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TRAVERSING INVITATIONAL SPACES:

THE BEAUTIFUL IRAQI WOMEN PROJECT

By

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B.A., Political Science, University of Louisville, 1987
M.A., Communication, University of New Mexico, 2000

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Communication

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2013

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to participants in the Beautiful Iraqi Women Project.

It was an honor to story with you.

Acknowledgments

With deep gratitude to my mentors, my committee members:

Tema Milstein--for enabling transformation;

Karen Foss--for enabling self-determination;

Pam Lutgen-Sandvik--for enabling immanent value;

Julia Meredith Hess--for enabling safety;

Jessica Goodkind--for enabling participation.

I am grateful to the following faculty for their generous guidance throughout my doctoral studies: Jan Schuetz; Stephen Littlejohn, Patricia Covarrubias, Mary Jane Collier, Tamar Ginossar, Judith White, Miguel Gandert, Glenda Balas, Ilia Rodriguez, Richard Schaefer, Judith Hendry, Karen Schmidt, Sharon Nepstad, and Susan Pearson. I appreciate the assistance and support given by the C&J Department staff – Nancy, Jeanette, Gregoria, Adán, and work-study students – you are the best! I always felt welcomed when I entered the building.

My world would have been dry and relentless without my wonderfully creative and exuberant friends: CJ, Donna Jewell, Trudy, Panda, Monica, Jessica, Barbara, Nancy, Jelena, Susan, Audrey, and Qingjing. You all brought such joy into my life; I appreciate that. I am always grateful to my mother and family for giving me the precious gift of being loved all my life. Finally, to my fiercely beloved and deeply respected pack-mate, Mark - thanks for sharing the journeys. Shazam!

TRAVERSING INVITATIONAL SPACES

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By

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ABSTRACT

The Beautiful Iraqi Women project was a short-term participatory research project co-designed and co-facilitated with Iraqi refugee women. Pragmatic project goals were to learn about Iraqi refugees' resettlement experiences and create accessible and welcoming entries into the different spaces that govern refugee resettlement processes. Theoretical goals were concerned with learning how invitational rhetoric concepts of safety, immanent value, self-determination, and sharing perspectives contribute to achieving the pragmatic goals. Research questions framing this project were:

RQ1: How is invitational rhetoric constructed in a short-term project with Iraqi refugee women?

RQ2: In this invitational space, what do Iraqi participants' shared perspectives reveal about their lived experience as resettled refugees?

The project was conducted through a series of weekly research and reflexive sessions over a six-week period with two groups of participants: seventeen Iraqi refugee participants and six Access participants. Access participants were individuals invited by Iraqi refugee participants due to their positions in and access to institutions that regulate policies and practices that influence refugee resettlement.

I collected data through audio recordings of select research sessions, and my field notes. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and uploaded into Dedoose software. Arabic conversations were not translated. I applied provisional, focus, and affective first

cycle coding processes; and one two-stage pattern-coding scheme to organize the data, then used hermeneutic and rhizoanalytic approaches to analyze the data.

In response to RQ1, my analyses produced two strains of safety, procedural and psychic; located a distinct form of immanent value based in trustworthiness of an individual perspective; and identified observable expressions of self-determination through Iraqi identified self-regulation procedures, and decision making authority. Sharing perspectives served two key functions. First, the process of sharing perspectives allowed participants to get to know each other better, thereby revealing different positionalities among participants. Second, Iraqi refugee-shared perspectives challenged perspectives held by others in ways that precipitated multiple meaning-making spaces in which to explore specific perspectives emerging from particular Iraqi participant-identified issues.

My second analytic pass responded to RQ2. My analyses suggest that Iraqi refugee lived experience occurred within distressing and regulated contexts; contexts relieved through Iraqi togetherness. Iraqi-refugee distress was noticed in three dimensions: psychic pain, obligations to help other Iraqi refugees navigate and comprehend resettlement processes, and discrimination unique to the New Mexico context. Iraqi refugee distress was intensified through thwarted attempts of Iraqi participants to engage in the governing structures of resettlement due to regulatory constraints that appeared unintelligible; lacked clear accountability processes; and were non-responsive to the particularities of being an Iraqi refugee in New Mexico. Iraqi togetherness was expressed through spending time with other Iraqi refugee women, and recognized as a political organizing strategy.

