gender assessment. In “doing” gender, men are not always doing dominance and women, not always doing deference reflecting “natural differences” as a powerful legitimator of hierarchal arrangements (Goffman 1967, Kimmel 2014, and West and Zimmerman 1987 & 2002).

Using the concept of “doing” gender, West and Zimmerman (1987 & 2002) argue that gender is more the continuous creation of meaning of gender through human actions than a set of traits or gender roles. Agreeing with Goffman’s (1976) concept of “gender display,” West and Zimmerman (1987 & 2002) suggest that gender is the product of social interactions and might seem “natural and essential.” By “doing gender” West and Zimmerman (1987) mean creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological; and, once the differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the “essentialness” of gender (Bem 1993, Fausto-Sterling 2000).

In other words, “doing” gender can violate internalized gender scripts and gender ideology and be a temporary adjustment to difficult situations, such as how immigrant/refugee women, specifically, must re-negotiate gender performance, boundaries, and internalized scripts. Immigrant/refugee parents don’t renegotiate gender identity as defined by Kohlberg (1987), for instance. These parents still know they are women and men. But their ideas about what that means—how they can/should “do” gender are changing while they remain contested.

My dissertation explores how, instead of “doing gender” in a culturally acceptable way that validates their gender identity, immigrant/refugee parents from diverse backgrounds constantly engage in gender boundary negotiation within the spontaneously

created social safety nets that Welcome Home offers. How do these parents perceive their own multicultural efforts in negotiating and adjusting their ways of creating new gender boundaries in new cultural settings? The central question is what gender negotiation strategies men and women attending Welcome Home Programs utilized to adjust their multiple experiences in the various spaces and times that they occupied prior to their arrival in the host country.

In so doing, this research hopes to make at least three contributions to the literature. First, the study hopes to highlight insights as far as gender boundary negotiation strategies in response to competing demands at different times and cultural spaces are concerned. Second, my dissertation is designed to add insights to theories of immigrant/refugee experiences regarding gender boundary negotiation in the context of their resettlement to the United States. Third, this study addresses a void in the literature by focusing on Welcome Home Program participants, predominantly women as actors in the process of regaining their human agency in a context of immigrant/refugee resettlement. Instead of describing culturally acceptable ways of “doing gender” that validate gender among immigrant/refugee parents in their new cultural settings, this dissertation explores their own definitions of constant gender boundary negotiation and re-negotiation over time and space.

The programs offered at Welcome Home Center acknowledge the opportunity to allow immigrant and refugee family units to set up and implement their own goals in the process of their adjustment to the United States. Simultaneously, the Welcome Home Program offers them a social context, including social support that made it easier to achieve the goals they set up. The Welcome Home Program has three components. First,

the Family class, where parents meet without their children, adopts a family-focused approach for its family curriculum delivery. The Welcome Home Center takes into consideration participants' transnational learning strategies that hinge on their strategies of building bridges between their knowledge and any cultural gaps they may have about the host country (Kasun 2014, 2015, and 2016). Secondly, parents spend time with their children in sessions called Children Academy twice a monthly to work together on socio-academic projects. Thirdly, the Family Coaching sessions are based on one-on-one family coaching needs as expressed by parents. The Family class and Family Coaching strategies hinge on assumptions by the Center that changing one member of the family, such as providing more power to the wife, has an impact on gender boundary negotiation because, in a home, married couples engage in negotiations.

As far as terminology is concerned, the legal frameworks of immigrant and refugee experiences are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Once legal immigrants and refugees enter the United States, the two categories collapse to form one category called foreign born people. The Current Population Survey, for instance, uses the term "foreign born populations" (Capps et al. 2006). In some U.S. policies, the term immigrant can also include refugees. For instance, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has welcome kits that are distributed to refugees and legal immigrants¹⁰. The term immigrant refers to refugees and immigrants in the handbook. In this regard, as far as terminology is concerned, unless participants in the present study self-identify specifically as "refugees" or "immigrants," this dissertation uses the phrase "immigrants/refugees."

¹⁰ The United States Government Publishing Office. 2017. *Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants*. Available on the Website of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services of the Homeland Security Department at <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/files/nativedocuments/M-618.pdf>

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

RESETTLEMENT PRACTICES AS RESPONSES TO ARMED CONFLICTS

People are forced to flee their homes for their safety, sometimes across national borders when famine or natural catastrophes erupt, like the 2010 earthquake in Haiti or armed conflicts such as the war in Syria, which began in 2011. In recent decades, the world witnessed a rapid increase in the global population of immigrants/refugees. Legal immigrants and refugees are admitted to the United States as human faces of contemporary conflicts, famine and natural disasters worldwide. The adjustment process to the host country always involves some social exchange strategies, including gender boundary negotiation based on their migration trajectories from their homelands.

The literature covers multiple aspects of complex factors that shape the current trends of third-country resettlement in industrialized countries. First, the literature about transnational forced migration provides insights into collective identities that immigrants and refugees carry with them (Afzal 2006; Bruno 2015; Gerard and Pickering 2014; Hansen 2008; Kasun 2014, 2015 and 2016, and Human Security Center 2005). Second, the literature on armed conflict resolution, especially the literature focusing on refugee resettlement, highlights complex dynamics related to a distinction within the contemporary international community between national and human securities. Some

literature highlights the concept of national security that emphasizes powers of nation states, such as political, economic and military powers to protect its citizens, in contrast with the concept of human security that emphasizes human rights from violence and fear of any forms of violence. Some scholars of armed conflicts and protracted refugee situations indicate that, within third-country resettlement policies for instance, national security concerns of host countries rather than human security determine refugee status determination contexts (e.g. Aall 2001, Crocker 2001, Doyle 2001, Falk 2003, Guehenno 2001, Johansen 2006, Kaldor 1999, Laurenti 2002, Lederach 2001, and Rummel 1994).

Contextualization of Limits to What is Acceptable in “Doing” Gender

Some scholars in the Western world (Bem 1993, Collins 2000, Connell 2002, Kimmel 2005 & 2014, West and Zimmerman 1987 & 2002) use the concept of “gender identity” to show the importance of different social traits attributed to men and women. This stands in contrast to Kohlberg’s (1987) concept of gender identity as an internalized understanding of oneself as a male or female and the social scripts and norms that adhere to one’s sex status. In this dissertation, I will use the first definition of gender identity. In addition, I will use the following concepts as provided by the literature. The term “gender performance” often refers to social expectations of what men and women should do in order to be in conformity with internalized gender scripts underlying their gender performance (Goffman 1967). The concept “gender ideology” often indicates how important social determinants of male power and men’s dominance in society are in the social architecture of gender inequality. The “gender ideology” concept is often at the underlying level of “doing” gender (West and Zimmerman 1987 & 2002).

Building on a critique of sex-role theorists that posit that individual men and women are compelled to perform culturally prescribed roles for the benefit of the society and themselves, some contemporary sociological perspectives on gender believe that gender is not only plural, it is relational and situational (Whitehead 2002, West and Zimmerman 1987 & 2002). In their critique of sex-role theory, sociologists drawing from the symbolic interactionist perspective show that there is no single universal masculine or feminine role. They highlight that men and women may engage in internalized “gender scripts” similar to theatrical-like performances as actors on the social stage. In this sense, gender scripts allow individual men and women to assimilate social behaviors and attitudes (Goffman 1959 & 1976). Whenever society recognizes that individual men and women display compliance with gender scripts in multiple settings, social recognition increases a sense of belonging to the society (Whitehead 2002: 19).

Sociologists using a symbolic interactionist approach argue that individuals acquire their gender identity within social institutions. They believe that gender socialization depends on the way a child’s day-to-day situations continuously stabilize his or her sense of being a boy or a girl. From this sociological viewpoint, because men and women each have different social learning histories, gender differences exist in the behaviors and values of children and adults (Connell 2002, Kimmel 2005 & 2014, West and Zimmerman 1987 & 2002). According to some scholars applying the symbolic interactionist viewpoint to gender ideology, male power and domination are not an attitude or a possession.

So deeply woven into people's lives, male power is often invisible to those who are in dominant positions. Male power and dominance are usually at the underlying levels of social interactions and institutions. Social institutions create gendered normative standards and are the major factors in the reproduction of gender inequality. In this perspective, gendered identities of individuals shape gendered institutions, and the gendered institutions express and reproduce the inequalities that compose gender identity (Bem 1993, Epstein 2007, Whitehead 2002). Social research consistently privileges the standpoint of men and devalues that of women. The feminist standpoint theory highlights that the white heterosexual upper-class male's viewpoint dominates and pervades other viewpoints (Smith 1987, Smith 1990).

As a method of inquiry about the relationship between everyday negotiation strategies of gender boundaries and the larger institutional gender imperatives, Smith (2005) argues that it is at the micro-level of interactions that gender ideologies and scripts are experienced, shaped and reaffirmed. From this perspective, immigrant/refugee men may have power in relation to their wives, but have little in a larger social context. Women have to negotiate gender boundaries even within the home and their communities where an expectation that men/husbands have power and privilege that women lack, even though the men can't find good jobs and have no power outside the community.

Contextualization of Patriarchal Bargains with Distinct "Rules of the Game"

Some gender scholars highlight, that in most regions that these immigrant/refugee parents originate from, there is a continuum that ranges from a system of households with relative autonomy of mother-child units as exemplified in Sub-Saharan polygyny, to

more patriarchal male-headed entities in geographical areas such as Northern Africa, the Muslim Middle East, and Southeastern Asia (Caldwell 1978, Kandiyoti 1988). In some regions, culturally grounded kinship systems often played a significant role in defining gender boundaries until the European colonialism eroded women's material relative autonomy. Some scholars indicate that European colonialism imposed in Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, patrilineal-patrilocal mechanisms that attributed land ownership to men, such as the gender binary divide and patrilineal extended family giving the senior man authority over everyone else (Burnet 2012, Jefremovas 1997 and 2002). When households are in crisis, coping mechanisms may occur, such as stepping outside the line within patriarchal bargains to accommodate and adapt changes. The patriarchal bargain refers to a tactic in which women display patriarchal norms by deliberately accepting gender roles disadvantaging women but choose alternatives maximizing their own options and power (Kandiyoti 1988).

Also, given its long history in the gender scholarship, an assumed separate dichotomy between masculine as public and feminine as private gender spheres that never overlap is often taken for granted, a perspective that the feminist critique argues against. Although they believe that gender performance originates from social norms, some feminists consider that "undoing gender" may occur in contexts of social norms that lead to a self-evaluation as being dehumanized (Butler 2004).

Contextualization of Gender Boundary within the Socio-Cultural Domain of Migration

For Epstein (2007 - in Kimmel and Aronson 2014), male-dominated institutional arrangements constantly establish subtle social boundaries used in gatekeeping male privileges, such as male-labeled jobs (p.164); oppressive cultural taboos associated with

girls' virginity and family honor (p.166); women's clothing and symbolic norms against modern dress for women that do not apply to men, what Epstein (2007) calls "role zones" about women's surveillance in the sense that there are constantly space and time constraints on women's freedom (p.167). Epstein (2007 in Kimmel and Aronson 2014: 156-8) highlights the importance of institutional structures that assign, prescribe or prohibit social and symbolic norms to each gender category into gender boundaries. Occupational sex-segregation in the host country (Hartmann 1976) may result in cultural assemblages within resettlement practices that do job placements of immigrant/refugee women in so-called feminine jobs, such as the food industry (Koyama 2015).

Given a variety of traumatic experiences during people's encampment (Rawlence 2016), it is often too easy to oversimplify the relationship between fleeing one's homeland and losing some aspect of one's culture. Some refugee scholars indicate that refugee camps function as spaces where camp life takes place. Refugee men and women negotiate their gender boundaries simultaneously within the refugee camp space and complex institutional arrangements they navigate over time. It is within a complex spatial and temporal context that forced migration takes place. For instance, time spent in the camp also influences strategies that people utilize to negotiate their gender boundaries (Malkki 1995b, Peteet 1997).

Immigrants/refugees usually utilize these safety nets to negotiate gender boundaries as men and women, and can create conditions for their collective identity formation in the host country. Re-negotiating gender boundaries occurs in all aspects of life, public and private. This research is focused on how immigrant/refugee parents, mostly women do this in semi-public settings, such as the Welcome Home programs

designed to provide socioeconomic opportunities to participants in the process of their families' self-sufficiency. Some refugee scholars show that gender is not "done" or renegotiated in a vacuum, but rather occurs within co-ethnic communities (Mallki 1995, Peteet 1997) and other groups with which migrants come into contact, including resettlement agencies (Koyama 2015).

Contextualization of Gender Boundary Negotiations during Resettlement

My dissertation draws on extant literature about transnational migration and refugee resettlement (Koyama 2015, Levitt 2011, and Averanius 2012). The study also builds on preliminary findings from in-depth qualitative analysis of patterns that emerged during my internship study. The current research makes further in-depth analysis of gender boundary negotiation aspects that are involved in parents' collective and individual learning experiences within Welcome Home Program design and delivery (Kasun 2014, 2015 and 2016). As shown in the internship report, little, if any, research has examined immigrant and refugee parents' own involvement in their adjustment process with consideration of their resettlement aspirations (Kagaba and Gagné 2017).

How cultural gaps are addressed is important in a complex interplay of individual/family goals, agency support, and the gender expectations/scripts of the native culture/community (Fadiman 1997). Social spaces where immigrant/refugee parents can engage in gender boundary negotiations will enable them to create and support their collective gender identity (Paterson 2006, Peteet 1997). The gender ideology about public and private spaces in the host country that subordinates women to men because men are working outside the home and women do childcare often affects the process of bridging gaps (Koyama 2015).

Co-ethnic social safety nets in the host country can be one of the main sources of information during the job search. They can also be among factors motivating immigrants/refugees in their access to the labor market participation in the host country. Reliance on levels of co-ethnic safety nets alone can be a form of closure based on the nature of which co-ethnic ties provide a mechanism for immigrant job seekers to gain entrée into the job market (Sanders 2002). However, relying simultaneously on co-ethnic safety nets and social ties with the host country represents open opportunities.

Positive outcomes increase when people can seek advice and get information from more experienced and better-informed members of their ethnic communities and, simultaneously, utilize other community resources in the host country communities. Low levels of social bonds with the mainstream host society among any immigrant group can have a negative impact on upward mobility opportunities that the mainstream society can offer (Toma 2014).

Contextualization of Space and Time that Parents Occupy during Migration

The history of migration to the United States since the end of the nineteenth century to the present reveals a substantial variation considering people's diverse national origins. This variation is beyond the scope of this research. The current study is about the contemporary process of migrants' adjustment to the host country. To explore outcomes of adjustment of first-generation adult immigrants/refugees, migration scholars make a distinction between co-ethnic ties among immigrant groups known as bonding social capital, and ties that link immigrant communities to the mainstream society known as bridging social capital. The concepts of bonding and bridging social capital emphasize

the importance of membership in ethnic networks that hinge on in-group solidarity and trust (Averanius 2012; Toma and Vause 2014).

The literature shows that co-ethnic ties are important in the process of integrating immigrant newcomers into ethnic communities that settled in the host society. For instance, already established ethnic communities are expected to provide some hints to newcomers about how to navigate the mainstream society in the host country, such as finding jobs (Sanders 2002, Scott and Cartledge 2009, and Toma 2014). Contemporary migration theorists argue against an oversimplification of bonding and bridging social capital that would assume homogeneity of social safety nets among immigrants/refugees from diverse backgrounds (Averanius 2012; Toma and Vause 2014). However, outcomes based on level of co-ethnic safety nets among immigrant communities also depend on socioeconomic circumstances. In some circumstances, immigration could be perceived as emasculating for some men in some ethnic communities as these men perceive some level of status loss of their traditional ethnic safety nets. At the same time, the same socioeconomic circumstances could be liberating for some women among the same ethnic group as these women get access to the host country's opportunities beyond their traditional ethnic ties (Averanius 2012, and Hansen 2008).

