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The number of asylum seekers fleeing their home countries continues to rise globally, including individuals seeking asylum in the United States. Seeking asylum in the U.S. tends to have different consequences depending on the political climate. And to make matters more complex, we knew very little about asylum seekers, as they continually get blended with refugees in samples explored in research. In the asylum-seeking literature, the term asylum seeker and refugee are used interchangeably leaving a gap of knowledge about their distinct experiences that separate them from using refugees synonymously. The process of forced migration that asylum seekers undertake is a journey marked at first by extreme loss, which may include the loss of home, country, culture, family, language, friends, social support, shared cultural, and plans for the future (Di Tomasso, 2010; Tribe & Keefe, 2007). In addition, post-migration factors accounted for equal or greater variance in symptomatology than of pre-migration and transit stressors on mental health (Jannesari, Hatch, Prina, & Oram, 2020; Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, Greenslade, 2008; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of adolescents seeking asylum in the United States. This knowledge of post-migration experiences, identities, and roles helped in providing more knowledge to intersectional strategies in counseling, counselors increasing their cultural competence in working with asylum seeking adolescents and their families, and more ways to advocate for clients. Describing the asylum process for asylum seeking adolescents in the United States contributes to cultural humility for counselors, serves as a first step towards policy changes at the local and national levels, and shows the importance of intersectionality approaches in the counseling field. Capturing how adolescent asylum seekers

describe and make meaning of their migration and post-migration experiences in the United States was key to providing more knowledge in effective counseling and advocacy opportunities.

Intersectionality Theoretical Framework was used to boundary the lived experiences of asylum-seeking adolescents in the United States and the adolescents' perception of self since seeking asylum. This study explored the experiences of the asylum process for adolescents in the United States using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The following research questions were addressed in this study: (a) What are the post-migration experiences of adolescents between the age of 13 - 16 seeking asylum in the United States? (b) What are the shifts, if any, in perception of self since seeking asylum? Through semi-structured interviews, the experiences of asylum-seeking adolescents were explored, and five superordinate themes emerged from data analysis, along with one a priori developed superordinate theme for a total number of six superordinate themes across all five interviews: (1) *pre-migration trauma*, (2) *transit migration*, (3) *mandated detention*, (4) *family dynamics*, (5) *identities*, and (6) *resilience, hope, and relief*. Three of the six themes included subordinate themes: *mandated detention emergent subordinate themes*), *family dynamics (2 subordinate emergent themes)*, and *identities (5 emergent subordinate themes)*. The themes described the lived experiences of adolescents going through the asylum process in the United States provided more efficacy and intersectional approaches in counseling these youth and their families. Implications for counselors, limitations, and future research are discussed based on results.

THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENTS SEEKING
ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES WITH AN
INTERSECTIONALITY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

by

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This dissertation is dedicated to all the asylum-seeking youth and families that are continuing to find safe spaces to live their authentic lives. The ones that have come before us and the one that continue to make the migration journey. I hope to continue to bring your voices into the counseling world and the greater society to make sure we are doing our duty to protect and empower you all. No human is illegal on stolen land. No human deserves to be locked up for coming to another country for freedom and safety, no matter how they entered the country. We all have a right as humans to live freely wherever we are. *Justicia para todos!*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the implementation of the Zero Tolerance policy has resulted in thousands of children separated from their family members once they arrive at the US-Mexico border when seeking asylum (Alberto & Chilton, 2019; Chisti, 2018; Olivera, 2018; The Attorney General, 2018), the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) has resulted in between 57,000 and 62,000 people returning back to Mexico to await asylum court hearings (American Immigration Counsel, 2020), and the Asylum Transit Ban has resulted in a larger number of rejections of asylum due to asylum seekers not applying for asylum in another country prior to entering the United States (American Immigration Counsel, 2020). For decades prior to the Zero Tolerance policy, thousands of noncitizens (i.e., adults, families, and unaccompanied children) have arrived in the United States and applied for asylum each year (Asylum in the United States, 2019; Policies Affecting Asylum Seekers at the Border, 2020). Applying for asylum is the process by which individuals seek protection from persecution in their home countries. Seeking asylum is not a new process and the political perception of asylum seekers has gotten worse since applying the Zero Tolerance policy. Most recently, the political articulation in the United States has demonstrated and heightened anti-immigrant sentiment towards asylum seekers (Bohman, 2011; Olivera, 2018).

The number of asylum seekers fleeing their home countries continues to rise globally. The process of migration that asylum seekers undertake is a journey marked at first by extreme loss, which may include the loss of home, country, culture, family, homeland, profession, language, friends, social support, shared cultural, spiritual, political, or religious views, and plans

for the future (Di Tomasso, 2010; Tribe & Keefe, 2007). The process for fleeing their home countries during migration and post-migration shifts are imperative to the wellbeing of asylum seekers. However, consider that after a person seeking asylum takes their first step into United States soil to plead for survivorship for the sake of their existence, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers take the individual seeking asylum straight to mandatory detention due to an irregular entry due to U.S. border patrol blocking or inability to reach ports of entry (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016).

It is important to clarify the differences of asylum seekers versus other individuals who may be immigrating to the United States. Asylum seekers meet the definition of a refugee in section 101(a)(42) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) (Mossad, 2019) and the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (1951); however, asylum seekers typically enter the United States without having previously applied for refuge (as a refugee would have done). This is due to circumstances that caused asylum seekers to seek protection within the United States. Unlike asylum seekers, refugees typically wait at a refugee camp while being screened and have multiple background checks before receiving U.S. government approval, along with being provided transportation to come to the United States. On the other hand, asylum seekers typically enter the United States without previously applying for refuge and without the background checks, which results in asylum seekers sometimes being mistaken for undocumented immigrants.

For the current research study, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (1951) definition will be used to define asylum seekers, which states an asylum seeker is a person who falls under the definition of refugee:

a person who is owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religions, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country (Article 1A, para. 2).

The definition only covers the intent and claim of the need to stay in the United States.

The other part of what defines asylum seekers are that they must apply for asylum within one year of arriving in the United States (American Immigration Counsel, 2020), thus, as noted above, this delay in application might be portrayed as undocumented individuals before applying for asylum during the one-year period.

These differences of entry between refugees and asylum seekers into the United States are important to note, as in some studies refugees and asylum seekers are equated as synonymous or merged into the same sample within research studies. As an example, in one study, persons with refugee status were referred to as asylum seekers (Omeri, Lennings, & Raymond, 2004), while in other studies, persons still awaiting an asylum outcome were referred to as refugees (Eytan et al., 2007; Ryan, Kelly, & Kelly, 2009). Another difference is that all asylum seekers during the asylum process tend to have poorer mental health than refugees who have permanent residency (Silove, Sinnerbrink, Field, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 1997; Silove, Steel, McGorry, & Mohan, 1998; Zimmerman, Kiss, & Hossain, 2011).

Asylum Process

While overall immigration into the United States has been declining, there has been an increase in Central American migration to the U.S.-Mexico border (Alberto & Chilton, 2019; Cohn, 2017). Before the Zero Tolerance Policy in 2018, the number of asylum seekers in the United States from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras rose by 25% from 2007 to 2015, in contrast to more modest growth of the United States' overall foreign-born population and a decline from neighboring Mexico (Cohn, 2017).

Due to the United States being a destination country, and the U.S. facing a high influx of asylum seekers, there is now a growing trend toward more restrictive asylum policies in the United States, including increased periods of mandatory detention and extended processing times (Li, Liddell, Nickerson, 2016). Globally, mandatory detention is a common interception policy implemented in response to the irregular entry of migrants, including asylum seekers (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016). Detention of asylum seekers has concerned health professionals and human rights advocates, in part because of the potential detrimental effects on the mental health of detainees (Keller et al., 2003). The average days in a detention facility in the United States, with the Zero Tolerance policy, is an average of 51 days, with the children and family members separated (Alberto & Chilton, 2019; Cantor, 2016; Domnoske, 2018; Lind, 2018; Rizzo, 2018; The Attorney General, 2018; Thompson, 2018; Yan, 2018), which is much longer than the established 72 hour suggested maximum detainment.

Families tend to migrate to the destined country together as a group, even if they are separated at onset (Borjas & Borjas, 1991). Separation from family for asylum seekers represents a significant barrier to positive psychological outcomes (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016). A study of Iraqi refugees in Australia found that those who are separated from immediate family members had elevated PTSD and depression symptoms, compared to those who are not separated from immediate family (Nickerson et al., 2010). Additionally, culture shock and acculturation issues appear to weaken family unity (Blanchet-Cohen & Denov, 2015). Upon resettlement, while family continues to play a key role in care and protection, however, parents often seem to be insufficient or incapable of meeting the complex needs of their children, according to childrens' testimonies since their need for care and protection was redefined (Blanchet-Cohen & Denov, 2015). Consequently, parents often rely on their children for

resource access and communication (Deng & Marlowe, 2013), and the children are sometimes used by parents and service providers as translators of culture and language, resulting from children acculturating faster than adults (Bemak & Chung, 2017; Dow, 2011). These tendencies create role changes within the family. These changes in family roles can be especially difficult to adjust to and can adversely affect psychological adjustment for both youth and parents (Fisher, 2013).

For children, the parental mental health status (particularly emotional well-being of the parent) and stable familial relationships are strongly protective (Almqvist & Broberg, 1999; Jones & Kafetsios, 2002). However, children may lose confidence in their parents as they witness a transformation from autonomous and culturally competent caretakers to depressed, overwhelmed, and dependent individuals who are trying to learn a new language and new customs (Bemak & Chung, 2017; Bemak & Chung, 2015; Deng & Marlowe, 2013). In addition, the authority of the adults may be undermined by familial conflict over traditional values and practices, resulting in strained relationships and changes in family dynamics, all of which may build on another layer of already existing trauma (Bemak & Chung, 2017; Bemak & Chung, 2015; Deng & Marlowe, 2013). While understanding what might be going on with family dynamics after resettlement through a family lens is important, more information is needed. Specifically for adolescents, understanding how their intersectional identities (during a time of identity development) and roles (e.g., in family, school, work) intersect, through the use of Intersectionality Theory, during their post-migration experience in the U.S. is important in helping adolescents seeking asylum positively adjust to the new culture.

While pre-migration trauma is a significant predictor of mental health outcomes, researchers in the field have been criticized as being skewed in their focus on traumatic pre-

migration events, rather than considering the psychological impact of post-migration factors (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2003; Summerfield, 1999). Post-migratory stressors negatively affect the asylum-seeking population, who are already vulnerable to mental health difficulties as a result of their previous exposure to traumatic events (Robjant, Hassan, & Katona, 2009). Successful post-migration adjustment is hindered by experiences of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia, which contribute to hostility, exclusion, rejection, and subsequent trauma (Aydin, Krueger, Frey, Kastenmuller, & Fischer, 2014; Bemak & Chung 2017; Kira et al., 2010). A link has been established between racism, xenophobia, and mental health problems with post-migration of individuals seeking refuge in the United States, specifically in studies that included refugees and asylum seekers (Aydin et al., 2014; Bemak & Chung, 2017; Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014; Priest et al., 2014). While some information is known, ultimately - and especially since the implementation of the Zero Tolerance Policy - it is unclear what the unique experiences of asylum seekers are with post-migration, particularly adolescents seeking asylum.

Given that it is understood that mandatory detention, the length of stay in detention, validation for pre-migration difficulties, legal status insecurity, (eg., Ryan, Kelly, & Kelly, 2009) and family separation all impact mental health (Alberto & Chilton, 2019), it is important to explore asylum seekers separately from refugees in their post migration experience. While some information is known about the post-migration experience (and cited above); however, as noted earlier, many times researchers have blended refugees and asylum seekers in the same sample, due to researchers assuming these individuals are synonymous in post-migration experiences (e.g., Li, Liddell, Nickerson, 2016). Post-migration experiences need to be explored for individuals identified as asylum seekers separate from that of refugees as the harsh political and humanitarian realities of today with the Zero Tolerance Policy in place since early May 2018

(Office of Inspector General & Kelly, 2018) have resulted in reports of asylum seekers arriving to the United States faced with mistreatment, physical, sexual, and verbal abuse by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) when placed in detention centers that have amplified the asylum seekers pre-migration experiences (ACLU San Diego and Imperial Counties, 2018; Alberto & Chilton, 2019; Ataiants et al., 2017; Dreby, 2015; Slack et al., 2016; Young, 1998). According to the American Immigration Counsel (2020), the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)—often referred to as the “Remain in Mexico” program - states that “individuals who arrive at the southern border and ask for asylum (either at a port of entry or after crossing the border between ports of entry) are given notices to appear in immigration court and are sent back to Mexico” (p. 2). Asylum seekers are then instructed to return to a specific port of entry at a specific date and time for their next court hearing (American Immigration Counsel, 2020, p. 2). This sends individuals back into spaces that could be dangerous for them, and retrigger traumatic events. The Trump administration implemented the Asylum Transit Ban, also known as Third Country Transit Bar, on July 16, 2019, and announced a ban on asylum for any individual who enters the United States at the southern land border. The policy applies to all individuals who have crossed the U.S./Mexico border after that date (American Immigration Counsel, 2020, p. 6). The MPP and Asylum Transit Ban are policies that have been in place for the past two years, resulting in great shifts in the asylum-seeking process in the United States that could result in increased trauma or negative mental health outcomes to those seeking asylum. This shift in the processing of asylum-seeking individuals also can combine with any traumatic events the individual experienced prior to arriving in the United States. Understanding the post-migration process of today would add to a current gap in the asylum seekers literature. Given the rapidly shifting socio-political landscape in the United States, post-migration should be examined further

to better understand the compounding effect of resettlement challenges (Utrzan & Wieling, 2020).

Adolescents

The mandatory detention required of asylum seekers once they cross the U.S. border from an irregular entry due to blocking or inability to reach ports of entry (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016) can retrigger, or be the start of, traumatic experiences for an individual, especially children and adolescents (Alberto & Chilton, 2019). The Office of Inspector General and Kelly (2018) stated in their review on the Zero Tolerance Policy, that the children who the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deemed to be unaccompanied alien children were held in DHS custody until they could be transferred to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement. The HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement is responsible for the long-term custodial care and placement of unaccompanied alien children (The Office of Inspector General & Kelly, 2018). An unaccompanied alien child is defined by DHS as a child under 18 years of age with no lawful immigration status in the United States, who has neither a parent or legal guardian in the United States, nor a parent or legal guardian in the United States “available” to provide care and physical custody for them (Office of Inspector General & Kelly, 2018). As such, children traveling with a related adult other than a parent or legal guardian — such as a grandparent or sibling — are still deemed unaccompanied alien children (Office of Inspector General & Kelly, 2018). This review from the government shows that youth under the age of 18 years old experience being separated from their adult caregivers and siblings once they entered the United States to seek asylum. Although the public is aware of family reunification due to the Zero Tolerance policy, there are no concrete numbers on reunification in the literature yet and no updated number on reunification due to family

separation at the port of entry. On May 29, 2020, there was a report that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) separated more families at the ports of entry than reported. This error in reporting was due to the Office of Field Operations (OFO) officials not using the data system consistently to track families that were separated at the ports of entry. This reporting error results in not knowing how many families still need to be reunified and how many have been reunified (United States DHS Security Office of Inspector General, 2020).

Being separated from family in and of itself can be traumatizing for youth (Miranda & Legha, 2019) and lead to post-traumatic stress reactions (Rousseau, Mekki-Berrada, & Moreau, 2001; Wilmsen, 2013). In addition to being separated from their families and guardians, Alberto and Chilton (2019) reported that children in detention facilities at the border are mistreated by employees, including being sexually abused (ACLU San Diego and Imperial Counties, 2018; Haag, 2018). Asylum-seeking children are less likely to report abuses and violence in the United States - oftentimes due to mistrust, cultural expectations, documentation status, or lack of support in their communities (Alberto & Chilton, 2019; Bauer et al., 200; Dutton et al., 2015; E S-M, 2016; Earner, 2010; Futures Without Violence, 2018; Goodman et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2016; McLeigh, 2013; Miranda et al., 2005; Modi et al., 2014; Moynihan et al., 2008; Sabin et al., 2015). Due to the constant changes of asylum policies in the United States, there is a dearth of literature on recent asylum process experiences since the implementation of Zero Tolerance policy, especially for adolescents. Adolescence is a time when young people negotiate what cultural norms one identifies with and what cultural groups one belongs to (Erikson, 1959, 1980; Fine & Sirin, 2007; Helms, 1990; Phinney, 1990, 1992; Sirin et al., 2013). To combine this transitional age, with migrating to the United States due to violence and persecution in one's home country, to be faced with family separation, prejudice, abuse, among other transitions such

as navigating new family roles and a new culture, needs to be further understood in order to advocate for policy change and to assist mental health professionals in better understanding how to help youth seeking asylum.

American Counseling Association (ACA; 2009) stated adolescents have a strong need for social belonging and recognition, and adolescents define their own identities within the current social setting in relation to their peer groups. Given that all young individuals can be understood to go through such processes of negotiating their individual identities within different public or cultural narratives, this context is different for adolescents seeking asylum (Sporton, Valentine, & Nielsen, 2006). Sporton et al. (2006) stated that for young Somalis that sought refuge in the UK, identity practices and affiliations and discursive understandings of 'self' and 'other' were shaped through their history of mobility. The individuals seeking refuge established reasonable accounts of their identities from different life experiences (Sporton et al., 2006). For some young asylum seekers who remembered their homeland as a powerful part of their identities, a common experience for them was an 'unsettling' experience of forced mobility that influenced a form of identification that was compounded by disempowerment across different domains (possessions, cultural and social capital) and the uncertain nature of this mobility (Sporton et al., 2006). Gibson (2002) explored the impact of the Balkan war and the experiences of forced exile on the processes of adaptation and identity development for five adolescent refugees who have lived in the United States for at least two years. She concluded that the older adolescents expressed more certainty, whether Bosnian or American, about holding on to their identity they identified with during the study, while the younger adolescents were more ambivalent about their identity during the study. These studies suggest younger participants being more ambivalent and less certain on how they identified since they arrived at a younger age and embraced more of the country, they

were in at the time of the study than with their homeland (Sporton et al., 2006). Additionally, the unsettling experience of mobility could influence identity development while migrating to the United States and the intersectionality in experiencing new privileges and oppression (Sporton et al., 2006).

This brings the importance of understanding those that are in the United States that are not refugees, but are seeking asylum, who are still in the adolescent identity development stage, but maybe old enough to be able to explore and talk about asylum-seeking experiences. More specifically, to have adolescents talk about how those experiences shape their sense of identities, and to look at this age for asylum seekers since it is a time of identity development during the post-migration phase. This research will add to the identity development literature of asylum-seeking adolescents after migrating to the United States and the intersectionality in experiencing new privileges and oppression.

Intersectionality theory posits the social, cultural, contextual, political, and historical aspects influencing experience, privilege, and oppression (Chan & Erby, 2018) of the lived experiences of asylum-seeking adolescents. Sporton, Valentine, and Nielson (2006) stated an awareness of circumstances with asylum seekers that settled in the United Kingdom and they essentialized notions of childhood that failed to locate age as one of the multiple influences that intersect to shape asylum seekers' identities. Age acknowledges another identity and adds more context with the lived experiences since age could play a large factor with experiences. In result, Intersectionality theory is a helpful resource to provide an opportunity to make sense of the experiences of privilege and oppression during post-migration asylum with self-identified identities and given, such as: age, gender, nationality, race and ethnicity, and an asylum status simultaneously.

Need for the Study

There is a gap in the research regarding recent asylum experiences for adolescents in the United States. Fleeing home countries to seek asylum in the United States is a historical process with different consequences depending on the political time in the United States. Since the Zero Tolerance policy was implemented on the southern border by the current president, the actions due to this policy have raised much involvement in the mental health field (e.g., more counselors reaching out to provide counseling services and advocating for asylum seekers by going to detention centers to witness the living conditions to see what resources could be provided from the mental health field) and acknowledgement of a violation of international human rights laws. Due to the policies, the mental health field has another responsibility in what needs to be addressed in the counseling room and outside of the agencies for best practices. Yet, there is a dearth of literature in counseling about considerations for adolescents seeking asylum since the Zero Tolerance policy has been in place and before the policy was implemented. The Zero Tolerance policy has created new circumstances for asylum seekers, like family separation, that have not historically been done, but could change the needs and experiences of adolescent asylum seekers. Understanding the asylum-seeking adolescent experiences will add to literature on cultural considerations in the counseling field, and this knowledge could influence best practices with asylum seekers during the adolescent time of development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of the asylum process for adolescents in the United States through an Intersectionality Theoretical Framework. Describing themes of the lived experiences of adolescents going through the asylum process in the United States provided more efficacy and intersectional approaches in counseling

these youth and their families. This knowledge of post-migration experiences, identities, and roles may help in developing or implementing effective treatment strategies in counseling, counselors increasing their cultural competence in working with asylum-seeking adolescents and their families, and lead to more ways to advocate for clients.

Significance of the Study

Describing the asylum process for asylum-seeking adolescents in the United States contributed to cultural humility, first step towards policy changes, and the importance of intersectionality approaches in the counseling field. Capturing how adolescent asylum seekers situations that equate their experiences in the United States is key to providing more effective counseling and advocacy opportunities.

Research Question

Research Question 1: (a) What are the post-migration experiences of adolescents between the age of 13 - 16 seeking asylum in the United States? (b) What are the shifts, if any, in perception of self since seeking asylum?

Operational Definitions

Adolescence: is defined as the transitional period between childhood and adulthood that occurs between roughly ages 10 and 20 years (ACA, 2009). For purposes of this research, the term adolescence will be the age range of 12-17 years old due findings from the pilot study.

Asylum Seeker: is defined as an individual that is owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religions, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2007). Asylum seekers fall under the refugee definition. Asylum

seekers meet the definition of refugees and are identified as asylum seekers due to seeking asylum once individuals arrive at the port of entry checkpoint in the United States, and have up to one year to file for asylum from when an individual arrives in the United States. Asylum seekers are not screened prior to arriving like identified refugees are.

Zero Tolerance Policy: is defined by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that determined the policy would cover alien (current government terminology for the general immigrant population) adults arriving illegally (not from a port of entry) in the United States with minor children. Because minor children cannot be held in criminal custody with an adult, alien adults who entered the United States illegally would have to be separated from any accompanying minor children when the adults were referred for criminal prosecution (United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, 2018) due to arriving at a location that was not a port of entry. The children, who DHS then deemed to be unaccompanied alien children, were held in DHS custody until they could be transferred to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is responsible for the long-term custodial care and placement of unaccompanied alien children (United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, 2018). An unaccompanied alien child is a child under 18 years of age with no lawful immigration status in the United States who has neither a parent or legal guardian in the United States, nor a parent or legal guardian in the United States “available” to provide care and physical custody for him or her. 6 U.S.C. § 279(g)(2). As such, children traveling with a related adult other than a parent or legal guardian — such as a grandparent or sibling — are still deemed unaccompanied alien children (United States Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, 2018).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Identity is the essential core of who we are as individuals, the conscious experience of the self inside.”

- Kaufman (Anzaldúa, 1987, p.62)

Asylum Seekers (Pre-migration, Transit, & Post-migration)

There is a common assumption, mentioned previously in Chapter 1, about using refugees and asylum seekers interchangeably; however, it is important to define and differentiate these populations (Peeler, 2019). Refugees have legal status as a refugee prior to entering the United States based on similar reasons as a person who is seeking asylum, and their entry always comes with permanent legal status (Peeler, 2019), unlike asylum seekers. Asylum seekers are only allowed to apply for asylum once they are in the United States. Asylum seekers do indicate that they have a well-founded fear of persecution and are therefore seeking to be recognized as a refugee since they meet the same definition of reasoning for leaving their home country (Bronstein, Montgomery, & Dobrowolski (2012).

Using the terms asylum seeker and refugee interchangeably is problematic due to the distinct experiences these individuals have in coming to the United States (or any other country). Specifically, as one example, the lack of benefits that asylum seekers have due to their status in arriving in the U.S., being misidentified as undocumented individuals in the United States, mandated detention, and lack of resources due to an in limbo immigration status; all of which are not the same experience as refugees (e.g., asylum seekers experiencing higher post-migration stressors upon arrival due to immediate problems relating to their residency status) (Silove, Steel, McGorry, & Mohan, 1998). Refugees are given a permanent visa (Li et al., 2016) that includes

government benefits. Asylum seekers do not have any of the benefits, nor have permanent residency, resulting in higher rates of distress since they are in limbo and do not have secured status. Another word that gets used often for asylum seekers, but not in the literature, is asylee; this term defines an individual that is already granted asylum (American Immigration Counsel, 2018). This differentiation between asylum seeker and asylee is significant since an asylum seeker is going through the asylum process while an asylee already finished the process and was accepted by the United States. The need to use the correct terminology is key in being able to address certain needs and experiences that asylum-seeking individuals, specifically adolescents, are going through.