In a final analytic move, I synthesized the analyses produced during the project cycle and identified two ways the invitational research produced in this project can be translated as praxis in transformative and rhizomatic research. I conclude by offering invitational strategies of inquiry that could be applied in future participatory research projects.

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Preface

This text is about lived experience. The title, *Traversing Invitational Spaces: The Beautiful Iraqi Women Project*, clearly identifies Iraqi women as key participants in this project. Yet traversing indicates, rightly so, that this text illustrates journeys through which multiple actors participate, through which multiple paths carve, forge, meander, zigzag, move back and forth, swivel, pivot, go up and down, and perhaps, at times, are obliterated - movements that infuse meaning and context to lived experience. This is no stable project, but rather an incessantly emergent project.

This text is about stories. There are fragments of dialogue interspersed throughout the text. Some dialogue I experienced – for example, dialogue that emerged from the research sessions. Some dialogue, however, was recalled and recounted. These recollections reverberate lived experiences that were strong enough, disruptive enough, or startling enough to be recalled and re-experienced. The stories you read in this text are neither chronologically nor spatially bound, but rather rhizome-like in their branching and stemming characteristics. Some stories lay dormant, even as they anticipate opportunities to emerge. The stories presented in this text are lived by participants in this project: Iraqi refugee women, service providers, volunteers, my committee members, and me.

This text, then, is about our stories. I have scattered signposts throughout, signifying reasons I believe certain interactions or particular passages are instructive. I have included critical reflections throughout the text. I hope I have crafted a text that engages you in ways that you can see yourself, position yourself, as a participant in these stories. In the spirit of invitational rhetoric, I offer my perspectives to you. Perhaps, you will feel yourself being drawn into the stories that are written here. To that end, I hope that the interactions that occur throughout this text provide spaces for you to consider ways these stories--these lived experiences -- could become, or perhaps already are, part of your story.

Chapter 1: Introduction

> *When the Americans come to us, their first lecture they give us in orientation is they tell us that in America, there's no revolution if you want something. There is organization. You can raise your voice. You can tell the government you need this and this and this. So they will understand, they will know, they will be clear on what you need. That's what the Americans have taught us in Iraq, so of course you have this here.*

The introductory quote is a comment made by an Iraqi refugee woman in an interview conducted during her first year resettled in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It is this particular perspective that precipitated the focus of this research project. The Beautiful Iraqi Women Project is designed to provide a process and an opportunity for this woman, and other Iraqi women, to "raise their voices" so that others, namely the government, will understand. In this project, the *government* signifies any regulating entity that influences ways Iraqi refugee women experience resettlement processes, and *understanding* necessitates a willingness to listen to the perspective and acknowledge its value. This project, then, invites Iraqi women to talk together, listen to each other, and achieve insights into ways they can "act even while being acted upon" (Ortner, 2006, p. 110).

The recognition of constrained ability to act is one of the many notions that underpin Ortner's (2006) ideas of social theory--one of the theories that ground this project. Included in Ortner's theory are assumptions that subjects are always "partially knowing," that "subjectivity is the basis of agency" (p. 110), and that subjectivity is "both the individual desires nested within the larger cultural formations" (p. 111). The goals of my research project are reinforced through Ortner's conceptualization of a social theory based in beliefs that "culture (in a very broad sense) constructs people as particular kinds of social actors, but social actors through their living on the ground, reduce or transform some of the cultures that made them" (p. 129). Ortner's concept of social theory illuminates two key organizational principles grounding this research project: (a) political, social, and cultural structures create and regulate choices; and (b) participation within those structures frustrates, transforms and generates choices, leading to changes in the practices and policies that impact the everyday lives of everyday citizens.

What adds to the uniqueness of this project is that I also was a conversational partner with research participants. In this sense this research becomes a political project. It is political because it is participatory, and attempts to generate multiple opportunities for research participants to inform the research process, the issues discussed, and the ways the issues are discussed. It is political in the sense that I pay close attention to ways the research process is conceptualized, managed, and assessed in order to highlight ways power dynamics function in the research space. Finally, it is political because it seeks to animate transformative opportunities for individuals to articulate and influence their everyday social worlds.

In this introductory chapter, I present different aspects of the research project. First, I describe the project purpose, and explain its action and research dimensions. I then briefly examine different aspects of the current resettlement environment that might impact Iraqi refugee women. I then describe ways participatory and feminist philosophical positions inform this project. I end with a preview of the remaining chapters in this document.