In the United States and other immigrant and refugee host countries, the difference between immigrants and refugees is not always clearly defined, except that refugees are defined as people who have been forced to leave unsafe places in their home countries due to violent conflicts, often crossing national borders in large numbers as a result of well-founded fears of persecution (United Nations Refugee Convention 1951, article 1). The United States immigrant/refugee resettlement law defines the term

“refugee” in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees¹¹. The law emphasizes refugees’ conditions of being victims of persecution in their homelands. Handbooks at most local refugee resettlement agencies replicate the definition of a refugee as a person who:

Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (Article 1(2)).

This definition of the term “refugee” that emphasizes active persecution in refugees’ countries of origin also recognizes that refugees represent a category of thrown-out and stateless people (e.g. Martin and Schoenholtz 2006, and Mayotte 1992). The United Nations High Commission based its policies about the international responsibility to protect immigrants and refugees on such a perception of refugees as people forced to flee from their homeland (Malkki 1995b). Immigrants are usually people who move on their own to resettle in host countries for various reasons, including personal reasons related to armed conflict or socioeconomic difficulties in their home countries (Sévigny 2012).

In addition to these perceptions about massive displacements and statelessness of refugees, some refugee scholars (e.g. Malkki 1995a, Malkki 1995b, Petzet 1997) highlight the complexity of the contemporary “refugee problem.” These scholars argue against at least two most common oversimplification tendencies within refugee studies. First, they argue against *a priori* oversimplified assumptions associating people’s displacement across nation-state borders with loss of people’s identity and habits, such as

¹¹ The 1951 Refugee Convention can be available at the United Nations High Commission for Refugees at <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/3b66c2aa10>

some tendencies within a sedentarist analysis framework that links the loss of homeland to the loss of cultural identity. Second, scholars drawing from feminist theory argue against an oversimplified definition of “being a refugee” as a generalizable phenomenon that can involve generalizable refugee experience to the global refugee population. For these scholars, definitions of “being a refugee” and “being an immigrant” involve, for instance, a variety of socioeconomic, political and legal experiences on the spectrum of various negotiations and boundaries of people’s social identity in their displacement from their homelands to host countries. These scholars argue against labelling immigrants/refugee men and women as a specific and generalizable social category in the sense that understanding refugee experiences requires a case-by-case analysis (Malkki 1995b, Peteet 1997).

Forced migrations have a large variety of historical and political causes, and involve people experiencing various situations of life. For instance, Malkki (1995b) shows that people’s displacement “is always one aspect of much larger constellations of sociopolitical and cultural processes and practices.” In contrast with a tendency in some refugee studies to exclude the general background information or root causes of displacement, the author recommends including “some of the issues and practices that generate the inescapably relevant context of human displacement today” in the contemporary work on displacement (p.496). In this perspective, immigrant/refugee men and women engage in negotiations of gender boundaries in multiple spaces and cultural settings; not only in the home country and the host-country, but often with respect to messages from home and opportunities offered in the host-country (Abu-Lughod 1993, Gerson and Peiss 1985, Peteet 1997). Negotiating gender boundaries shapes the role of

immigrant social safety nets during the process of immigrants' adjustment to their host country. Some feminist research findings suggest that social safety nets are important as far as gender boundary re-negotiation is concerned. Strategies that first-generation immigrants utilize to negotiate their gender boundaries often determine the kind of social ties and social mechanisms that create and support their safety nets (Malkki 1995b, and Peteet 1997).

Outcomes in the process of their adjustment among first-generation immigrant communities depend on how "doing gender" is negotiated. A balance between co-ethnic gender social safety nets and host community gender safety nets for first-generation adult immigrants usually determines outcomes in the process of adjustment to the United States. For instance rigid patriarchal norms in one immigrant/refugee community emphasizing restrictions on women's socioeconomic autonomy can explain gender differences as compared to another community with less rigid restrictions on women's socioeconomic autonomy (Toma and Vause 2014). Re-negotiating gender boundaries occurs in all aspects of life, public and private. My dissertation is focused on how immigrant/refugee women do this in public settings, such as the workplace and Welcome Home programs. This study also includes some insights into the home, regarding child care and living with an alcoholic/abusive husband, for instance.

Contextualization of Current Protracted Refugee Situations

For the past four decades or so, ethnic violence was a major trend in contemporary warfare worldwide. Characterized by systematic attacks on civilians, recent worldwide ethnic conflicts generated massive human displacement, especially

women, children, and the elderly (Bixler 2005, Collier et al. 2003). Estimates show that nine out of ten victims of wars today are civilians (Hoffman 2006). In addition, systematic attacks on civilians in ethnically-based armed conflicts sometime include rape as a weapon of war (Burnet 2012, Chang 1997).

As a general background of third-country resettlement reveals, millions of refugees in the global South are stuck for decades in refugee camps without any legal status. Among other international issues related to third-country resettlement, constantly growing numbers of immigrants/refugees represent a challenge to the nature and quality of humanitarian assistance provided to them (Afzal 2006, Buzan 1998, Crisp 2008, Kelly 2007, Koyama 2015, Lammers 1999, the United Nations Secretary General Millennium Report 2000, The International Council of Human Rights Report 2006, and The Human Security Report 2005). The United Nations defines conditions of these forced migrations as “protracted refugee situations” characterized by precarious material conditions.

Within a contemporary context of immigrant/refugee resettlement that emphasizes international responsibility to protect people in dangerous situations worldwide, third-country resettlement has focused on an empathic response to the most vulnerable among people forced into exile looking at degrees of active persecution in their homelands (1951 United Nations Convention). In other words, immigrant/refugee individuals and families are the lucky ones. From the time they are granted third-country resettlement eligibility, they demonstrate a mindset of starting a new life and do whatever it takes to stay in the host country. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees highlights that it takes courage to relocate in the host country.

To understand the implications of third-country resettlement patterns on admission of legal immigrants and refugees to the United States, this study highlights patterns of interactional landscapes within the U.S. immigrant/refugee admission system. From this perspective, the current study explores underlying trends of these interactions among immigrant/refugee parents attending Welcome Home Programs to better understand factors influencing their resettlement performance. In other words, since factors influencing their social exchanges during the Welcome Home Programs necessarily includes their transitional identities, rather than starting with their time in the United States, this study is also mindful of their time in refugee camps, such as the contemporary third-country procedures of refugee status determination overseas (Sévigny 2012).

Contextualization of “Top-Down” Model within Third-Country Resettlement

Generally speaking, the role of the host-country state in the context of third-country resettlement and responses of the state to refugee needs determine the contrast between a top-down or bottom-up resettlement model. Within a bottom-up model, the state perceives immigrants/refugees as having their own capacity to financially contribute to their resettlement efforts. Historically speaking, the League of Nations before World War II utilized a bottom-up approach that emphasized relief practices promoting refugee livelihoods as central components of their resettlement efforts (Easton-Calabria 2015). In its resettlement strategic practices, the League of Nations believed that immigrants/refugees were a short-term phenomenon. In the bottom-up model a global context of that time where protracted refugee situations were not as common as today influenced fundamental assumptions of the past.

For instance, bottom-up model strategies during the League of Nations era included hiring refugees in international refugee organizations and/or including refugees in fundraising for revolving funds to provide loans to their peer refugees as strategies of their self-sufficiency during their resettlement process. A bottom-up resettlement model may view immigrants/refugees as labor migrants. These bottom-up relief practices originally included refugee resettlement in host countries' economic action plans in sectors such as agriculture, road construction, infrastructures, small businesses, and service economy (Easton-Calabria 2015). In most cases, a bottom-up approach can use immigrants/refugees as laborers willing to do low-paid jobs that no one else wants to do.

In contrast to the bottom-up approach as far as immigrant/refugee livelihoods of are concerned, within a top-down model, the state more likely treats immigrants/refugees as subjects of humanitarian needs. A top-down model has characterized the contemporary immigrant/refugee admission policy under the United Nations High Commission for Refugees as a privilege among recipients of international humanitarian assistance. Among other contemporary top-down third-country refugee resettlement practices, each host-country determines its resettlement procedures¹² based on its priorities. One among other weaknesses of the top-down model is that the dominant perception about self-sufficiency in the host-country may obscure immigrant/refugee transnational experiences, such as post-traumatic stress disorders due to unsanitary conditions, repeated life-threatening raids in camps, and/or lack of a justice system for a long time (e.g. Easton-Calabria 2015, Horn 2010, Hyndman and Wenona 2011, and Rawlence 2016). The

¹² The contemporary admission and resettlement of immigrants and refugees coming to the United States are federally coordinated under the 1980 Refugee Act (Bruno 2015; Kennedy 1981). The President and Congress set up annual admission limits of incoming immigrants and refugees.

contemporary top-down model is also more likely to reproduce pre-existing gender scripts and ideologies based on various gender-based assemblages, such as a tendency within refugee resettlement practices known as “occupational sex segregation” to place immigrant/refugee women in “feminine” jobs and men in “masculine” jobs (Hartmann 1976, and Koyama 2015). Access to occupational sex-segregated income-generating jobs for immigrant/refugee women in the host-country (Hartman 1976) may become an extension of these women’s family obligations (Koyama 2015). In some cases, by employing women outside the home, they are changing gender scripts.

Contextualization of Complacency-Building during Refugee Status Determination

Within existing immigration and third-country refugee resettlement policies of industrialized countries including the United States, there are many practices aimed at controlling the influx of immigrants and refugees from the global South (e.g. Gerard and Pickering 2014, Hyndman and Wenona 2011). Over time refugees in the global South are reduced to massive numbers of people waiting for international humanitarian assistance in seeking asylum status in industrialized countries. To capture this depiction of Protracted Refugee Situations, scholars drawing from the feminist theoretical use the concepts of “masculinization” to describe rigid immigration policies/institutions and “feminization” of the refugee status to describe the process of seeking asylum that usually emphasizes patterns characterizing protracted refugee situations, such as obedience, compliance, docility, immobility, victimhood, patience and dependence on humanitarian assistance (Hyndman and Wenona 2011).

Within the current complacency-building refugee status, stateless immigrants/refugees who are victims of persecution in their home countries have to wait for a long time, sometimes for decades, in refugee camps located in regions that are referred to as transit areas (Gerard and Pickering 2014). Immigrants/refugees have to abide by certain rules for their refugee status determination, also commonly known as vetting procedures, in order to be admitted to their respective host-countries. For instance, in order to be admissible to the United States, the more compliant to U.S. vetting guidelines immigrants/refugees in refugee camps are, the more likely they will be eligible for the U.S. resettlement. Immigrants/refugees, who fail to comply with U.S. refugee status determination, such as moving to other refugee camps during the vetting period, may lose their eligibility (Sévigny 2012). In a summary, being victims of persecution and being stateless alone did not make immigrant/refugee parents attending Welcome Home Programs eligible for the U.S. resettlement.

Although this perspective has the merit to contextualize how immigrant/refugee men and women are stripped of their human agency during their long encampment, the use of “feminized/feminizing” vs. “masculinized/masculinizing” terms is contestable, based on the tendency for such terms to further reify existing notions of women as weak and men as naturally powerful. I would argue for replacing such terms; “feminization/feminizing” with “encouraging complacency or dependence,” and “masculinized/masculinizing” with “bureaucratic and rationalized.”

Contextualization of Rationalizing Refugee Status Determination

Immigrants and refugees who move on their own – or are smuggled – to industrialized countries in search of asylum are increasingly perceived as threats to their host countries' national security (Falk 2003). In reaction, Western countries, including the United States, often adopt tough measures used as deterrents aimed at keeping massive numbers of immigrants and refugees offshore. Immigration laws in industrialized countries are designed to deter any aspects that would threaten third-country refugee status determination efforts. Drawing on feminist theory about forced migration and armed conflict response, the concept of “bureaucratic rationalized” practices that some scholars refer as “masculinization of border securitization” (e.g. Gerard and Pickering 2014) can capture this social reality of refugee admission policies. Like other Western countries' resettlement policies, U.S. resettlement practices are characterized by strategies to use force if necessary, as well as inflexible and rational bureaucracy. A bureaucratic and rationalized system forcing compliance among all people, regardless of gender, often denies them their human agency. Characterized by lack of some aspects for human agency, the immigrant/refugee experience during displacement represents a special context where gender negotiations can take place. Due to a context of protracted refugee situations, traditional gender negotiation strategies are affected (Abu-Lughod 1993, Gerson and Peiss 1985, Peteet 1997).

Like any immigrants/refugees that are admitted to industrialized countries including the United States, parents attending the Welcome Home Programs are the product of the contemporary resettlement model characterized by complacency-building and bureaucratic/rationalized practices that some scholars refer to as a combination of

“masculinized” refugee admission and resettlement policies and hyper “feminized” refugee statelessness and victimhood (Hyndman and Wenona 2011). This combination of bureaucratic/rationalized practices and complacency-building practices often work to obscure various lived experiences of immigrants/refugees in Protracted Refugee Situations, such as gender-based violence/rape during migrations (Fox 2010, Gerard and Pickering 2014) and, more importantly, successful survival strategies that people utilize, such as gender boundary negotiations (Malkki 1995b, Peteet 1997).

Immigrant/Refugee Admission to the United States

Each year, the U.S. Government signs an annual accord commonly known as a “Cooperative Agreement” with U.S. non-government resettlement agencies to implement refugee resettlement policies. The Cooperative Agreement specifies that “refugee” means any person admitted to the United States under section 207 (c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended, or a person to whom eligibility for the resettlement assistance available to individuals admitted under section 207 (c) has been extended by status. In addition to legal provisions as abovementioned, legal immigrant and refugee resettlement in the United States is a multi-level bureaucratized process that involves three federal agencies and has the reputation of being among the most rigorous vetting system in the world. In accordance with the 1980 Refugee Act, the United States refugee resettlement program is operated by three federal agencies. The Asylum Division of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), and the Office of Refugee Resettlement work in collaboration for the admission and resettlement of immigrants and refugees.

The first federal agency involved in immigrant/refugee admission and resettlement is the Asylum Division of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). USCIS/DHS provides the adjudicators needed to interview refugees considered for admission to the United States and ascertain whether those refugees' persecution claims are consistent with U.S. refugee law. Refugees are determined eligible by the USCIS while still living in refugee camps or transit areas overseas. The second agency is the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) of the United States Department of State. Through PRM, the Department of State works in close conjunction with international organizations, such as the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), to provide life-sustaining assistance to refugees overseas. PRM humanitarian assistance overseas and USCIS screening overseas are beyond the scope of this study.

The PRM of the U.S. Department of State operates two accounts to assist refugees relocating to the United States through local refugee agencies during at least their first three months of arrival. Both federal grants are available for basic support to strengthen refugees' capacity towards self-sufficiency. The first account is called Migration and Refugee Assistance (MRA); the second is Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA). Both grants can pay a portion of refugee resettlement staff, initial rent and utility bills for immigrants/refugees, among other things.

The third federal agency in charge of assisting immigrants/refugees is the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Under ORR/HHS, the Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP) is responsible for resettling and integrating refugees and other immigrants in the United States. The ORR coordinates

various programs at the federal level and can provide funding to private and non-profit agencies. ORR programs usually have a time limit for the availability of cash and medical assistance, employment preparation, and English language lessons. Most parents enrolling freely at Welcome-Home Center have completed the federally funded mandatory 90-day orientation programs at federally-funded local resettlement agencies. Unlike other agencies, Welcome-Home Center is not a recipient of ORR/PRM grants.