There are two primary ways an individual could apply for asylum (American Immigration Counsel, 2018): the affirmative process and the defensive process. Both the defensive and the affirmative processes require the asylum seeker to be physically present in the United States (American Immigration Counsel, 2018). The defensive process is the most common way that asylum seekers apply for asylum. Asylum seekers who arrive at a U.S. port of entry or enter the country without inspection generally must apply through the defensive asylum process. The American Immigration Counsel (2018) defines defensive asylum:

A person who is in removal proceedings may apply for asylum defensively by filing the application with an immigration judge at the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) in the Department of Justice. In other words, asylum is applied for “as a defense against removal from the U.S.” Unlike the criminal court system, EOIR does not provide appointed counsel for individuals in immigration court, even if they are unable to retain an attorney on their own. (p.2)

The second process of seeking asylum is the affirmative process, which is less common than the defensive process. The affirmative process is when an individual seeking asylum applies for asylum at time of presentation to the United States. The American Counsel (2018) defines affirmative asylum:

A person who is not in removal proceedings may affirmatively apply for asylum through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a division of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). If the USCIS asylum officer does not grant the asylum application, an applicant does not have a lawful immigration status, they are referred to the immigration court for removal proceedings where the asylum seeker may renew the request for asylum through the defensive process and appear before an immigration judge. (p.2)

In 2017, 26,568 individuals were granted asylum in the United States (16,045 affirmatively, and 10,523 defensively) (Peeler, 2019). Even though individuals usually seek asylum through the defensive process, one can notice that according to these numbers, more individuals were accepted through the affirmative process than the defensive. This may seem like a large amount of acceptances; however, in 2017, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) received more than 258,000 applications for asylum with more than 31,000 of those filed affirmatively from Central America's Northern triangle (Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala) (Peeler, 2019). This resulted in less than 10% of applications for asylum being approved.

An individual generally must apply for asylum within one year of arriving in the United States and asylum seekers in the affirmative and defensive processes face many obstacles to meeting the one-year deadline. They also mentioned that some individuals face traumatic repercussions from their time in detention or journeying to the United States and may never know that a deadline exists. In many cases, missing the one-year deadline is the sole reason the government denies an asylum application (American Immigration Counsel, 2018). Once the application process has started, it is not a quick process, as a court date could be scheduled a few years later. Even using the most common way to apply for asylum (i.e., defensive application), the process can be lengthy and might change due to the policies that are in place during the time

of application versus the time of the court date or approval of application (Eight Facts about Refugees and Asylum Seekers, 2020).

As destination countries face a higher influx of asylum seekers, there is a growing trend toward more restrictive asylum policies, including increased periods of mandatory detention and extended processing times (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016). There are no explanations provided for the further restrictions when implemented. Globally, mandatory detention is a common interception policy implemented in response to the irregular entry of migrants, including asylum seekers (Li et al., 2016). Detention of asylum seekers has concerned health professionals and human rights advocates, because of the detrimental effects on the mental health of detainees (Keller et al., 2003). Findings from a study of asylum seekers detained from remote Australian detention centers suggested that placement in immigration detention increased mental disorder prevalence rates threefold in adults (Ichikawa, Nakahara, Wakai, 2006). Another study comparing two groups of Afghan asylum seekers in Japan who had equivalent levels of pre-migration trauma found that, compared to those who were never detained, the group that had a prior experience of immigration detention reported significantly higher levels of anxiety, depression, and PTSD ten months following release from detention (Keller et al., 2003). Researchers suggest that mental health outcomes deteriorate the longer the generally asylum-seeking process takes (Laban, Komproe, & Schreuders, 2004; Li, et al., 2016). At the same time, regardless of the conditions of an immigration detention, a detainee's mental health is inevitably disrupted by the very act of being held, a common phenomenon experienced by refugees and asylum-seekers held in detention (Foong et al., 2019; Puthooppambil, Maina-Ahlberg, & Bjenereld, 2013). When looking at other reasons for the decreases in the number of individuals

seeking refuge in the United States (Li et al., 2016), it could be the further restrictions that have been increasingly placed to deter people from coming to the United States.

Successful post-displacement and post-migration adjustment may be hindered by experiences of discrimination, racism, and xenophobia, which may contribute to hostility, exclusion, rejection, and subsequent trauma (Aydin et al., 2014; Bemak & Chung 2017; Kira et al., 2010). A link has been established between racism, xenophobia, and mental health problems (Aydin et al., 2014; Bemak & Chung, 2017; Nadal, Griffin, Wong, Hamit, & Rasmus, 2014). Intersectional Theoretical framework examines the ways in which public policies uphold social inequalities and inequities (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Using individuals' identities to excuse harsh punishment in any country is extremely harmful since the powers of the federal system are intersecting forms of racial and citizenship dominance towards a xenophobic and racist agenda. This is an example of the restrictions and extending mandatory detention required by the U.S. government for those seeking asylum.

In the United States, all citizens are exposed to overt and covert political messages by public and social media, which may influence their worldviews (Bemak & Chung, 2017). All individuals, including counselors, need to be aware of political countertransference, which Chung, Bemak, and Judo Grabosky (2011) defined as a negative reaction toward migrant and refugee populations. Bemak and Chung (2017) mentioned that the current, and at times heated, debates about immigration and the updates of terrorist alerts fuel a culture of fear about foreigners and add to psychological trauma to asylum seekers and refugees.

There are many factors to consider when working with asylum seekers that are a part of their experiences when arriving in the United States. USCIS (2019) states that a person that seeks asylum cannot apply for permission to work (employment authorization) in the United States at

the same time they are applying for asylum. An individual may apply for employment authorization if 150 days have passed since filing the complete asylum application, excluding any delays caused by the person filing, such as a request to reschedule their interview, and no decision has been made on their application (USCIS, 2019). Not being able to apply for employment is a possible added stressor affecting a family system and is just one example of multiple factors that were mentioned above that asylum seekers face. Other factors they face include the steps it takes and the timeframes on when to apply for citizenship, green card, asylum, and employment authorization that might not match the demand the family has for immediate assistance or stability.

There are stressors and potential barriers that were mentioned above, and there are key protective factors to consider (i.e, social support and family). Social support is a powerful determinant of overall well-being (Urtzan & Wieling, 2020) reported by many asylum-seeking populations of different cultures and nationalities (O'Toole, Corcoran, & Todd, 2017). While displacement is characterized by sudden departure and pervasive fear of uncertainty, it also presents an opportunity to connect with others who share similar experiences (Urtzan & Wieling, 2020). Social support can serve as a foundation for protective factors during adjustment, such as resilience (Simich et al., 2003). Families tend to move together as a group, even if they are separated at onset (Borjas & Borjas, 1991). While family can serve as a protective factor since most families travel together, the separation from family that may be experienced represents a significant barrier to positive psychological outcomes in individuals seeking refuge (Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016), especially if the families are going to an immigration detention center.

Children that are seeking asylum often have significant mental health concerns that may be exacerbated by the effects of detention of family separation on arrival (Peeler, 2019) as well

as experiences during post-migration. Children often appear resilient but the impact of detention on their psychological being in relation to lifespan development needs further exploration (Foong, Arthur, West, Kornhaber, McLean, & Cleary, 2019). In detention environments, it is difficult for parents to assume normal and healthy parenting roles, which compromises the essential need to build secure attachments with their children in an abnormal space (Foong et al., 2019). Interpersonal relationships are critical to coping with the aftermath of displacement for the children and their guardian(s) (McIlwaine & O'Sullivan, 2015; Urtzan & Wieling, 2020). The presence of at least one positive adult or nurturing family member acts as a protective factor (Ataullahjan et al., 2019).

Changes in family roles can be especially difficult to adjust to and may adversely affect psychological adjustment for all family members (Fisher, 2013). Culture shock and acculturation issues appear to weaken family unity and when seeking asylum from where war has fundamentally altered family roles and structure, young people's care and protection might be redefined (Blanchet-Cohen & Denov, 2015). Upon resettlement, while families continue to play a key role in care and protection, the parents/legal guardians often seem to be incapable of meeting the complex needs of the youth in the family unit (Blanchet-Cohen & Denov, 2015). Another factor to consider is that children acculturate faster than adults, which leads children to sometimes be used by parents and service providers as translators of culture and language (Bemak & Chung, 2017). Consequently, parents must often rely on their children for resource access and communication (Bemak & Chung, 2017; Deng & Marlowe, 2013), thus, flipping some of the familial roles in post-migration.

For children, the parental mental health status (particularly emotional well-being of the parent) and stable familial relationships are strongly protective (Almqvist & Broberg, 1999;

Jones & Kafetsios, 2002). Children may lose confidence in their parents as they witness a transformation from autonomous and culturally competent caretakers to depressed, overwhelmed, and dependent individuals who are trying to learn a new language and new customs (Bemak & Chung, 2015, 2017; Deng & Marlowe, 2013). In addition, the authority of the adults may be undermined by the children due to familial conflict over traditional values and practices during the youths' efforts in acculturating and assimilating in the United States, resulting in strained relationships and changes in family dynamics - all of which may compound already existing trauma (Bemak & Chung, 2015, 2017; Deng & Marlowe, 2013). These shifting family dynamics in refugee and immigrant populations may lead to negative consequences, which given the similar, yet additional, stressors asylum seekers face it is also assumed that they experience these same shifts in family roles and family conflict. However, this is not yet specifically known. In Fisher's (2013) study, interviews with refugees from African backgrounds resettled in Australia found that changes to gender roles, such as when males lose their status as the primary breadwinner or an increasing in financial independence between spouses, can exacerbate interpersonal difficulties in the family, which has been related to domestic violence in refugee populations.

Unaccompanied Asylum Youth

Thus far, there has been discussion on what this process looks like with families that are seeking asylum; however, youth may also seek asylum unaccompanied. This section is about individuals that are identified in the United States and globally as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and adolescents. There are a few definitions for this particular group of individuals. An unaccompanied migrant youth, also known as unaccompanied alien child (UAC) is defined by the United States legal system, is an individual under the 18 years old who arrived

in the United States without a lawful immigration status and has no parent or legal guardian in the United States, or a parent or legal guardian that is not available within the United States to provide care and custody generally (Jani & Reisch, 2018; Peeler, 2019; Roth & Grace, 2015). The term unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) is widely used in the United Kingdom (UK) context and emphasizes the intersection of salient identities present as both minors and asylum-seekers (Rogers, Carr, & Hickman, 2018; Wernesjo, 2014), but this term is not used in other legal systems such as the United States. The United Nations' High Commission for Refugees' (UNHCR, 2014) defined unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth as "children who are separated from both parents and are not being cared for by an adult, who, by law or custom, is responsible to do so" (p. 121). For this study, the term unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth will be used to be more specific of these individuals seeking asylum; other definitions mentioned above could be including immigrants and refugees.

Most unaccompanied youth arrive in the United States to seek asylum (Peeler, 2019). In contrast, unaccompanied refugee minors (URM) applied for status before arriving into the United States. These URM typically have a sponsor in place who is responsible for their resettlement once they arrive (Jani & Resich, 2018). Additionally, they are eligible for federally funded benefits to assist with their resettlement in the United States (Jani & Resich, 2018). On the other hand, unaccompanied youth seeking asylum are not eligible for state-funded services other than education and emergency health benefits. Thus, the basic difference between URM and unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth is the child's location (i.e., outside of the United States or if the child is in the United States) at the time they apply for legal status which affects their eligibility to receive vital services and having a sponsor or not once the youth is in the United States (Jani, Resich, 2018; Segal & Mayadas, 2005). Unaccompanied asylum-seeking

youth tend to suffer from more mental health concerns than URM, such as an increased likelihood of experiencing psychiatric disorders and depressive symptoms (O’Toole Thommessen, Corcoran, & Todd, 2017; Wiese & Burhorst, 2007). These differences with unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth and unaccompanied refugee children are other important examples as to why it is crucial to not use refugee and asylum seekers synonymously that was mentioned earlier.

During the past few decades, there has been greater attention in figuring out what could be done to care for and place unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and adolescents (Jani & Resich, 2018). In 2002, Homeland Security Act coined the term “unaccompanied alien children (UAC)” and transferred the responsibilities for working with unaccompanied children from the commissioner of the Immigration Naturalization Service (INS) to the Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) that is within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) (Jani & Resich, 2018). In the United States, there are four different types of living arrangements that are provided for unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth: institutional shelters, group homes, independent living (older youth), and foster care (in about 17 cities) even with uncertainty and insecurity experienced by UAC living in the United States (Jani & Resich, 2018). In 2014, the Obama Administration implemented the Central American Minor (CAM) Program that allowed unmarried children under 21 years of age in El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras whose parents are legally present in the United States to be considered for refugee status; however, the Trump Administration terminated this program in 2017 (Jani & Resich, 2018). The termination of the program made it more difficult for the youth to come and be united with their parents. For almost twenty years, family reunification was shaped by the ORR policies and guidelines in the United States, resulting in unaccompanied children in the United States

being placed with sponsors as “family reunification” (Roth & Grace, 2015). All these policy changes in the recent years highlight the importance for counselors, organizations working with asylum seekers, and asylum seekers to keep up with policies that can drastically change the asylum-seeking youth’s process and their families.

Adolescence

Adolescence refers to the transitional period between childhood and adulthood that occurs roughly between the ages 10 and 20 years (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2009). In adolescent literature, generally, adolescents are influenced by varying ability levels, stereotypes, family, citizenship, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual identity and the effects of these identities and circumstances on their achievement in their education, familial interactions, social exchanges, and employment options (Underwood, 2017; Underwood & Dailey, 2014). ACA (2009) stated adolescents have a strong need for social belonging and recognition. Adolescents also define their own identities within the social setting in relation to their peer groups (ACA, 2009). Phinney (1990) mentioned that it is important to assess the feeling of belonging with adolescents, while Lax and Richards (1981) stated a sense of belonging to one’s own group can be defined in contrast to another group; that is, the experiences of exclusion, contrast, or separateness from other group members.

During this transitional period of adolescence, identity development is key in development (Kroger, 2007). Personal identity is about goals, values, and beliefs that are internalized and or developed from an individual (Meca et al., 2017; Waterman, 1999). Personal identity relates to the question “Who am I?” and cultural identity relates to the question “Who am I as a member of my group?” (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Weisskirch, 2008). For adolescents that are non-native and ethnic/racial minority backgrounds, identity development is more

complex compared to the U.S. born, ethnic majority adolescents (Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2008; Meca et al., 2017; Syed & Mitchell, 2013). While acknowledging that personal identity is a normative task for all adolescents, non-native U.S. adolescents are also tasked with navigating multiple cultural reference points. This results to non-native adolescents in the United States developing another cultural identity and understanding what their ethnic racial group and membership is and what it means to them in the larger system (i.e., United States, larger community they arrive in) (Meca et al., 2017).

According to Erikson's (1950) model of psychosocial development, adolescence is an age range where personal identity develops in a dynamic manner involving coherence and confusion (Meca et al., 2017). Coherence refers to a sense of who one is and where one is going in life, whereas confusion signifies an inability to enact and maintain lasting commitment and a lack of a clear sense of purpose and direction (Meca et al., 2017). Although personal identity is salient for most adolescents, as they think about who they want to be and what do they want to do in their lives (Cote & Levin, 2002), cultural identity is most salient for non-native (i.e., immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers) and ethnic minority youth (Meca et al., 2017; Phinney & Ong, 2007). This is mostly due to the fact that Eriksonian-based research major focus on personal identity that has been conducted largely with white, non-immigrant participants (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Weisskirch, 2008; Sneed et al., 2006).

Culture is a part of all aspects of life that are always moving and socially constructed (Gonzalez & Mendez-Pounds, 2018). Culture is also one of the most significant formative elements in identity (Lemzoudi, 2007). In the counseling field, therapeutic practices do not always consider the cultural dimension of the client can be counter-therapeutic (Lemzoudi, 2007; Thomas & Schwarzbaum, 2006). Yet, cultural identity is the area that experiences the most

fundamental changes during acculturation (Lemzoudi, 2007). Thus, imagine the changes asylum-seeking adolescents must experience while they are figuring out who they are and how they want to identify, while also being told who to be and how they should identify themselves as they migrate to a new country and culture, such as the United States.

Migration is equivalent to a rupture from one's culture, one's conception of whom one is and what it means to be in this world (Lemzoudi, 2007). Due to the social construct of culture, the concept of self is tied to the asylum seekers' home, pre-migration, thus, a change of culture implies a redefinition of one's identities and roles in the new society. Even so, youth that migrate to another country will most likely develop a hybrid sense of cultural identity, retaining some elements from their country-of-origin culture and other elements from their new home society (Lemzoudi, 2007). Arnett (2002) and Berman et al. (2011) suggested that identity confusion is the result of living within two cultures with "competing" belief systems (Underwood, 2017). Berman et al. (2011) also suggested that rather than trying to be independent, asylum-seeking adolescents are just trying to fit in--which they do by trying to become "bicultural" (i.e., integrating their traditional culture and their embedded culture) (Underwood, 2017). This adjustment with becoming "bicultural" can also be experienced by other adolescents that are non-native to the United States (Underwood, 2017). What should be noted; however, is that most of the personal and cultural identity literature for non-native U.S. adolescents was conducted with immigrants, not asylum seekers. Thus, while some similarities are expected, given the challenges and stressors that are unique to asylum seekers, some differences may also emerge from what has been historically known about the adjustment process and impact of migration and post-migration on adolescent youth. This purpose of this study is to explore the concept of self

with the asylum-seeking adolescents and add to the literature of identity development for this population.

Wong and Schweitzer (2017) mentioned that feeling socially included (i.e., work and school) in the country of resettlement is imperative to the general well-being of adolescents from refugee backgrounds (Brough, Gorman, Ramirez, & Westoby, 2003; O’Sullivan & Olliff, 2006) that also applies to asylum-seeking adolescents. Lived experiences at one stage of migration can influence experiences at another stage of migration (Perreira & Ornelas, 2011, 2013). Many asylum-seeking youths often arrive with trauma (personal or witnessed) that led them and their families to migrate or may have experienced traumatic situations during the migration process with or without their families (Olsen, 2019). During migration, the asylum-seeking youth may have been separated from their families, a family member may have suffered violence, possible death, or their parents may be in unstable legal situations in the United States or in their home country.

Once adolescents arrive in the United States, they are also at risk due to the difficulty in learning a new language and most likely to have gaps in their education, depending on their age (Olsen, 2019). In addition, before arriving in the United States, some of the unaccompanied adolescents have frequently experienced lack of education and poverty (UNHCR, 2016). To address educational gaps, some areas in the United States of programs provide extra support (Short & Boyson, 2012), while acknowledging that there is relatively little work that has been done to rigorously estimate the impact of these programs (Olsen, 2019).

Mental Health Concerns of Asylum-Seeking Youth

There are some common factors that affect mental health that all adolescents face that include multiple physical, emotional and social changes, including exposure to poverty, abuse, or

violence, that can make adolescents vulnerable to mental health problems (ACA, 2009; World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Emotional disorders commonly emerge during adolescence (WHO, 2020). Suicide completion also remains a leading cause of death among adolescents, with rates that continue to rise in the United States (Kann et al., 2014; Stone et al., 2018).

Mental health services are underutilized among adolescents in the United States (DuPont-Reyes et al., 2020; Merikangas et al., 2010). Forcibly displaced adolescents - such as asylum-seeking adolescents - face barriers in obtaining health services, aggravating existing health concerns, and introducing new health issues (Atalluhjan, Gaffey, Spiegel, & Bhutta, 2019). Atalluhjan et al. (2019) also mentioned that in addition to psychological trauma and violence, displaced adolescents can also experience physical injury and nutritional deficiencies.

There are devastating situations that are important considerations when thinking about the mental health of accompanied and unaccompanied asylum-seeking youth. In the limited United States and United Kingdom research on asylum-seeking youth, there has been a common concern on high risks of psychological distress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression (Bronstein, Montgomery, & Dobrowolski, 2012). Asylum-seeking adolescents, unaccompanied or with their family unit, who have fled their country of origin have been found to have survived numerous potentially traumatizing and life-threatening events (Blackburn & Barker, 2011; Marshall, Schell, Elliott, Berthold, & Chun, 2005) and the dangers during traveling to the United States could have exacerbated pre-migration experiences (O'Toole, Corcoran, & Todd, 2017). Sometimes the families leave their home country and take multiple stops to the United States. Each additional migration can lead to new trauma exposures, which means the risk of experiencing trauma and developing PTSD can accumulate throughout the migration process (Perreira & Ornelas, 2013). According to Bethold (2000), 98% of asylum-

seeking adolescents in the United States survived direct violence and about 44% experienced other kinds of violence. Asylum seekers are extremely vulnerable by the time they arrive in the United States. This information is important to consider to reduce retraumatization when the asylum officers are interviewing the asylum seekers, when the lawyer asks for their stories again, and when counselors are attempting to explore pre-migration, transit, and post-migration experiences.

Afkhami and Gorentz (2019) stated that oftentimes it was difficult to evaluate behavioral health on refugee children and younger adolescents due to limitations in cognitions, vocabulary, and insight relative to refugee adult clients. However, this study is looking at interviewing about lived experiences and not assessing behavioral health. For this study, the age range of potential participants will start at 12 years old due to the results in the pilot study and the ability for the younger aged participants to be able to understand, respond and provide effective feedback. Furthermore, having participants that have been in the United States for two years or less is during the time that the families of the participants are still going through the asylum process, recently did, and/or big adjustments are still occurring (i.e., work, acculturation, education, housing, transportation).

Intersectionality Theoretical Framework

Hall's (1992) theoretical framework on intersectionality defines intersectionality as a theoretical framework that recognizes young asylum seekers' identities as fluid and relational. Intersectionality Theory suggests that identities are formed and transformed continuously in relation to other people. The importance of adopting an intersectional framework to understand the experiences of asylum-seeking youth lies in the theory's integration and simultaneous consideration of multiple structures of power, privilege, and oppression (Andersen & Collins,

2007) while including the asylum seekers historical and contextual factors (Gangamma & Shipman, 2018; Harley, Jolivette, McCormick, & Tice, 2002).

The term “intersectionality” has been widely taken up since the early twenty-first century by scholars, policy advocates, practitioners, activists, college students and faculty in interdisciplinary fields such as the U.S. American studies, sociology, political science, history, and other traditional disciplines (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Dimensions of intersectionality have been used in global public policy discussions and to inform the work of grassroots organizers to inform progressive movements (Collins and Bilge, 2016). One single definition of intersectionality does not exist due to the diverse ways in which they have been applied across disciplines (Anthias, 2012; Gangamma & Shipman, 2018). The definition I will use that I believe fits best with my research focus is Collins and Bilge (2016) general description of Intersectionality:

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor. They are generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people’s lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves (p.2).

The Intersectionality Theoretical Framework is used as a heuristic process, an analytic tool, that is to be used to understand different social problems in different ranges of social problems (Collins & Bilge, 2016). For example, intersectionality as a concept is useful in the major axis of social divisions in a given society at a given time, for example, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, citizenship, dis/ability, and age function by building off on each other and working together by solving the problem that the individual or others are facing (Collins &

Bilge, 2016). For instance, intersectionality as a concept began due to the social problem of women of color being erased in the civil rights movement for not being represented correctly with all their identities being seen simultaneously to express their true experiences (Collins & Bilge, 2016).

The History of Intersectionality

Intersectionality Theory originates from the history of social justice, human, and civil rights movements that were intended to fight marginalization and oppression in the United States (Bilge, 2013; Bowleg, 2008, 2012, 2013; Carbado et al., 2013; Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018; Cho, 2013; Collins & Bilge; 2016; Combahee River Collective, 1979; Viruell-Fuentes, Miranda, Abdulrahim, 2012). In the 1960s and 1970s, African-American women activists confronted the barrier of how their needs simply fell through the cracks of antiracist social movements, feminism, and organizations for workers' rights (Collins & Bilge, 2016). The late 1960s to early 1980s was a period of social movement activism in the United States that led to many of the main ideas of intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Particularly, the late 1960s was a time when women of color were in tension with the civil rights, Black Power, Chicano liberation, Red Power, and Asian-American movements (Collins & Bilge, 2016). This was an energetic time for women of color to fight for their basic rights since individuals that were not women of color were not advocating for them. These women brought up the idea of intersectionality - where privileged identities and marginalized/oppressed identities really get considered within the same person. The creation of activism of Black women, Chicanas, Asian-American women and Native women was not derivative of white feminism (feminism that only helped white women in the U.S. society without acknowledging women of color) but were original in their own right (Collins & Bilge, 2016; Roth 2004; Springer 2005). The groups of women of color that are

mentioned each had their own agenda in what their community needed and came together. The United States Black feminists created their own political organizations, using the label “black feminist”; and Mexican-American feminists formed an autonomous Chicana feminist movement (Arredondo, 2003; Garcia, 1997a, 1997b). In the end, all groups of women of color were trying to create the narrative that was erased that truly spoke to their experiences that were influenced by power, privilege, and oppression. These revolutionary movements led to Black feminism and Critical Race Theory, the main ideologies from which Intersectionality theory emerged.