Project Purpose

At times, home is nowhere. At times, one knows only expressed estrangement and alienation. Home is, then, locations: home is that place which enables and promotes varied and ever changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. (bell hooks, 2004, p. 155)

The project described in this document is a case study of an action research project designed to have practical outcomes, and to generate new ways to think about invitational rhetoric. Through this project, I intend to contribute to theory about the use of invitational rhetoric in communication research. In addition, and as a result of this research, I hope to contribute to positive and self-determined social change that materially impacts the everyday lives of research participants.

Action dimension. The project is broadly conceptualized as a case study; a series of six research and reflexive sessions conducted with two groups of participants. The primary group is Iraqi refugee women, many of whom were previously involved in an action-research intervention project (2009 – 2010) during their first year of resettlement in the U.S. Iraq refugee women are designated primary since the research project is, above all else, interested

in creating spaces to allow their perspectives to emerge. For example, if the Iraqi refugee women who participated in the first research session did not want to invite other participants, there would be no second group. The initial group did, however, desire to invite others to participate in the research project. I call the second group Access participants. Access participants are individuals invited by Iraqi refugee participants due to their positions in and access to, institutions that regulate policies and practices that influence refugee resettlement. Research sessions are designed to be Iraqi refugee-centered, participatory, dialogic, and employ a variety of creative methods to engage in the "spiral of self-reflective cycles," a process commonly used to describe a hermeneutic interpretation in action-constituted research models (Freire, 1970; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). I distinguished two types of sessions within the project: active and reflexive. Active sessions were two-hour sessions where all participants engaged with each other to discuss particular topics and these were followed by one-hour reflexive sessions with members of the research design team where the previous active sessions were discussed, and plans were made for future sessions. For future reference, I will use these terms to differentiate the two types of research sessions.

The dialogic design of the research project is broadly informed through an *ethics of responsibility* as articulated by Levinas (1996) and further elaborated by Oliver (2001, 2004). In brief, Levinas' ethics of responsibility is based in the idea that "I" am wholly responsible to the "Other." Responsibility, then, is about our duty towards the Other, a duty that perhaps we have not been prepared for nor asked for, but a requirement that exists because the Other exists. For Levinas, the Other is all who are not I. Oliver (2001)[1] elaborates this sense of the Other and conceives of an Other that co-exists with the I through her concepts of inner and outer witnesses, examples of the interior and exterior facets of the self. She stresses the health and viability of the inner-witness is crucial to the ability of a subject to regain her capacity to be address-able (capable of address) and response-able (capable of response). These capacities stimulate subjectivities and are engendered through dialogic interactions.

These ideas of dialogic interactions are based in the notion, then, that subjectivities (and subsequently agency) are enabled through the address-ability and response–ability of individuals in communicative situations. All research sessions in this project are therefore

[1] Oliver's notions are elaborated in chapter 2.

constructed to encourage generative intra and inter-personal interactions in order to create transformative possibilities for Iraqi and non-Iraqi participants.

A complementary action component in this project is an advocacy element. Issues identified through the research sessions are directly shared with policy makers, in particular the New Mexico State Refugee Coordinator (See appendix A for letter of support). In accordance with State mandates, the Refugee Coordinator's responsibilities include: (a) supporting the effective resettlement of refugees within the shortest possible time after entrance into the State, (b) promoting economic self-sufficiency for refugees, and (c) protecting the refugees and the community from infectious disease. The State Refugee Coordinator is well positioned to advocate for policy change on behalf of refugees and to monitor services provided to refugees. In addition to the State Refugee Coordinator, and depending on the issues raised during the research sessions, other key resource individuals were invited to listen to Iraqi women share their perspectives about their resettlement experiences.

Research dimension. The research dimension is designed to provide insights into questions that emerge from the key constructs informing this project: invitational rhetoric, space, and participatory practices. The research questions guiding this project are:

RQ1: How is invitational rhetoric constructed in a short-term participatory project with Iraqi refugee women?

RQ2: In this invitational space, what do Iraqi shared perspectives reveal about Iraqi lived experience as resettled refugees?