Contextualization of Gender Boundary Negotiations in the Host Country

Once in a country they call their new home, immigrants/refugees need to learn simultaneously a new language, culture, and structural requirements of their host country (Rumbaut 1997). Given social and economic hardships to attain self-sufficiency in their host country, the process of the adjustment of immigrant and refugee parents becomes challenging. The literature about forced migrants and refugees (Gerard and Pickering 2014, Mayotte 1992, Omata 2011, Ott 2011, Horst 2006, and Rawlence 2016) and international relief practices (e.g. Anderson 2001 & 2002, Lischer 2005, Malkki 1995a, Malkki 1995b, Peteet 1997) suggests that immigrant and refugee resettlement outcomes depend on a complex interplay between host countries' good intentions to provide assistance to immigrants/refugees and expectations of immigrants and refugees about resettlement practices.

In other words, during the process of their adjustment to host countries, immigrant/refugee admission and resettlement practices matter. Simultaneously, immigrant/refugee experience matters – including aspects of their gender negotiation strategies –in the sense that people's experiences, including gendered ones during their displacement from their homelands, have become over time part of their collective

identity (Kasun 2016, Levitt 2011, Peteet 1997, and Waters 1996 & 1999). Considering the importance of their life experiences during their displacement, for immigrants/refugees who spent time in dehumanizing encampments with high levels of dependency on humanitarian assistance (Hyndman and Wenona 2011), the process of adjustment to the United States is not the equivalent of switching their ability to navigate their parental role in their native culture to the ability to navigate their parental role in the host country's culture (Kagaba and Gagné 2017, Kasun 2016, and Levitt 2011). The reason for such difficulties is, among other factors, related to long periods of time, often decades, spent in refugee camps. The process of their adjustment to the United States is different from families coming to the United States on immigrant visas, such as family reunification or immigrant lottery visas straight from these locations, for instance.

It is typical in the process of their adjustment that some immigrant/refugee parents get access to income-generating jobs for the first time in their life, often without adequate education, English proficiency, a driver's license, and a support network beyond the resettlement agency. They are often expected to manage low-income family budgets and start their path towards self-sufficiency, such as shopping, paying monthly rental and utility bills. Generally speaking, it is a challenge for these immigrant/refugee parents to balance their expected goals against the limitations of their human agency in negotiating their gender boundaries. In addition to these structural gaps, immigrants/refugees have a constant fear of being deported if they fail the United States naturalization process (Hyndman and Wenona 2011, Sévigny 2012).

Consistent with findings of contemporary migration studies, immigrant and refugee women and men are gendered actors navigating gendered institutions along their trajectories to the host country (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999 and 2003; Koyama 2015; Scott and Cortledge 2009). The literature about forced migration suggests the importance of including gender in migration studies in the exploration of trends in the contemporary third-country resettlement (e.g. Donato et al. 2011, Koyama 2015, Malkki 1995b, Peteet 1997). During the process of their adjustment to the United States, immigrant/refugee parents engage in various dyads that involve collective and individual re-socializing efforts, most of the time gendered (Zimmermann and Zimmermann 2007).

Contextualization of Gender Boundaries in a Transnational Context

Various structural forces within admission and resettlement policies shape immigrant/refugee parents' interactional strategies based on their various collective experience, including gender boundaries in multiple times and spaces. Immigrant/refugee parents' adjustment process to the receiving mainstream community usually builds on their existing negotiation experiences, including gender negotiation strategies (e.g. Daley 1991, Gerard and Pickering 2014, Levitt 2011, Malkki 1995b, and Peteet 1997).

Social research has shown that collective identities are socially constructed in the sense that social learning is a process through which members of society discover, transmit, reaffirm and change their commonsense cultural knowledge, thus creating their own realities and identities (e.g. Berger 1963; Berger & Luckman 1966; Blumer 1969; and Kimmel 1992). Previous studies about gendered migration highlight the importance of social ties that immigrants and refugees from different countries need during their

transnational adjustment to the host country (Côté, et al. 2015; Creese and Wiebe 2012).

Other studies explore their gendered adherence to co-ethnic bases of the subordination of women among immigrants (e.g. Epstein 2007).

The current analysis builds on an epistemological assumption in sociology that adult individuals are expected to have a stable sense of what it means for them to be a man or a woman (e.g., Fausto-Sterling 2000, Kohlberg 1987, West & Zimmerman 1987). But to understand constant negotiations of gender boundaries during immigrant/refugee resettlement, it is important to draw on existing theories. The aim of this dissertation is to put emphasis on approaches that recognize the importance of understanding collective and individual gender negotiation experiences in multiple spaces over time including how immigrant/refugee parents constantly engage in gender negotiations in the process of adjusting to their host country.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study focuses on understanding immigrant/refugee parents' bridge-building efforts of their gender boundary negotiation. It builds on insights from immigrant/refugee parents, predominantly women and Welcome Home Program administrators about how setting and working toward goals has helped the parents remain in the program as their social context (Kagaba and Gagné 2017). Social perspectives of gender boundary negotiation (Abu-Lughod 1993, Collins 2000, Gerson and Peiss 1985, Smith 1987, Smith 1990, Smith 2005), transnationalism in learning settings involving immigrants/refugees (Kasun 2013/2014/2015/2016), and multiculturalism during migration are used to frame, interpret, and understand my findings.

Gender Theories

The first body of work for the current study is gender theories. Research findings suggest that gender is essential in contemporary migration scholarship as women's needs are qualitatively different from men's needs (Curran et al. 2006; Mahler and Pessar 2006, Saldico and Manjivar 2012). Various sociological perspectives emphasize the role of gender socialization and gendered institutions in the process of fluid assemblage of meaning and behaviors that individuals construct from their cultural values, images, and

prescribed expectations. In their exploration of social structures and social institutions, many sociologists suggest that gender is socially learned (e.g. Chodorow 1999, Connell 1987/2002, Fine 2011, Kimmel 2000, Lorber 1991, Young 1997). From symbolic interactionist lenses, there are three important concepts in understanding the underlying gender background of immigrant/refugee parents attending Welcome Home Programs. First, men and women know social expectations about their gender since their early socialization (e.g. Mead 1934, Kohlberg 1987). These social expectations often become engrained in individuals' cognitive self (Bem 1993, Butler 1990, Chodorow 1999, Epstein 2007, Kohlberg 1987, and Lorber 1991), and individuals develop an underlying self-perception and self-expectation (Goffman 1973, and Tannen 1990 & 2005).

For instance, Lorber (1991) in her book *The Social Construction of Gender* shows that in hierarchal contexts, gender differentiation assumes, amplifies, and even creates psychological and behavioral differences in order to ensure that the subordinate group differs from the dominant (p.143). She argues that there is a taboo about the sameness of men and women, one dividing the sexes into different exclusive categories that exacerbates the biological differences between the sexes and thereby creates gender (p.145). For Lorber (1991), men resist the idea of essential sameness that allows women and men to work together as equals because doing so undermines differentiation and hence male dominance (p.147). Quoting Lorber and other feminists, Fausto-Sterling (2000) argues that gender identities exist in social institutions strongly marked by a variety of social inequalities (p.250).

Within feminist perspectives that argue that social structures treat women as subordinate to men, many scholars (e.g. Bem 1993, Butler 1990, Chodorow 1999, Collins 2000, Epstein 2007, Fausto-Sterling 2000, Kohlberg 1987, West & Zimmerman 1987, Young 1997) deny that there is an essential difference between women and men. Gender difference must be understood as a relational construction; that one's sense of identity, agency (Elder 1998), and authenticity arise as a result of internalizing early gender relationships; gender identity becomes embedded deep within people's subconscious, and institutional arrangements create conditions that lead to that subconscious embeddedness of gender (Chodorow, 1997).

Many social scientists argue that transnational family displacement is more than just moving from one society to another. Transnational theories show that gender boundary negotiations in transnational contexts is never done in a vacuum and necessarily hinges on the pre-existing gender system from the native cultural background. Within gendered institutional systems during immigrant/refugee resettlement in the host country, transnationalism argues that traditional hierarchal power structures from their homeland that subordinate women to men do not disappear (Koyama 2015, Levitt 2011)

When immigrants/refugees move to a new culture, such as the United States, they need to adjust their strategies of "doing" gender (e.g. West and Zimmerman 1987; and West & Fenstermaker 2002). According to West and Zimmerman (1987), doing gender is unavoidable because of the social consequences of sex category membership: the allocation of power and resources not only in the domestic, economic, and political domains but also in the broad arena of interpersonal relations. For West and Zimmerman, though it is individuals who do gender, doing gender is fundamentally interactional and

institutional in character, as long as accountability is a feature of social relationships. They suggest that, in virtually any situation, one's sex category can be relevant, and one's performance as an incumbent of that category (i.e., gender) can be subjected to evaluation.

The symbolic interactionist perspective emphasizes the way gender cues, scripts, symbols, and ideologies shape the nature of human interactions. From symbolic interactionist lenses, gender identities are both voluntary as individuals choose who they are and coerced as they are pressured, forced, and sanctioned into submission to some cultural norms. Symbolic interactionist theorists suggest that gender identity is neither smooth nor finite in the sense that it is an ongoing process as people's social contexts change (Epstein 2007, Levitt 2011, West and Zimmerman 1987).

For most of these parents, experiences that encouraged dependency and passivity referred to by some as "feminizing" (Hyndman and Wenona 2011, Sévigny 2012) in refugee camps became engrained in their transnational identities. Given simultaneous hyper rationalized (referred to by some as "masculinized" policy practices that demand submission (Hyndman and Wenona 2011, Sévigny 2012) that they have to navigate during the process of refugee status determination, bridging gaps for them may involve not only adapting their strategies of "doing gender" to the host country but also some strategies of "de-feminizing" some aspects of their transnational identity.

Scholars have explored gender identity boundaries from the feminist standpoint that focuses on gendered institutions. In this vein, men are expected to be superior and entitled to greater privilege than women. Such institutionalized beliefs and norms play an important role in shaping gender identity boundaries and establishing gender inequality

(Smith 1987, Smith 1990, Smith 2005). From the feminist standpoint perspective, some scholars focus their inquiry on gender inequality established by a complex social environment including race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and/or sexuality (Collins 2000, Crenshaw 1991, Smith 1987, Smith 1990, Smith 2005).

Transnational Theory of Migration

Transnational perspectives argue that gender socialization among adult immigrants/refugees is a complex fluid assemblage that necessarily involves traditional gender identities and ideologies from their native countries (e.g. Koyama 2015).

Transnational theorists highlight the role of immigrants'/refugees' interpersonal ties within their ethnic community in the host country. The concept of co-ethnic ties is known as bonding social capital as compared to social ties with resettlement staff, volunteers, donors and the mainstream society at large known as bridging social capital.

Transnational perspectives suggest that bonding and bridging social capital do not necessarily predict change in pre-existing gender-based social structures that treat women as subordinate to men within immigrant/refugee ethnic communities (Sanders 2012, Toma 2014).

From transnational perspectives, gender ideologies and identities in a given immigrant/refugee community follow them to the host country. Some gender scripts within transnational contexts are used to reproduce gender inequality among immigrant/refugee communities in the United States. As the research about ethnicity, nationality and nationalism suggests, when ethnic groups leave their homeland, they carry with them much of their ethnic culture, and their lived experiences during their displacement become part of their collective identity (e.g. Anderson 2006, Hansen 2008,

Levitt 2011, Lischer 2005, Malkki 1995a, and United States Committee for Refugees 1991).

From transnational lenses, there are trends towards (re-) creating social and ethnic safety nets among immigrant / refugee communities, especially among first-generation adults. Consistent with research findings that living transnationally across generations usually becomes the norm (e.g. Levitt 2011, Scott and Cortledge 2009), social interactions among immigrants/refugees during their resettlement in a host country often depend on their self-perceptions. Their transnational space within the host country is often based on their pre-existing collective self-identification. Transnational cultural norms are likely to influence the types of individual goals and strategies put in place to achieve those goals.

Multicultural Theories of Migration

Within assimilationist approaches of the past, immigrants/refugees were expected to gradually lose their home culture and adopt American dominant ways of doing things. Taking into account a substantial variation in migrations to the United States since the nineteenth century, multicultural theories emerged. Contemporary trends are characterized by a shift towards more multicultural approaches. Multicultural perspectives argue that it is possible for immigrants/refugees to adopt American cultural standards and maintain aspects of their cultures (e.g. Alba and Nee 1997, Greenman 2011, Guarnizo et al. 2003). For individuals to set their own goals in designing their programs, curricula may be an important step toward a multicultural approach in the U.S. contemporary immigrant/refugee resettlement system.

Lenses from multicultural theory are useful in explaining why participants in resettlement social contexts behave the way they do when experiencing conflicting expectations during their adjustment process. In addition to transnationalism and multiculturalism, this study builds on gender interaction theories (Crenshaw 1991, Collins 2000, Goffman 1987, Epstein 2007, West and Zimmerman 1987 & 2002) to understand how immigrants/refugees do gender. Interaction perspectives help in the analysis of what mechanisms immigrants / refugees put in place to make sense of their new identities as mothers and fathers, which are at the underlying level of their adjustment process.

Given contemporary American inter-racial and class realities as far as multiculturalism is concerned, some first and second-generation immigrants/refugees often use their transnational status as an identity device to display their cultural values. Multicultural expectations in the process of their adjustment to American cultural standards may require immigrants/ refugees to emphasize their traditional cultural values (Waters 1996/1999). From this perspective, immigrant/refugee parents' initial adjustment to the United States can be explored looking at context-specific gender boundary negotiation strategies.

In the social space they are offered at the Welcome Home Center, how do these parents “do” gender and engage in gender boundary negotiation during their social exchanges in the process of setting up and working toward their own goals? Within a larger context of bridge-building their transnational gaps to the host-country, what are their patterns of interactions during the program delivery that may appear? Existing gender theories and transnational strategies in learning settings help to interpret those

patterns of their interactions. Using transnational lenses, this study concentrates on examining bridge-building strategies in a program solely funded by private donations – such as preparing for the general education diploma (GED), preparing for a driver’s license, enrolling children in school, cooking together and making new friends, and co-creating social bonds with Family Coaches and instructors.

Research Objectives

Based on existing theory, this dissertation addresses the following research questions. Do the women and men enrolled in Welcome Home Programs carry their transnational experiences with them? This study explores how they re-negotiate gender in a new host country and the ways that Welcome Home helps people overcome any complacency they may have developed in refugee camps—a “bottom up” approach.

During an in-depth interview, Amina considered herself as someone still in the process of her adjustment to the host-country although she had been in the United States for more than 15 years at the time we met. After her arrival in the United States in late the 1990s, she enrolled in high school and dropped out 2 years later to work a full-time job and take care of her aging grandparents. In her mid-thirties at the time of this study, she was a stay-at-home mother of 3 children. She used to be employed full-time until her husband graduated from college with a degree in Nursing. She was preparing for a general education diploma (GED). Compared to Amina, her peer participants at Welcome Home Center were at lower stages than her on the spectrum of their adjustment to the United States. Amina and her peers had in common their parental status from a transnational background.

Like Amina, immigrant/refugee parents enrolled in the Welcome Home Center in order to work toward achieving their own goals with the assistance of instructors and the agency family coaching unit. Being the largest immigrant /refugee resettlement destination in the world, the United States offers a unique opportunity to explore how the shift from agency-directed goals toward the incorporation of immigrant /refugee parents' own goals enhances their commitment to those aspirations. Within the context of U.S. immigrant /refugee resettlement, case studies exist exploring what cultural differences look like during resettlement (Fadiman 1997, Patterson 2006, and Omata 2010). Being unique, Welcome Home Center provides important insights on the process of adjustment for immigrants/refugees in the United States.