Intersectionality’s history stems from two specific theoretical junctures, specifically Black feminism and Critical Race Theory (Carbado et al., 2013; Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018). In addition, Intersectionality theoretical development discloses the philosophical tenets that stem from feminism and Critical Race Theory emphasizing equality, equity, and demarginalizing social injustice and multiple forms of experiences woven into power and oppression (Carbado et al., 2013; Chan & Erby, 2018; Collins & Bilge, 2016). Intersectionality Theory was created organically, and it is important to acknowledge the women of color that paved the way to fight for representation and enforce an accurate depiction of their experiences in the United States.

Core Tenets of Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality Theory’s core tenets of social inequality, power, relationality, social context, complexity, and social justice formed within the context of social movements that faced the crises of their times, primarily, the challenges of colonialism, racism, sexism, militarism, and capitalist exploitation (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Crenshaw (1989, 1991), a law scholar and the individual that coined the term intersectionality, claimed that the feminist movement did not advocate for human rights, policies, and protections for members of marginalized groups who are frequently invisible in the margins with multiple overlapping forms of oppression (Chan &

Erby, 2018). In the *Stanford Law Review* particularly, she was referencing the experiences of Black women in the U.S. society. Crenshaw (1989, 1991) has provided a justified critique on problems rooted in social structure using an intersectionality lens as she described forms of oppression between Black feminists and women of color identities (Chan & Erby, 2018). McCall (2005) also acknowledged that many other key texts introduced the conceptual framework and offered similar terms (see Anzaldua, 1987; hooks, 1984; Glenn, 1985; King, 1988; Mohanty, 1988; Moraga, 1983; Moraga & Anzaldua, 1984; Sandoval, 1991; Smith, 1983; Spelman, 1988). Even though Crenshaw focused her discussion in that same article on the experience of women of color as marginalized simultaneously on gender and race, her reasoning is widely applicable to various locations at various intersections (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016). Collins (2004) focused extensively on oppression as a woman of color in academia, but challenged a dominated system, academia, through alternative identities and the insider-outsider perspective in the joining of her identities being a Black woman and being in a high-ranking position in academia.

Collins and Bilge (2016) synthesized the six core tenets of intersectionality as an analytic tool: social inequality, power, relationality, social context, complexity, and social justice (Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018). In social inequality, intersectionality adds additional layers of complexity to understanding and encouraging individuals to move beyond seeing social inequality through race-only and class-only lenses that allows interactions among various categories to speak to true experiences that are not caused by a single factor (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Smooth (2013) stated that privilege and oppression could coexist because of the complexities in multiple identities linked to already formed systems of power relations, a second tenet (Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018). Power relations are analyzed across the domains of power that are structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal (Collins & Bilge, 2016). It is important to look at how power works in

each domain (that will be described below) to bring about the dynamics of a larger social phenomenon, like social unrest in the United States (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Third, is relationality, that explains the importance of rejecting binary thinking and embracing both/and frame. Relationality shifts from analyzing what distinguishes entities (e.g., the differences between race and gender) to examine their interconnections (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Collins and Bilge (2016) argued that power constitutes a relationship rather than a static entity. Social inequality, relationality, and power relations are in a social context (i.e., the fourth tenet). Mutually linked categories are interconnected to systems of power shaped by what individuals think and do (Carastathis, 2016; Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018; Smooth, 2013), while being aware of particular historical, intellectual, and political contexts (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Intersectionality itself is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity of the world (Collins & Bilge, 2016). The level of complexity can complicate things and can be a source of frustration for scholars and activists, and at the same time, something that all scholars need to address seriously and collaboratively (Collins & Bilge, 2016). This means intersectional approaches are not linear in what might be expected when using it, and many aspects need to be considered for intersectionality to be used effectively in any discipline. Lastly, according to Collins and Bilge (2016), social justice may be intersectionality's most debatable core tenet, but it is one that expands the circle of intersectionality to include people who use intersectionality as an analytic tool for social justice. Social justice is listed as an optional tenet in Intersectionality Theory, but is not always used by researchers, analysts, and others who utilize the theory. The reason for not using social justice as a tenet could be due to the assumption that individuals have within the United States, and other countries, that racism and discrimination is no longer a concern in today's society (Collins & Bilge, 2016). However, individuals who use the social justice tenet of

Intersectionality Theory are critical of the status quo assumptions, recognizing that more work still needs to be done (Collins & Bilge, 2016). The core tenets of Intersectionality Theory are applied when intersectionality is an analytic tool and when it is seen a critical inquiry. The following explains how intersectionality is an analytic tool that is described by four domains of power in relation to the construct of power.

Four Domains of Power

There are four domains that Collins and Bilge (2016) used to describe the organization of power that provides opportunities for the concept of intersectionality to be used as an analytic tool that are: interpersonal, disciplinary, cultural, and structural. All domains of power will be discussed individually and could work interchangeably. First is the interpersonal domain of power. This domain of power explains how people relate to one another to construct reality and more specifically who, or which individual(s), is/are at an advantage or disadvantage within social interactions (Collins & Bilge, 2016). For example, asylum-seeking adolescents' actions shape power relations just as much as the policy makers that decide certain experiences for them in the United States, the individuals that interview them during their asylum process, or the attorney that might be representing and defending their case. For example, in regard to the interpersonal domain of power, the interaction between a border patrol officer with an asylum-seeking adolescent will be very different than if it was a border patrol officer interacting with a US citizen since the asylum-seeking adolescent now has a new identity (asylum seeker) that creates a disadvantage within social interactions for the asylum-seeking adolescent. Using intersectionality as an analytic tool highlights the complexity of individual identities and how the varying combinations of identities can differentially position each individual in regard to power

and oppression in society within the interpersonal domain of power (Chan & Erby, 2018; Collins & Bilge, 2016).

The second domain, the disciplinary domain of power, states that people find themselves encountering different treatment regarding which rules apply to them (i.e., societal, system, organization) and how those rules will be implemented; in essence, power operates by disciplining people in ways that put people's lives on paths that makes some options seem viable and others out of reach (Collins & Bilge, 2016). For example, The United States government showcases that there is still an opportunity for a fair process for individuals to seek asylum. While this outward public perspective may be provided, the U.S. government has only accepted about 3% of individual and family cases in the last couple of years that dropped from 13%. Thus, what is showcased and discussed publicly may be different than what is actually occurring. Moreover, there is less restriction with immigrants from European countries to come to the U.S., while the government has drastically restricted laws towards immigrants from non-European countries to come and stay in the United States (i.e., the Muslim Ban). Hence, an example of disciplinary power for making it harder for individuals with different immigration statuses due to identities that have been used against them to come to the United States.

The cultural domain of power states the importance of providing explanations for social inequalities that result due to lack of fairness (Collins & Bilge, 2016). The domain of the theory exposes the attempt to create the illusion that there are no inequities between different identities to counter claims of discrimination. There are different treatments within identities using the same societal rules in the name of fairness; however, individuals arriving from different countries are receiving different care from United States officials and organizations in the asylum process and there is a need to acknowledge the lack of an even playing field for all

individuals seeking asylum (e.g., Haitians) (Lennox, 1993). This is not recent and has been occurring for decades. There is still racism and discrimination on the individual's country of origin and color of their skin on how asylum-seeking individuals care will be when being detained in a mandated detention center (i.e., length of time, evidence in seeking asylum). In addition, there is still discrimination towards particular countries that make the application even harder for some individuals' interviews to move forward towards a court hearing (U.S. GPO, 2003). This also could be influenced by whoever is in power that is implementing harsher policies towards asylum seekers from particular countries and cultural groups within those countries.

Lastly, the structural domain of power refers to how the state and federal government are organized or structured. This domain of power reveals how all of these levels/relations are organized and intersect with asylum seekers to create barriers - to treatment, to mental health, to health access - creating more disparities and creating further barriers and marginalization. For example, for the asylum-seeking families, most arrive with little money and have to find their own transportation across the country for all family members (Li et al., 2016). Also, some individuals are less aware of the resources available and are not provided that information since they are in the process of seeking asylum. The asylum officers are not allowed to suggest seeking a lawyer since that is providing legal advice. Resources are also not always available in areas that asylum seekers are sent to, which creates another barrier. Intersectionality Theory questions how intersecting power relations of class, gender, race, citizenship, and nationality shape the institutionalization of the state and federal government in the United States. The United States has assumed clear justifications for greater restriction of care for asylum seekers and a fair process due to the powers that the government holds in state and federal levels. In conclusion,

those are four domains of power when using intersectionality as an analytic tool (which can be used independently and interchangeably) that brings to light the complexity of people's lives within a complex social context.

This study seeks to utilize the Intersectionality Theoretical framework to help understand any social problems that emerge from the asylum-seeking adolescents in the study, and to use the domains of power and core tenets of the theory to provide language to the themes in regard to power, privilege, and oppression. The domains of power are especially useful for analyzing specific social problems that affect specific populations within a given matrix of domination, for example, how immigration policies articulate with citizenship (Collins, 2017). The four domains of power add to advocacy and social justice work for asylum-seeking adolescents in the counseling field. The core tenets and the domains of power provide the framework that is needed in adding language to the counseling literature for asylum-seeking adolescents and in figuring out how the larger system (i.e., school, state, federal) plays a role with asylum-seeking adolescent clients in relation to power, privilege, and oppression. It is the hope that this study will be the first plank.

Intersectionality as a Critical Inquiry and Praxis

Intersectionality Theory has been discussed as an analytical tool (as discussed above with the tenets and domains of power), and it can also be used as a critical inquiry and praxis. Intersectionality as a critical inquiry leads people to question traditional theory, frames of knowledge, and methodologies in order to understand the people's relationship to social inequality (Buchanan, Rios, & Case, 2020). While critical inquiry is important, the inquiry is often used by academics to critique and dismantle theories, frameworks, and ways of knowing; and thus, remains disconnected from the community the critical inquiry intends to represent

(Buchanan, Rios, & Case, 2020). For instance, there is a need for community-based research and bringing the results back to the communities where information was collected from so that the results can be applied to help the community that was researched. However, this is often not the case. Usually, researchers collect information and then provide that information to the academic community, foregoing bringing the results to the community for immediate application. This study hopes to be able to have a connection with the community and provide information for counselors who are not in academia and organizations that provide support for asylum-seekers, particularly asylum-seeking adolescents. So, while the use of Intersectionality Theory is important in conceptualizing and understanding individuals, communities, and the impact of power - an increase in grassroots application is important. This study is intended to provide the results back to the community for providers to better understand the asylum-seeking adolescence post migration experiences through an Intersectionality Theoretical framework.

Intersectionality in the form of critical praxis refers to individuals or groups using intersectional frameworks in their daily lives, and can occur anywhere (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Intersectionality as critical praxis broadens the use of intersectional frameworks to study a range of social phenomena, like critical inquiry, and at the same time, challenges the status quo to transform power relations. For instance, researchers are usually in the front lines for solving social problems that come with complex social inequalities (Collins & Bilge, 2016).

Researchers and activists illustrate how practice informs theory, and how theory ideally should inform community organizations and best practices. These concerns reflect the political dimensions of intersectionality and thus, embody a motivation to go beyond the basic comprehension of intersectional dynamics to transform them (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall,

2013). The praxis orientation is still central to Crenshaw's work and reflects other law scholars that share social justice sensibilities (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995).

Intersectionality as a critical praxis highlights the important strategy for doing social justice work. Thus, the goal of this study is to explore real-life experiences of asylum-seeking adolescents to allow themes of their experiences and the meanings they make of these experiences to emerge. The goal then will be to apply Intersectionality Theory to better understand the process of migrating to the United States, and the impact this migration and post-migration had on their identities. The findings will add to knowledge about what is being practiced in the counseling field for the asylum-seeking adolescent population. These findings will speak to how counselors may apply Intersectionality Theory in working with and understanding asylum-seeking adolescents and their families and what might be needed to provide for the clients (i.e, letter to judge to support asylum case, higher case management with schools, requesting further assistance for students' schools, and a resource list for asylum seekers common needs in the local area).

Intersectionality Theory Applied with Asylum Seekers

Sporton, Valentine, and Nielson (2006) mentioned the intersectionality identities were shaped by relations of power and are not fixed; they intersect in complex ways at different times and different places. Intersectionality provides a way for bringing together identities such as age, gender, race, religion, immigration status, sexuality by seeing the individual holistically in their social contexts and or socially and culturally constructed categories, rather as emergent properties that are not reducible to biological essences or role expectations (Sporton, Valentine, & Nielson, 2006; West & Fenstermaker, 1995). This is where domains of power come into play when using Intersectionality Theory. This means that individuals' identities can shift depending

on the cultural environment that individual is in due to the domains of power. It can change when someone moves to a different area that is different from their previous environment.

Intersectionality theory is able to incorporate individuals that have an asylum-seeking identity due to being in a new country, and what that is like for asylum-seeking adolescents in relation to power, privilege, and oppression.

Counseling Asylum Seekers

From what has been highlighted so far in this chapter is the significance in defining who asylum seekers are, the policies they face, adolescents that arrive with and without family and their development, how Intersectionality Theoretical Framework exists within this population in the United States, and mental health concerns with asylum seekers. Here is some general information on counseling adolescents and asylum seekers. There is a need to learn what counselors are doing now in the United States and what are gaps or further exploration in practice that this study can help in adding knowledge to best practices for this population in general and for adolescents. In refugee literature, it states that the first few post-migration years are critical (Bemak, Chung, & Pederson, 2003). When refugees are challenged to learn new coping skills and behavioral and communication patterns while attempting to meet basic needs such as housing and employment (Bemak, Chung, & Pederson, 2003). There is a dearth of literature in regard to counseling asylum-seekers, particularly adolescents.

There are a few theories that are used in guiding interventions with all children and adolescents (e.g., Cognitive Theory, Attachment Theory, models of loss, & models of resilience); however, it remains unclear the extent to which these models can guide interventions to meet the needs of accompanied and unaccompanied asylum-seeking adolescents (Groark, Sclare, & Raval, 2010). Many counselors use western individualistic models and interventions in the

United States, and it is important to be aware of the models being used since that may clash with asylum seekers' belief systems that are rooted in collectivistic cultures (Bemak & Chung, 2017). The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies encourage all counselors to take an action-oriented response to client social justice and cultural considerations (Ratts et al., 2015) and are essential when working with asylum-seeking clients (Lonn & Dantzler, 2017). Unfortunately, due to the lack of evidence-based research for counseling asylum seekers, most of the counseling literature mainly focuses on immigrants and refugees. According to Thomas and Schwarzbaum (2006) culture is one of the most significant formative elements in identity, and the researchers affirm that therapeutic practices that do not consider the cultural dimension of the client can be counter therapeutic. Even though this speaks for refugees, it is applicable for asylum seekers since the forced migration is experienced by both populations before arriving in the United States and acculturation once they all arrived. This study is to help add knowledge to best practices for asylum-seeking adolescents in the United States with an Intersectionality Theoretical Framework.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

In Chapter I, the researcher explored the lack of literature on asylum-seeking adolescents in the United States and provided points on further exploring post-migration experiences after the implementation of recent governmental policies specific to asylum seekers. More specifically, it needs to be better understood about what entails being an adolescent who has immigrated and sought asylum in the U.S. This knowledge will contribute to best practice in the counseling field in terms of how to effectively understand asylum-seeking adolescents, as well as have the potential to influence policy. In Chapter II, the researcher explored relevant literature related to refugees and immigrants in combination with the literature on asylum seekers. Finally, the argument was made within Chapters I and II regarding the need to add literature on the experiences of adolescents in the United States during post-migration using an Intersectionality Theoretical Framework. In addition, a goal of adding information about the adolescent identities and how the experiences from the system of government and others that are involved in the new policies (i.e. border patrol officers, interviewers, counseling in detention centers) towards asylum seekers provide privileged and oppressed experiences from power due to the adolescent's identities and how they stay the same, how they shift, identities that they are given, and their experience of their concept of self in their migration experience into the U.S.. The purpose of this chapter is to provide details of a research study that includes the research question, phenomenological research design, and procedures. The methodology and findings of a pilot study are also provided.

Research Question

Research Question 1: (a) What are the post-migration experiences of adolescents between the age of 13 - 16 seeking asylum in the United States? (b) What are the shifts, if any, in perception of self since seeking asylum?

Research Design

To better understand the experiences of adolescents during the asylum-seeking process in the United States, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA: Smith et al., 1999) methodology will be used in this study. IPA is a qualitative research methodology that is grounded in psychology and is influenced by phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA is double hermeneutic, which entails the participant's sense of their lived experience, but also the researcher's attempt in understanding how the participant makes sense of their personal and social world (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al. (2009) stated that IPA examines "how a particular phenomenon has been understood from the perspective of particular people, in a particular context" (p. 51). Phenomenology has a strong philosophical component and across all perspectives of phenomenology, there is a common understanding that the philosophical assumptions are stated as: the study of lived experiences of persons, the view that these experiences are conscious ones (Creswell & Poth, 2018; van Manen, 2014), and the development of descriptions of the essences of these experiences, not simply explanations or analyses (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological qualitative research is suggested to be the most similar to the counseling field in that it allows people to share their stories, and thus, is most compatible with the process and practice of counseling (Haase & Johnston, 2012; Jorgensen & Brown-Rice, 2018).

Participants

In order to be able to speak about post-migration experience as an adolescent asylum seeker, criteria to be able to participate in the study included (a) participants who were currently seeking asylum in the United States, (b) being between the ages of 13-16, (c) having lived in the United States for three calendar years or less, (d) Spanish speaking, (e) in the defensive asylum process, (f) accompanied, and (g) had phone or internet access.

The recommended range for the sample size in a phenomenological study is 5 to 25 participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Polkinghorne 1989). For IPA, the recommended sample size ranges between 2 to 25 participants (Alase, 2017). Generally, Creswell (2013) has suggested a maximum of 10 individuals in a phenomenological study. Therefore, a minimum of five participants, but no more than 10 participants, was the aim for the current sample; yet the complexity of the sample needs to be taken into consideration. Smith et al. (2009) highlighted that “IPA studies are conducted on relatively small sample sizes, and the aim is to find a homogenous sample” (p. 3). Smith and Osborn (2007) stated that “There is no right answer to the sample size. It partly depends on several factors: the degree of commitment to the case study level of analysis and reporting, the richness of the individual cases, and the constraints on is operating under” (p. 56). The importance of the sampling is the quality of the information that is received rather than the quantity in terms of the sample size, and the depth of meaning that is explored in the interviews within the sample and less about how many participants (Fusch, & Ness, 2015).

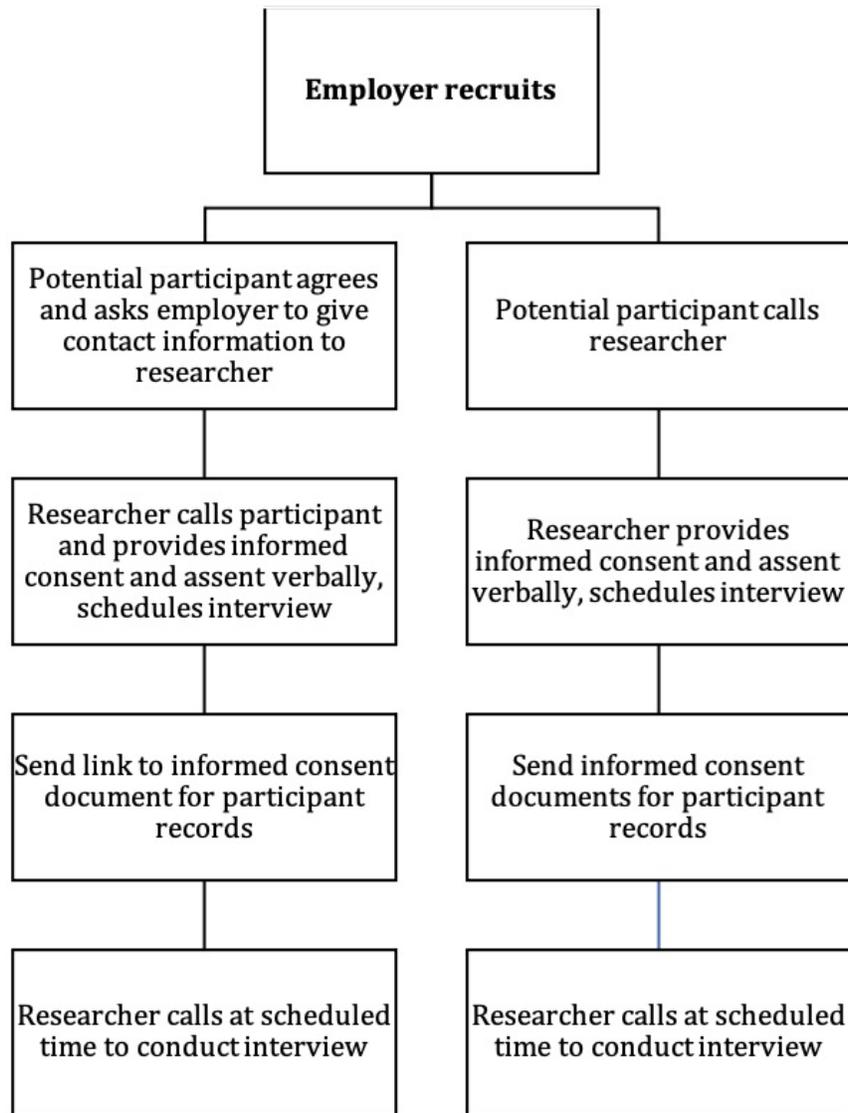
The final sample in the current study included five participants. All participants were accompanied arriving into the United States, currently going through the defensive asylum process, and Spanish speakers. The sample consisted of an age range of 13-16, with an average

of 14.2 years old. Other descriptors of identities collected from the participants were: two of the participants were from Honduras, two were from El Salvador, and one participant was from Mexico, and three were males and two were females. The range of living in the United States was from 1 year and 5 months to 2 years and 7 months, with an average of 2 years. All of the adolescents had a lawyer for their asylum case.

Procedures

An IRB was submitted prior to beginning data collection, to ensure guidelines for conducting ethical research are followed. A combination of purposeful convenience and snowball sampling was utilized. Participants were recruited by one organization known to the researcher. An employee of this organization provided an email indicating their interest and agreement to be included as a study recruitment site. This letter was provided to the IRB. Once IRB approval had been received, the employee (i.e., recruiter) received the recruitment criteria to reach out to potential participants. The recruiter disseminated recruitment information to any clients or individuals that they believed met the criteria for the study (see Appendix A). Recruitment information included the researcher's contact information. The employee of the organization and potential participants were asked to forward the study invitation materials to other individuals who may also have met criteria, thus utilizing snowball sampling to attract more participants (Albase, 2017). There were two avenues on how the potential participants moved forward with volunteering to participate in the research study after being contacted by the recruiter (see Figure 1). This included (a) participant agrees to participate and asks the employee/recruiter to provide their contact information directly to the researcher or (b) the potential participant directly calls the researcher with the information provided to them by the recruiter.

Figure 1. Two avenues for access to potential participants after contact with the recruiter



Once participants indicated an interest through one of the two avenues noted above in Figure 1, the informed consent and adolescent assent documents were verbally provided over the phone to potential participants (see Appendix A). During this verbal consent/assent process, participants were asked for verbal confirmation of consent or assent, before scheduling the interview. This verbal consent/assent process helped to ensure that participants were informed

about the study and were mindful of confidentiality of participants who were still seeking asylum, resulted in the least amount of identified information collected (see Appendix A). The parental informed consent provided full disclosure of the intent and reason for the study, included the criteria for the study, offered in Spanish - the preference of parent/legal guardian. The parental informed consent provided information regarding the incentive of a \$10 Amazon electronic gift card for the adolescent participants that fully completed the interview and the researcher's contact information. During the consenting process, the researcher asked participants' legal guardian to provide their own phone number for the researcher to contact them for the interview (if they consented to allow their child to participate). Once parents or legal guardians consented, the researcher provided the youth assent verbally to the youth participant, which contained similar information to the parental informed consent.