I elaborate these two research questions in Chapter Two. I focus on these particular constructs because they represent potential sites that enable, as well as processes that precipitate, transformative communication. In the remaining sections of this first chapter, I contextualize some facets of the invited participants' resettlement experiences and discuss my philosophical positions related to this project.

Context

The impact of the United States-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 continues to reverberate. Since the U.S Refugee Admissions Program to assist especially vulnerable Iraqi refugees began in 2007, 166,249 Iraqi nationals have been referred for resettlement in the U.S.;

approximately 50% (84,435) have been approved for resettlement (USCIS Iraqi Refugee Process Fact Sheet April 2011). Refugees are individuals forcibly displaced from their home country because of a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" (United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951).

Despite U.S. President Obama's remarks on October 21, 2011, that "the long war in Iraq will come to an end by the end of this year" and his assurance that "Iraqis have taken full responsibility for their security" (Whitehouse, 2011) many Iraqis still experience aftershocks from the seven-year long U.S. led war, "Operation Iraqi Freedom[2]." In addition to the destruction, displacement, and destabilization resulting from this most current occupation, Iraqi people have experienced patterns of conflict and violence since staking independence as a sovereign nation-state from Britain in 1932 (BBC, 2012). As Iraqi and U.S. political priorities shift, Iraqis who have been involved in conflicts – either through direct fighting, working with members of different forces, or affiliation with specific groups –find they are increasingly vulnerable to retribution from opposing factions. During change and conflict, rules of laws change, creating opportunities for chasms and unknowns. Many Iraqi nationals, like other refugees applying for resettlement, seek refuge in safer countries and envision safer lives, especially safer and better worlds for their children.

Indeed, a 2009 report based on 54 individual interviews and four focus group interviews conducted with Iraqi refugees in three transit countries (Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan), revealed that the common denominator of refugees' expectations of resettlement countries is the "desire to build a life for their children in physical safety and stability, and enjoying freedom of religion" (ICMC, 2009, p. 7). This expectation has not necessarily manifested for many Iraqi refugees resettled in the U.S. According to Sarah Steimel's (2010) discourse analysis examining top U.S. newspapers' coverage of refugees in American human-interest stories, there are no success stories. Rather, three main narratives characterize refugee experiences: (a) as prior victims; (b) as in search of the American Dream; and (c) as unable to achieve the American Dream. Steimel concludes, "Together,

[2] The 2003 invasion was named "Operation Iraqi Freedom." U.S. led operations continued under this name until February 2010 when the Obama administration renamed the war "Operation New Dawn" to reflect the reduced presence of U.S. troops in Iraq. For more information, consult The Washington Post, February 19, 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com

these discourses represent a narrative of escape, hope, and then harsh reality for refugees in America's current economic climate" (p. 219). Nonetheless, some singular and more hopeful stories occasionally are publicized, such as Khalid Rasheed's measured pragmatism expressed in an Albuquerque-based KUNM public radio interview:

> I was a big business family before, now I am working from the beginning. I work now in the Flying Star café. After I make five years, I will make citizen, yes, my home, USA. I feel happy. Of course, I am not rich, but I am rich in my heart. That's good. (Gustavas, 2011)

Rasheed's testimony, and other similar refugee-generated narratives, reflects the perseverance shown by many refugees who continue to act and create change in their lives, even while they face numerous resettlement challenges in the United States.

Refugee resettlement challenges. Since U.S. refugee resettlement policies emphasize self-sufficiency through employment as soon as possible, many resettlement challenges can be characterized as challenges to secure livelihoods. The U.S. government allocates $1,850.00 for each refugee who resettles in the U.S, with $750.00 of this amount allocated to the local resettlement agency for administrative costs, and the remaining funds are used to support immediate resettlement costs such as rent, furniture, food, and clothing. The resettlement agency provides basic necessities and core services during the initial period of resettlement, a period of 30 – 90 days (Day, 2012). After the U.S. federal government has fulfilled its mandated responsibilities to resettle refugee families, refugees then engage with state and federal social welfare systems in the same ways as any other family.