Building on features of the social context created during the Welcome Home Programs, this analysis sheds some light on immigrant/refugee participants' thoughts about their social interactions as parents when they adjust to their new life in the United States. Drawing on transnational gender theories and multiculturalism, the analysis of data about goal setting and implementation shed new light and understanding "doing gender" and adjusting transnational other statuses among refugee parents in the process of their adjustment to the host country. It is an exploration of how spontaneously created social gendered safety nets among transnational immigrant/refugee parents from diverse backgrounds make sense of their efforts in adjusting their ways of "doing" or "undoing" gender to the new culture.

Social science research suggests that it is important to understand what the aspirations and cultural beliefs of immigrants and refugees are in the exploration of their process of getting acclimated to the host country (e.g., Fadiman 1997, Koyama 2015, McDonald-

Wilmsen 2009, Patterson 2006, and Ott 2011). Contemporary migration studies have included various gender aspects such as gendered transnational communities, occupational sex segregation, and childcare in gendered immigrant and refugee communities (Koyama 2015). The current study explores how immigrant/refugee parents make sense of their learning experience about new structural constraints in their host country. Specifically, the research examines gendered transnational social exchanges that participants negotiate in order to shed some light on what “doing” and/or “undoing” gender experiences look like in the process of their adjustment to the United States.

CHAPTER 4: METHODS

The current research analyzes data collected during a 10-month internship that focused on immigrant/refugee parents' experiences during their adjustment to the United States in the programs offered at Welcome-Home Center. I was formally introduced to the Parenting Class evening session on September 29, 2015. From that day until April 19, 2016, I attended classes every Tuesday and was able to informally chat with participants in the lobby and corridors before and after classes. Such informal interaction was vital to establishing rapport and trust with program participants, who came to accept my presence as a researcher. The fact that I am an immigrant likely contributed to the bonds I established.

The following unrecorded conversation after my introduction as someone who is a refugee from Rwanda translates those bonds and rapport. Abdul mentioned that he heard about what happened in 1994 in Rwanda, my native country. He asked me about my family, how long I have been in the United States, and whether my parents and relatives also live in the area. I told him that my children and wife are in the United States and that all my other relatives are still living in Rwanda. He commented about being a parent of children without close relatives in the host country:

We both share the same difficulty of raising kids without close relatives around. It has an impact on our children to grow up without their grandparents, no uncles, no aunts, no cousins, no one. I can imagine the feeling of your boys growing up without other young boys from their extended family, or their uncles. Not easy for your only girl to grow up alone, my brother [laughter].

After gaining entrée at Welcome-Home Center, open-minded participant-observation and open-ended and semi-structured interviewing served as important ethnographic data gathering techniques about immigrant/refugee parents' in-depth life experiences (e.g. Charmaz 2006: 20-21, Fetterman 2010, and Jorgensen 1989). Participant observation activities represented an amount of time equivalent to 102 hours. Through open-minded participant observation (e.g. Charmaz 2006: 20-21, Fetterman 2010, and Jorgensen 1989), and theoretical sampling (Glaser 1967: 45-77), I took jottings and then, immediately after each class, recorded in-depth field notes based on the jottings (Jorgensen 1989). More specifically, I recorded ethnographic data throughout the internship about participants' actions and social exchanges within the Welcome Home Center and during one-on-one interviews (Fetterman 2010). I attended as often as possible two classes of 21 and 24 parents respectively and recorded notes on who attended the classes, and other key information about the program delivery. Participant observation was appropriate as the classroom was the natural setting for the Welcome Home Programs. Between September 2015 through April 2016, I observed 15 evening Welcome Home Center sessions, 15 sessions of evening sessions of Children Academy, and 20 community guest-speakers' presentations. I also attended 7 morning sessions of Welcome Home Center from February through April 2016, which was during the second semester of the school year.

Combined, I conducted 29 open-ended and semi-structured interviews with participants and staff/administrators. The open-ended and semi-structured interviews were distributed as follows:

- Instructors: I interviewed twice the Family class instructor. I also conducted 1 interview with one of the 3 assistant-instructors in the Welcome Home Center.
- Staff: I interviewed 5 female and 1 male administrators/staff of the Community Center that are directly involved in the Welcome Home Center, including 3 repeat interviews. Welcome Home Center activities were intertwined with English as a Second Language (ESL). I purposely excluded ESL administrators and staff.
- Welcome Home Center participants: I interviewed 17 participants, including 3 men from both morning and evening classes.

These interviews were equivalent to more than 15 hours of audio recording that focused on background information about what traditional cultural aspects were desirable for immigrant/refugee parents in adjusting their original cultural/ethnic parenting features in the United States. This dissertation focuses primarily on women as there were only 4 men in the sample. I do not draw conclusions about men's experiences due to the small sample size, but I include their experiences in my analysis. Combined, 25 interviews were with women (85 percent) and 4 interviews with men (15 percent).

Preliminary Data Collection and Analysis from the Internship

Welcome Home Program administrators conducted enrollment interviews starting late July until early September 2015 for 45 incoming and returning immigrant/refugee parents, and established for each participant an enrollment interview form containing

information about participants' goals. More women (N=40) than men (N=5) from 17 nationalities enrolled in the Program. Attendees' ages ranged approximately from 24 to 45 and their approximate median age was mid-thirties¹³. I analyzed the written data thus collected.

With the assistance of the Agency, the majority of immigrant/refugee parents expressed their willingness to have one-on-one interviews. Due to transnational cultural sensitivity because the majority of interview subjects were female, all interviews had to be held at the Agency's facilities. Given limited availability of participants at the agency, I conducted open-ended and semi-structured interviews with those who were able to arrive early at the agency or stay late after their classes. Also given the fact that no professional interpreters or any of their relatives with more English proficiency were available on site to help translate, the language barrier was an issue in the process of recruiting interview subjects. Due to language limitations and ethical reasons related to subjects' confidentiality if outside interpreters were recruited, I purposefully chose to interview those who could speak English at an intermediate or advanced level (N=33) or 73.3% of participants.

In addition to written data analysis from enrollment interviews and participant-observation of classroom activities, I conducted pre-program and/or post-program interviews with staff/administrators (N=8)¹⁴ and mid-program and/or post-program

¹³ Welcome-Home Center Administrators reported that the Agency did not keep records of demographic data about immigrant/refugee parents attending Family Program (FEP) such as age, religious affiliation, marital status, and race/ethnicity as a mixed-group strategy.

¹⁴ The interviews with Agency staff/administrators include 2 interviews – preprogram and post-program – with 1 instructor and each of 3 administrators.

interviews with immigrant/refugee parents (n=17) or 51.5% of participants with intermediate or advanced level of English. During these open-ended and semi-structured interviews, I asked immigrant/refugee parents about their aspirations, what changed or did not change during the Welcome Home Program delivery, and what they did about discrepancies between the United States lifestyle and their own cultural backgrounds. The interviews focused on what they hoped to learn as parents from the Programs, what problems they had that they hoped to solve, and what goals they believed they met or made progress in meeting after one semester and after two semesters (see Appendix 1 for interview guides). Similarly, I asked staff members, instructors and administrators questions about their goals and their opinion about what they thought major problems were during the program delivery. I asked them about what they believed they did to help immigrant/refugee parents meet or make progress in meeting goals after one semester and after two semesters, what specific approaches instructors, staff and administrators took to address goals of their clients that differed from their own or when client goals changed during the course of the year. I asked administrators, instructors and staff whether or what they would change about the Program in the future and why.

Data Mining and Analysis for the Dissertation

Expanding on preliminary patterns from data collected from my participant-observation, and open-ended and semi-structured interviews at Welcome Home Center, I used qualitative research approaches to remain open to the data thus collected. I utilized an analytic inductive approach to look for patterns and themes about how participants self-evaluate their gendered adjustment processes with reference to the social space offered by the Welcome Home Programs and its various components, including

collective and individual experiences. The objective is to understand immigrant/refugee parents' lives in greater depth (Creswell 1994; Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1967; Fetterman 2010, Marshall and Rossman 1999).

Drawing on preliminary findings from the data collected during my internship, and using the ATLAS.ti computer database program, I did additional data mining and focused line-by-line coding analysis to identify further patterns in the data about collectively and individually lived experiences on a large spectrum of social exchanges during the Program. I created codes as concepts that emerged from reading the transcripts, code managers, which are the spaces where all codes are listed, where information on each code can be found, and where code-related procedures are possible. I also grouped into code families according to shared characteristics, and code-to-code networks that allowed me to conceptually explore the data. Using analytic inductive coding strategies allowed me to identify patterns in the data and conceptualize those trends toward a more theoretical understanding of the data (Charmaz 2006: 44-71).

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS
GENDER BOUNDARY NEGOTIATION AMONG IMMIGRANT/REFUGEE
PARENTS

Preliminary findings from my internship in Welcome Home Center¹⁵ highlighted social bonds that immigrant/refugee parents developed in order to re-define their social safety nets; and also revealed that Welcome Home Center recognized immigrant/refugee parents' transnational identity (Epstein 2007, Levitt 2011). Solely funded through private donations, the Agency utilized unique family coaching approaches that encouraged immigrant/refugee parents to set their own goals and work toward achieving those goals with the help of the agency. Building further on features enhancing program efficacy and sustainability based on immigrant/refugee participants' goals (Kagaba and Gagné 2017), this study explores how immigrant/refugee parents negotiated their parental roles as men or women during their adjustment to the United States. Under the umbrella of Welcome Home Programs, the Family Coaching Unit offers one-on-one social support to parents in order to focus on their own definition of successful outcomes, such as obtaining a driver's license with limited English proficiency, buying a car or a home without an interest-bearing loan, and enrolling children in schools of their choice.

¹⁵ During an internship study at Welcome-Home Center since September 2015 until May 2016, I conducted in-depth analysis of how immigrants and refugees perceived that being able to set their own goals empowered them by giving them control over their bridging transnational differences, and potentially motivated them to work toward those goals.

Forty-five immigrant/refugee parents who relocated to the United States within the previous five years, on average, freely enrolled with their children in the 2015 – 2016 Welcome Home Programs on first-come-first-served basis. They spent the school year in the program getting help to better adjust to the United States as their new home. During enrollment interviews and throughout the school year, instructors and staff emphasized to participants, sometimes through interpreters, that Welcome Home Programs were designed for family units in the sense that parents and children could attend simultaneously. My research focuses mainly on adult participants. I purposely excluded children.

Welcome Home Programs split the 2016 class into two parents' sessions based on their children's age. The morning session was composed of 19 mothers and 2 fathers of 3 and 4-year-old children attending the morning session of the Children Academy Program. The evening session was composed of 22 mothers and 2 fathers with elementary school-age children attending the evening Children Academy Program. Parents' sessions included various activities, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons and family sessions without their children. The Children Academy had activities for children and their parents together. The Center also offered opportunities to these parents to learn new skills together, such as gardening and ethnic cooking by peers of popular dishes from their homelands to share at the Center once a month. The Family Coaching Unit provided one-on-one coaching sessions about financial literacy and economic self-reliance.

Administrators and staff at the Center measured successful outcomes of the program from participants' regular attendance and attracting new participants. The Center reported a constantly growing waitlist each year. These parents' marital status, the process of their refugee status determination, and their admission to the United States is beyond the scope of this study. However, given their various experiences from the time of fleeing their homelands and during their migration trajectory, rather than starting with their time in the United States, this study will be mindful of their multiple spaces and cultural settings prior to their arrival in the United States (Kasun 2014/2015/2016, Peteet 1997).

Negotiating Fluid Gender Boundaries in a Context of Putting the Family First

Constant gender boundary negotiation and “doing” gender among immigrant/refugee parents are often context-specific within the larger socio-cultural domain. How parents engage in gender boundary negotiation and “do” gender are dependent on a number of factors, including peer pressure and resettlement expectations to attain self-sufficiency as quickly as possible. For parents attending the Welcome Home Program, “doing” gender and negotiating gender boundaries are about the practicalities of balancing childcare with work and other demands. In most cases, some of the people that I observed and interviewed broke the norms they had in their native countries without necessarily changing their gender identities or internalized scripts.

Temporary Rule-Bending as a Rationalizing Adjustment Strategy

Given a sense of survival during initial adjustment to the United States, among other aspects of the resettlement context, these parents believe that the gender boundary adjustment is temporary based on various experiences they have as far patriarchal bargains are concerned, for instance. However, the adjustment might become permanent. From this perspective, engaging in temporary adjustment strategies represents a rationalizing strategy to make sense their commitment and resilience in the process of bridging their transnational gaps.

Immigrant/refugee parents attending the Welcome Home Programs came from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds. Most of them arrived in the United States at different times that ranged from one year to fifteen years. If the New Home immigrant/refugee population were less ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse, the Center would likely have larger homogeneous communities to specialize in. Since early the 1990s, the city has been home to one of the largest federal refugee resettlement programs in the United States. According to recent reports, the rapidly growing immigrant/refugee population from highly diverse demographics also represented an increasing component of the labor force in sectors such as manufacturing, retail, and healthcare (Capps 2006, Kodithuwakku 2012).

By using the method of mixed groups in their programming, the Center hoped to create a social network of internationals and new relationships creating a safety net for the refugee community that they served. Building on preliminary patterns from my internship study, goal setting, and implementation was only part of what was going on in the Welcome Home Programs (Kagaba and Gagné 2017). Family coaches and

instructors, mostly female, not only had to deal with new situations they may be unprepared for, but also they had to learn U.S. policy and systems as they went along. Immigrant/refugee parents did not always come into the Center knowing exactly what they wanted to achieve that year.

My participant-observation and interviews revealed that various family-related circumstances influenced gender boundary negotiation strategies, such as in contexts where husbands and wives had to juggle household and work-related responsibilities. The most common circumstances were related to new childbirth and/or lack of access to affordable childcare opportunities. For instance, most interviewed married women reported that they enrolled in the Welcome Home Programs to let their husbands¹⁶, who were eligible to enroll in Welcome Home Program, to go to work. In all cases, the husbands' work schedules were incompatible with Program schedules.

Fluid Dimensions of Mindsets about Gender Boundaries in Countries of Origin

Some research can help contextualize the fluid dimensions of mindsets about gender boundaries among immigrant/refugee subjects of the current dissertation. First, collective identity formation is more than individual choice and historical legacy. The dynamic nature of ethnic identity, for instance, involves establishing socially negotiated frameworks (Nagel 1994). Second, debunking the metaphorical concept of having roots in a homeland can help understand intimate ties between people and place (Malkki 1992). This debunking process may also include the misapplication of Western, body-oriented gender concepts to non-Western realities, such as Sub-Saharan Africa where motherhood

¹⁶ As an ethical strategy, Welcome Home Center reported that they did not keep a record of participants' marital status. Three married women in my sample reported that they had part time jobs.

is the economic, spiritual and moral center of the household (Burnet 2012, Oyewumi 1997). Third, people's social role as a member of the kin group determines their gender boundaries under a system where age and reproductive status have impact on gender boundary strategies. Women rely on husbands, brothers to get access to land under the patrilineal kinship; and the best status a female can get is motherhood (Burnet 2012, Jefremovas 1997 and 2002). Fourth, most of ethnic conflicts at many places where these parents originate from are a legacy of socioeconomic imbalances introduced during colonialism (Fanon 1991). For instance, in some areas, the European colonialism reinforced patrilineal inheritance of land and property (Burnet 2012)

During the adjustment process of their family units to the host country, these immigrant/refugee parents from seventeen nationalities build on their previous experience of gender relations from their homelands as described in the following brief profiles¹⁷:

- In many areas of the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeastern Asia, the family often dominates marriage decisions. The experience of ordinary men, women, and children in the family may occur within a patrilineal – patrilocal extended family. The extended family unit typically consists of the older couple, sons, their wives and families, and unmarried daughters. Living arrangements and related intergenerational support are essentially relationships based on specific duties and responsibilities (Bowen 2002, Joseph 2000, Knodel 2015, Newcomb 2009, Rugh 1984). In some

¹⁷ As an ethical strategy to protect the study subjects' confidentiality, brief profiles of gender boundaries are outlined in general terms within geographic regions that include countries where they originate from rather than providing a description of how gender roles looked like in each specific country of origin.