After verbally agreeing to participate in the study, participants scheduled a day and time for the interview with the researcher and selected whether they would like the interview to be conducted via phone or face-to-face using video technology. Two of the four participants did their interview right after they verbally consented. The researcher mentioned to participants while scheduling the interviews to be in a space that is quiet and as private as possible. A space that provided privacy and confidentiality to participants and be easier to minimize background noises. Interviews were audio-recorded, with the researcher being the sole interviewer for all interviews. The next time the researcher contacted the participant was for the scheduled semi-structured interview with the given contact number from the parent/legal guardian and adolescent or was done right after the verbal consent from participant.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected via semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B), which occurred in one of two potential formats: via phone or online video. The format of the interview determined based on the preference of the adolescent and family and access to phone or video. Semi-structured interviews are the most frequent data collection method used in IPA since semi-structured interviews permit the researcher and participant to engage in dialogue (Smith & Osborn, 2007). Researchers have suggested the time frame for interviews for IPA be between one to one and a half hours, with only one interview (Alase, 2017); however, Smith and Olson (2007) advised that the time frame might be too long for young children. The age range for young children is not specified in the literature, thus it is unclear if adolescents who are 13 to 16 years old would fall within this “young children” definition, based on previous research. So, with the consideration of the interviews being conducted with adolescents, the researcher aimed for the interviews to be approximately 30 to 60 minutes. The semi-structured interview started with discussing the interview procedures, including a description of the process of the interview, introduction of the researcher, mentioning to participants that the researcher may take notes to just help her stay in check with what is being said, and reminding the participant that the interview will be audio-recorded, as mentioned on the informed consent and youth assent. The initial script and the semi-structured interview questions were provided by the researcher verbally in Spanish, as preferred by the participant. Each participant was asked to respond to the interview questions in Spanish or English, based on their preference. The researcher took field notes before and after each interview.

Given that the semi-structured interview and script were offered in Spanish, the interview and script was looked over by an expert, who was also the second translator and transcriber for

the current study. The identified expert was a cultural and language broker, a native Spanish-speaker and fluent in English, had some knowledge in qualitative research, and had worked with adolescents, and specifically with immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. She looked over the consent forms, interview script, and interview questions to make sure the questions are culturally appropriate and capture what the researcher is asking.

The interview was semi-structured, and consist of 16 open-ended questions, with additional probing questions (see Appendix B). The interview questions started out with questions to build rapport, which was suggested to be the most important thing at the beginning of the interview with a participant to receive good data (Alase, 2017; Smith et al., 2009). Interview questions were developed to gather information on an individual's migration and post-migration experience in the United States, and to gain more information on adolescent experience of identity and concept of self in a new country.

At the end of the interview, each participant was reminded that they may be contacted again for explanations of themes that arise from information provided during the initial interview via phone and verbally discussing themes to participants. Participants were asked where to send their \$10 Amazon electronic gift card and was sent immediately after the interview. All interviews were audio recorded. Once interviews were completed, they were translated and transcribed. The second translator assisted with translating and transcribing from Spanish to English.

Data Analysis

Interpretive phenomenological analysis' (IPA) was used to analyze the interview data collected to identify emerging themes. The purpose of IPA is understanding how individuals make sense of their experiences as an interpretative activity best accomplished through the

detailed examination of particular cases within phenomena of interest (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith et al., 2009; Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999). During the analysis, IPA involves the interpretative relationship with the researcher and the transcript (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

The first step for analysis, as advised by Creswell (2013), is for the researcher to “first describe their own personal experience with the phenomenon under study. The researcher should begin with a full description of their own experience of the phenomenon” (p. 193). After identifying and describing the researcher’s own experiences with the phenomenon, an in-depth analysis using IPA occurred on each participant’s transcript initially to identify emergent themes within each individual interview. There was a second coder during this analysis process that engaged with the researcher in this coding process.

In IPA, analysis occurs by reading each individual transcript, and coding with the focus shifting back and forth from the key claims of the participant, to the researcher's and second coder’s interpretation of the meaning of those claims. First, each transcript was read independently by both coders. In the reading of the first interview, the researchers identified initial codes (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999) and met to discuss and came to consensus. During this process, the researcher and second coder read the first interview multiple times, identified codes, met to discuss the codes, as well as determined if the codes stood alone or if they clustered, led to identification of superordinate and subordinate themes (Miller, Chan, & Farmer, 2018). The researcher and second coder collaboratively selected themes based on prevalence and relevance and were transparent about decision-making throughout the analytic process (Miller et al., 2018). After the first interview was coded, this same process occurred for each subsequent interview. The researcher and second coder read them independently but discussed the codes together as they arose. The researcher built in steps to ensure trustworthiness while conducting

the analyses with the second coder. After the interviews were coded and initial themes were identified and agreed upon by both coders, an auditor (i.e., faculty dissertation chair) was utilized at the completion of this initial stage of data analysis to determine if the themes that were created aligned with the participant interviews. This process was repeated for each interview, finally followed by cross case analyses (Miller, Chan, & Farmer, 2018) to explore all themes across participant interviews to determine if there were shared experiences during post-migration for asylum-seeking adolescents (Smith & Rhodes, 2015) upon review of the auditor. This was done by combining all themes that emerged from individual interviews and examined to see if superordinate themes emerged that were aggregated across multiple interviews. After shared themes emerged, interviews were reread to determine if any additional statements made during the interviews aligned with the emergent, shared themes. The auditor was used at the completion of this stage as well, to verify if the final shared themes aligned with participant interviews. Finally, the researcher reached out to members who approved an additional reach out, to engage in member checking. Participants that answered or reach back out were provided the larger themes, and description of the themes, and asked those participants if those themes aligned with their post-migration experience in the participants' preferred language.

Trustworthiness of the Data

There were many methods that were used in the current study to ensure trustworthiness of the data. Specifically, as noted above, a second coder coded with the researcher to decrease the researcher's subjective bias entering into the development of themes. Additionally, an auditor assisted in confirming that the identified themes are grounded in participant interviews. And member checking after data analysis was used to validate that emergent themes are accurate in representing participants' experiences. Additionally, bracketing was used throughout the study to

assist the researcher in remaining objective and setting aside any personal experiences as much as possible during the data analysis process to best understand the participants' lived experiences in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994) which will help to increase trustworthiness.

Bracketing

The two coders met prior to the data collection to talk about personal experiences and identities that could cause a challenge to the data collection process and will discuss ways that the team could collaborate in order to maintain impartiality. The primary researcher was the interviewer and wrote field notes and reviewed field notes to bracket personal reactions, experiences, and remain objective.

The Primary Researcher

The primary researcher identifies as a Cuban-Iranian American woman. She comes from a family of immigrants and asylees, is bilingual in English and Spanish, and has strong opinions on the current policies that are put upon asylum seekers and has clinical experiences with clients seeking asylum. She recognizes that her own identities may influence her lens and the analysis of the data. More specifically, the primary researcher was born and raised in the United States and her mother first sought refuge in Mexico from Cuba as a child before moving to the United States. The researcher grew up hearing stories of language barriers, identities, and hardship due to the fast need to adjust to a new country due to forced migration. These stories were also shared by clients in her clinical work. The researcher's clinical work has mostly focused on children and adolescents that are part of families of immigrants or who have migrated to the United States that were English and Spanish speakers, asylum seekers, immigrants, and refugees. The primary researcher acknowledges her beliefs of the social and political injustice that has

been historically placed on asylum seekers but recognizes that the policies in the United States today are much harsher than they historically have been. Due to these experiences and identities, bracketing becomes important for the researcher. Therefore, the researcher will bracket before the interview process with the second coder and continue to bracket throughout the research process by writing field notes before, during, and after conducting interviews with participants and analyzing data. The goal of bracketing was to acknowledge and become aware of any emotional reactions that could come up when meeting with a participant that might remind her of a client or family member.

Limitations

Given that the required criteria to participate in this study includes speaking English or Spanish, this can rule out asylum seekers from other countries. Participants that meet the particular criteria for this study could have different post-migration experiences than individuals from other countries that are asylum seekers. While the goal is not to generalize the findings from this study but to better understand adolescents' experiences of the post-migration experience, and the influence this may have on their identities, it is acknowledged that individuals from different countries may have different experiences.

Intersectionality Theory is also being used to frame this study. Intersectionality Theory acknowledges all identities of individuals simultaneously. Since this researcher is using an Intersectionality Theoretical framework, it is acknowledged that even though the participants have experienced the same phenomenon of going through the asylum process, the adolescents' identities being considered simultaneously could be more difficult to identify emerging themes when it comes to different populations that are seeking asylum in the United States. Also, the

researcher is only seeking individuals from the southeastern region of the United States, which limits experiences others may have in other states or areas (i.e., rural vs urban locations).

The sample size is small due to using IPA; however, a small sample size is the intent when using IPA in order to have a homogenous sample related to a specific phenomenon (Smith & Osborn, 2007) and to gain a greater depth of understanding related to the meaning the participants make of their experience - in this case the post-migration experience of an adolescent seeking asylum in the United States. Creswell (2013) stated, “the important part is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it” (p.161). As noted above, while the sample size is small for IPA, the goal of this methodology and study is not to generalize to asylum seekers but instead to gain information and understanding about the meaning asylum-seeking adolescents make of their post-migration experience which can assist in providing effective mental health interventions or advocating for policy changes.

Finally, policies play a large role in how the asylum seekers are being treated and the policies are constantly changing, so the experiences due to policies could result in asylum seekers having different post-migration experiences depending on the policies being implemented. The constant change of policies towards asylum seekers may also create distrust from the population to the researcher. It is acknowledged that the researcher is not able to spend much time in the field to gain participant trust, given the difficulty in accessing this population as well as given the current context of a health pandemic. However, providing personal information and introduction of the researcher during the informed consent and assent process, as well as at the start of the interview will hopefully begin bridging this connection and creating trust, albeit this introduction of self cannot be a true replacement for time in the field. On a final note, what

asylum seekers might view as a concept of self and their experiences due to policy changes could possibly not speak to post-migration experiences with future policies due to extreme hardship that individuals seeking asylum are going through right now due to newer policies that have been implemented in recent years.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in order to evaluate components of the research process proposed in the current study. The pilot study will answer the following research questions:

- (1) What is the length of time of the semi-structured interview?
- (2) What is the experience of the participant during the interview process? More specifically,
 - (a) are the questions relevant, applicable, and understandable, (b) was there a sense of trust from participant towards the researcher during the interview, (c) was the recruitment transcript that the researcher verbally stated in the beginning of the interview something that influenced the experience of the adolescent (i.e., comfort, trust, and connectedness), and (d) did the interview questions result in discussion about the adolescent's identities and experiences in the United States post-migration?

Participants

Three youth participants were included in the pilot study. The participants were adolescents seeking asylum in the United States from a predominantly Spanish speaking country in Central America. The participants are siblings and met the criteria for being in the United States for less than two years, were currently going through the asylum process, spoke Spanish or English, and had technology for all interviews to use video, as this was the stated preference of the youths' mother. The first participant was 12 years old, the second participant was 10-year-old, and the third participant was 20 years old. While one participant was outside of the 12- to

17-year-old criteria for the main study, all youth were still within adolescent age according to ACA (2018).

Procedures

An employer at an agency that works with individuals seeking asylum in the United States reached out to one family to inquire if they would be interested in participating in the pilot study. The family consented to the employer that they would be interested and had three adolescent youth that met the stated criteria for inclusion. The parent asked the employer to provide the researcher with her contact information. The researcher then reached out to the participants' mom, since she stated she had potential interest in her sons' participation in the study when she received information about the pilot study from the employer at the organization.

The initial contact occurred between the researcher and the mom of the three participants via internet video. During the initial contact with the parent, the researcher provided verbal information about the purpose of the pilot study to the mom and was able to receive verbal consent from the mom for the youth who were under the age of 18 years. Once mom provided verbal consent, the researcher stated she would need to receive verbal assent from the adolescent participants (mom's children) who were under the age of 18 years old, and verbal consent from the 20-year-old youth. The researcher stated to the mom that the oldest youth was considered an adult, thus, her consent was not needed as a legal guardian, and the researcher would need his consent directly. The participants' mom stated her understanding of what was being asked of her children for the pilot study, and then the researcher and mom scheduled a date and time for all three interviews to occur. The interaction with the mom and all three semi-structured interviews were in Spanish. The three interviews with youth participants were conducted via video on the phone as well. All three interviews were conducted consecutively on the same day. During the

first interview, the first participant (12-year-old male) was given a private space at his home for the interview, and each participant traded places once the other participant was done. The researcher provided information to the participant about the researcher and the purpose of the study, and then asked for verbal assent from the participant before beginning. The 12-year-old verbally assented to be in the pilot study. The researcher conducted the interview with the first participant and then asked the youth the follow up evaluative questions at the end of the interview protocol (see Appendix C). This same process was applied for the second participant (10-year-old male) as well. The third participant (20-year-old male) gave his consent before moving forward with the interview protocol and also provided feedback during the evaluation questions at the end as well.

Findings

The first participant's duration of time for the interview was about 30 minutes, the second participant was about 60 minutes, and the third participant's duration of the interview was about 40 minutes. The average time for the semi-structured interviews was about 45 minutes.

Some main themes arose after looking over all three participants' responses to the interview questions. The first main research question inquired if the interview questions were relevant, applicable and understandable (research question 2a). Throughout the interview process, and during the follow up evaluative questions, it was noted that there was some confusion on the word "identities", resulting in a few interview questions needing clarification on what was being asked when the researcher used the word "identities" and "new identities". The participants were given examples on what identities meant during the process of the interview, and the importance of stating their nationality was for all three participants when once

they were given examples of identities. The examples provided during the interview by the researcher seemed to help participants understand what was meant by the word “identities.”

In regards to whether a sense of trust was developed from participant towards the researcher during the interview (research question 2b) and whether the verbal consent/assent and introduction of the researcher at the beginning of the interview was something that influenced the experience of the adolescent (i.e., comfort, trust, and connectedness) (research question 2c), the participants stated to the researcher that they were comfortable and were clear on what they were being asked to do for the pilot study and understood information provided about the confidentiality of their responses. The participants also stated that they became relaxed when answering the first couple of casual questions, which indicated that the structure of the interview was successful at building rapport. Lastly, the participants stated that they trusted the researcher since their mom already spoke to the researcher and felt comfortable talking to the researcher.

Another theme that came up was that all participants mentioned their migration process to the United States and the experiences they had with the system that speaks to the Intersectionality Theoretical Framework in referencing power, privilege and oppression in social problems. This theme was also related to the research question regarding relevance and applicability of the interview, and ultimately provided important content that related to post-migration experiences and information regarding identities. This theme led to another theme that emerged when participants talked about their identities, which was the assumptions made by the participant about the message the system gave them, which was that they did not belong in the United States.

In the follow up evaluation questions, the researcher asked if there was anything more about their experiences or if there was another way the researcher could have asked a question

they were confused about, all participants stated no, as they understood what was being asked when the researcher clarified a few times during the interview process (e.g., providing examples of “identities”). The participants were the most engaged during the time of asking the participants on their migration process and once they arrived in the United States (research question 2d).

Implications

The range of time for all three participants were from 30 to 60 minutes. Therefore, this time frame will be kept as the expected time frame that interviews will take for each participant. However, it is stated in the informed consent and assent that the interview will range from 30 - 60 minutes, unless the individual needs more time to answer the questions, at which point more time will be given.

Due to the feedback from the evaluation, a few interview questions were changed. The participants understood when the researcher provided examples of what “identities” meant after asking the question. The original interview question “What are your current identities (for example, your race, country of origin, nationality, social class, religion, age, etc.) that are the most important that you tell others?” was modified to “What are your current identities that are the most important that you tell others? (for example, your race, country of origin, nationality, social class, religion, age, etc.)”. Another question that was reworded was, “Do you notice carrying the identity or label of an asylum seeker with you in the United States? If so, what is that like?” was reworded to “What have you noticed living in the United States being a person looking for asylum?” The probing question was removed and deemed to not be needed since pilot study participants answered the first question after the researcher clarified what it meant.

The resultant question that the researcher used to clarify allowed all three participants to answer the probing question.

Additional changes to the interview protocol included reordering the question, “What message do you think the system is sending (border patrol, state officials, ICE officials, immigration detention)?” which was moved to right after the process of migration since all three mentioned a few examples of the system during this point in the original interview protocol. Finally, the researcher removed the question at the end of the interview script about contacting the participants post-interview for additional questions or member checking since it is in the informed consent and assent that legal guardians and youth agreed to.

In regard to the trust that was mentioned above from the participants, the researcher will continue to provide an introduction to herself, as well as verbally provide the informed consent and assent to participants before starting the interview protocol, as this seemed to provide enough information for all three of the participants to willingly share their post-migration experiences.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of adolescents seeking asylum in the United States. In Chapter III, the methodology for this qualitative study was provided. Five participants engaged in semi-structured interviews about their experiences and reflections of their processes of being an adolescent seeking asylum in the United States. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the data and identify themes that captured the participants' lived experiences.

Research Question

The research questions for this study were: What are the post-migration experiences of adolescents between the age of 13 - 16 seeking asylum in the United States? And what are the shifts, if any, in perception of self since seeking asylum?

Overview of Themes

Five superordinate themes emerged, with additional five subordinate themes within two of these superordinate themes. Additionally, one superordinate theme was identified a priori - given the focus on youth identities in research question 2 in relation to the Intersectionality Theory framework. Five subordinate themes emerged within the Identities superordinate theme. The superordinate and subordinate themes include:

- Pre-migration Trauma
- Transit Migration
- Mandated Detention, including:
 - Family Separation
 - Uncertainty of Deportation

- Detention conditions
- Family Dynamics, including:
 - Loss
 - New Relationships
- Identities, including:
 - Salient Identities
 - Asylum Seeker
 - Acculturation Stressors
 - Responsibilities
 - “We Are Not Welcomed”
- Resilience, Hope, and Relief

The first four themes that emerged describe aspects of the migration experience from before the adolescents started their migration process to when they arrived in their current location in the United States. The fifth theme, *identities*, emerged in regard to how the adolescents felt about themselves, what identity they were told was theirs, and how adolescents felt about experiences, including stressors, associated with their identities. The final theme, *resilience, hope, and relief* emerged from what the adolescents were experiencing currently in their post-migration experience. Pseudonyms were used for all adolescents.

Pre-migration Trauma

The adolescents mentioned what they did prior to coming to the United States and how life was in their home country. When the researcher asked adolescents about their reasoning for seeking asylum in the United States, pre-migration trauma from community violence emerged from all adolescents. Pre-migration trauma is referenced in this study as traumatic experiences

that occurred prior to resettlement (Stuart & Nowosad, 2020). Community violence exposure was the reason that most of the adolescents stated coming to the United States and seeking asylum. Some community violence exposures that were mentioned were: a family member was attacked, a family member was assaulted, a family member was harassed, and the same family member's life was threatened, hearing about violence in their community, and an overall violent and dangerous environment.

Some adolescents reported their families' motivation for migrating to the United States was connected to escaping threats or acts of violence directed towards their family members, most of which seemed to be their biological mothers. For example, Carlos shared that "A family problem. They tried to murder my mother" was the reason for leaving his home country when asked why he was in the United States seeking asylum. Similarly, Alejandro described "[we came to the United States] To protect my mom. My mother was assaulted. The following morning, we suddenly left and my mom told me to go outside. The things that were done there, there was crime stuff that gave you fear." When asked how he felt while sharing the pre-migration experience with the researcher, Alejandro stated, "Weird, I find it hard to talk about it."

Sofia shared her reason for seeking asylum in the United States. Sofia stated being unaware at first as to why they moved so many times in her home country and then her mom eventually disclosed to her that she was being stalked and threatened to be killed by the same person that killed her brother (Sofia's uncle):

I would move around a lot. I didn't know why I would move around a lot. Because my mom would say that we should move, and yes, then we would have to move from one place to another....When we came here my mom explained very well. She told me that we came here because of my uncle's death. And she explained to me exactly why we moved from one place to another in Honduras. And it was because they threatened her very often, so she had to move from place to place.... They threatened her a lot in the

process. They threatened her and they would tell her that they were going to kill her. The person who killed my uncle, would threaten her a lot. And that's why we would move.

Maria and Juan reported an overall dangerous environment prompted their family's immigration. For example, Maria stated, "my reason for coming to the United States to seek asylum was because my entire country was very dangerous, and my uncle was a police officer and my family (on my father's side) received continuous threats because of my uncle's position. I heard about the violence in my community and to my family. My father witnessed community violence, but I never did. That is why I came with him to the United States under his asylum application." Juan also described an overall dangerous environment in his home country that was the motivating factor for him and his mother to leave and come to the United States to seek asylum:

We left because in El Salvador things were dangerous and we could do some things outside in the street, but we could just not leave because something would happen is how it was and there are a lot of gangs, (pause) well there are a lot of gangs in El Salvador.

Juan expressed the need to leave El Salvador because of everyday gang related violence. He was not able to just go outside in general whenever he wanted, since him or his mother could incur any violent consequence from gang members.

Family Dynamics

All adolescents mentioned systemic adjustments or shifts in their family systems since arriving in the United States. This includes new relationships forming, reuniting with family members who had previously migrated to the United States, as well as leaving family members that are still in their home country. Thus, this theme has two subordinate themes: loss; new relationships.

Loss

Loss emerged from some adolescents. Loss included: leaving family from home country, missing family, and talking about family when stating what they did before migrating to the United States. All five adolescents noted family members and relationships they left behind in their home country.

Maria described what she did when she lived in El Salvador. She expressed sadness when talking about missing her family, especially her leaving her mother behind when migrating to the United States. “When I was in my country, I studied. My mom had two babies, small, like two or three years old when I came [to the United States]. So, I’ve always liked babies, so I’d take care of them a lot. I miss my country a lot because my mom is over there. So, I didn’t want to come [to the U.S.] anymore because my mom.” Similarly, Carlos also shared how he felt devastated about leaving his older brother in Honduras. He talked about his older brother as his father figure when he and his mother left for the United States. Carlos stated that his father had moved to the United States prior to him and his mom moving, it seemed to be a new family starting over, living with his father, mother, and newborn brother without his older brother. He stated,

My dad was living in the United States when we came. I have an older brother that lives in Honduras and a really little one here. It’s really strange not living with my older brother because we were used to living together always. But when I came, my older brother wasn’t at home very often because he was at the university. And while my dad wasn’t there, he was like my dad, so it was like, it did hurt me a lot when I came.

Juan described what life was like before moving to the United States. Juan talked about being with his grandmother most of the time while his dad was working. He only came with his mother, so he left his father and grandmother back in El Salvador. He also stated how he felt about leaving his grandmother, and that she visited him and his mother recently and will be coming to the United States soon. For example, “I was with Mamita but my mamita is coming

back to the United States.... My mamita is my mother's mother, my grandmother. And I would spend time with my dad and when he went to work, I would be with her. I miss her. Right now, she is in El Salvador, but she will be coming back soon to the United States." Sofia described that she felt strange leaving her home country to the United States since she had never left her country and her family. "The immigration process was a very strange experience...I had never been away from my country, from my family. I felt happy and weird. I felt happy, because I was able to meet some of my family that I didn't know, my aunt & uncle on my mom's side."

New Relationships

Some of the adolescents described acquiring or establishing new relationships through the post-migration process. Some relationships are noted as tumultuous (e.g., Maria with her father), while others are noted as joyful (e.g., Maria and Sofia with extended family members).

Maria expressed a tumultuous relationship with her father, the person she came with to the United States. She expressed the absence of her father back in her home country and that she came with him 2 years prior to the interview to the United States since he was the only one that was able to come with her to seek asylum. Maria stated, "well, it's just that it's my dad. It's just that when I was in my country, he was never like...I never really lived with him, he never really supported me in anything, so well I just came here with him, because he's the only person that I could. I haven't had a good relationship with my dad since I was born, I think my mom and him separated, so I didn't really relate to him, only with his parents, my grandparents, but I am with him now. And even here, no, I don't have a very close relationship with him. The post-migration has been a little hard because well...I didn't have a lot of support from my dad a lot. I have been working for myself, If I wanted something, I had to buy for myself. I never had my dad's support

like “Do you need anything? Do you want to talk about anything? How is school going?” He never asked me about anything.”