The U.S. resettlement plan[3] is designed to promote economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible by providing cash and basic social service assistance when refugees arrive, then within a few weeks of arrival, provided targeted employment assistance so that refugees can enter the workforce as quickly as possible. There are, however, severe limitations to this approach. A critical policy review illustrates how the resettlement priority of "early employment" is shortsighted and "deprives refugees of opportunities to enhance their long-term well-being" (Dawood, 2011, p. 1). Indeed, many Iraqi refugees experience

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[3] For a concise overview of current resettlement policies, please consult HAIS 2013 report, Resettlement at Risk: Meeting emerging challenges to refugee resettlement in local communities (*www.hias.org/uploaded/file/Resettlement_at_Risk.pdf*).

high levels of stress and accompanying health-related issues. Under these conditions, securing a meaningful livelihood is especially daunting during initial months of resettlement.

To illustrate, many Iraqi refugees are highly educated professionals, working as doctors, lawyers, teachers and scientists in Iraq. Finding equivalent jobs that reinforce their social identities (as well as their financial security) in the U.S. is difficult due to language barriers and lack of compatible accreditation processes (IRC, 2009). Even entry-level positions are highly competitive. The sluggish U.S. economy so exacerbates resettlement challenges that some refugee families face homelessness and may return to Iraq rather than seep into poverty in the United States. The resettlement experience of Iraqi refugees in Albuquerque appears to follow this national trend. As Marshall Jensen, former refugee program director for Catholic Charities, one of the two refugee resettlement agencies in New Mexico, explains during an interview with KUNM radio:

> We have had families become homeless; we have had Iraqi families go homeless. Quite simply, the supports are not in place for those families. I don't think we support these families as much as we should nor as much as our commitment nationally to this mission would suggest. (Gustavus, 2011)

After three months of federal resettlement support, refugees are entitled to state and/or local government supported programs designed to serve families who need assistance and support in the state: SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, and TANF (temporary assistance to needy families) are common programs and each has a unique set of eligibility requirements. TANF, for example, provides monthly cash assistance for up to 60 months to low-income families with children. When refugee families enroll in this program, they are subject to the same eligibility requirements as any other family. This means there are no criteria wavers that respond to unique circumstances experienced by refugee families. A closer review of one criterion – demonstrated work activity hours – illustrates a particular challenge a refugee family might experience.

Cash assistance depends, in part, on the number of documented hours of core and non-core work activities a cash grant recipient completes. If a family receives cash assistance (in the form of a debit card), the recipient must submit a timesheet that documents the

combined number of hours engaged in core and non-core work activities to her/his local Income Support Division (ISD) office. These "work" hours often represent unpaid labor.

The New Mexico Human Services Department (2012), the department that directs the TANF program, reports that *community service*, *vocational training*, and *child care services for other cash assistance recipients* are classified as "core" activities. Core activity hours are weighted more heavily than "non-core" activities such as basic language and education classes, e.g. ESL (English as a second language) and/or ABE (adult basic education) classes. Rather than encourage and support language acquisition activities that assist refugees in obtaining higher income earning jobs, the eligibility requirements for cash assistance may actually constrain refugees' abilities to engage in meaningful work by devaluing language and literacy skills building activities even though professional jobs require a certain level of language competency. Due to the low number of refugees resettled in New Mexico, the state has fewer refugee-centered programs compared to resettlement trends in Texas or California, where 5,600 and 5,000 refugees were resettled during 2011 (Martin & Yankay, 2012). Thus, refugees looking for longer-term support in New Mexico have limited resources compared to states and cities that resettle larger numbers of refugees.

Over 250 Iraqi refugees were resettled in Albuquerque during federal fiscal years (FFY) 2007 – 2011. In FFY 2012, a total of 216 refugees were resettled in Albuquerque; roughly 10% (21) of those were Iraqi refugees. The State Refugee Coordinator reports that numbers for FFY13 and FFY 14 have not been determined (personal communication, June 11, 2013). In 2009-2010, 18 Iraqi families (37 total participants; 14 adult women) participated in the UNM Refugee Well-being Project (RWP) under the guidance of the project's designer, Jessica Goodkind. I joined the RWP team during this research cycle and assisted with qualitative data analysis. Preliminary data analysis from that research cycle suggests that Iraqis talked about *fear* significantly more than other groups of refugees in the same time frame, the first few months of resettlement (Lowry, 2011). Additional analysis indicated that Iraqi refugees shared some common experiences during their first year of resettlement in Albuquerque. These experiences include (a) relief at being safe from the everyday violence of war and occupation; (b) confusion about U.S. legal, social and health

care systems; and (c) apprehension about the long-term effects of cultural differences on their children's future (J. Hess, manuscript in process, August 2012).