- areas, such as the Middle East, ethnic relations often contributed to survivalist mentality among the minorities (Rugh 1984); and in some areas such as Southeastern Asia, although parents treasure their daughters, they favor their sons (Knodel 2015).
- With many clans and sub-clans as determined by patrilineal lineage, some areas of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan have strong pastoral roots, and domestic chores include handcrafts. Rites of passage are the cultural norm (Addullahi 2001, Gebremedhin 2002).
 - Single motherhood is widespread – but remains unexplored – in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, and Zambia with higher risks of child mortality in never-married single-mother-headed households as compared to other households. Divorce increases the vulnerability of children as the poorest outcomes are observed among children of divorced women (Clark 2013).
 - In the contemporary Caribbean, child labor plays a critical role in peasant household livelihood strategies making children necessary in rural areas. In rural Haiti where the birth rate remains the highest in the world, when more men are absent due to wage migration from impoverished farms, for instance, the women remaining behind give birth to more babies (Schwartz 2009).
 - In Latin America, such as Mexico, the concept of machismo is the controlling factor in gender boundary negotiation, with emphasis on women's reproductive roles. The machismo ideology affects the type of responsibilities, limiting the role women are allowed to have in communities. Formal education increasingly affects the role and status of women and is changing the gender boundary landscape (Howell 1999).

Adjusting to New Circumstances in a Context of Putting the Family First

During an interview with Lin, a refugee mother of two from Southeast Asia in her early thirties who relocated in the Midwestern city five years earlier, I learned that her husband had to request special accommodations from his employer to be able to enroll in the 2014 class of Welcome Home Programs as she just had her second child. She shared that she was a stay-at-home mother attending the 2016 class of Welcome Home Center as a returning student on behalf of her family and indicated that her husband would like to attend but was unavailable due to work obligations. Lin commented that it does not matter which parent can take their children to the Children Academy Program if the other parent is at work, and learn from the program.

Lin mentioned that, as an example, although home-buying would be a man's "job" in their home country, because her husband had no time, she was the one that the Center introduced to a federally funded program through local banks called Homeownership Opportunity Program that provided down payment and closing cost grant funds up to \$10,000 to qualified low-income first-time homebuyers. At the Center, Lin was introduced to bank representatives that explained policies and guidelines for first-time homebuyers to receive and maintain a grant through the Homeownership Opportunities Programs. Showing me paperwork that she had just received regarding her household information, such as address, employment history, monthly income and combined housing expenses, assets and liabilities, Lin observed in a mid-program interview:

When my husband is off work – which does not happen often (smile), we come to class together¹⁸. He likes the (Welcome Home) classes. Because he has no time, I come to class in the name of the family. I just got these forms (showing printed forms) from a bank representative. The bank representative explained them to me. At home, I will explain to my husband how to fill out the forms. The Family Coach said she can help us filling them out, if we need assistance. If there are questions, I will be the one to bring the forms to the Center because my husband is often busy. I do it for the family.

Immigrant/refugee parents engaged in gender boundary negotiation dictated by a resettlement context, with institutional and cultural demands, such as access to income-generating jobs, money management, home buying and school enrollment for children, as a space that their family units occupy in the aftermath of their migratory trajectory. Although Lin takes the forms to her husband and explains them to him, she is in a position to educate him about banking, income limits categories within low-income families, financial information needed for their home purchase loan, and steps to obtaining a federally-funded mortgage grant and bank mortgage loan. Although the husband is the primary bread-winner and she takes care of the children, except that he attends when he is able.

Negotiating Fluid Gender Boundaries in a New Culture

Data from my participant-observation and interviews revealed negotiation patterns of fluid gender boundaries. The way gender is enacted is dependent upon a multitude of situational, institutional, and cultural factors. No matter what these immigrant/refugee parents believe about the essential nature of women and men, they violate those beliefs, believing that doing so is an exception. The following patterns illustrate fluid aspects of gender boundary negotiation that parents negotiate to meet their

¹⁸ I observed that Lin and her husband attended class together six times during the school year.

family needs dependent upon a variety of cultural and institutional demands of their host country.

In the first trend from the data, like many other immigrant/refugee parents in my sample from areas where the family holds the duty of teaching behaviors to children (Joseph 2000), Hakim thinks it is okay for a husband to do childcare in general and take his children to the Children Academy, in particular, and for the woman to work outside the home if that is what the situation demands. For the 2016 class, Hakim, a male refugee in his early forties who arrived in the United States eight years earlier from the Middle East, observed that his wife used to enroll in Welcome Home Programs in the previous two years:

This school year (2016), my wife just had our third child. The baby is our second son, who needs care 100 percent from his mom because he is still a small baby. That was the reason why I enrolled in the Welcome Home Programs to be able to build my three-year-old son who is attending the program with me.

It was common for people in my sample to be fluid in negotiating gender boundaries. Most parents negotiated and performed gender boundaries within the context of family, with the success of the family and children being of primary importance. For David, a refugee parent of three children, who relocated in the area five years earlier from Sub-Saharan Africa, intergenerational living arrangements were common in his homeland (Abdullahi 2001). Commenting on the importance of the Welcome Home Programs, he observed:

Welcome Home programs give me some good ideas about how to take care of my children. When you listen to conversations among parents, some would say “I need a car, a house, and many other things.” My goal is for my son to have a good character. Maybe he will become a Doctor or Engineer or Lawyer, but the good character first, very important. After he gets good character, maybe he can save

money; maybe he will help me when I am old [laughter]. I am happy to take care of my children... If I go back to the homeland, I will certainly tell everybody about what I am doing here (at Welcome Home Center) for my children.

David's comment suggests that, for some parents, social contexts during their resettlement can affect the way gender is enacted in the household. Maybe the gender identity script is changing for David or Hakim, but there is not enough data to tell for sure. My future study will investigate that.

The second trend involves Amina, a married woman in her late thirties originally from Sub-Saharan Africa, where the common age of marriage is around 15 years old, where men who can afford to do so may have up to four wives, and where sub clans can live intermixed in a certain area (Abdullahi 2001). Amina reported that she got married when her husband started college. Although uncommon in her homeland, she worked multiple fulltime income-generating jobs outside the home to put her husband through college and financially take care of the family. They had three children when her husband was still in college. Her husband scheduled his college classes in a manner that allowed him to look after the children when Amina was working. After her husband graduated from college with a degree in health care and got a decent job in 2014, Amina stopped working outside the home to further her own education. When she enrolled in Welcome Home Programs in 2016, Amina, had been in the United States for almost a decade. She also attended in General Education Development (GED) preparation classes. She was hoping to pursue a college education and become a social work professional in the future.

In a mid-program interview, Amina observed:

When people ask me how long I have been in the United States, it makes me quite uncomfortable to tell them that I have been here for many years. It makes me feel awkward when I have to tell people that I just started taking GED (General Education Development) preparation classes. I started driving

at age 17 to be able to go to work and help out my aging grandparents. I worked many many [emphasis is hers] jobs at different places for many years because I had to. My husband was a student, and it was my responsibility to take care of the family until he graduated. Now is my turn to go back to school because he graduated from college, but I feel like it's maybe too late for me [smile]. That is what it is. My 6-year old daughter, who comes here [Children Academy], needs my fulltime support for a good start in school. That is the reason I enrolled in the Program. This program is awesome. It helps my daughter get better prepared for regular school work.

Gender boundary negotiation is fluid in the sense that people who come from homelands where gender roles are quite strict find themselves adapting to the new context, both for survival and for the betterment of the entire family. There is not enough data to tell for sure whether or not traditional gender ideologies/scripts have necessarily changed, but it is clear in my data that adaptations to new conditions and violations of traditional norms was common.

A third trend that emerged from the data is exemplified by a husband whose stay-at-home wife didn't speak English. The data suggest that the couple used to adhere to traditionally specified gender scripts in their homeland, where large kin groups are critical inter-generational support and family is mutually protective of each other (Joseph 2000). The husband sleeps a couple of hours and then walks his daughter to school, rather than sending his wife, who was ineligible to enroll in the Program. Haruna, a father of three children in his late-thirties from Sub-Saharan Africa relocated in the United States almost three years earlier with his wife and their daughter, without any other member of his immediate family. They had two more children after arrival in the Midwestern city where he was enrolled in the 2016 morning session of Welcome Home Programs. During my participant-observation, Haruna informally commented to me during a break about his weekly work overload:

I work six days per week. But, the time has changed and I have to adapt to it. I cannot just go sleep because I need to sleep. They [Children Academy] need me to be here for my 5-year old daughter there [pointing a finger.] My wife was not lucky to go school in my home country, and so, (she speaks) no English. Also, she takes care of our two younger children at home. I was a carpenter in my native town and could schedule my own time. Here [in the United States], I work night shift in a chicken company sometimes more than 12 hours. Then I come back home early in the morning, sleep a little bit and wake up to walk my daughter to the [Children Academy] program and attend the Family class. It is a responsibility I have to do. Who else will do it for my family if I don't do it? [Smile]

As of the time of the interviews, a general trend suggested a division of labor where the men were the primary earners and women the primary caretakers of children. It may be due to a sampling bias in that I could only interview people who were able to participate in the programs. Despite these more traditional gender activities from the data associated to husbands as the primary earners and mothers as the primary caretakers of children, I still noticed various ways in which people re-negotiated gender.

For some participants, like Lin and Haruna, gender boundaries of their homelands get “bent” out of necessity. It is possible that the rationale for men and women, doing so-called man’s job or doing childcare is related to the absence of the extended family and care network from back home. Rather than being a question of traditional versus contemporary gender boundaries, maybe it is filling in the missing extended family that is not possible in the host country. Further studies are needed to explore how gender boundary fluidity, such as in a context of bridging gaps between gender boundary negotiation in the new culture of the host country may affect immigrant/refugee parents’ traditional gender identities and scripts.

The fourth trend that emerged from the data is about women who took the lead in the Homeownership Opportunities Program for first-time homebuyers with the assistance of the Family Coaching Unit. For most parents in my sample, the process of constant gender boundary negotiations entails often engaging in deliberate violations of internalized gender scripts. Among other gender boundary negotiation experiences, Welcome Home Program offered participants¹⁹ who expressed the desire to participate in a program called “Homeownership Opportunities Program – Home Manager Program” opportunities to meet with bank representatives, work with realtors and visit homes for sale and report back to their partners. Five women who took the lead in the home-buying program pointed out during my interviews with them that they enrolled in the Welcome Home Programs as part of a negotiated agreement with their husbands as part of the couple’s juggling of household responsibilities.

For example, Dar, in her late thirties shared with me during an interview the reason why the couple decided that she would be a stay-at-home mother to take care of the kids and enroll in Welcome Home Programs in the 2016 evening class with her two daughters as a returning participant. She said she relocated to the United States five years earlier from Southeastern Asia with her husband and their first child; her second daughter was born in the United States. She mentioned that her immediate family relocated to another state, hundreds of miles away and that her husband’s immediate family lived in the same neighborhood as her family of four. Patrilocal extended families are common

¹⁹ I observed that one man and five women participated in the program called “Homeownership Opportunities Program – Home Manager Program” to make home ownership possible for first-time low-income home buyers with the assistance of Welcome Home Center during the school year 2015-2016. Bank representatives held special individual and collective sessions to explain income limits summary, eligibility criteria for a federally-funded grant up to \$10,000, and steps to obtain a mortgage loan.

where Dar comes from. In her homeland, the institution of family is essentially a relationship based on specific duties and responsibilities. Women are expected to help with household chores and take care of their aged parents more than men (Knodel 2015).

Dar observed:

We own a family car and my husband is the driver. He takes the car to work and some of his relatives ride with him to work. If I was working, I would have a problem of transportation, because it would require him to drive me back and forth to work, pick up or drop off his relatives, and go to his job himself. There is no guarantee that I would find a job close enough to his job. So, that's why I am a stay-at-home mother to take care of the family and bring the girls here [Children Academy]. This program is helpful. We just bought a two-bedroom home. They [Family Coach Unit] showed us how to get a cheap two-bedroom home. Although women do not buy houses in my culture because families build their houses [laughter], I went through most of the buying process, and shared the information with my husband until the end. My kids are doing well in school. I am happy we did it that way.

As of the time of interviews, examples were mostly of families where men work outside the home and women take care of children, although Amina worked outside the home while her husband was in college and some of the men reported to “help out” with child care.²⁰ This pattern may be a result of sampling bias from within Welcome Home where only people who have free time can participate in the programs. That is, if women have jobs, they are likely not in the programs. They and their husbands may be working. As exemplified in the following scenario involving Sadiki, a father of five children in his early forties from Eastern Africa has been in the United States for almost a decade. The country where Sadiki come has strong pastoral roots, and handcrafts are common among women as part of their domestic chores (Addullahi 2001, Gebremedhin 2002). Sadiki shared that his wife has a fulltime job outside the home for almost five years at a well-

²⁰ Welcome Home Center reported that, as a matter of policy, they did not keep records of participants' occupations. Three married women reported that their work schedule did not have time conflict with the Program.

paying welder job at a car manufacturing company and he was taking care of the children when his wife was not available²¹. Sadiki commented:

My wife has been working a night shift at a well-paid job for the past five years. She was exceptionally lucky to have that well-paid job. She is a welder at a car manufacturing factory, usually a job for men [laughter]. I have been working first shift at a shoe manufacturing factory for the past four years. I come home after work every workday in time to bring my four children to the Children Academy Program and to attend Welcome Home Programs myself. I have attended Welcome Home Programs for four consecutive years so far. My kids need my presence here [Children Academy]. The kids are really doing well in school, mostly because of this program. I have to support them. At the same time, I am learning. They [the Center] just showed me how to buy a home, and we are working on buying a home for the family.

Some men are okay about getting involved in childcare, especially taking their children to the Children Academy Programs; and also think it is normal for a wife to work outside the home at night given the circumstances of resettlement.

Jobs seem to expand fluid negotiated gender boundaries, such as in instances where wives take the lead in the home buying process due to husbands' busy schedules. Finding a family shelter is normally a men's affair in the cultures where these five mothers came from. Since the husbands were not always available, as part of their fluid gender boundary negotiation strategies, their wives took the lead in ensuring that the families each had a permanent home in their host country.

One of the unintended consequences of immigrant/refugee women taking the lead in the home buying process was that such social violations were seen as pragmatic strategies to adjust to temporary difficult situations. Children learn gender, in part, during

²¹ During the interview, Sadiki reported that his family was beyond the low-income limits that determined that his family was not eligible for the federally-funded grant up to \$10,000 under the Homeownership Opportunities Program. He told me that he was applying for a mortgage loan with the assistance of Welcome Home Center.

primary socialization by observing their parents (Bem 1993, Connell 2002, Fausto-Sterling 2000, Fine 2011, Kimmel 2005, Kohlberg 1987, Mead 1934). Children of these immigrant/refugee parents that engaged in gender boundary fluidity negotiation are likely learning a much more fluid definition of what it means to be a man or woman than their parents learned in their homelands. My future research will explore whether and how gender ideologies/scripts from their homelands change during the process of immigrant/refugee resettlement.