Maria then described what it was like at first when she moved to her current location when she met her father’s side of the family and how she feels about them currently has changed from when she met them. She stated,

With my family that I came to, I had never lived with before. It was something new and I didn’t know what I was going to do or what was going to happen to me. At first, I didn’t have a lot of trust, with who to talk to, or things like that. Because my family is my dad’s family, and I was always living with my mom’s family. So it was like, like family that I had never lived with, so it felt weird. Later, I gained trust a little, not trust that I could tell them everything that happened to me, but trust that I could start talking with them. But now I talk to my cousin and I have a lot of trust with her, I talk a lot with her about the things going on for me, and she understands me a lot.

Sofia also described how she felt with her new relationship with her family she recently met; however, it was a positive experience since the beginning when she arrived at her current location, she was happy to have family from her mother’s side and create new relationships. For example, Sofia stated, “when I arrived here [where she is currently living], it was a joy because I didn’t know my uncles on my mom’s side. It was a joy to meet them.”

Transit Migration

Transit migration emerged from all of the adolescents, which describes the experience after the adolescents left their home and during their process of moving to the United States, potentially stopping in other countries. Some adolescents felt uncertain about proceeding with their migration journey in Mexico before reaching the United States, having specific moments that they questioned migrating. In addition, all adolescents, except for one, traveled by bus and cars to get to the Mexican and United States border, with some adolescents making many stops and one adolescent describing crossing a river to arrive in the United States.

Maria described her second attempt with uncertainty and anxiety in having another failed attempt in coming to the United States. For example, she shared,

At the beginning I tried the migration journey with my dad, but in Mexico we can't be in Mexico like we can be in here. Well, here I can be in the United States because I'm underage, but in Mexico no. I couldn't be in Mexico because I'm not from Mexico, right. So, we arrived a little far into Mexico, I think it was almost at the US-Mexico border and then in Mexico they caught us and they held us for a few days. It's like the immigration in the United States but Mexico also has their own immigration, too. But the Mexican immigration officers can't let people go through because we are not legal in Mexico. So, we went back to our country [El Salvador] again. So I didn't want to come anymore because my mom, and because we could not arrive. And my dad had an accident over in El Salvador, so things became difficult too, because he drinks. So we came again, but I wasn't that happy about coming because he would say "what will happen?". But then we came and in Mexico we fixed some papers because we got there when a caravan arrived. We were not in the caravan, but we still came with a lot of people. But there was the caravan where a lot of people came walking. So in Mexico the people in the caravans were given an asylum, where they could fix their papers and stay in Mexico. So we did that and with those papers you can fly by plane in Mexico to an airport close to the US-Mexico border since Mexico is like, I think 2 days crossing by bus.

Participants noted that during their migration experience, they were at times uncertain and anxious about continuing their journey to the United States. More specifically, while Maria successfully was able to migrate to the United States during her family's second attempt to seek asylum, she expressed anxiety when they arrived in Mexico during her second attempt since the first attempt to pass through Mexico to the United States failed, resulting in her and her father having to return to their home country. Maria mentions her process of crossing through Mexico:

We sought asylum in Mexico... We stayed by bus while we spent one day in Mexico and we still had two more days to get to the [US-Mexico] border. So, by bus I think, or three days. But then we fixed the papers and used a plane. And that was easier because the first time we came differently, being careful not to be found, and traveling by bus, and things like that. But the second time we did it by plane, so it was easier. We got the border and we crossed, and then immigration caught here in the United States, but they couldn't send us back to our country because I'm underage. So I think because of that I'm trying to fix my status here in the United States. But yes, it was a little difficult. I think things always happen for a reason, and...I don't know.

Alejandro described similar feelings of uncertainty during his transit migration experiences and feeling hopeless, and scared at times about continuing the journey to the United States, versus considering going back to his hometown in the southern part of Mexico due to fear, danger, and safety in transit. He stated,

When we [my mom and I] got to Tijuana, well, we were hopeless because there were a lot of people over there in Tijuana which is a bit more dangerous for visitors like me that are not from that area. We were hopeless since we did not know if we should continue or if we would go back. We were waiting for our turn to cross. Where we stayed in Tijuana, you can hear nonsense at night and at times there were shootings and one morning there was an ambulance that came to pick up someone that was on the floor dead. At times we were still thinking about waiting or going back and at times, my mom would tell me that she did not want to come here and wanted to go back since she did not want to wait in Tijuana. I felt scared since I had never been to Tijuana. I did not really go anywhere much but being in a new, big city I felt weird since they would tell me a lot of things happen about the border and that they deceive people and so I did know at times what could happen to us.

Therefore, Alejandro's depiction of his experience of being in transit was being exposed to new violence and fearing deception when he would reach the border.

When explaining her migration experience to the United States, Sofia stated, "The migration process was a very strange experience. I had never been away from my country and from my family. I felt weird when we started the migration journey, happy and weird. When I came on the trip, I cried a lot in the process...We were coming in cars... and in buses."

Juan described his transit migration process of passing through Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico; however, he was the only adolescent that expressed that he liked the migration process before arriving in the United States since he never traveled before and learned about other cultures. For example, he stated,

When we came here [to the United States], we went to Honduras. And then we left in the car for a long time so I am not sure where, but I think it was Guatemala. And then we took a bus that took us to another part and stayed there overnight. After that, I think we took another bus, no, we then took a truck, then we arrived at a place that we were walking to then after we were picked up by another truck that took us to Mexico I

believe. Then we crossed a river and stayed at a house that night, well, I think it was days, like some days. And then after that, we went by car to another place that looked like a small amount of houses and we arrived with a bag and it was like a desert and that is when the cars arrived from immigration and they took us. (big sigh while saying and they took us) So that was everything.... I liked the migration because I was able to get to know other countries when I knew little. Well it was like tourism, but I learned a few things or like how to say things in other countries that we do not say in El Salvador.

Mandated Detention

Mandated detention emerged from all adolescents. All adolescents were taken by immigration officers to a detention center. Adolescents stated that the food was gross and many noted the cold temperature (through the use of the term “hielera”, which means icebox). This theme has three subordinate themes: family separation; uncertain of deportation; and detention conditions.

Family Separation

Family separation was mentioned by all adolescents except for two. Alejandro, who was 11 years old at the time he was in mandated detention, was not explicit if he was with his mother during his time in the icebox and did not answer or reach back out during member checking for verification. Sofia was 12 years old during this time and never separated from her mother and cousin during the 4 days they were detained in the immigration detention center. All adolescents that were separated, were separated from their biological mother or father during their time in the detention center.

Juan, who was 10 years old at the time of his arrival, was separated the longest out of all youth from his mother. From his descriptions, he separated from his mother for 2 months during his experience at the detention center. He talked about being scared when he was separated from his mother, particularly when he was first taken from her. Right after Juan was separated from his mother, the immigration officer told him that he would reunite him and his mother; however,

the immigration officer took Juan to another location - a detention center that did not include his mother. Juan then realized that the immigration officer intentionally lied to him about reconnecting with his mother so Juan would travel with the officer to a new location. A detention center where he found himself with other kids his age that he did not know. Juan shared this experience:

At the time, for me, I was 10 years old and they told me that if you were younger than 10 years old, you were able to stay with your mom. And they even told me that I was going to see my mom but in reality, they took me to a place that I was going to be by myself with other kids that I did not know. In Texas, they separated me from her. I was scared because I was always with her or with people I knew. I was separated from my mom for 2 months.

Carlos, who was 13 years old at the time, described seeing his mother go in and get questioned once they were taken by the immigration officers to an office, and then him and his mother were bused to the detention center (which he called the dogpound). At the dogpound was where he and his mother were separated. He indicated that he did not see her during the few days they were both detained at the detention center. He stated, "I saw her when she came out to the office, which is when they asked her questions and such, and I saw her again when we went on the bus, and then when we were separated at another place that they call "the dog pound" I think... There, it's like, with wires. There are wires and such. And there, what's it called? There, I kind of saw her one time. Well, I didn't see her until we left from the dog pound. I was there for like 2 days; I think." Maria was separated for the shortest amount of time compared to the other adolescents that were separated. She described her experience of being separated from her father for one day while she was in the detention center, she stated, "My father and I got the border and we crossed, and then immigration caught us here in the United States, but they couldn't send us back to our country because I'm underage. They separated me from my dad for one day. So, I was like I have not spoken with my dad, I haven't spoken to my dad, I don't know

what will happen.” Maria seemed uncertain when she was going to see her dad next, but not worried when she discussed it.

Uncertain of Deportation

Uncertain of deportation emerged from some adolescents during their time in mandatory detention. Some stated that they were not sure that they would be sent back while in the detention center since they witnessed many individuals get deported from there. Some adolescents reported uncertainty and noted lack of information or communication from the detention personnel.

Maria described that she felt uncertain if she was going to get deported when she was in the detention center and was not given any information or communication from the detention personnel. Specifically, she stated, “The immigration officers wouldn’t tell us that they were going to send us to our family members here. They wouldn’t tell us anything, but they did have us there for a day. So I was confused and would say “Are they going to send me to my country?” or “What happened?”. No one would say anything.” Alejandro also expressed uncertainty of getting deported since he witnessed individuals get deported from the detention center and was not sure if he was going to as well. For example, “When we arrived, we were in a van, and we were taken to a detention. When we got to the icebox, I felt weird and thought that I will just wait and see what they tell us, and we did not know that night since many people were taken back if we were also getting deported. They took a lot of people back and I was nervous when we were thinking that would happen to us when we were walking, and they took us.”

Detention Conditions

Detention conditions emerged from all adolescents. The experiences in the detention center, including things like food, temperature, lack of privacy, lack of access to showers, and

treatment by staff. The detention centers were often described as having harsher conditions than follow-up housing arrangements (e.g., “homes”, “asylum”).

Maria described her experience in the detention center when she was separated from her father. She stated, “We were locked up, we could not see what the weather was, or if it was night or day, or what time it was, we didn’t know anything. They did give us food, it wasn’t the best food, but they gave us food. Then they moved us to a different place, which I think it was called... I don’t remember... I think “house”, but it was called a house of something... it was a “house” [a detention center] for immigrants but there were children. And there they gave us a mattress to sleep in, they put us with people our own age, they told us to bathe, they gave us clothes. There it was fine, it was fine, how the immigration officers were at the detention center.” Maria then explained, when answering if she knew the reason for what happened to her (i.e., separating from her dad, sleeping on a mattress, staying with other adolescents her age, being locked up) at the mandated detention, “It was a little...they were doing their job. They weren’t so good or kind, but they tried to be mindful...but they took away everything. When they gave us food many people were kind to us, but yeah. It wasn’t anything too bad.”

Carlos also described the conditions of the detention center when he was separated from his mother and expressed a distaste on how ugly the immigration process is and that individuals were not treated well. Carlos referred to the detention center as a dog pound based on how he, and others, were treated. Carlos explained:

Where I came in, it’s not like you arrive and they treat you well. You arrive and they treat you like you’re not a person. Like you were an inmate, like that. I remember that I arrived to like these rooms, there was glass, and they were cold. And when I arrived, it was only me, and it was only me in that cell. And then with time, more people started arriving, more and more were arriving until it was filled. There were like 20 to 25, I think, there. Then everyone kept leaving, and I was one of the last ones to leave. And I remember that I only saw my mom two times. I saw her when she came out to the office, which is when they asked her questions and such, and I saw her again when we went on the bus, and

then when we were...because there is another place that they call “the dog pound” I think... There, it’s like, with wires. There are wires and such. And there, I kind of saw her one time. Well, I didn’t see her until we left from there. I was there like 2 days, I think. In the dog pound, for food they gave you a burrito, a gross burrito. A gross gross gross burrito. It was like beans and rice. I never ate it. I traded it for an apple or something better. I traded it with one of the kids that were there.

Carlos also shared that he noticed the difference in treatment in the dogpound he received than others from another country. Carlos is from Honduras and he recognized that even though he, and other individuals that were detained, were treated poorly, that a group of Mexican adolescents were treated worse. He stated, “I remember also that in the dog pound, there was an immigration officer that said he was from Mexico, that his parents were born in Mexico. And he spoke Spanish well. He gave us crackers. When it was his shift, he gave us some crackers and he treated us a little bit better. But I noticed that other immigration officers didn’t treat us very well, but they treated Mexicans worse. It was strange, but they were all children, 15- or 16-year-olds.”

Juan explained his time in detention with the greatest detail among all five adolescents. He talked about his experience in the detention center, when he was separated from his mom:

There were 4 zones and 4 hallways and it was like a in each pathway depended on how long, like that. It was a detention center.... every hallway had a room and had a president and when I arrived I was in the first pathway and in the first pathway they had time to go outside to play, but to go outside and play or time to go outside but play inside to play pool, there was a tv, or I do not remember what else. The second hallway I was only there for one night and I was never in the third hallway, I lasted the longest in the fourth hallway. And there, they would take us to a movie theater, but that movie theater had Netflix movies or other times we would go to a big court but for the most part they did not allow us to do anything more just to go outside or if they had balls outside to play with. Andddd.... what else? Oh there was a hairdresser’s but they cut hair very ugly (laughed). And to play, there were people that were more than 14 -16 years old and when they were 18, they moved them to a place with older people. I ate, but the things that they gave us were not good, like the things they gave us were gross. They would give us something good but it was not always. I think I was able to eat in the morning and in the afternoon and that is it because at night they did not give us [food], only two times a day.

Following what Juan described about being at the detention center (without his mother), he then talks about reuniting with his mother and going to another facility, he stated, “After that

[detention center], we [my mom and I] went to another center for 4 months but there we were together. Over there were 4 places that had gymnasiums and were by color. There was red, where they would put music and play things and there was green that was calmer and was more for people that were bigger right, and another one that was more for nursing/infirmary, and the other one was more for gym for the school because also there was a school.” Sofia also described her experiences and how she felt when she was at a detention center. Specifically, she stated, “We withstood a lot of hunger there. They gave out burritos. They gave juice, crackers... and we spent...[laughed] yes, and it was very cold there and we spent 4 days there. We almost never saw the light of day. We were locked in rooms that they had us in, like cages. And the bathrooms were inside there...there...inside the cage... did not have private bathrooms.” Also, Alejandro described the conditions of the detention center they stayed at following the uncertainty that was provided in previous subordinate theme:

The immigration officers took us and we had to wait 3 days inside something that was cold, in the icebox. I feel like that was what it was called since it was so cold inside. I felt weird since when I was there, I was not sure if it was during the day or night since all day it was covered with 4 walls and the light was on all day and a television was making noise like when you know it does not have a signal? So, we had to be there for 3 days and then the immigration officers called us.

Identities

The theme of Identities was developed prior to data collection and analysis and is based in the second research question exploring identities of youth who migrated to the United States seeking asylum. While the theme of Identities was an a priori theme, five subordinate themes emerged that answers both research question 1 and 2. This theme captured how their concept of self and how their identities have influenced their experiences in the United States. This theme has five subordinate themes: salient identities; asylum seeker; acculturation stressors; responsibilities; and “we are not welcomed”.

Salient Identities

All five adolescents talked about certain identities that were important to them. Name and nationality came up for all adolescents. Age did come up for all adolescents except for Carlos, who was 15 years old at the time of the interview. Maria added a bit more information after her age and nationality, she stated, “I’m 16 years old, I grew up in El Salvador, I was studying, I lived with my mom, she always supported me and gave me advice.” Carlos only mentioned, “My nationality and my name are the most important identities to me.” Similarly, Juan stated, “My country, my age and those are always the 2 things that I tell others.” Sofia described, “Where I come from, and I start with my name, and then my age and like that. [Nationality as identity] means everything because I was born there and I was raised there, and... with my family. Alejandro also mentioned the same identities, he shared, “Name, age, and the country of where I am from.”

Asylum Seeker

Asylum seeker emerged from some of the adolescents. Some adolescents were aware of what that identity means in the United States, and some adolescents stated when they were aware of this identity that they now have, rather than an identity they self-identify with. Maria mentioned that she was aware of asylum seeker being an identity she now has once she was in contact with immigration documentations, the immigration court, and a lawyer to represent her case as an asylum seeker:

I realized that I now have to say I am an asylum seeker when they let me go out of immigration, they gave us many papers, where they had our names and we had to go to immigration to one place. We had to present ourselves and with those papers that had our identities and our photos. We had to present ourselves on the scheduled date the immigration court said, because that way they would know where we were living. Those papers, it’s like, you present yourself and you put a lawyer to work on your case and help you fix your asylum status.

Similarly, Alejandro shared about his awareness of when the asylum seeker identity came to be about once he and his mother were in contact with a lawyer. He stated, “I realized that I was an asylum seeker when we went to the lawyer about 6 months ago.” In addition, Sofia also stated that the identity came to be about for her when her mother connected with a lawyer to start the asylum process for their case. For example, she stated, “my mom went to the lawyer, so...she went to do that whole process.” Carlos also shared when he noticed that asylum seeker was an identity of his. He stated, “I noticed because of my mom. I had no idea what I was doing [laughter]. That was when I was in the asylum. When I was in the asylum, I noticed because I remember they gave us a talk about those who ask for asylum and such and that’s when I noticed.” Carlos noticed that he was identified as an asylum seeker when the center was explaining where people’s experiences fit in the process in immigration.

In regards to what asylum seeker means, Sofia, Juan, Carlos, and Alejandro were aware of how asylum seeker is defined in the United States, but did not state what it meant to them specifically. For example, Sofia stated being an asylum seeker to her means “protection”. Sofia just stated “protection” in regards to why individuals seek asylum in the United States. Juan stated, “It’s like a person that comes to seek asylum to live here” when asked what the asylum seeking identity meant to him. Carlos shared, “someone who is looking to take refuge somewhere else because of a problem.” Carlos also answered in a way of what asylum seekers meant when asked what that identity meant in general. Alejandro also shared “For them to protect me here in the United States” Also, Alejandro stated, “At times, people from here do not discriminate because of it.” when asked about what it is like seeking asylum in the United States. It seemed that Alejandro was implying individuals from the United States do not discriminate against him sometimes for being an asylum seeker.

Acculturation Stressors

Acculturation stressors emerged from all adolescents. Some acculturation stressors included: language barrier, access to benefits, discrimination and bullying at school. Maria expressed the difficulty of not being able to legally work in the United States since she was not able to receive a work permit due to her status: “Well it’s like, it’s not so good, because sometimes there are things you can’t do, like drive a car because you can’t get your license. Because, I was also taking driving classes, but you needed a permission here, and I don’t have it yet, so I couldn’t do it. It’s like if you want to work you can’t because you don’t have a work permit, you don’t have a social security number, because when you are 16 years old you can find a job, but you can’t. It’s possible that it happens. I have hope that I can fix my papers here.” Maria also mentioned since arriving in the United States, it has been difficult being a student. For example, Maria stated, “I am a little stressed because of school, a lot of homework, but everything is good.” Juan shared a situation that has affected his experiences in school. He expressed the difficulty in being a student in the United States due to language barrier. He was able to identify a subject that is easier for him due to him not speaking English while studying in a new school with a new culture:

A situation that has affected me at school is that I do not know English, and other things that are difficult.... The hardest material for me is reading since I try to read a lot and analyze things and those are things that I cannot do here in the United States. And now, Mathematics is much easier since it is about numbers because the materials are much easier since I do not need to know English to understand.

Similarly, Sofia also shared the acculturation stressor due to language barrier at school. She stated, “And, when I started school, it was something weird because I didn’t speak English. I didn’t understand what they said to me. Alejandro also mentioned what he does in a student role and also shared the difficulty in the student role due to language barrier and wanting to desire

school more in the United States since he likes school. For example, Alejandro stated, “I like to study because here, well to desire school more here since you know I do not speak much English and I do schoolwork.”

Another acculturation stressor that emerged was from Carlos and Sofia, who expressed feeling betrayed by someone from the same ethnicity in school. For example, Carlos shared:

At school I would ask for help with English and a lot of people didn't want to [help]. And it happens a lot, that even Latinos, that have spent years here and speak English and Spanish pretend they don't speak Spanish not to help you. In class, there was a girl from Mexico, she spoke Spanish, I heard her speaking Spanish in the hall, but she never helped me. I tried with another friend, but she never helped us.

Similarly, Sofia shared “There was a student that was Venezuelan. We were friends and then she started distancing herself from me and said I called her names. She then started saying that we were going to fight and so I told my mom to pick me up and then we told the principal's office so they could find her. It was a negative experience.”

Something that came up for Carlos was the difficulty in the beginning since there were not a lot of benefits and mentioned the barrier of healthcare benefits when being an asylum seeker in the United States. Carlos stated, “In the beginning it was hard. To go to the doctor and things like that, it was too expensive, we didn't have Medicaid or anything.”

Sofia described an acculturation stressor on how she felt about individuals here in the United States perceived individuals like her. For example, “There are a lot of people that don't like for us to come to the United States because we come here seeking a future. And there are a lot of people that...who harm people who come here seeking a future. Because we come fleeing from something that...that a lot of things can happen to us.”

Juan also described his experience in a lack of trust with opening up about experiences that were talked about in the interview since he was worried that it would cause a negative

consequence and make his time at school more difficult than just the material. For example, he stated, “I have not shared my experiences with my friends because of lack of trust. Also, like, also, to not experience discrimination.” Carlos also described how being an immigrant in school in the United States has influenced his experiences and stated, “At school, being an immigrant is really ugly. Because here, people here [in the United States] are like... discriminating, like that. And not knowing English and all that. There is a lot of discrimination because of that [not speaking English].” Carlos then went on that this does not occur anymore for him, but then he added, “a time [when he was discriminated against for not speaking English] when I felt different from the rest”. Alejandro also shared how some experiences in his school had already affected him in the United States for not speaking English and how he felt by the discrimination against him, he stated, “At times, they discriminate against me. At times, when I get home, well, when I am at the school, I feel bad and at times, I cry. They discriminate against me because I do not speak English.”

Responsibilities

Responsibilities emerged from some adolescents. Responsibilities that came up were more on the changes in their roles due to their identities (i.e., gender, age) that are different from when they lived in their country of origin. Juan stated that now he has new responsibilities since his mom works a lot and his age difference from when he was in El Salvador to now. Specifically, when in El Salvador, he was younger and did not allow him to have the responsibilities he has now, or that his mom entrusts in him or expects him to do. For example, Juan stated, “Things I do here that I did not do in my home country is taking out the trash (laughed), at times I cook because back in El Salvador, I did not cook because I was too young (10 years old) and over there it is usually the dads or the moms and now, yes, I cook.” Sofia

described the need to do more at home to help her mother since her mother is working longer hours than she did prior to moving to the United States. She stated, “At home, it’s helping my mom. I help her because she works late, so I have to make dinner and have to clean.”

Alejandro was the only adolescent that expressed a work identity and is not able to do the work that he did in his home country in the United States due to his age, he stated, “Over there was a bit more different, well I hardly went out too much. I helped my family, and we were working to make money. We worked in the fields, to harvest, at times, we would go cut corn, or pull out cilantro... cut garbanzo. It is a bit different here than over there like I can’t work here (laughed).”

“We Are Not Welcomed”

“We are not welcomed” emerged from most adolescents. The adolescents were provided with examples of what makes up the system - border patrol, state officials, ICE officials, immigration detention. All five adolescents expressed their interpretation of what the message from the system gave them with all their experiences since arriving in the United States up until the current day. The initial theme from most adolescents was that they are not welcome in the United States and eventually shifts slightly to uncertainty or acceptance for some adolescents thinking about how they felt currently after being in the United States for 1.5 – 2.5 years. Maria described how she was not sure right now what the system’s message was towards her and it depended on how her asylum case ended. Specifically, “For right now, I am not sure. I hope it is a positive message, but not sure what it is. I am waiting for the status of my application and then see from there.” Carlos stated the message he thought the system was sending when he arrived in the United States. He stated, “I think with most people that I have shared with, that have entered like that, like me, nobody had nice experiences from there. The message there was don’t try to

enter here. It's what they've always tried to do. I think that's the message that they've left, they've tried to leave." Juan felt unwanted when looking back at the detention conditions when he was alone and stated, "We are not welcomed." Sofia described the message she thought she was receiving looking back at her entire experience and stated "Well, that they can give us an opportunity." Alejandro described how he thought the message was from the United States system currently, he stated, "The message was not the same when we arrived. Right now, if we want to be here, we can. That we keep fighting and we can do it."

Resilience, Hope, and Relief

Resilience, hope, and relief emerged from the adolescents in regard to what they experienced by currently expressing positive emotions, including relief, in the face of trauma and adversity and describing future goals and steps despite challenges. Maria spoke about future goals and steps she has taken to overcome barriers at such a short time:

Well, the truth is like, that I'm very enthused for a reason. The truth is that I want to join the military, well I want to join the military, but I can't right? Because I don't have my papers. So, I always wanted to go to the military and based on that it was like... I came here, I was enthusiastic, I entered school, I'm learning English, so it's like a new life, something very different, but then if at any moment I can fix my status, I could go to the military. So it means something very important, because, like... I'm like I want to enter the military, but I can't because I don't have my papers. Because I'm not legal here. But I have hope that I can, that it can happen. So I'm taking military classes right now, they gave me a uniform and everything, but for that I don't need papers right. But when I turn 18, if I want to join, I will need them, I will need them. So, if I don't have them I can't. But that's why I have hope that maybe I can fix them.