Strategies of Gender Boundary Negotiation in a New Culture

For immigrant/refugee parents, outcomes of the adjustment process to their host country depend on their individual and collective commitment to overcome the hurdles and impediments of their transnationally lived experiences. As immigrant/refugee parents recognize that returning in their homelands is not an option for them anymore, they create gender boundary opportunities and make a commitment to them (Abu-Lughod 1993, Gerson and Peiss 1985, Peteet 1997). For immigrant/refugee parents, renegotiating gender boundaries with the Center's support requires some level of flexibility on both sides.

New gender boundary re-negotiation often takes place within new socio-economic contexts, although there is often some influence from their home, such as religious constraints of the homeland (Abu-Lughod 1993, Gerson and Peiss 1985, Peteet 1997). Commitment to their gender identity boundaries thus created has two consequences. First, as immigrant/refugee parents realize that they don't have their traditional safety nets from their homelands to count on anymore, they are more likely to demonstrate resilience in re-creating new spaces as fathers and mothers. Secondly,

because immigrant/refugees know that their new gender identity boundaries do not allow them to strictly remain in their traditional gender identity boundaries, they open up to negotiating new gender boundaries more freely. In a sense, various social contexts that immigrants/refugees navigate provide room to them to bend some traditional gender identity boundary strategies.

Changing the way immigrant/refugee parents enact gender may be part of their existing resilience as gender boundary fluidity is part of survival and adjustment to the new structural demands. As a strategy to support immigrant/refugee participants, the role of Family Coaches was not to challenge participants' ways of "doing gender." The role of the Family Coaches was not to prescribe to participants with dictates such as "this is what we do in the United States in such and such circumstances." The staff's challenge was to stay in the mind of these parents in the process of negotiating their gender boundaries. The Welcome Home Programs created a social context conducive to constant gender boundary negotiation often occurring during social interactions among or with these immigrant/refugee parents. In a sense, Welcome Home Programs are located at the crossroads of diverse cultural backgrounds and the U.S. Culture.

In other words, there is value in immigrant/refugee parents' resilience and commitment to their transnational status. As Bill, a member of the Center's higher management observed in a post-program interview, the resettlement context that often focuses on the entire family becomes a social place that motivates and reinforces immigrant/refugee parents' commitment to their survival strategies. According to Bill in a post-program interview, immigrant/refugee children will be influenced by their parents

and the larger culture. He also mentioned that the Center was aware of this cultural crossroads²² that also influenced parents' gender negotiation. Bill observed:

People who enroll in our programs are likely better prepared to be part of the society. Increasingly since the mid-1990s, we have people that spent more than a decade in refugee camps. They know that they are not going back to their countries of origin. So, they are more resilient to settle down in the city and be part of the population than in the past when some immigrants/refugees were looking back and saying, "As soon as I can I go back to my country, to my culture, and my tradition." Despite their (immigrant/refugee parents') resilience, they know that the first generation will keep their native languages, culture and traditions; the second generation, half and half. But, the third generation would speak perfect English, know the (U.S.) system inside and out, and go to college. How is the staff going to work for a family to be prepared 30 years from now, to make sure that the great grandchildren of these participants will be what we call today "American?" I can tell you from the number of nationalities that we are serving that, in the last three years, we reached 101 countries. What it means is that we have increasingly more diversity. For instance, some parents' life experience or social interactions were inside their traditional tribes or clans, or religion. At arrival to the United States, they need to interact not only with fathers and mothers from all over the world, but also with the American society and this changes a lot the dynamics, especially how they see themselves as fathers and mothers within that cultural diversity.

Immigrant/refugee parents' prior life experience, such as religion, social norms, and mores intersect with structural demands in the host country to define their strategies of gender negotiation. In a sense, immigrant/refugee parents' enrollment in the Welcome Home Program and/or access to their income-generating employment in the United States, for the first time in their life in many cases, become opportunities to promote their resilience and commitment to the host country.

²² Welcome Home Center reported that, as an ethical strategy, they did not have a specific gender policy for their programs.

Balancing Fluid Gender Boundaries and the New Culture

Encouraging individuals to set their own goals as implemented during the Program was an important step towards supporting their adjustment efforts to the host-country. The Center provided opportunities to immigrant/refugee parents characterized by open-minded family coaching approaches. By allowing these parents to actively get involved in setting and implementing their curricular goals, the Welcome Home Programs served as a new social network. They were encouraged to think of themselves first as family units trying to adjust to their new life in the United States.

Receptiveness and responsiveness at the Family Coaching Unit helped simultaneously to pre-empt any misunderstanding and pre-emptively lay some ground for future relationships. The Welcome Home Programs, especially its Family Coach Unit, utilized holistic approaches in the program delivery that emphasized mutual receptiveness between the Center and the immigrant/refugee parents. For Welcome Home Programs, receptiveness means that providing assistance and support to these parents consisted not only of finding the right resources but also about negotiating a relationship situated in a complex array of cultural sensitivity. As a context of providing assistance and support to these parents, Welcome Home Center became a safe place where gaps could be worked out. Family Coaches needed to balance between being receptive to these parents' needs and being open-mindedly responsive to their diverse cultural experience, especially regarding gender boundary negotiation strategies.

Welcome Home Programs are supportive of bending the "rules," but they don't promote it. In order to accomplish their job as family coaches, they also needed to confront potential deeply engrained ethnocentric attitudes towards the new culture and

vice versa. Bending gender boundaries was acceptable to immigrant/refugee parents as long as it was seen as being situational and not a political or cultural statement or an act of rebellion. The Center played an important role in ensuring that spatial and situational opportunities for gender negotiations remained safe. This receptiveness also needs to be open-mindedly responsive according to Amy, a member of the Center's high management for several years in a post-program interview. Amy commented:

If I want anything about my work to be effective it has to be in a place where people are ready to receive whatever I am hoping to offer. In order to get that from the person I am working with, I feel I have to have that same mentality of reception. I need to be receptive and responsive to whatever they bring to the table, even if I completely don't understand. And then from that, I am like, "it's my responsibility to meet her where she is; first to understand." It's not really important the why, it does not matter because if that's not a way that I can be receptive and responsive to the need, then I have to figure out how I can do. If both of us are digging our heels and I am like, "I have to be able to do this" and she is like, "No, this makes me uncomfortable." Then our next meeting is not going to produce much cohesion either. So, Yeah!

The social impact of such pragmatic rule-bending, as opposed to open rebellion, helped to alleviate strained and stressful adjustment process of immigrant/refugee parents to the United States. As social bonds emerged during the program, these parents opened up and shared their individual stories. In so doing, such attitudes helped contextualize immigrant/refugee parents' human agency in building social bonds and safety nets. Simultaneously, Welcome Home had to acknowledge that participants' safety nets needed to be built on their existing resilience and commitment to the host country. The coaching staff/administrators focused on being mindful of participants' gender identity boundaries rather than raising flags on how their own views were challenged by these parents' gender boundary negotiation strategies.

Barriers to Gender Boundary Fluidity

A trend to emerge from the data about single-mothers attending the Welcome Home Programs indicated that the options of being stay-at-home mothers decreased, and could constrain possibilities. Unlike their married counterparts, single-parents²³ likely had to juggle household and job-related responsibilities alone, such as in the case of Angela, in her forties, a single mother of two children. Originally from Central America, she arrived in the United States in 2008 and she separated from her husband when her children were still very young. Angela shared that she is working full time as head of household. Angela was juggling two cleaning jobs in hospital facilities, which is uncommon in her country of origin in Central America. Being separated from an extended family might open opportunities, while being a sole provider without extended family support might compel her gender boundary fluidity. She said she enrolled in the 2016 evening class of Welcome Home Programs to take advantage of the Children Academy Program.

I am happy that the two boys are currently getting A and B grades in school. I enrolled them in the [Welcome Home] program for the past two consecutive years and their grades improved. They used to get D or lower in class. But they have made good progress. I am glad that being raised by a single-mom does not have negative impact on their school performance. For instance, today [Tuesday] my supervisor called me and told me that she needed me to go to work because someone called off. I went to work but reminded the supervisor that I needed to have time to take my kids to the Children Academy. I came to class straight from work [showing me her uniforms]. Usually, I take Tuesday off. My employer knows that.

²³ There were at least six single-parents in my sample, all were women. At least four among them reported having a job outside the home.

A fifth trend emerged from data about gender boundary negotiation was exemplified by scenarios that might appear as wives were seeking validation and permission from their husbands. Some husbands were happy to have their wives work and were happy to do child care, and some husbands were more resistant. The staff at the Center sometimes struggled with respecting the boundaries imposed by husbands. For example, some native cultures of immigrant/refugee parents define femininity as submission to men, which is an additional aspect of gender boundaries that must be negotiated within the resettlement process in the host country (Epstein 2007). Simultaneously, the resettlement context demands that immigrant/refugee women and men be pro-active in establishing self-sufficiency by taking advantage of available socio-economic opportunities that the host country offers. Amy, a professional family coach at the Center for several years described to me during a post-program interview how an immigrant/refugee mother enrolled in Welcome Home Programs requested assistance in obtaining a driver's license with limited English and insisted that the Family Coaching Unit talked to her husband first before starting the training:

(...) A woman who is in our Welcome Home Programs this year (2016) wanted to know about driver's license. And I have written down all the resources; and she was, "Let me talk to my husband." Her husband came to me to talk about it. I was like, "Okay great. Here they are." And he goes, "Okay I give you permission to help her out on this." It was so strange to me; nobody has given permission to do something since I was like 15 [laughter]. It is not a small thing to figure out. I don't know the answer all the time. I feel like we all participate in "doing" gender all the time.

My interviews indicated that immigrant/refugee parents' efforts to confront challenges of fluid gender boundary negotiation may involve various factors in addition to the Center programmatic features, such as gender boundaries imposed on women by

husbands. Discussing the impact of traditional and/or contextual gender scripts and ideologies, Amy indicated that women persisted in confronting these challenges often leading to other alternatives. Amy observed:

I recently found that the participant I was working so hard with to get her learner's permit, her husband was very upset that she has received this. They are from a totally different culture, it's not a Muslim culture, yet again I think, gender had a play²⁴ in it because she is a woman who is learning more English than he is, she now has a little more power in the relationship because she could drive if she wanted to.

Limits to gender fluidity went beyond women's lack of education, such as the impact of women's lack of education in their homelands on their possibilities in their new homes, and were situated within a transnational context where immigrants/refugees were sometimes conflicted in a desire to take advantage of opportunities and a wish to be more fluid in gender boundary negotiation and the dictates of the gender ideologies/scripts of their native cultures.

I attended a presentation in the winter of 2015 for both Family sessions by a guest-speaker from a local healthcare center about the benefits of a flu shot. At the end of the session, the guest speaker offered the flu shot for free to attending parents on a voluntary basis. At the end of the presentation, many parents volunteered to take the shot. Salima, a mother of two children and in her mid-thirties, was willing to have the flu shot, but she told the nurse who was giving the flu shot that she needed to talk to her husband first. She went to a corner of the room to make a call from her mobile phone. She briefly spoke to her husband in their native language. When she finished her call, she told the nurse that she was not taking the flu shot because she agreed with her husband not to take

²⁴ The Family Coach appears to be making assumptions about Islam and gender that could be related to potential impact of resettlement workers' attitudes towards and assumptions about various cultures on the programs and immigrant/refugee families.

one. This scenario may suggest that, as any family unit, there are constant negotiations within immigrant/refugee families. It might appear that she needed to ask permission; but this might also be a topic the couple has agreed to discuss. For instance, I learned later during the program that Salima was pregnant. There is no sufficient data from the male perspective to say for sure whether or to what extent her husband imposed gender boundaries on her. Additional research is needed to advance knowledge about all implications of barriers related to traditional gender scripts, such as the ones about femininity and masculinity.

A sixth theme to emerge from the data indicates that barriers to gender fluidity negotiation were related to women's lack of education in their homelands, which affected their possibilities in their host country. Among unintended consequences, lack of English isolates especially stay-at-home mothers more than men and women who get jobs and must speak English. The more a person interacts with people who speak English, the more fluent she becomes and the reverse is true—while staying at home and speaking only one's native language, one becomes more isolated. As Lisa, a professional Family Coach with several years of experience observed, women without formal education and with very young children were more likely to become stay-at-home mothers.

(...) a lot have to do with the opportunity that has been presented to them so far in terms of how much they have access to at this point. Women without education who get here with small children are essentially isolated from that integration process because they cannot enroll in the Welcome Home Programs, they are ineligible for GED, and/or they don't get a job.

From Lisa's perspective, everything that stay-at-home mothers without formal Western education have access to is filtered through an interpreter or someone in their community, for instance.

My data indicate that gender boundaries often shifted due to pragmatic demands. Even though there were some levels of fluidity of gender boundaries in their negotiation strategies, immigrant/refugee parents are negotiating new gender boundaries in a complex context. The need to survive and the desire for the family to thrive, more liberal values, and more conservative gender scripts and identities of the native culture influenced their strategies of gender negotiation in the host country. For instance, women are often expected to remain more traditional, such as dress (Epstein 2007), but this may expand to driving and jobs.

Program Ethics Optimizing Gender Boundary Negotiation

Ethics of receptiveness and balancing require from Welcome Home Programs to recognize that immigrant/refugee parents needed to establish new comfort zones within their gender negotiation strategies. Family Coaches and staff have to wrestle with their own values regarding gender. Just as renegotiating gender is a challenge for participants; it can also be a challenge for some staff. Immigrant/refugee parents engaged in creating symbiotic relationships between program efficacy, their human agency, and their negotiation strategies of fluid gender boundaries. Both administrators and participants assess success of the programs in terms of impact on participants' goal achievement enhancing their socioeconomic stability.

Immigrant/refugee parents' renegotiation strategies are a self-directed process that cannot be encouraged or forced by others. Welcome Home Center and the programs and staff are challenging gender boundaries by giving options, rather than directly challenging gender identities and telling participants they are doing it all wrong. From the viewpoint of gender boundary negotiation, administrators and staff believed that

participants' self-efficacy and commitment became part of their opportunities to negotiate their gender boundaries that, in turn, determined program outcomes leading to program efficacy. Family Coaches, instructors, and staff at Welcome Home Center endeavored to stay within the comfort zones of immigrant/refugee parents that engage in gender boundary negotiation.

Program efficacy consisted of providing to parents sets of problem-solving skills that enabled them to discover possible next steps in the process of their own adjustment to the United States. Comfort zones also consolidated into family units' space where family-oriented self-efficacy began in the process of their adjustment to the United States. In other words, gaining problem-solving skills provided incentives to immigrant/refugee parents to be creative and consistent in their goal setting and gender boundary negotiation. More opportunities emerged from their ability to navigate their comfort zones thus created. Satisfactory outcomes in their comfort zones set in motion more search for opportunities in the process of their adjustment to the United States, and simultaneously their negotiation strategies of fluid gender boundaries. From this perspective, Amy, a professional at the Family Coaching Unit for several years shared that respect of participants' viewpoints guided their program ethics to potential ethnocentric attitudes. She observed:

(...) people deserve to feel safe and respected. As a woman living in 2016, third wave feminism, it would be easy for me to jump to, "Under no circumstances; anybody would be allowed to do A, B and C..." What I would call Feminist outburst, which is very easy for me to do. They (immigrant/refugee parents) don't have that same experience as I do. So, I have to create a way to communicate about that. Just giving them the resources and tell them like, "if you want to do something beyond that you are free to do that too."