Despite resilience and hopefulness expressed, Maria also noted the uncertainty of her future in the US. Maria described, "It's something that I don't know if it will happen, but I wish a lot of it would happen, but I don't know if it will happen."

Maria also demonstrated perseverance in addition to resilience and relief during her resettlement in her current location:

Yes, when I came to school it was like, I wanted to go into class, because I would see a lot of people with the uniforms, and I was like “I have always liked it and one day I want to do it” or “I like it a lot”. So, I tried to take the class, but they didn’t let me because I didn’t speak English very well, because that’s very important right? So the teacher told me “If you learn English, I will let you do it next year.” So I got very excited, I studied a lot, and then they let me in last year. So I have learned a lot there. Well, at work, where I work, I have to speak English. So It was something I have to do because it’s really important. I would say “I need to learn English because it will help me to take the class, and because I need it at work too. But they allowed me to take the class, and I tried to communicate with my teachers. And well, it makes me feel a little excited, a lot.

Carlos implied resilience as he discussed all that he had overcome through the trauma he experienced and the poor treatment he received and anxiety he felt through his migration process. he stated, “At first, it’s hard, because it’s not like there are a lot of benefits [as an asylum seeker in the U.S.]. Because for example, we didn’t know much. But with time, when things are done well with immigration and everything, well... everything comes together with time and everything is better. At this point, I feel normal.” Alejandro stated that when asked about what he had noticed living in the United States being a person seeking asylum, he stated, “we are better, and I am not scared.” Alejandro also expressed relief after he left the detention center and was one of the individuals that were able to pass through, “I felt relieved since now I was not seeing things that I saw in Mexico were a little different.”

Sofia refers to a process of normalization and stability:

Once we arrived, my mom started working and I started going to school. We were fine. I have learned a new language. And I have learned to make friends that don’t speak my same language. The school is big, there are a lot of teachers...teachers that help you. I can get to be a professional. I can have a very high goal, because here, you get the support to achieve those goals.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter 4 was to report the results of the data analysis of interviews with five adolescents seeking asylum between ages 13-16 to answer the identified research questions. Reflections and experiences emerged from adolescents’ descriptions of their lived experiences as

adolescents seeking asylum in the United States. From the data analysis process, a total of ten superordinate themes emerged from these adolescents' interviews describing the lived experiences of learning how it is as an adolescent seeking asylum in the United States and their perception of self since post-migration. In Chapter 5, these themes and results will be discussed with existing literature on asylum-seeking adolescents, identities, and mental health.

Intersectionality Theoretical Framework will be referred to provide further insight to perception of self since seeking asylum and the experiences of the asylum-seeking adolescents. Limitations, implications, and future research will be stated following the discussion of these results.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of the asylum process for adolescents in the United States through an Intersectionality Theoretical Framework. The goal in describing themes of the lived experiences of adolescents going through the asylum process in the United States was to provide more efficacy and intersectional approaches in counseling these youth and their families. This knowledge of transit and post-migration experiences, identities, and roles was to help in developing or implementing effective treatment strategies in counseling, counselors increasing their cultural competence in working with asylum-seeking adolescents and their families, and lead to more ways to advocate for clients. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to identify themes across the shared lived experiences of five adolescents currently seeking asylum in the United States. This chapter goes into detail about the results of the current study, connecting the results to existing knowledge. In addition, the results will be examined within the Intersectionality Theoretical Framework. Finally, implications for practice and limitations and the need for future research will be discussed.

Comparison to Existing Knowledge

There is a dearth of literature in regard to counseling asylum seekers, particularly adolescents in the United States. The themes that emerge from this current study are discussed in relation to literature on pre- and transit migration, mandated attention, and identities.

Migration

Adolescents frequently shared their experiences during pre-migration, transit migration, and when they arrived in the United States. The pre-migration stage is the time before the

adolescents left their country of origin. When adolescents talked about pre-migration experiences, community violence emerged from all participants. Pre-migration trauma is referenced in this study as traumatic experiences that occurred prior to resettlement (Stuart & Nowosad, 2020). This aligns with what Zimmerman, Kiss, Hossain (2011) stated that forced migrants are likely to have experienced traumatic events during the pre-migration stage, which may also affect psychological and physical health throughout their journey.

The pre-migration trauma that emerged from youth in the current study was community violence exposure. Exposure to community violence - generally and directed specifically toward members of the family - was the identified reason most of the adolescents in this study reported leaving their home country and seeking asylum in the United States. Community violence is used to define violence that is enacted on a member or members of the community by someone outside the family unit (Steinbrenner, 2010). Some community violence exposures that were mentioned from the adolescents in the current study include: a family member was attacked, a family member was assaulted, a family member was harassed, and the same family member's life was threatened, hearing about violence in their community, and an overall violent and dangerous environment. Kliewer and Sullivan (2008) stated that exposure to community violence is defined as experiencing, seeing, or hearing about violence in one's home, school, or neighborhood. Sofia's experiences, from the current study, align with Alberto and Chilton's (2018) finding on internal displacement felt by asylum-seeking women and their children. In the current study, Sofia's experiences from Honduras, she mentions being internally displaced and constantly moving with her mom in Honduras due to death threats and harassment. Honduras has a problem with a vast amount of internally displaced people, including women and children. According to the UN General Assembly (2015), the Honduran legal system and public policies

have failed to hold perpetrators accountable for violence against women which has forced women and their children to move to the United States (Alberto & Chilton, 2018). These reports from the UN General Assembly about the status of what is occurring in Honduras aligns with both Carlos and Sofia that came from Honduras due to violence or threats towards their biological mothers.

The two adolescents from El Salvador, Maria and Juan, described an overall dangerous environment that they were running from. Those findings are supported by a 2018 - 2019 report that shared that El Salvador remains one of the most violent countries in the world, with 62 murders per 100,000 people, almost 12 times the U.S. rate (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2019). Two thirds of these murders are gang-related (United Nations, Human Rights Council, 2018). Similarly, Mexico also experienced the deadliest year on record in 2018, and the first three months of 2019 showed a 10% increase in homicides when compared to the same period in 2018 (Staff, 2019). Even though this current study's main focus was post-migration experiences, the adolescents highlighted the importance of acknowledging pre-migration events, as those events are the reasons why the adolescents are seeking asylum in the United States. It is important to note that although these youth may not be in their previous communities, where they identified violence, they are currently still going through the process in making their case to stay in the United States; hence, why the adolescents in the study are still identified in the United States as asylum seekers rather than asylees.

Some of the adolescents in this study appeared to still be affected by what had occurred during their migratory experiences by how they were talking about the experiences and words to describe how they felt during those times. For example, when Alejandro was describing his time in Tijuana while waiting to cross the border to California, he was scared and hopeless due to the

violence him and his mother witnessed there and he shared that his mother was second-guessing going to the United States versus going back to their hometown in the southern part of Mexico. During the interview, Alejandro sounded devastated while talking about his migratory experiences, up until he discussed having left the detention center.

Asylum-seeking adolescents may continue to be emotionally affected by trauma experienced in their home countries, as well as the dangers and violence they often encountered during migration (MacLean et al., 2019; Temores-Alcantara et al., 2015). Furthermore, the very process of seeking asylum may contribute to psychological distress, as these adolescents are required to participate in potentially re-traumatizing asylum interviews or immigration hearings (Schock et al., 2015). The following sections focus on post-migration experiences, which include experiences once arriving in the United States.

Mandated Detention

The theme, *mandated detention*, both supports and extends the existing literature as youth reported about detention conditions align with reports and literature, while adding the experiences from the accompanied adolescents' perspective in what the mandatory detention was like, including family separation for most adolescents in the current study. Results from youth in this study align with Sangmo et al.'s (2020) study on accompanied and unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors' experiences (pre migratory, migratory, and post migratory) as youth in their study also were minors that crossed the southern US border were held in *hieleras*, described as a cold room without windows. These experiences align with what participants said in the current study about being detained in the United States in a place that was cold with four walls, and Alejandro explicitly said they were in a *hielera* during his time in the detention center. In addition, participants from Sangmo et al.'s (2020) mentioned being separated from family members during

their time in detention, which contributed to their feelings of fear. This aligned with how many youths in the present study were also separated for short and long periods of time from their family while in mandatory detention, with Juan being separated from his mother for two months, being scared during his time in detention without his mother. Although most of the participants in Sangmo et al. 's (2020) study did not cross the southern border of the US (like youth in the current study), the ones that did had similar detention condition experiences when detained in the United States.

The processes of being detained that the adolescents described in the current study also aligns with how MacLean et al.'s (2019) study described the process of seeking asylum in the United States when crossing the US-Mexico border. Individuals who seek asylum in the US remain in an immigration detention facility when they first enter the country. This is the first step to determine eligibility for asylum, which can result in an expedited removal, which equates sending the individual back to their home country. This process comes with a lot of fear, which is credible, given the possibility of persecution or torture upon returning to their country of origin (HRF, 2018). MacLean et al. (2019) also acknowledged the controversial policy that forcibly separated children from their parents at the US-Mexico border and how it is detrimental to children's health and wellbeing (MacKenzie et al., 2017) and emphasized the need to do prospective research on the effects of this policy. All of the adolescents in the current study arrived at the US-Mexico border during the Zero Tolerance Policy that was enforced by the previous presidential administration. The current study adds to the lived experiences of adolescents during the Zero Tolerance policy era, especially since most of the adolescents in the study were separated from their mother or father for a period of time as mentioned already. The adolescents provided detail on their conditions in the mandatory detention, especially Carlos and

Juan. Carlos expressed disgust during the interview when talking about the maltreatment he received in what he called the detention center, “the dogpound.” How the detention center is even referenced implies that offices and staff within the detention treated their detainees as less than human. Juan also expressed betrayal and fear when the immigration officer lied to him about reunifying with his mother and was instead sent to an all-boys detention center.

Acculturation Stressors

Acculturation stressors emerged from all adolescents that were talking about what it has been like being an asylum seeker in the United States. Some acculturation stressors included: language barrier, access to benefits, discrimination and bullying at school. Language barrier was the biggest acculturation stressor that was talked about in this theme. This finding is supported by a study that explored the process that Hispanic immigrant parents migrating with a child go through when immigrating to the United States (Gonzalez & Mendez-Pounds, 2018). Gonzalez and Mendez-Pounds (2018) found that when the parents arrived in the United States, learning English was a priority since language barrier was identified as a complex challenge in itself that isolated these individuals from the rest of their community and gave place to a lack of emotional support. This particular study was from a parent perspective; however, the results in the study also aligned with the stressors of the adolescents in the current study starting school, revealing that both the parent perspective (Gonzalez & Mendez-Pounds, 2018) and the youth perspective (current study) are similar; with results from this study adding to the acculturation literature the adolescents’ perspective.

Language barrier was mentioned during the time that adolescents shared their school situations that have influenced their experiences since being an asylum seeker in the United States. For example, the three males (Carlos, Juan, and Alejandro) in the study expressed

difficulty in school due to not speaking much English. Carlos described his experience that being an immigrant in the United States was ugly and spoke in general about people that from the United States discriminate against individuals that are immigrants that do not speak English. Juan expressed the difficulty in reading class since he does not speak English and found an interest in math since it is numbers that he is familiar with. Alejandro expressed sadness when he was talking about being discriminated against and at times mentioned he goes home and cries due to his experience in school. He stated he is discriminated against because he does not speak English. Acculturative stress on refugees is related to their ability to speak the language of the host country (Nwadiora & McAdoo, 1996), the more that refugees can communicate in English, the fewer feelings of stress they experience. This relates to the asylum-seeking adolescents in this study, as they explain their experience of the same acculturative stressor of a language barrier leading to stress. Two of the adolescents, Maria and Sofia, expressed support once they were learning English by their English-speaking teachers. Maria shared that when she first started to study, studying was a little difficult because she couldn't speak with her teachers a lot because she did not speak English, but now her teachers are proud of her because she learned English quickly and she can communicate with them. Maria also stated she was not able to enter JROTC in her high school in the beginning, and the JROTC teacher told her that if she learned English, she could join the following year and that motivated her to study English and then she got in the next year. Sofia also described that she learned a new language [English] since she was in the United States, and she could set a very high goal here [in the United States] since one can get the support to achieve those goals since she had teachers that helped her. This theme was supported by acculturation literature. For example, Dow (2011) stated in the article, *The Acculturation Processes: The Strategies and Factors Affecting the Degree of Acculturations*, that

a common language is essential if communication is to take place, so familiarity with language is the skill that most new arrivals look to acquire.

General support from school has a direct, positive effect on adolescents' health, development, and psychological well-being (Rosenfeld, Richman, & Bowen, 2000; Torsheim & Wold, 2001; Xu, Bekteshi, and Tran, 2010). Similarly, two female adolescents' Maria and Sofia expressed that they felt support from their teachers shortly after they arrived at the new school in the U.S., and the teachers supported them in learning English. This support that the adolescents experienced appeared to bring up hope in how they felt now (during the interview), which is talked about later in this chapter.

Identities

All adolescents in the current study expressed salient identities, none of the identities noted by youth included asylum seeker. All of the adolescents brought up their nationality and all but Carlos stated their age as an identity. Alejandro, Sofia, and Carlos mentioned their name as one of their salient identities. These results are in contrast with Gibson's (2002) study that explored the impact of the war in the former Yugoslavia and the experiences of forced exile on the processes of adaptation and identity development for five Bosnian adolescent refugees who have lived in the United States for at least two years. Gibson concluded the older participants (17-18) were more certain about holding on to the nationality identity they have now and the younger participants (14 years old) were more ambivalent about their current nationality identity. Alejandro (13), Juan (13), and Sofia (14) appeared certain during the interview about their nationality identity, which was the same as their country-of-origin. This could be due to the length of time that the adolescents have lived in the United States in the current study since the maximum length of time in the United States was two and a half years and Gibson's study does

not clarify how long the adolescents were in the United States, only the minimum length of time.

When some participants talked about what the identity of being an asylum seeker meant to them, the adolescents mentioned they understood the definition of what asylum seekers meant but did not necessarily claim that identity as their own - just as something that they have to identify with now during their asylum process. Chambon (1989) suggests that there are two sets of family identities that are created and consequently coexist: (1) the adolescent's own definition connected to its country of origin and (2) a set of new norms defined by the host country (Gibson, 2002). In addition, forming an identity requires an integration of past experiences, current personal changes and societal expectations for one's future into one's self concept (TStroufe, Cooper, & DeHart, 1996). This aligns with the emergent theme of identities from some adolescents in the current study. Youth in the current study shared they were aware of this identity of being an asylum seeker that they now have; however, rather than an identity they self-identify with, they identified "asylum seeker" as a label that they will temporarily have while in the asylum process, and one that others identified them with. For example, when being asked what the asylum seeker identity meant to them, Sofia, Juan, Carlos, and Alejandro were aware of how asylum seeker is defined in the United States, but did not state what it meant to them specifically. Maria, Alejandro, Sofia, and Carlos all described when they had an awareness of the asylum seeker identity. Their awareness aligns with Chambon (1989) on a set of new norms defined by the host country. Maria expressed that she was aware of the label as an asylum seeker once she had contact with immigration documentations, the immigration court, and a lawyer to represent her case as an asylum seeker. Alejandro shared his awareness of when the label as an asylum seeker came to be about once he and his mother were in contact with a lawyer. Sofia also

stated that the asylum-seeking label came about for her when her mother connected with a lawyer to start the asylum process for their case. Carlos stated he was aware because of his mom, and at the asylum center the workers there talked about who was asking for asylum.

When immigrant families arrived in the United States, the need for parents or legal guardians to work to provide for the family took priority and led to a reduced amount of time dedicated to the children (Gonzalez & Mendez-Pounds, 2018). This arose among the youth in the current study as well. Specifically, Juan and Sofia discussed situations affecting them in the United States in needing to do more around the house for themselves since their mothers work a lot more than before they came to the United States. This included more cooking, taking out the trash, and cleaning the house.

Also, Carlos shared his awareness of his identities with the different treatment he was receiving compared to adolescents his age that were from Mexico at the detention center. It seemed important for him to mention that even though he and others were treated poorly, there was a large group of Mexican adolescents that were treated even worse than him and were separated from the larger group. He also stated that yes, there were a few Mexican adolescents that were with him that were not set aside; however, the group he mentioned was much larger than the small number of Mexican adolescents that were in the group with him.

Intersectionality Theoretical Framework

The current findings that emerged both support and extend the existing literature of Intersectionality Theoretical Framework by addressing the identity development that asylum seeking adolescence go through during this age with new identities in a new country with their migration experiences. This includes looking at their identities, new and old, simultaneously in

relation to power, privilege, and marginalization. Particularly, with this current study looking at adolescents seeking asylum in the United States from Honduras, El Salvador, and Mexico.

Intersectionality Theory is rooted in Black Feminism and Critical Race Theory (Carbado, Crenshaw, May, & Tomlinson, 2013), and emerged from the works of Crenshaw and Collins from their legal and sociological academic disciplines (Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018) in which race and gender simultaneously interacted (Gangamma & Shipman, 2018). Since then, the Intersectionality Theoretical Framework has been expanded to include other identities such as: age, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and immigration status (Gangamma & Shipman, 2018). Intersectionality presumes the social, cultural, contextual, political, and historical aspects influencing privilege and oppression (Chan, Cor, & Band, 2018; Gangamma & Shipman, 2018) for the experiences of asylum-seeking adolescents. Under the immigration umbrella, most of the Intersectionality Theoretical Framework literature is on adult women that are immigrants and other racial and ethnic minority groups and LGBTQ+ adolescents in the United States that are not immigrants.

This study adds to the intersectionality literature on how the asylum-seeking adolescents perceived their concept in self by looking at some of their identities simultaneously in relation to their experiences in the United States with power, privilege, and marginalization. Carlos recognized how his identities affected his experiences in the detention center in general and compared to others who had identities that differed from his own. Carlos was expressing that individuals coming to the United States to seek asylum were treated poorly at the detention centers, and at the same time, there was a certain identity that was treated even worse than him which brings up some privilege that he had during his time in the detention center. This brings up how privilege and marginalization can coexist in experiences. In regard to the intersectionality

core tenets, Carlos's experience is supported by the cultural domain of power (one of the four domains of power) that states the importance of providing explanations for social inequalities that result due to lack of fairness (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Cultural domain of power also highlights that there are different treatments within identities using the same societal rules in the name of fairness; however, it is known that the asylum process is not an even playing field for all individuals seeking asylum (Lennox, 1993). Carlos's experiences also align with the relationality tenet since he was looking at his experiences while examining the interconnections of his identities. In Carlos's case, he was being treated differently since he was from Honduras compared to Mexican adolescents that were in the detention center with him.

The political rhetoric of how the U.S. society views asylum seekers goes back to the Reagan administration. Since the Reagan administration in the 1980's, there has been a negative political rhetoric among asylum seekers to justify the start of mandatory detention for asylum seekers (Ghosh, 2019; Macías-Rojas, 2018). Under the Reagan detention policies, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) began arresting and detaining Caribbean and Central American asylum seekers — mostly Cubans, Haitians, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans, many of whom were fleeing Communism or civil wars in their home countries (Macías-Rojas, 2018). The nationalities of most of the adolescents in the study have been put in mandatory detention for the past 40 years when seeking asylum. The policies that started in the 1980's are still reflective in how the adolescents seeking asylum in the current study are being treated in the United States. With the inhumane conditions that the asylum-seeking adolescents went through in the mandated detention center and lack of resources are connected with the social justice tenet since racism and discrimination is still a concern in the United States and more action-oriented approaches need to be done to advocate for asylum seekers.

System's Message

All of the adolescents in this study described their interpretations of the system's message to them when considering all their experiences since arriving in the United States. “We Are Not Welcomed” theme emerged from most adolescents’ responses in the current study on how they interpreted the system’s message that also aligns with the core tenets of power, social inequality, and relationality. Social inequality, as mentioned in chapter 2, brings up the layers of complexity to encourage individuals to move beyond seeing social inequality through race only and class only lenses (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Privilege and oppression could coexist because of the complexities and multiple identities linked to already formed systems of power relations (Smooth, 2013), which is the second tenant of Intersectionality Theory that aligns with this theme of “We Are Not Welcomed”. Power relations are analyzed across the domains of power that are structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal (Collins & Bilge, 2016). These three core tenets of intersectionality align with what the adolescents’ messages were. For example, Maria described how she was not sure right now what the system's message was towards her since her case was still in progress and it depended on how her asylum case ended for her to figure out what the system message was towards her. She also stated that she hoped it was a positive message in the end. Maria’s interpretation of the system's message aligned with the social inequality and relationality core tenet in seeing how it is for a 16-year-old adolescent seeking asylum that is also a female and from El Salvador (the interconnections of her identities) does not get a choice and the decision is out of her control at this point.

Social inequality tenet came up for all adolescents during their migratory experiences. For example, Carlos stated the message he thought the system was sending when he arrived in the United States was that he thought nobody had nice experiences from the mandatory

detention. He added, “The message there was don’t try to enter here. It’s what they’ve always tried to do. I think that’s the message that they’ve left, they’ve tried to leave.” Juan’s response also aligns with the social inequality tenet when he was asked what the system’s message was giving him with all the experiences he went through since arriving in the United States, he responded, “That we are not welcomed.”

Counseling

Intersectionality Theory has been used in Family Therapy with non-asylum-seeking and nonrefugee populations to help center examination of systemic issues of power and oppression, and family relationships (Golden & Oransky, 2019). Melendez and McDowell (2008) discuss the intersections of race class and gender across social locations in therapy with an immigrant couple from Peru; however, there is a need to use intersectional approaches with asylum seekers more specifically. Interventions for working with asylum seekers must similarly include an awareness and acknowledgement of the connection of personal and socio-cultural-political dimensions of asylum-seeking issues (Bala, 2005; Gangamma & Shipman, 2018). This current study adds knowledge about the lived experiences of the asylum-seeking adolescents that need to be addressed in counseling. The current study also brings up experiences that may or may have not been addressed yet in the counseling sessions. Golden and Oransky (2019) mentioned there is a lack of focused discussions of ways to utilize knowledge of these additional identities in therapy. While this study does not explicitly talk about the effectiveness of intersectional approaches, the results conclude the importance on their concept of self, bringing in identities in the counseling room, and an identity such as “asylum seeker” appeared to not be an identity that the adolescents identified with, but something that they understand is given to them in the moment while they’re in the middle of the asylum case.

This leads to using broaching as a tactic to explore salient identities of the adolescents and the ability to consider the cultural factors of the adolescent and within the counselling relationship. Day-Vines et al., (2007) coined the term broaching and they defined broaching as “the counselor's ability to consider the relationship of racial and cultural factors to the client's presenting problem, especially because these issues might otherwise remain unexamined during the counseling process” (p.401). Broaching is also a strategy that reflects a consistent attitude of openness and authentic commitment to learning about others (Day-Vines et al., 2007; Jones & Welfare, 2017; Jones, Welfare, Melchior, & Cash, 2019). There is an acknowledgement of cultural factors during the counseling process that enhances counselor credibility, client satisfaction, the depth of client disclosure, and clients' willingness to return for follow-up sessions (Day-Vines et al., 2007; Sue & Sundberg, 1996). This is important for a community that does not have much access to mental health services and build trust due to their experiences and their age. Even though the importance of building that relationship in the counseling room was not discussed in the study, Juan and Alejandro mentioned not telling their peers about their experiences due to trust issues.

Resilience, Hope, and Relief

It is imperative to give a platform to both sets of narratives: the voices of trauma and despair, and those of resilience and strength (Lavie-Ajayi & Slonim-Nevo, 2017; White, 2004). There are various definitions of resilience. A general definition of resilience is: “positive adaptation, or the ability to sustain or regain mental health, despite experiencing significant adversities” (Sleijpen et al., 2013, p. 2). This definition refers to the psychological condition of individuals who have experienced hardship and trauma (Lavie-Ajayi & Slonim-Nevo, 2017).

Resilience, hope, and relief emerged from some participants when they discussed how they are now in their migration experience. All adolescents have lived in the United States for one and one half to two and a half years. The results captured how adolescents are resilient in the face of adverse situations and how they had hope for what is to come in the future in the United States. Maria emphasized her focus on her education and future career in the U.S. military. That aligned with Sagmno et al. (2020) stated in their study that they saw some of the asylum-seeking youth report resilience promoting factors like education and future careers. Some adolescents also expressed relief in where they are right now, in a safer place than in their home country and throughout their migration journey. For example, Carlos implied resilience as he discussed all that he had overcome through the trauma he experienced and the poor treatment he received and anxiety he felt through his migration process. In addition, Alejandro stated that when asked about what he had noticed living in the United States being a person seeking asylum, he stated that he and his mother are better and he is not scared. Alejandro also expressed relief after he left the detention center and was one of the individuals that were able to pass through to asylum interviewing without being deported, and now in his current location, reflecting that he was not seeing things that he saw in Mexico. These statements from Carlos and Alejandro also aligned with Sangmo et al. (2020) study when the minors seeking asylum stated that they experienced safety and felt more secure in the United States compared to their country-of-origin.

Implications for Practice

The purpose of this study was to describe the experiences of adolescents seeking asylum in the United States and the shifts, if any, of perception of self since seeking asylum. There are important implications for counselors on how to increase their cultural competence specifically to counsel and advocate for asylum-seeking adolescents in the United States. Overall, the

findings of this study emphasize the importance of post-migration experiences that include - mandatory detention, acculturation stressors, the asylum process, identities and roles, and intersectional approaches.

Traumatic experiences emerged from all the adolescents in the study at different times during their migratory journey. One post-migration experience was that all the adolescents experienced mandatory detention since they all crossed the US-Mexico Border. It is important for counselors to be aware of the experiences that are common for adolescents seeking asylum through the defensive asylum process. Blount and Acquaye (2018) mentioned that counselors can initiate culturally-sensitive discussions on the effects of the traumatic experiences the client may have endured and by normalizing some of the symptoms they may be experiencing (e.g., anxiety, fear, distrust; ACA, 2013).

Even though the results of this current study do not explicitly explain a particularly effective approach in counseling, the traumatic experiences during the migratory journey in these adolescents highlights the need for mental health counseling. Adolescents like Juan, the adolescent that arrived into the United States when he was 10 years old and was separated from his mother the longest, for two months. Children are vulnerable to the effects of their environment, and trauma experienced early in life has a significant effect on emotional and behavioral development (Oral et al., 2016). Another study that supports the mandatory detention experiences of the adolescents of the current study. They suggested the youth would especially benefit from early, developmentally appropriate, and specialized interventions to address significant stressors (MacLean et al., 2019).

Implications for Intersectionality Theoretical Framework

In regard to intersectional approaches, this study expressed some salient identities to the adolescents and an identity that turned out to be more of a label, “asylum seeker”. This brings up the importance in broaching identities in the room and provides knowledge on what might be important to bring up. In the results, no adolescent stated one of their salient identities was asylum seeker and instead was only a title given to them. This suggests for counselors to not hyper-focus on the adolescent being an asylum seeker, but allow them to express their salient identities to the counselor when broaching is invited to the counseling room. It seemed that there were some barriers that a small number of the adolescents expressed that were due to their asylum status and other barriers, like language and work, that seemed to also go along with immigrants and refugees’ experiences in acculturative stressors literature. For example, when Carlos mentioned that in the beginning it was hard to go to the doctor and other medical needs since it was too expensive, he and his family did not have Medicaid or any health insurance since they are asylum seekers.

Implications for Counselors

Since the study was in Spanish and translated to English, it is important to acknowledge that the transferability of the findings from this study gears towards Spanish-speaking counselors, as experiences of youth who are fluent in English prior to coming to the United States may have a different migration experience. All of the adolescents in this study started learning English once they started school in the United States. Since the adolescents have been in the United States for a maximum of 3 years, it is important to explore when English was learned and counselors should give clients the choice of language to use in the session if possible (ACA, 2018). In addition, it is important with positionality to recognize the similar and different

identities within the room that could also come up due to encounters that the asylum-seeking adolescent have had during their migratory journey and discrimination within the Hispanic and Latinx community. It is also important to acknowledge the differences within the Spanish-speaking cultures while providing Spanish-speaking counseling services. In addition, many counselors are receiving stories from biased-social media that could influence their views on particular nationalities that are asylum seekers or as a group entirely (Bemak & Chung, 2017). Counselors also need to be aware of political countertransference, which Chung, Bemak, and Kudo Grabosky (2011) defined as a negative reaction toward migrant and refugee populations. It is vital for counselors to educate themselves and be open to asking what the client's experiences are rather than assuming due to political messages by the public and social media networks.

ACA (2018) acknowledged that throughout the history of the United States, there have been policies related to immigration have often reflected prejudicial negative societal attitudes toward immigrants from many ethnic backgrounds and still remain today. In addition, ACA (2018) advises counselors to keep this context in mind since many policies affect the immigration process. For example, mandatory detention for asylum seekers has existed for 40 years in the United States and has had a negative tone about asylum seekers ever since the Reagan administration needed to justify the inhumane conditions that were put on asylum seekers at the time and labeling asylum-seeking individuals as “criminals” and “dangerous classes” (Macías-Rojas, 2018). It would be beneficial for counselors to provide a safe space and start with an open and compassionate approach that allows the adolescent seeking asylum to continue services and feel accepted, respected, and safe. A counselor's duty is to provide multiculturally competent practices. The counselor's self-awareness of positionality could then use broaching with clients. Since clients who identify as racial and ethnic minoritized individuals

have the highest attrition rate after the initial session (Alcantara & Gone, 2014; Jones, Welfare, Melchior, & Cash, 2019), it is encouraged to broach within the first two sessions, as it contributes to establishing and maintaining a trusting and solid therapeutic relationship (Fuertes, Mueller, Chauhan, Walker, & Ladany, 2002; Jones, Welfare, Melchior, Cash, 2019; Knox, Burkard, Johnson, Suzuki, & Ponterotto, 2003).

After providing a safe space for the client to build rapport and broach salient identities and provide an intersectional approach throughout the sessions, cultural empowerment is needed to consider when thinking about what clients would like to work on during their time in counseling. Defined by Solomon (1976), cultural empowerment refers to clients' ability to connect with their own power to advocate for themselves and overcome cultural barriers. Bemak and Chung (2017) described an example that many counselors find themselves working with asylum seekers who are more concerned with mastering skills to adapt to their new community than with addressing their psychological difficulties. They also advised counselors to first resolve their clients' practical problems and frustration regarding access to resources, language training, legal services, medical care, employment, transportation (Bemak & Chung, 2014; Bemak & Chung, 2017). Carlos mentioned about the barriers of addressing those practical barriers requiring counselors to be familiar with acculturation and have a network of resources to foster client's empowerment (Bemak & Chung, 2017). Maria talked about how she was frustrated for not being able to have a work permit since she was providing for herself and was determined to learn English quickly for her job and to understand more in school and to stay in JROTC and during the interview did not refer back or bring back up any migratory situations prior to her current location unless asked. It is highly encouraged for counselors to reach out to asylum seekers by offering psychoeducational services, starting with education about necessities

for survival in a new place (e.g., access to medical services, free legal representation) and discussion of basic strengths and skills for immediate use (Blount & Acquaye, 2018).

Another stressor that was difficult for all adolescents was the difficulty in speaking English in school and how Carlos, Juan, and Alejandro mentioned discrimination due to not speaking English. In the school system, it is important for school and school-based counselors to be aware of the bullying and peer aggression and respond as a much needed resource for newly arrived adolescents and their families (Adams, 2016). Increased efforts to support dialogue on issues of migration, discrimination, and health will provide an added resource to the asylum-seeking adolescent community as they transition to the U.S. educational system (Adams, 2016). In addition, Adams (2016) concluded that the school sector serves as an early entry point for psychological support and can assist in mitigating the negative psychological effects of migration journeys. For clinical mental health counselors in agencies, non-profit organizations, and private practice, the importance that xenophobia is still ingrained in the school systems where the adolescents spend most of their time and to do case management and connect with teachers and school counselors to inform them, with a release of information form, on what has been going on with the client and what adjustments need to be made in the school environment to provide more safety for the adolescents.

Finally, engagement, social justice activism, and advocacy are believed to effectively create social change (Nilsson, Schale, & Khamphakdy-Brown, 2011). Advocacy refers to an activity or action-oriented approach toward changing or transforming the process by which public decisions are made, and hence, political, social, and economic contexts that significantly influence peoples' lives (Cohen, 2011; Nilsson, Schale, & Khamphakdy-Brown, 2011). Social justice has been defined as "the fundamental valuing of fairness and equity in resources, rights,

and treatment for marginalized individuals and groups of people who do not share equal power in society” (Constantine et al., 2007, p. 24). Effectively balancing individual counseling with social justice advocacy is key to addressing the problems that individuals from marginalized populations bring to counseling (Ratts et al., 2016). Certain situations will call for individual counseling and other situations may take place in the community. For example, since all of the adolescents are in the process of seeking asylum, it would be beneficial for counselors to write a letter to the judge to add more evidence to the client’s case. Another example is talking to lawmakers in lobbyists in the mental health field and discuss the lived experiences that are occurring in present time to tackle inhumane conditions and reduce the xenophobic language towards asylum-seeking clients that has been used for many years in the U.S. society. In addition, being up to date on current immigration policies regarding asylum seekers is important in understanding what could have affected the experiences of the adolescents and what is not in place anymore. For example, the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)—often referred to as the “Remain in Mexico” program was terminated the first day of Biden’s presidency. It was reported back in early February that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was going to start processing in mid-February the cases that were forced to remain in Mexico while waiting for their immigration court hearing (DHS, 2021). That program was active from December 2018 through January 2021. Even though some of the adolescents arrived during the time that this policy was implemented, all adolescents in the current study were not sent back to Mexico while waiting for their court date.

Limitations and Future Research

The study looked at lived experiences of adolescents seeking asylum in the United States; however, it is unlikely that the full range of post-migration experiences were captured within the

timeframe of one interview. Since it was difficult to get a hold of a few adolescents after the interviews for member checking, it shows it would be difficult to do another interview with this particular population. There were five participants since it was difficult to reach the accompanied asylum-seeking adolescents population in the United States, with the added complication of the narrow criteria of this study. Also, this study looked at accompanied asylum-seeking adolescents since there was no qualitative study that was found on lived experiences of accompanied asylum-seeking adolescents in the United States, especially during the times that some of these harsher policies were put in place that could have affected the adolescents' experiences. In addition, there are most likely different experiences from other nationalities and races within the asylum-seeking population that would have other experiences, harsher or easier, due to their identities. It is important to note as counselors that asylum seekers are a diverse group and come from many countries and various cultures within a country, and they will have different experiences depending on the timing of their coming to the United States and waves of immigration from the same country (ACA, 2018). Furthermore, all adolescents were in the same region of the country, and since this study is highlighting post-migration experiences and identities, it is possible that there are different experiences depending on the geographical location that the asylum seekers are resettled in.

In addition, there have been no large empirical studies that have evaluated the mental health of children in immigration detention in the U.S. (MacLean et al., 2019). MacLean et al.'s (2019) study assessed the mental health of children held at a US immigration detention center over two months in mid-2018 and interviewed mothers and children. Their results demonstrate that detained children, and especially those previously separated from their mothers, experience significant psychological distress. Prior studies have demonstrated that detention and forced

separation are damaging to the mental health of immigrants (Keller et al., 2003; Sangmo et al., 2020; Sen et al., 2017). MacLean et al. (2019) theorize that the trauma in the asylum-seeking youth population is observed as a continuum, involving the pre-migration experiences of the subjects in their countries of origin, their migration experiences, and their subsequent detention in the United States. Against this background of trauma, detention and denial of adequate mental health treatment are detrimental to the development of these children (MacLean et al., 2019). Future research can include more focus on mental health symptoms and attitudes towards counseling for accompanied adolescents seeking asylum. Also, counselor's experiences working with adolescents seeking asylum.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT INFORMATION AND INFORMED CONSENT AND ASSENT

Telephone Script for the Recruiter

This study is to explore the post-migration lived experiences of adolescents going through the asylum process in the United States and the researcher's name is Chanel Rodríguez. I am reaching out to you since I believe that you meet the criteria for this study. The criteria include currently: 13 - 16 years old, speak Spanish, have lived in the United States for up to 3 calendar years, currently going through the asylum process, have access to technology to be able to do a video or phone interview. The researcher speaks Spanish and English. If you agree to move forward, each participant will receive a \$10 Amazon gift card if they complete the interview in its entirety and need a valid email address to send the gift card. I can provide the researcher your phone number and she can contact you or I can give you the name and phone number of the researcher and you can contact her. If you decide to contact her, please reach out within 72 hours. If you do not, you will most likely not be able to participate due to time consideration.

Parent/Legal Guardian Informed Consent (English version)

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

Project Title: Experiences of Adolescents Seeking Asylum in the United States

Principal Investigator: Chanel Rodríguez (c_shahna@uncg.edu)

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kelly Wester (klwester@uncg.edu)

Participant's Initials: _____

What is the study about?

This is a research project. Your child's participation in this project is voluntary. I hope to provide information about your child's experiences that will lead to counseling approaches that work with asylum-seeking adolescents and their families, like you and your child. I also hope this study leads to more ways to advocate for you all. This study is asking for your child to complete a 30 - 60 minutes interview. I ask that you give me permission to contact your child after going over our interview to make sure that what I am saying is truly what your child reported during the interview.

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

Your child is being asked to take part in a research study. Your child's participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose for your child not to join, or you may withdraw your consent for him/her to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There may not be any direct benefit to your child for being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose for your child not to be in the study or you choose for your child to leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship or your child's relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about your child being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

Why are you asking my child to participate?

I am asking if your child can participate as your child was identified by a friend or an agency as being someone who is between the ages of 12 and 17 years old and is currently going through the asylum process in the United States. Other requirements to be in the study include being able to speak Spanish and being in the United States for less than 3 calendar years.

What will you ask my child to do if I agree to let him or her be in the study?

The interview is expected to last about 30 - 60 minutes of the child's participation. The time may be longer if you need more time to answer the questions. Your child will be asked about your identities and experiences since arriving in the United States. A follow-up with your permission for me to recontact your child if I have any questions on their responses. Your child may experience stress or be triggered from some questions during the interview, as I will be asking about their migration experience, so I will be providing USCRI resources.

Is there any audio/video recording of my child?

This interview will be audio recorded. Because your child's voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the tape, confidentiality for things said on the tape cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape as described below. I will not acknowledge your child by name during the audio recording and de-identify them as much as I can, including the transcription.

What are the dangers to my child?

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. Risks might include experiencing anxiety, sadness, or other emotions that might come up from talking about their experiences. Those are times that I encourage you to reach out to USCRI for resources.

If you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact the researcher, Chanel Rodriguez, who may be reached at (c_shahna@uncg.edu) or at (407) 756-5129 or her advisor, Dr. Kelly Wester at klwester@uncg.edu.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study, please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855)-251-2351.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of my child taking part in this research?

This study could offer new knowledge about the lived experiences of asylum seekers in the United States. This dissertation is a first step to create positive changes in policies for asylum-seeking individuals.

Are there any benefits to *my child* as a result of participation in this research study?

There are no direct benefits to you or your child for participating in this study.

Will my child get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything for my kid to be in this study?

Once the participant completes their interview with the researcher, they will receive a \$10 electronic gift card. The participant will need an email address to receive the incentive. The gift card will be sent to the email address that is provided in the contact section. If the participant stops participating in the middle of the interview, the participant will not qualify to receive the gift card. It will not cost you anything for your child to be in this study.

How will my child's information be kept confidential?

Researcher will not be identifying participants by name when data is disseminated and will follow confidential data collection procedures. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet, and the video software we would use, cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing. While I will not provide this information to others generally, I do have to report if your child states that they have current thoughts of killing themselves or others or if they indicate that they are currently self-harming (i.e., cutting, burning, hitting yourself) if they are under 18 years old.

What if my child wants to leave the study or I want him/her to leave the study?

You have the right to refuse to allow your child to participate or to withdraw them at any time, without penalty. If your child does withdraw, it will not affect you or your child in any way. If you or your child chooses to withdraw, you may request that any data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state. The researcher also has the right to stop your child's participation at any time. This could be because your child has had an unexpected reaction, has failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped. Choosing not to participate in the study or choosing to leave the study will not be held against your asylum process or affect any services you receive.

What about new information/changes in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to allow your child to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

Do you have any questions on what I just shared with you?

Are you allowing your child to participate in the study?

By verbally agreeing for your child to participate in this study, you are agreeing that you are the legal parent or guardian of the child who wishes to participate in this study described to you by this website created by the researcher of this study. By scheduling an interview, you are verbally consenting for your child to participate. If you consent now, you can change your mind and cancel the interview at any time. After consent, the researcher will send a link to the document to have the copy of the parental informed consent and adolescent assent form.

Parent/Legal Guardian Informed Consent (Spanish version)
Consentimiento Informado del Padre/Tutor Legal

Título del Proyecto: Experiencias de Adolescentes que Buscan Asilo en los Estados Unidos

Investigadora principal: Chanel Rodríguez (c_shahna@uncg.edu)

Asesora de la facultad: Dra. Kelly Wester (klwester@uncg.edu)

Iniciales del participante: _____

¿De que se trata el estudio?

Este es un proyecto de investigación. La participación de su hijo/a/x en este proyecto es voluntaria. Espero brindar información sobre las experiencias de su hijo/a/x que conduzcan a enfoques de consejería que funcionen con los adolescentes solicitantes de asilo y sus familias, como usted y su hijo/a/x. También, espero poder generar más formas de abogar por ustedes. Este estudio le pide a su hijo/a/x que complete una entrevista de 30 a 60 minutos en duración. Adicionalmente, le pido permiso para contactar a su hijo después de la entrevista para verificar que lo que yo digo es realmente lo que su hijo reporte durante la entrevista.

¿Cuáles son algunas cosas generales que debe saber sobre los estudios de investigación?

Se le pide a su hijo/a/x que participe en un estudio de investigación. La participación de su hijo/a/x en el estudio es voluntaria. Puede elegir que su hijo no participe o puede retirar su consentimiento para que participe en el estudio, en cualquier momento o por cualquier motivo, sin penalidad.

Los estudios de investigación están diseñados para obtener nuevos conocimientos. Esta nueva información puede ayudar a las personas en el futuro. Puede que no haya ningún beneficio directo para su hijo/a/x por participar en el estudio de investigación. También puede haber riesgos al participar en estudios de investigación. Si elige que su hijo/a/x no participe o abandone el estudio antes de finalizar, no afectará su relación o la relación de su hijo/a/x con la investigadora o la Universidad de Carolina del Norte en Greensboro.

Los detalles sobre este estudio se describen en este formulario de consentimiento. Es importante que comprenda esta información para que pueda tomar una decisión informada sobre la participación de su hijo/a/x en este estudio de investigación.

Se le dará una copia de este formulario de consentimiento. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre este estudio en cualquier momento, debe preguntarle a la investigadora nombrada en este formulario de consentimiento. Su información de contacto está a continuación.

¿Por qué le pide participación a mi hijo/a/x?

Estoy preguntando si su hijo/a/x puede participar ya que su hijo/a/x fue identificado por un amigo/a/x o una agencia como alguien que tiene entre 12 y 17 años de edad y actualmente está pasando por el proceso de asilo en los Estados Unidos. Otros requisitos para participar en el estudio incluyen poder hablar español o inglés y estar en los Estados Unidos por menos de 3 años.

¿Qué le pedirá a mi hijo/a/x si acepto que participe en el estudio?

Se espera que la entrevista dure entre 30 a 60 minutos con la participación del/la niño/a/x. El tiempo puede ser más largo si necesita más tiempo para responder las preguntas. Un seguimiento con su permiso para que vuelva a contactar a su hijo/a/x si tengo alguna pregunta sobre sus respuestas. Se le preguntará a su hijo/a/x sobre sus identidades y experiencias desde que llegó a los Estados Unidos. Es posible que surja algún tipo de estrés o reacción emocional para su hijo/a/x, ya que le preguntaré sobre su experiencia de inmigración, por esta razón le proporcionaré con recursos de USCRI.

¿Hay alguna grabación de audio / video de mi hijo/a/x?

Esta entrevista se grabará en audio. Debido a que la voz de su hijo/a/x puede ser conocida por alguien que escuche la cinta, no se podrá garantizar la confidencialidad de lo que se dice en la cinta, aunque la investigadora tratará de limitar el acceso a la cinta como se describe a continuación. No identificare a su hijo/a/x por su nombre durante la grabación de audio y lo desidentificare lo más que pueda, incluyendo la transcripción.

¿Cuáles son los peligros para mi hijo/a/x?

La Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad de Carolina del Norte en Greensboro ha determinado que la participación en este estudio presenta un riesgo mínimo para los participantes que podría surgir al hablar sobre sus experiencias. En caso de ser necesario comuniquen con USCRI para obtener recursos.

Si tiene preguntas, desea más información o tiene sugerencias, comuníquese con la investigadora, Chanel Rodríguez, a quien se puede contactar en (c_shahna@uncg.edu) o al (407) 756-5129 o a su asesora, la Dra. Kelly Wester en (klwester@uncg.edu).

Si tiene alguna inquietud sobre sus derechos, cómo lo tratan, inquietudes o quejas sobre este proyecto o los beneficios o riesgos asociados con participar en este estudio, comuníquese con la Oficina de Integridad de la Investigación de la UNCG al número gratuito (855) -251 -2351.

¿Hay algún beneficio para la sociedad como resultado de que mi hijo/a/x participe en esta investigación?

Este estudio podría brindar conocimientos sobre las experiencias vividas por los solicitantes de asilo en los Estados Unidos. Esta disertación es un primer paso para crear cambios positivos para las personas que buscan asilo.

¿Hay algún beneficio para mi hijo/a/x como resultado de su participación en este estudio de investigación?

No hay beneficios directos para usted o su hijo/a/x por participar en este estudio.

¿Habrá beneficio económico para mi hijo/a/x por participar en el estudio? ¿Me costará dinero el que mi hijo/a/x participe en este estudio?

Una vez que el participante complete su entrevista con la investigadora, el participante va a recibir una tarjeta electrónica de regalo de \$10. El participante necesitará una dirección de correo

electrónico para recibir el incentivo. La tarjeta regalo se enviará a la dirección de correo electrónico proporcionada en la sección de contacto. Si el participante deja de participar en medio de la entrevista, el participante no cualificará para recibir la tarjeta de regalo. No le costará nada que su hijo/a/x participe en este estudio.

¿Cómo se mantendrá la confidencialidad de la información de mi hijo/a/x?

La investigadora no identificará a los participantes por nombre cuando se difundan los datos, y seguirá procedimientos de recopilación de datos anónimamente. Toda la información obtenida en este estudio es estrictamente confidencial a menos que la ley exija su divulgación. No se puede garantizar la absoluta confidencialidad de los datos proporcionados a través de Internet debido a las protecciones limitadas del acceso a Internet. Asegúrese de cerrar su navegador cuando haya terminado para que nadie pueda ver lo que ha estado haciendo. Yo no proporcionaré esta información a otras personas en general, pero si tengo que romper la confidencialidad si su hijo/a/x afirma que tiene pensamientos actuales de suicidarse o matar a otros, o si su hijo/a/x es menor de 18 años de edad e indica que actualmente se está autolesionando (es decir, cortarse, quemarse, golpearse).

¿Qué pasa si mi hijo/a/x quiere dejar el estudio o yo quiero que deje el estudio?

Tiene derecho a negar la participación de su hijo/a/x o retirarlo en cualquier momento, sin penalización. Si su hijo no desea continuar, no le afectará a usted ni a su hijo/a/x de ninguna manera. Si usted o su hijo deciden retirarse, puede solicitar que cualquier dato que haya sido recopilado sea destruido a menos que esté en un estado no identificable. La investigadora también tiene derecho a detener la participación de su hijo/a/x en cualquier momento debido a que su hijo tuvo una reacción inesperada, no siguió las instrucciones, o porque se detuvo todo el estudio. La elección de no participar en el estudio o la decisión de abandonar el estudio no se considerará en contra de su proceso de asilo ni afectará los servicios que reciba.

¿Qué pasa con la nueva información / cambios en el estudio?

Si se dispone de nueva información significativa relacionada con el estudio que pueda estar relacionada con su voluntad de permitir que su hijo/a/x continúe participando, se le proporcionará esta información.

Consentimiento voluntario del participante:

¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre lo que acabo de compartir con usted?

¿Está permitiendo que su hijo/a/x participe en el estudio?