Unlike other local resettlement programs, trends in the Center's program ethic revealed that Welcome Home participants took the lead in establishing their own approach to negotiate their gender boundaries, among other strategies. To contextualize the Center's ethics about open-minded gender policy Lisa, a professional Family Coach for several years, observed that pressure from their ethnic community influenced some women to remain in a relationship with an alcoholic:

I feel like I get a lot of information from the women's perspective of their own culture versus what they see in the United States culture. And I see a lot of women talking to each other, talking to me, catching information here and there based on all over general communication; women feeling like, "You got it so good already in the United States, don't push the envelope too much." For example, there was one woman who used to be in coaching. She was referred here for counseling. She was thinking very seriously about divorcing her husband because of his alcoholism. And other women in her community tell her, "No, you got it good. At least he doesn't cheat on you with other women, he doesn't beat you. Don't mess with the good things; it could be a lot worse." My perspective on that, I feel worlds away from it in a lot of ways. My only way to only relate to this is to think about the way my grandparents grew up I guess, older generations of women in my community who dealt with all those kinds of things. It's almost like a lot of the people I am working with, their culture has a lot in common with the way the United States, its politics and society was in the 1940s-1950s era. That's the only reference point I have. I think about it in my head and I am like, "They are living in that sort of dynamic."

In other words, program efficacy and sustainability were rather a means to end than an end in itself from the staff perspective. Coaches, instructors, and staff, "follow the lead" so to speak of participants. Welcome Home Center's success in helping women and men renegotiate gender boundaries is rooted, it seems, in only encouraging immigrant/refugee parents as far as they are ready to go. And when the parents are not comfortable, Welcome Home Center respects that.

As per the Center administrators and staff, program efficacy emerged from the process of the program ethics that emphasized parents' commitment to their self-efficacy. Welcome Home participants' goals were often formulated and achieved with consideration of combined criteria from one's family/ethnic group's expectations. In a mid-program interview, Jill, a professional at the Family Coaching Unit described successful outcomes with respect to participants' own definition of being fathers and mothers within their comfort zones:

Our waiting list says a lot about how Welcome Home Programs are valued in the community. Our goals are based on what a family needs so that they can find employment, be able to be self-sufficient and integrate better into the community; including their own definition of being fathers and mothers in their new context. When I see success, I don't see it within myself because the focus is not on me and will never be on me. It's on them (immigrant/refugee participants). So, depending on how successful the family believes there is a success, I will believe how successful I am, because that is the way it should be. So, when they feel excitement, when they are happy like "yeah! This is awesome!" That's how I know that they have done it for themselves. So, I am just here to give them confidence.

The more immigrant/refugee parents were able to expand their comfort zones as fathers and mothers with the help of their family coaches/parenting instructors, the program's good reputation increased and translated into more candidates to enroll in the program.

Family-Based Approach Features Enhancing Gender Boundary Negotiation

In the context of Welcome Home Program ethics, building rapport became the cornerstone of program efficacy/sustainability and necessarily involved supporting immigrant/refugee parents' gender boundary negotiation strategies. The Family Coaching approach provided opportunities that enabled participants to do what they wanted to do at their own pace. The Center's program ethics consisted of sequencing goals from more

realistic short-term ones towards more long-term emergent comfort zones that participants self-defined. The Family Coaching Unit considered itself successful as long as immigrant / refugee parents could utilize these safety nets as motivation to go forward in selecting their own achievable goals. In a sense, steps in goal achievement opened new opportunities to the immigrant / refugee parents. Achievable goals became incremental in creating incentives for their learning process. Welcome Home Center believed that the open-door policy consolidated program efficacy, such as balancing between receptiveness and open-minded responsiveness about gender boundary negotiation strategies, ability to provide adequate information, encouraging motivation and commitment to participants' social spaces. As Amy, a professional Family Coach mentioned in a post-program interview, coaches, instructors and staff put emphasis on building rapport between the Center and each family unit attending the Programs. She commented:

Like recently I had people who I have coached for a couple of years and come back and talk to me about loans to get vocational certificates. It was a good idea. How do I do it? It takes like maybe a 30-minute conversation to help them rolling with it, and I don't see them again. I see them when they are picking up their kids after school program occasionally, but I don't see them for any specific coaching reason unless there is something. There is a woman that I have not seen for like 6 or 7 years and she came back to ask me about ... I cannot remember what it was, to be honest. I think it was banking. She wanted to make sure that some notice she got was not a scam, she just really could not tell. I had not seen here forever. We caught up, "How are your kids? How things are going?" She was back up doing her own pace. She had it all. She knew what she wanted and she knew how to get to places.

The Welcome Home Programs measured successful outcomes in terms of parents' self-efficacy (Bandura 1994). As participants' self-confidence in taking the lead increased, their performance increased on their own pace within their self-defined

opportunities. Welcome Home success draws on opportunities offered to immigrant/refugee parents of gaining social recognition of their negotiated gender boundaries. The program efficacy was not only an outcome of immigrant/refugee parents' learning; it was mainly the impact of pragmatic strategies thus created. As Lisa, a Family coach for many years, revealed in a post-program interview, features of program efficacy enhancing parents' human agency were often a challenge. In the following anecdote, Lisa indicated that, by persistently walking the line of ethnic community pressure to stay in a relationship with an alcoholic, a woman was able to negotiate other levels of social recognition based on her persistent role on helping other women with lower levels of English proficiency and other various forms of assistance. According to Lisa, this woman persisted despite her husband's anxiety until she was able to find alternatives of social recognition that elevates her status as a woman, which "freaked" out her husband due to feeling insecure in his traditional male status. Lisa observed:

That woman who came for counseling and discussing divorce (and was pressured by her peers to remain the relationship) ... That evolved slowly over time because her English got better. She got a vocational certificate, she helps so many people in the community because she is bilingual, she does case management for a lot of people, not like, "I am a very technical case manager" but she is a community leader. When people need something, and do not know how to do something they come to her and ask her for help. I think her husband saw that and it freaked him, it made him feel a lack of security in their relationship.

The Center established balance as needed between participants' comfort zones and the new reality in their host country. It seems that the reason this works is that they don't fully accommodate traditional gender and they don't fully support staff coming in with direct challenges to religious or native beliefs and customs. Family Coaches walked the line to establish a balance between these challenges.

Confronting Irreconcilable Cultural Aspects to Protect Fragile Spaces

Most aspects of these parents' interactions with instructors/staff and the host country, in general, involved stepping out their comfort zones. In order to bridge some gaps, the Center had to carefully confront irreconcilable cultural aspects that often risked making gender boundary spaces fragile. The Center staff work within the comfort zones of participants while supporting pragmatic challenges to their traditional ideas about gender boundaries.

The Center's bottom-line strategy was to consider program efficacy as an outcome of participants' self-efficacy and vice versa. The staff opened opportunities for women and men to re-negotiate gender without prodding or forcing them to do so, leaving the choice to participants. Based on levels of comfort within the opportunities immigrant/refugee parents were presented with, such as guest speakers, a trusting relationship between the parents and the Center played an important role in creating conditions to bridge gaps among parents' pre-existing safety nets to the United States reality. Commenting on challenges to establish a balance for participants, Amy, a professional Family Coach, shared that it was challenging for the Center to walk the line to the satisfaction of all parties involved in irreconcilable cultural aspects. Amy observed:

We had a community speaker on banking come in and she was very much with "women power, women can do anything men can do" and the population she was talking to was majority women from the Middle East. She said something along the lines of "you don't just want to stay home and take care of the kids your whole life." But, it was interesting because the speaker was international. I think she may have been a refugee as well. I just thought "wow, she was from one end to the other." The women never said anything but, for me, I was just thinking about what I know. I was like "most of them stay home and take care of their kids."

The Welcome Home Programs became an important stakeholder towards participants' self-sufficiency and renegotiating gender boundaries. During a post-program interview, Jill, a professional at the Family Coach Unit, confirmed the significance of an anecdote that I witnessed about a male participant's reaction to a guest instructor's outfit. According to the participant, being dressed "improperly," the exercise instructor showed disrespect for most immigrant/refugee participants' religious beliefs. Jill commented:

Particularly one of the men commented to his family teacher that he did not feel comfortable participating in a gym class (for kids) because he did not feel that the woman teaching the class (a visitor to the Center) was appropriately covered. He does not expect her to wear a hijab or anything but he just didn't feel she was wearing enough clothing in teaching that class. He felt very uncomfortable participating with his female co-participants led by that woman. I think she was wearing yoga pants and tech-top with a sports bra underneath. So, we are asking people to step out their comfort zone every day. So, we had a conversation with that teacher and explained her, "Nothing against you or the way you do things. What you are wearing, it does not matter to us, but it would make our participants more comfortable if you could maybe wear a t-shirt instead of a tech-top." Every day, it's always a struggle to create that balance.

In a sense program efficacy and sustainability and parents' self-efficacy work hand in hand to enhance family units' self-sufficiency as they can simultaneously become opportunities for participants' fluid gender boundary negotiation.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

CONSTANT GENDER BOUNDARY NEGOTIATION IN A NEW CULTURE

Findings from this study show that negotiating fluid gender boundaries in a context of putting the family first become two important factors in gender boundary negotiation strategies among immigrant/refugee parents attending Welcome Home Programs. Emerging trends from various scenarios of gender boundary negotiation suggest levels of gender boundary fluidity, such as some fathers doing childcare for various reasons, and wives working out the home. These trends also suggest that gender identity, in the Kohlberg's (1987) sense that men and women know social expectations about their gender identity during early socialization, likely remains stable, but how they think of themselves as men and women who enact gender likely changes dramatically over time.

Immigrant/refugee parents attending Welcome Home Programs engaged in patterns of social interactions. Unlike other resettlement programs, the Family Coaching Unit at the Welcome Home Center emphasized a family-based approach of encouraging refugee parents to set and work towards their own goals. Telling immigrant/refugee parents that they are capable of formulating their own goals often offers some social

space that increases opportunities for participants to work on their human agency. This social context thus created can become an opportunity for participants' gender negotiations and human agency simultaneously. My participant observation and open-ended interviews with parents and Center administrators revealed that parents' negotiations of gender boundaries often intersected with their other institutional demands in the process of their adjustment to the United States.

Before relocating to the United States, most of the parents enrolled in the Welcome Home Programs never experienced a social context characterized by a job market and an economic system that emphasizes individual economic performance. It is unusual in the process of their adjustment that some immigrant and refugee parents get access to income-generating jobs for the first time in their life, without adequate education, English proficiency, a driver's license, and a support network beyond the resettlement agency. They are often expected to manage low-income family budgets and start their path towards self-sufficiency, such as shopping, paying monthly rental and utility bills. Generally speaking, it is a challenge for these parents to balance their expected goals against the limitations of their transnational immigrant and refugee gendered status. In addition to these structural gaps, immigrants/refugees have a constant fear of being deported if they fail the United States naturalization process.

As a general background within third-country resettlement practices, assistance to immigrants/refugees shifts its focus at arrival to the United States from refugee status determination procedures to reception and placement programs. Typically, refugee camps encourage complacency among immigrants/refugees that some scholars refer to as "masculinized vs. feminized" practices (Hyndman and Wenona 2011, Gerard and

Pickering 2014). Having lived, often for decades, in a space that requires complacency, then the U.S. resettlement expects immigrant/refugee parents to become active agents in their own survival and efforts to thrive in the host country.

Emerging trends from the data indicate that the process of immigrant/refugee parents' adjustment to the United States is a structural issue that is gendered insofar as women and men have to re-negotiate gender boundaries, both in terms of what they came to accept in their native cultures and in terms of overcoming dependency and complacency. My research findings also highlight that the process of gender identity negotiation goes beyond men getting involved in childcare and women getting involved in income-generating jobs outside the home and having to renegotiate these gender boundaries in the new culture, but that the negotiation process intersects with their transnational experiences, which frequently include long periods of time in refugee camps.

Welcome Home Programs became a social context promoting parents' human agency, in general, and their strategies for fluid gender boundary negotiation, in particular. In the process of helping parents formulate their own achievable goals, the program worked to help participants regain agency in taking control of their lives, such as supporting participants' problem-solving skills. The concept of human agency refers to the ability of individuals to select their paths of life. Although there is a constant sequence within the human agency of aspirations and achievements in individuals' development, satisfactory achievements do not solely depend on aspirations. There are complex relationships between individuals, their agency and the power of institutions to affect their consciousness and their free will (Elder 1998).

The Center encouraged or supported gender renegotiation without directly advocating that people change their values or beliefs. Challenging gender was pragmatic. From this perspective, immigrant/refugee parents' ability to set and implement their goals represented opportunities to enhance their human agency during the process of their initial adjustment. Immigrant/refugee parents' human agency supported their gender boundary renegotiation without directly advocating that people change their values or beliefs. For these parents, challenging gender boundaries was more pragmatic than questioning their traditional gender identities or gender scripts.

Negotiating fluid gender boundaries was also a very delicate balance between respecting people's religious and other values while encouraging them to challenge gender boundaries without directly violating the sacred or core beliefs and values. As some transnational migration theorists highlight, both immigrant/refugee interpersonal ties and bonds within the host country play an important role during their initial adjustment (Sanders 2012, Toma 2014). Trends emerging from the data indicate that Welcome Home Center programs seem to foster family units by connecting them to community resources to enhance their financial self-sufficiency. There is no sufficient evidence in the data that these programs foster a sense of community among participants. My research findings suggest the need for scholars and refugee agencies and workers to recognize cultural, structural, and transnational gender challenges.

Immigration scholarship and U.S. resettlement practices should also consider the complex intersections of these factors in addressing the needs of immigrants/refugees as they struggle to adapt to the cultural and structural demands and opportunities of a host

country. Resettlement programs should also promote bonding and bridging ties among immigrant/refugee participants conducive to mutual support.

CHAPTER 7: LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The Welcome Home Center adopted an open-door policy to enroll returning participants or/and those who needed informal coaching sessions/consultations depending on available spots. The open-door policy allowed participants to build layers in their own safety nets. Parents decided whether and how they were comfortable moving to next layers in their comfort zones. For instance, for an immigrant woman, getting a family-oriented skill (such as driver's license even if the husband is not happy about it) and her simultaneously increasing community involvement can become a strategy of negotiating further fluid gender boundaries. However, the impact this has on family stability was unexplored due to insufficient narratives from the male perspective.

My original intent was to evaluate the Welcome Home Programs and learn about participants' experiences in adjusting to the United States. I anticipated that there would be more men in the program. When they weren't there, the focus of the study that I negotiated with Welcome Home Center precluded me interviewing men (or women) in their homes. Simultaneously, the language constraints and traditional cultural barriers limited my access to the study subjects at the Center (Chapter 4). Future research should include an examination of participants outside the Center.

Based on the research findings, I can only state with certainty that gender renegotiation occurred on a situational, pragmatic basis. Future research should move outside the Center and include interviews with participants in their own homes, include interviews with more men, and focus on the degree to which pragmatic gender renegotiation is temporary and situation-specific, and if not, how long-term gender beliefs and scripts may have changed.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Immigrant/Refugee Parents Attending Welcome Home Center

A. Mid-program interview

Question 1: Tell me what your goals were when you started this program

Question 2: What goals do you believe you met or made progress in meeting after one semester?

Tell me about each one and what you've done to achieve each goal

Question 3: Have your own goals ever differed from your teachers' goals for you?

Tell me about that (with specific examples).

What did you do when your goals differed from your teachers' goals (with specific examples)?

Question 4: Have your goals remained the same or have they changed over the first semester?

How have they changed?

What have you done to achieve those new goals?