Al aceptar verbalmente que su hijo/a/x participe en este estudio, usted acepta que es el padre/la madre, o tutor legal del niño/a/x que desea participar en este estudio que le describe este sitio web creado por el investigador de este estudio. Al programar una entrevista, usted da su consentimiento verbal para que su hijo/a/x participe. Si da su consentimiento ahora, puede cambiar de opinión y cancelar la entrevista en cualquier momento. Después del consentimiento, la investigadora enviará un enlace al documento para tener la copia del consentimiento informado de los padres y el formulario de consentimiento del adolescente.

Assent Form - Minors 12-17 (English Version)

Project Title: Experiences of Adolescents Seeking Asylum in the United States

Principal Investigator: Chanel Rodríguez

Why am I here?

I want to tell you about a research study I am doing. Research studies are done to find better ways of helping and understanding people or to get information about how things work. In this study we want to find out more about the experiences of the asylum process for adolescents who are currently in the United States. You are being asked to be in the study because you have/are currently seeking asylum in the United States, have been in the United States for less than 3 years, and within the age range of 12 - 17 years old. In a research study, only people who want to take part are allowed to do so.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

If it is okay with you and you agree to join this study, you will be asked to schedule a time to have a 30 - 60 minutes interview with me. The time may be longer if you need more time to answer the questions. I will be having this interview with you on the phone or video chat. The interview will be audio-recorded. I will be using an interview protocol and will read it during the interview. I have most questions already prepared. Agreeing to participate also means agreeing to be contacted after to go over your answers to make sure that I correctly understood what you said during the interview, and to check if there is anything else you'd like to add that might have come up after the interview.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY?

Your participation will be an interview that will be about 30 - 60 minutes long.

CAN ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO ME?

Sometimes the questions I ask you might seem strange and make you feel uncomfortable or really sad when answering. Talking about your experiences or thinking about them can sometimes make it hard to stay present at times. If you are uncomfortable with some of the questions, please let me know and we will stop, skip the question, or do whatever I can to make you feel better.

CAN ANYTHING GOOD HAPPEN TO ME IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

I do not know if you will be helped by being in this project. However, we may learn something that will help other children and adolescents with the asylum-seeking identity and add knowledge to practices in counseling in the future.

DO I HAVE OTHER CHOICES?

You do not have to be in this study.

WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT TO BE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

You do not have to be part of this project. It is up to you. You can even say okay now, but change your mind at any time during the interview. All you have to do is tell me. No one will be mad at you if you change your mind. Choosing not to participate in the study or choosing to leave the study will not be held against your asylum process or affect any services you receive.

WHAT ABOUT MY CONFIDENTIALITY?

We will do everything possible to make sure that your data and or records are kept confidential. Unless required by law, only I can look at your records. I am required to keep your personal information confidential. I do have to report to your parent or legal guardian if you state that you have current thoughts of killing yourself or others or if you indicate that you are currently self-harming (i.e. cutting, burning, hitting yourself) since you are under the age of 18 and I do have to report if you state that you have current thoughts of killing yourself or others.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

You will be paid a \$10 Amazon gift card for taking the time to be in this study. The gift card will be sent to an email provided by you or your guardian.

DO MY PARENTS KNOW ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

This study has been explained to your parent(s)/guardian and they have given permission for you to be in it.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You can ask Chanel Rodríguez at (c_shahna@uncg.edu) or her advisor, Dr. Kelly Wester, at (klwester@uncg.edu) anything about the study. You may also call the Director in the Office Research Integrity at or 855-251-2351.

ASSENT

Do you have any questions about anything that was just mentioned to you?

Are you willing to participate in this study?

The information was verbally explained to you. You verbally consented above as documentation of assent to take part in this study. You are able to opt out at any time and cancel the scheduled interview if you decide to change your mind.

Assent Form - Minors 12-17 (Spanish Version)

Formulario de Consentimiento: Menores de 12 a 17 años

Título del Proyecto: Experiencias de Adolescentes que Buscan Asilo en los Estados Unidos

Investigadora principal: Chanel Rodríguez

¿Por qué estoy aquí?

Quiero contarles sobre un estudio de investigación que estoy haciendo. Los estudios de investigación se realizan para encontrar mejores formas de ayudar y comprender a las personas o para obtener información sobre cómo funcionan las cosas. En este estudio quiero conocer más sobre las experiencias del proceso de asilo de adolescentes que se encuentran actualmente en Estados Unidos. Se le pide que participe en el estudio porque tiene o está solicitando asilo en los Estados Unidos, ha estado en los Estados Unidos por menos de 3 años y está dentro del rango de edad de 12 a 17 años. En un estudio de investigación, solo las personas que quieran participar pueden hacerlo.

¿QUÉ ME PASARÁ EN ESTE ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN?

Si estás de acuerdo y aceptas unirse a este estudio, se te pedirá que programes una hora para tener una entrevista conmigo que durará entre 30 a 60 minutos. El tiempo podría ser más largo si necesitas más tiempo para responder las preguntas. Tendré esta entrevista contigo por teléfono o por video chat. La entrevista será audio-grabada. Usaré un protocolo de entrevista y lo leeré durante la entrevista. Ya tengo preparadas la mayoría de las preguntas. Aceptar participar también significa aceptar ser contactado después de repasar tus respuestas para asegurarme que entendí completamente lo que dijiste durante la entrevista, y para revisar si hay algo más que te gustaría agregar que pudiera haber surgido después de la entrevista.

¿CUÁNTO TIEMPO ESTARÉ EN EL ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN?

Tu participación será una entrevista que durará aproximadamente 30 - 60 minutos.

¿ME PUEDE PASAR ALGO MAL?

A veces, las preguntas pueden parecer extrañas y pueden hacer que te sientas incómodo o muy triste al responder. Al hablar sobre sus experiencias o pensar en ellas, en ocasiones puede ser difícil permanecer presente. Si te sientes incómodo con algunas de las preguntas, házmelo saber y nos detendremos, saltaremos la pregunta, o haremos todo lo posible para que se sienta mejor.

¿PUEDE PASARME ALGO BUENO EN ESTE ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN?

No sé si te ayudará estar en este proyecto. Sin embargo, podemos aprender algo que ayude a otros niños y adolescentes con la identidad de solicitantes de asilo a pasar por el asilo y a agregar conocimientos a las prácticas de consejería en el futuro.

¿TENGO OTRAS OPCIONES?

No es necesario que participes en este estudio.

¿Y SI NO QUIERO PARTICIPAR EN ESTE ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN?

No tienes que ser parte de este estudio. Es tu decisión. Incluso puedes decir que quieres participar ahora y puedes cambiar de opinión en cualquier momento durante la entrevista. Todo lo que tienes que hacer es decírmelo. Nadie se enojará contigo si cambias de opinión. La elección de no participar en el estudio o la decisión de abandonar el estudio no se considerará en contra de su proceso de asilo ni afectará los servicios que reciba.

¿QUÉ HAY DE MI CONFIDENCIALIDAD?

Se hará todo lo posible para asegurar de que tus datos y / o registros se mantengan confidenciales. A menos que lo exija la ley, solo yo puedo ver tus registros. Yo estoy obligada a mantener la confidencialidad de tu información personal. Tengo que informarle a tus padres o tutor legal si declaras que tiene pensamientos actuales de suicidarse o de herir a otros, o si indicas que actualmente te estás autolesionando (es decir, cortarte, quemarte, golpearte) ya que eres menor de 18 años de edad y tengo que informar si declara que tienes pensamientos actuales de suicidarse o suicidarse a otras personas.

¿ME PAGARÁN POR PARTICIPAR EN ESTE ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN?

Se te pagará una tarjeta de regalo de \$10 de Amazon para los participantes de este estudio. La tarjeta de regalo será enviada al correo electrónico proporcionado por ti o tu tutor.

¿SABEN MIS PADRES SOBRE ESTE ESTUDIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN?

Este estudio se ha explicado a sus padres / tutores y le han dado permiso para que usted participe en él.

¿Y SI TENGO PREGUNTAS?

Puedes preguntarle a Chanel Rodríguez en (c_shahna@uncg.edu) o su asesora, la Dra. Kelly Wester, en (klwester@uncg.edu) sobre cualquier cosa del estudio. También puede llamar al Director de la Oficina de Integridad de la Investigación al 855-251-2351.

ASENTIR

¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre algo que se le acaba de mencionar?

¿Estás dispuesto/a/x a participar en este estudio?

La información le fue explicada verbalmente. Tú consentiste verbalmente arriba como documentación de consentimiento para participar en este estudio. Puedes optar en cualquier momento y cancelar la entrevista programada si decides cambiar de opinión.

APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (English version)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study today.

Purpose: The reason I am asking to talk to you today is because I need your help. I want to learn more about experiences of asylum-seeking adolescents in the United States. As an adolescent that also identifies as an asylum seeker, you are an expert in this.

Some other information before we begin that is important:

Confidentiality:

- This information will not be held against your asylum process.
- This interview is being recorded, and I will try my best to make sure you are not easily identifiable.
- This information will not be sent to anyone, including but not limited to family members that are not present during the interview, The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), and school.
- While I will not provide this information to others generally, I DO have to report if you state that you have current thoughts of killing yourself or others or if you indicate that you are currently self-harming (i.e., cutting, burning, hitting yourself) if you are under 18 years old, or if you are experiencing or providing information about anyone who is under the age of 18 who is a victim of sexual abuse or neglect.

Before we begin, I just want to let you know that there will be no right or wrong answers.

I just want to know your opinion and your experiences. Please be honest, you will not hurt my feelings. You can choose not to answer any question and you can leave the interview at any time.

If you choose to leave the interview, I ask that you tell me so that I do not assume it was a technology failure. If there is no communication when a cutoff occurs in the interview, I will assume there is a technology failure and call you back shortly after the drop and then the following day in case there was time that was needed to fix the technological failure. If you do not pick up during either attempt, I will then assume that you do not want to continue the interview.

Do you have any questions for me? Are you ready to begin?

Semi-Structured Interview

How are you?

I would like to hear about what you like to do - so think about your day to day, what are some things you like to do?

Are you able to do those things currently since you moved to the United States? Where are you from?

What was your life like before you came to the United States?

What was the process like migrating to the United States?

Walk me through the experience.

How did you feel when you arrived in the United States?

Do you think there was a reason that was happening?

Who did you come with?

What are your current identities that are the most important that you tell others (for example, your race, country of origin, nationality, social class, religion, age, etc.)?

When did you realize that asylum seeker was your identity?

Did anything that occurred during the process lead to this awareness?

What does this identity mean to you?

How did that identity (or identities) come to be about?

What is it like to be a person seeking asylum in the United States?

What have you noticed living in the United States being a person looking for asylum?

What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences you already mentioned of being an asylum-seeking adolescent in the United States?

In school? At home? At the organization? At work?

What message do you think the system is sending (border patrol, state officials, ICE officials, immigration detention)?

How does that feel to think that is the message you are receiving from the system?

How does this/do these experience(s) you have already mentioned influence their concept of yourself and your identities?

What part of your experiences have you not yet expressed to others, if any?

What were your reasons for not bringing that/those experiences up yet?

We covered a lot of topics today. Thank you for your help today. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences in the United States that was not mentioned or asked? I will contact you again in case I have additional questions and to make sure I understood everything you said today.

This was a really helpful conversation and I have learned a lot. Thank you so much for your feedback. This will be very helpful for my study. If you have any questions about the interview protocol or anything about the study, here is my email: c_shahna@uncg.edu and my advisor's

email: klwester@uncg.edu. If you need anything outside resources that is not directly about the study, I recommend reaching out to USCRI.

USCRI North Carolina

Phone: 919-334-0072

Email: info@uscrinc.org

Website: <https://refugees.org/uscri-north-carolina/>

Semi-structured Interview Protocol (Spanish version)

Gracias por aceptar y participar en este estudio hoy.

Propósito: La razón por la que pido hablar contigo hoy es porque necesito tu ayuda. Quiero aprender más sobre las experiencias de los adolescentes en el proceso de asilo en los Estados Unidos. Como adolescente que también se identifica como solicitante de asilo, eres un experto en esto.

Alguna otra información antes de empezar que es importante:

Confidencialidad:

- Esta información no se usará en contra de tu proceso de asilo.
- Esta entrevista se está grabando y me aseguraré de que no seas fácilmente identificable.
- Esta información no se enviará a nadie, incluyendo, entre otros, los miembros de la familia que no estén presentes durante esta entrevista, el Comité de EE. UU. Para Refugiados e Inmigrantes (USCRI), y la escuela.
- Generalmente, esta información no se proporciona a otros, sin embargo tendría que hacer un reporte si tu dices que actualmente tienes pensamientos de matar o matarte, o si indicas que estás autolesionándote (por ejemplo cortarse, quemarse, golpearse), y tienes menos de 18 años, o si tú estás experimentando o proporcionando información sobre cualquier persona que es menor de 18 años que está una víctima de abusada sexualmente o descuidada.

Antes de comenzar, solo quiero hacerte saber que no habrán respuestas correctas o incorrectas.

Solo quiero saber lo que piensas y tu opinión. Ser honesto/a/x, no herirá mis sentimientos.

Puedes optar por no responder cualquier pregunta y puedes abandonar la entrevista en cualquier momento.

¿Tienes alguna pregunta para mí? ¿Estás listo/a/x para comenzar?

Entrevista Semi-Estructurada

¿Cómo estás?

Me gustaría saber lo que te gusta hacer - así que pienses en tu día a día o incluso en una semana típica, ¿cuáles son algunas de las cosas que te gusta hacer?

¿Puedes hacer esas cosas desde que te mudaste a los Estados Unidos? ¿De donde eres?

¿Cómo era tu vida antes de venir a Estados Unidos?

¿Cómo fue tu proceso de migración a los Estados Unidos?

Explícame la experiencia.

¿Cómo te sentiste cuando llegaste a Estados Unidos?

¿Crees que había una razón por la que estaba sucediendo?

¿Con quién viniste?

¿Cuales son las identidades más importantes que tú le dices a otras personas? (por ejemplo, tu raza, país de origen/nacionalidad, clase social, religión, edad, etc.)

¿Cuándo se dio cuenta de que el solicitante de asilo era su identidad?

¿Algo ocurrió durante el proceso condujo a esta conciencia?

¿Qué significa esta identidad para ti?

¿Cómo surgió esa identidad (o identidades)?

¿Cómo es ser una persona que busca asilo en los Estados Unidos?

¿Qué has notado viviendo en Estados Unidos siendo una persona en busca de asilo?

¿Qué situaciones han influido o afectado tus experiencias que ya has mencionado de ser un adolescente solicitante de asilo en los Estados Unidos?

¿En el colegio? ¿En casa? ¿En la organización? ¿En el trabajo?

¿Qué mensaje cree que está intentando enviar el sistema (la patrulla fronteriza, oficiales estatales, oficiales de ICE, detención de inmigración)?

¿Cómo estas experiencias influyen como tú mismo/a/x te ves aquí en los Estados Unidos?

¿Hay partes de esas experiencias que no has expresado a otras personas?

¿Cuáles han sido las razones por las que aún no has comunicado esa(s) experiencia(s)?

Esta ha sido una conversación muy beneficiosa. Muchas gracias por tu ayuda hoy ¿Hay algo más que te gustaría compartir sobre tus experiencias en los Estados Unidos que no haya sido mencionado o preguntado?

Voy a contactarte en caso de que tengo preguntas adicionales y para asegurarme que entendí todo lo que compartiste hoy.

Esta ha sido una conversación muy beneficiosa y he aprendido mucho. Muchas gracias por la información que compartiste. Esto será de mucha ayuda para mi estudio. Si tienes alguna pregunta sobre el protocolo de la entrevista o sobre el estudio en general, aquí tienes mi correo: c_shahna@uncg.edu y el de mi supervisora: klwester@uncg.edu. Si necesitas cualquier recurso no directamente relacionado con el estudio, recomiendo que contactes a USCRI.

USCRI North Carolina

Numero de Teléfono: 919-334-0072

Correo electrónico: info@uscrinc.org

El web: <https://refugees.org/uscri-north-carolina/>

APPENDIX C

PILOT STUDY SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (English version)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this evaluation today.

Purpose: The reason I am asking to talk to you today is because I need your help. I want to learn more about experiences of asylum-seeking adolescents in the United States. I am in the process of going over my protocol to receive feedback on the protocol, the questions, and other considerations that might come up. As an adolescent that also identifies as an asylum seeker, you are an expert in this. This is an evaluation of my interview protocol that I will use for my study.

Some other information before we begin that is important:

Confidentiality:

- This information will not be held against your asylum process.
- I will make sure you are not easily identifiable when giving feedback for the evaluation of my interview protocol.
- This interview will not be recorded and your answers during the interview will not be used in any study, just a summary of your feedback with the questions after the interview process.
- This information will not be sent to anyone, including but not limited to family members that are not present during the interview, The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), and school.

- While I will not provide this information to others generally, I DO have to report if you state that you have current thoughts of killing yourself or others or if you indicate that you are currently self-harming (i.e. cutting, burning, hitting yourself) if you are under 18 years old.

Before we begin, I just want to let you know that there will be no right or wrong answers.

I just want to know your opinion and your experiences. Please be honest, you will not hurt my feelings. You can choose not to answer any question and you can leave the interview at any time.

If you choose to leave the interview, I ask that you tell me so that I do not assume it was a technology failure. If there is no communication when a cutoff occurs in the interview, I will assume there is a technology failure and call you back shortly after the drop and then the following day in case there was time that was needed to fix the technological failure. If you do not pick up during either attempt, I will then assume that you do not want to continue the interview.

Do you have any questions for me? Are you ready to begin?

Semi-Structured Interview

How are you?

I would like to hear about what you like to do - so think about your day to day or even a typical week, what are some things you like to do?

Are you able to do those things currently since you moved to the United States?

Where are you from?

What was your life like before you came to the United States?

What was the process like migrating to the United States?

Who did you come with?

What are your current identities (for example, your race, country of origin, nationality, social class, religion, age, etc.)?

Are any of them new for you since you moved to the United States?

How did that identity (or identities) come to be about?

What is it like to be a person seeking asylum in the United States?

Do you notice carrying the identity or label of an asylum seeker with you in the United States?

If so, what is that like?

What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experiences you already mentioned of being an asylum-seeking adolescent in the United States?

In school? At home? At the organization? At work?

What message do you think the system is sending (border patrol, state officials, ICE officials, immigration detention)?

How does this/do these experience(s) you have already mentioned influence their concept of yourself and your identities?

What part of your experiences have you not yet expressed to others, if any?

What were your reasons for not bringing that/those experiences up yet?

We covered a lot of topics today. Thank you for your help today. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experiences in the United States that was not mentioned or asked? Would it be okay to contact you again in case I have additional questions and to make sure I understood everything you said today?

There are just a few additional questions I have, but these are specifically about your experience with the previous questions I asked.

- Are there experiences you have had in the United States that you have not yet talked about?
 - What type of question do you think would help to get at those experiences?
- Were there any questions that were confusing to you?
- When trying to get at “identities” I am looking to gain information on how you see yourself in your roles or in social categories. So this can sometimes be things like being a son or daughter, a friend. It can be your gender, race, and ethnic identities, cultural identities, religious identities, etc. So when I asked you about identities, is there another way that you think I could ask this question to better get at all of these social identities that you or others may experience?

This was a really helpful conversation and I have learned a lot. Thank you so much for your feedback. This will be very helpful for my study. If you have any questions about the interview protocol or anything about the study, here is my email: c_shahna@uncg.edu and my advisor's email: klwester@uncg.edu. If you need anything outside resources that is not directly about the study, I recommend reaching out to USCRI.

PILOT STUDY SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (Spanish version)

Gracias por aceptar y participar en esta evaluación hoy.

Propósito: La razón por la que pido hablar contigo hoy es porque necesito tu ayuda. Quiero aprender más sobre las experiencias de los adolescentes en el proceso de asilo en los Estados Unidos. Estoy en el proceso de revisar mi protocolo para recibir comentarios sobre las preguntas y otras consideraciones que puedan surgir. Como adolescente que también se identifica como solicitante de asilo, eres un experto en esto. Esta es una evaluación de mi protocolo de entrevista que usaré para mi estudio.

Alguna otra información antes de empezar que es importante:

Confidencialidad:

- Esta información no se usará en contra de tu proceso de asilo.
- Me aseguraré de que no seas fácilmente identificable cuando des comentarios para la evaluación de mi protocolo de entrevista.
- Esta entrevista no será grabada y tus respuestas durante la entrevista no serán utilizadas en ningún estudio, solo un resumen de tus comentarios con las preguntas posteriores al proceso de entrevista.
- Esta información no se enviará a nadie, incluyendo, entre otros, los miembros de la familia que no estén presentes durante esta entrevista, el Comité de EE. UU. Para Refugiados e Inmigrantes (USCRI), y la escuela.
- Generalmente, esta información no se proporciona a otros, sin embargo tendría que hacer un reporte si tu dices que actualmente tienes pensamientos de matar o matarte, o si

indicas que estás autolesionándote (por ejemplo cortarse, quemarse, golpearse), y tienes menos de 18 años, o si tú estás experimentando o proporcionando información sobre cualquier persona que es menor de 18 años que está una víctima de abusada sexualmente o descuidada.

Antes de comenzar, solo quiero hacerte saber que no habrán respuestas correctas o incorrectas.

Solo quiero saber lo que piensas y tu opinión. Ser honesto/a/x, no herirá mis sentimientos.

Puedes optar por no responder cualquier pregunta y puedes abandonar la entrevista en cualquier momento.

¿Tienes alguna pregunta para mí? ¿Estás listo/a/x para comenzar?

Entrevista Semi-Estructurada

¿Cómo estás?

Me gustaría saber lo que te gusta hacer - así que pienses en tu día a día o incluso en una semana típica, ¿cuáles son algunas de las cosas que te gusta hacer?

¿Puedes hacer esas cosas desde que te mudaste a los Estados Unidos?

¿De donde eres?

¿Cómo era tu vida antes de venir a Estados Unidos?

¿Cómo fue tu proceso de migración a los Estados Unidos?

¿Con quién viniste?

¿Cuales son las identidades (por ejemplo, tu raza, país de origen/nacionalidad, clase social, religión, edad, etc.) más importantes que tú le dices a otras personas?

¿Qué identidades son nuevas para ti desde que te mudaste a los Estados Unidos? ¿Cómo llegaste a identificarte de esa manera?

¿Cómo se siente ser una persona que busca asilo en los Estados Unidos?

¿Qué has notado viviendo esa identidad o clasificación de solicitante de asilo en los Estados Unidos?

¿Cómo te hace sentir?

¿Qué situaciones han influido o afectado tus experiencias que ya has mencionado de ser un adolescente solicitante de asilo en los Estados Unidos?

¿En el colegio? ¿En casa? ¿En la organización? ¿En el trabajo?

¿Qué mensaje cree que está intentando enviar el sistema (la patrulla fronteriza, oficiales estatales, oficiales de ICE, detención de inmigración)?

¿Cómo estas experiencias influyen como tú mismo/a/x te ves aquí en los Estados Unidos?

¿Hay partes de esas experiencias que no has expresado a otras personas?

¿Cuáles han sido las razones por las que aún no has comunicado esa(s) experiencia(s)?

Esta ha sido una conversación muy beneficiosa. Muchas gracias por tu ayuda hoy ¿Hay algo más que te gustaría compartir sobre tus experiencias en los Estados Unidos que no haya sido mencionado o preguntado? ¿Estaría bien volver a contactarte en caso de que tengo preguntas adicionales y para asegurarme que entendí todo lo que compartiste hoy?

Solo tengo algunas preguntas adicionales, pero estas son específicamente sobre tu experiencia con las preguntas anteriores que hice.

¿Hay experiencias que haya tenido en los Estados Unidos de las que aún no haya hablado?

¿Qué tipo de pregunta crees que ayudaría a abordar esas experiencias?

¿Hubo alguna pregunta que le resultó confusa?

Cuando intento llegar a las “identidades”, busco obtener información sobre cómo se ve a sí mismo en sus roles o categorías sociales. Entonces, esto a veces puede ser cosas como ser un hijo o una hija, un amigo. Puede ser tu género, raza y etnia, identidades culturales, identidades religiosas, etc. Entonces, cuando te pregunté acerca de las identidades, ¿hay alguna otra forma en que crea que podría hacer esta pregunta para aumentar mi entendimiento sobre estas identidades sociales que usted u otros pueden experimentar?

Esta ha sido una conversación muy beneficiosa y he aprendido mucho. Muchas gracias por la información que compartiste. Esto será de mucha ayuda para mi estudio. Si tienes alguna pregunta sobre el protocolo de la entrevista o sobre el estudio en general, aquí tienes mi correo: c_shahna@uncg.edu y el de mi supervisora: klwester@uncg.edu. Si necesitas cualquier recurso no directamente relacionado con el estudio, recomiendo que contactes a USCRI.

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