How did you handle the change of goals with the staff at Welcome Home Center?
How did they respond?

Question 5: Have your goals differed from other participants over the first semester?

How have they differed?

How did you handle the adjustment of your goals with other participants and the staff at Welcome Home Center / New Home School District?

How did they respond?

Question 6: What makes it possible to attend and succeed in this course and what makes it difficult to attend and succeed?

Question 7: What would you recommend to other refugees and immigrants who would like to enroll in the same course? Why?

Question 8: Tell me (with specific examples) what were your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in a family before you came to the program?

Tell me (with specific examples) what aspects of your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in a family are addressed during the first semester in the Welcome Home Center? Why?

Question 9: Have any aspects of your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in a family changed since you started taking this course during the first semester?

For instance, tell me (with specific examples) how spending a semester in the Welcome Home Center has helped you in adjusting to the demands of your as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in a family in the American context.

Tell me (with specific examples), if any cultural aspects of your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in a family have differed from the aspects of your roles in America, how the first semester of the Welcome Home Center has helped you to adjust to the new cultural demands?

Question 10: If you had a chance to go back and visit you home country after the first semester in this program, what important changes in your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in a family would you highlight for people back home?

Tell me (with specific examples) about aspects of your traditional roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in a family that you would recommend being included in your remaining time at the Welcome Home Center.

B. Post-program interview

Question 1: What goals do you believe you met or made progress in meeting over the year (with specific examples)?

Question 2: What has made it possible for you to move toward or achieve those goals?
What has made it difficult?

For instance, how did you come to class each day during the first semester? Was your transportation always available? If not, did you have a backup transportation available?

Have Welcome Home Center accepted that you bring children with you? Tell me (with specific examples) how having other children / people to take care of affected your participation in the program?

Have your job demands changed during the first semester?

Tell me (with specific examples) about how you handled the adjustments to the new demands of your job to be able to attend in the program.

Who else in your family is attending in the program?

Tell me (with specific examples) how your family was or was not supportive of your attendance in the program?

Question 3: Have your goals remained the same or have they changed over the year?

How have they changed?

What have you done to achieve those new goals?

How did you handle the change of goals with the staff at Welcome Home Center / New Home School District?

How did they respond?

Question 4: Have your goals differed from other participants over the year?

How have they differed?

How did you handle the adjustment of your goals with other participants and the staff/administrators at Welcome Home Center / New Home School District?

How did they respond?

Question 5: What would you recommend to other refugees and immigrants who would like to enroll in the same course? Why?

Question 6: Tell me (with specific examples) what were your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in a family before you started to the program?

Tell me (with specific examples) what aspects of your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) have been addressed over the year in the Welcome Home Center? Why?

Question 7: Have any aspects of your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) changed since you started taking this course?

For instance, tell me (with specific examples) how spending the year in the Welcome Home Center has helped you in adjusting to the demands of your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) in the American context.

Tell me (with specific examples), if any cultural aspects of your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) have differed from the aspects of your roles in the American context, how the Welcome Home Center has helped you to adjust to the new cultural demands?

Question 8: If you had a chance to go back and visit you home country after you have completed Welcome Home Center, what important changes in your roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) would you talk about to people back home? Why?

Tell me (with specific examples) about aspects of your traditional roles as a wife/mother (or husband/father or a girl/daughter or a boy/son, whichever is your case) that you would wish to be included in next year Welcome Home Center.

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Instructors, Administrators, and Staff at Welcome Home Center

A. Pre-program interview

Question 1: What do you do to address the goals of immigrants/refugees who enroll in your Welcome Home Center?

Question 2: Who among the participants share the same goals?

What do you do to address divergent goals that participants express?

Question 3: How do you select participants' goals to include in the curriculum?

Tell me about that (with specific examples)

Question 3: Who do you expect to benefit more from the program among your clients? Who do you anticipate will have problems attending in this program among your clients? Why?

Question 4: What aspects of parenting do some of your clients say they do differently from the U.S. standards?

Tell me about what you do to reconcile both aspects (with specific examples)

Question 5: How did the participants learn about the program?

B. Mid-program interview

Question 1: What do you do to address the goals of refugees and immigrants who enroll in your Welcome Home Center?

What were your goals?

Question 2: What were your clients' goals (with specific examples)?

How do you select participants' goals to include in the curriculum?

Question 3: What did you think about and did about the differences?

What did you do to address divergent goals that participants express?

Question 4: Have your clients' goals remained the same or have they changed over the first semester?

How have they changed?

What have you done to achieve those new goals?

How did you handle the change of goals with them?

When your clients' goals differ from your goals, how do you bridge the gap (with specific examples of practices and guiding philosophy/policy)?

Question 5: What have your successes been in teaching this course?

What practices make this possible? What have been the major obstacles? Why?

Question 6: What goals do you believe you helped refugees and immigrants meet or make progress in meeting after one semester? After two semesters?

Question 7: What would change about the program in the second semester? How?

Question 8: When enrolling in the program, what traditional cultural aspects did participants highlight as important for them but needed to be adjusted to the American context?

For instance, tell me (with specific examples) what gender roles did they emphasize and that you felt it was necessary to include in the first semester's curriculum?

Tell me (with specific examples) how openly participants have expressed their cultural issues perceived to be problematic in the American context.

What did you do when you learned about participants' cultural practices that were problematic in the American context?

What aspects were included in your curriculum during the first semester?

Question 9: Have you noticed any changes as far as their gender roles were concerned?

Tell me (with specific examples) about how you learned about changes in their traditional gender roles?

Tell me (with specific examples) to what extent spending one semester in the Welcome Home Center has affected their gender roles?

What specific aspects of gender roles do you plan to include in the remaining time of the course?

Question 10: What specific aspects of gender identity in the American context were problematic for participants?

Tell me (with specific examples) of what you did during the semester to include those aspects in the curriculum.

C. Post-program interview

Question 1: Have your clients' goals remained the same or have they changed over the year? How have they changed (with specific examples)?

What have you done to achieve those new goals?

How did you handle the change of goals (with specific examples of practices)?

Question 3: Have your clients' goals differed from your goals over the year?

How have they differed (with specific examples)?

When your clients' goals differed from your goals in the course of the year, how did you bridge the gap? How did they respond (with specific examples)?

Have you had any disagreements with your clients? What did you do to address those differences (with specific examples)?

Question 4: What are the major problems in teaching this course?

Why? What works and why?

Question 5: What goals do you believe you helped refugees and immigrants meet or make progress in meeting after two semesters? What practices (e.g. teaching methods?)

Question 6: What do you plan to do again next year?

Question 7: What would change about the program next year? How?

Question 8: When enrolling in the program, what traditional cultural aspects did participants highlight as important for them but needed to be adjusted to the American context?

For instance, tell me (with specific examples) what gender roles did they emphasize and that you felt it was necessary to include in the curriculum over the year?

Tell me (with specific examples) how openly participants have expressed, over the year in the program, their cultural issues perceived to be problematic in the American context.

Over the year in the Welcome Home Center, what did you do to help participants adjust when you learned about participants' cultural practices that were problematic in the American context?

What specific aspects were included in your curriculum during the first semester?

Question 9: Have you noticed any changes as far as their gender roles were concerned?

Tell me (with specific examples) about how you learned, over the year in the program, about changes in their traditional gender roles?

Tell me (with specific examples) to what extent spending one year in the Welcome Home Center has affected their gender roles?

What specific aspects of gender roles do you plan to include in the course next year?

Question 10: What specific aspects of gender identity in the American context were problematic for participants over the year in the program?

Tell me (with specific examples) of what you did during the course to include those aspects in the curriculum.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Telesphore K. Kagaba, PhD

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EDUCATION

University of Louisville, Department of Sociology, Louisville, KY

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Applied Sociology, May 2018

Areas of specialization: Gender, Migration and Populations, and
Qualitative Methods

Dissertation:

Gender Boundary Negotiation within the U.S. Immigrant/Refugee Resettlement:
How Transnational Bridge-Building Matters

Dissertation Advisory Committee: Patricia Gagné, Ph.D. (Chair), Cynthia
Negrey, Ph.D. (Member), Gül Aldikaçti Marshall, Ph.D. (Member), Julie
Peteet, Ph.D. (Member) and Jennie Burnet, Ph.D. (Member)

Temple University – College of Education, Harrisburg Campus, Harrisburg, PA

Teaching in Higher Education – Graduate Certificate Program, May 2012

University of Notre Dame, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Notre Dame,

M.A. in Social Science/International Peace Studies, 2008.

National University of Rwanda, Africa, Department of English, Butare

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) – English, June 1983

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Jefferson Community and Technical College, Departments of Sociology – Behavioral
& Social Sciences Division. Louisville, KY

Adjunct Faculty of Sociology (August 2017 – Present)

Carrollton, Louisville Downtown, and Southwest Campuses

Introduction to Sociology (SOC-101) – six sessions

University of Louisville, Departments of Sociology. Louisville, KY
Graduate Teaching Assistant (August 2014–July 2017)

Independently prepared and taught the following six sessions

- Self and Society (SOC 202) – one session in fall 2014
- Introduction to Sociology (SOC-201) – five sessions (in summer 2017, spring 2017, fall 2016, spring 2015, and summer 2015)

Assisted Faculty with the following course sessions

- Introduction to Sociology (SOC-201) – one session in summer 2016
- Introduction to Social Research (SOC-303) – one session in spring 2016
- Sociology of Gender (SOC 327) – one session in fall 2015

RESEARCH AGENDA

Professional Papers and Reports

- Kagaba, Telesphore and Patricia Gagné. 2017. “Resettlement Agency: The Case of Welcome Home Center.” *International Relations and Diplomacy*, November 2017, Vol. 5, No. 11, 671- 686 doi: 10.17265/2328-2134/2017.11.004.
- Heberle, Lauren, Catherine Fosl, and Telesphore Kagaba. 2015 “Searching for Safe, Fair, and Affordable Housing: Learning from Experiences - An Analysis of Housing Demand in Louisville Metro.” *The Center for Environmental Policy and Management, University of Louisville – Department of Sociology*. The report is available online at <http://louisville.edu/cepm/projects/housing-policy/searching-for-safe-fair-and-affordable-housing>.
- Kagaba, Telesphore and Patricia Gagné. “Gender Boundary Negotiation Among First-Generation Immigrant/Refugee Parents: When/Whether Gender Fluidity Matters in A Context of Putting the Family First” (in progress).
- Kagaba, Telesphore and Patricia Gagné. “Effects of Family-based Immigrant/Refugee Resettlement Program Ethics: A Strategy of Providing Social Space of Constant Gender Boundary Negotiation” (in progress).
- Kagaba, Telesphore, and Patricia Gagné. “Confronting Challenges of Gender Boundary Negotiation in a New Culture: Effects of Gender Enactment in a Complex Array of Cultural Diversity” (in progress).

Papers Presented or Accepted for Presentation at Scholarly Meetings

Bridging Transnational Gaps During Initial Adjustment Process of Immigrant and Refugees to the United States: In-Depth Analysis of a Family Education Program.

Theme of the conference: 2017 North Central Sociological Association – Annual Meeting Indianapolis, IN (March 30 – April 1, 2017) – Peace in Time of Polarization

Gender and the United States Refugee Resettlement: When A Transnational Context of “Doing” Gender Matters.

Theme of the conference: The Mid-South Sociological Association Annual Conference in Chattanooga, TN (October 18 – 21, 2017) – session: *Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies: An Interdisciplinary Perspective on the World.*

Papers Presented during Academic Workshops

Understanding the Rwandan Genocide beyond Identifying the “Good Guys” from the “Bad Guys”: The Case of the Ten Hutu Commandments.

Summer Peacebuilding Institute 2009 (May 14 – 22, 2009) – Center for Justice and Peacebuilding - Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia

The Rwandan Genocide Eleven Years Later: Rebirth and Rebuilding Human Dignity
Stanford Institute of International Studies (August 2005) – Stanford University, Stanford, California

In the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide: Rebirth and Reconstruction.

Higher Francophone Studies of International Affairs (September 7 – October 2, 1998) – Institute of Higher Francophone Studies (IHEF), Paris, France

Contributions to the U.S. Department of State Annual Publications

Human Rights – Annual Reports (six reports)

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices/Rwanda (2001 – 2006)

International Religious Freedom – Annual Reports (six reports)

International Religious Freedom Reports/Rwanda (2001- 2006)

Trafficking in Person Reports (three reports)

Country Narratives – Rwanda -Tier 2 (2003 – 2006)

ACHIEVEMENTS & HONORS

University of Louisville, Departments of Sociology. Louisville, KY

Graduate Research Assistant – Center for Environmental Policy and Management Center for Environment Protection (August 2014 – December 2015)

University of Louisville, Departments of Anthropology. Louisville, KY

Graduate Research Assistant (August 2012 – August 2015) National Science Foundation Cultural Anthropology Program – Department of Anthropology Grant recipient for a research assistant on “Intrinsic and extrinsic factors in rescuer behavior: Rwandan Muslims’ role in the 1994 genocide.”

University of Notre Dame, The Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace. Notre Dame, IN

Graduate Research Assistant (August 2006 – December 2007) -

- Focused on academic work related to “spoilers” of the peace process in Sri-Lanka
- Contributed to the Kroc Institute Peace Matrix online project about peace agreements since 1980s to the present.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE WITH GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

United States Department of States/ U.S. Embassy – Kigali, Rwanda

Assistant Political Analyst/Translator (1999-2006)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Kigali, Rwanda

Diplomatic Advisor (December 1994 – July 1999)

Radio Broadcast Journalism, Radio Rwanda – Kigali, Rwanda

Weekly broadcast magazines in Kinyarwanda and French (1983-1986)

SERVICE AND OUTREACH EXPERIENCE

- December 2017 – present: Reviewer for *International Relations and Diplomacy Journal*
- March 2018: The world map project painted on the wall of a refugee agency (with Graduate students and some Faculty)
- August 2015 – February 2017: Internship in an adult refugee education program
- Spring 2014: Internship in a refugee cultural orientation program
- 2009 – 2012: Community outreach coordinator, and volunteer trainer in a refugee program
- July – December 2007: Internship to design a refugee sponsors' handbook to assist refugee sponsors to intervene positively and help integrate refugee families into the community) at the American Red Cross
- 1999 – 2006: Steering committee member of various international conferences organized by the U.S. Embassy – Kigali (e.g. Rwandan constitution in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, women as partners of peace.)

OVERSEAS EXCHANGE & EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

United States Embassy – Kigali, Rwanda

Political Section (1999-2006)

Coordinated U.S. Embassy Kigali exchange programs (e.g. Women as Partners of Peace, Constitutionalism, and various International Visitor Programs – the US Department of State)

Ruhanga Teachers' Training School - Gatumba, Rwanda

High School Principal/French & English Teacher/French Cultural Center Director (1986-1993)

Founding member and first School Principal of ADEC-Ruhanga

OTHER LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Collaborative Development Agency (CDA) - Collaborative Learning Projects – Cambridge, Massachusetts

French Language Consultant (January – February 2009)

- Translated peacebuilding training manuals from English to French for Collaborative Development Agency (CDA) – Collaborative Learning Projects based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Translated from English to French CDA issue papers reflecting on peace practice projects throughout the world.

Freelance Translator (English, French, Kinyarwanda and Kirundi) 1998 – present

PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

American Red Cross – South Bend, IN

Intern, International Program and Refugee Resettlement Services (July – December 2007)

Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding work with the American Red Cross of Saint Joseph County's International and Emergency Services Program

United States Department of States/United States Embassy – Kigali, Rwanda

Political Section (1999 – 2006) – three Meritorious Honor Awards