This research project extends previous research conducted with Iraqi refugees in Albuquerque so that the Iraqi participants have opportunities to share their perspectives with each other, and with those in positions to make changes in policies and practices that impact their lives. This project, however, is conceptualized as a space for Iraqi refugee women to gather and talk together.

Why women? Women's roles in resettlement processes have been under-explored. Much research on women and resettlement has focused on the risks involved in states of conflict and the process of flight (Diken & Laustsen, 2005; Farwell, 2004; Gottschall, 2004; Lubbers, 2004; Manchanda, 2004; Sideris, 2000). Far less research has focused on the ways that gender roles can be revisioned and practiced differently once women have resettled. There are generative, as well as limiting, possibilities within a resettlement process. An effective response to these morphing possibilities calls for greater understanding of gender dynamics in the household, and more conversations about how those gender dynamics extend into larger social settings that create everyday routines. This project privileged a gendered lens by restricting participation to Iraqi refugee women with the intent that the issues raised in the research project all Iraqi are those that have particular impact on their gendered lives.

Philosophical Positions

In this section, I provide an overview of two philosophical positions guiding this project: (a) a participatory paradigm; and (b) a feminist orientation. I begin by reviewing the characteristics of a research paradigm. Since this project is thoroughly situated within a participatory paradigm, and because this paradigm is not as well known or applied as other major interpretative paradigms, I explore it in greater detail. I conclude by explaining ways my feminist orientation in this project is informed through an ethics of caring.

A research paradigm can be understood as the way a person frames her research orientation to fit her worldview. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define a paradigm as a "net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises" (p. 22); while Guba (1990) says that a paradigm is a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (p. 17). In short, all methodological choices about research design, the questions that are asked, the

population that is studied, and the literature review that is conducted, are informed through the paradigmatic lens of the researcher.

Thomas Kuhn (1962) is credited with popularizing and, perhaps, problematizing the term *paradigm* through revealing ways scientists, their research questions, and emergent knowledge(s) are situated within specific historicities. These specific circumstances create the leading paradigms or worldviews of the day. Kuhn also popularized the idea of a paradigm shift in this way:

> Rather than a single group conversion, what occurs within a paradigm shift is an increasing shift in the distribution of professional allegiances as practitioners of the new paradigm improve it, explore its possibilities, and show what it would be like to belong to the community guided by it. (Kuhn, 1962 p.157).

Reason and Bradbury (2001) joined this conversation by offering a critical perspective on how paradigms shift:

> Power in the research process has been challenged by new paradigm researchers, who increasingly call for a new worldview, suggesting that the modernist worldview of western civilizations is nearing the end of its useful life, and there is a fundamental shift occurring in our understanding of the universe and our place in it, that new patterns of thought and belief are merging that will transform our experience and our action. (p. 4)

Thus, paradigms represent the worldviews (of particular persons) of the day, and are constantly being revisited and elaborated, as evidenced by the participatory paradigm's emergence.

The following discussion stems from Guba and Lincoln's (1994) article that provides a comprehensive overview of competing paradigms and their respective stances on a variety of issues. Guba and Lincoln's overview includes a description of four major research paradigms: positivism, postpositivsm, critical theory, and constructivism. Through efforts to expand possibilities within the existing paradigms, most importantly the constructivist paradigm, Heron and Reason (1997) argued for a new paradigm based in a participatory worldview and participative realities. Guba and Lincoln took note and expanded their list of major research paradigms to include a participatory paradigm (2005).

Participatory Paradigm

The participatory paradigm, first articulated by Heron and Reason (1997) then elaborated and expanded into a major interpretive paradigm by Guba and Lincoln (2005), emerged as new researchers expanded ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions about social worlds and our engagement in these worlds. *Ontology* is concerned with the nature of reality. *Epistemology* is concerned with the nature of knowledge and the relationship between knower, the known, and the production of that knowledge. *Methodological* questions explore ways to obtain or understand the desired knowledge. These three areas are addressed differently within various paradigms. Appendix B (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 195) discerns five major competing paradigms according to their respective epistemological, ontological, and methodological stances.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) stress the importance of noting the ways that paradigmatic flexibility engenders more expansive paradigms, but at the same time, fluid expansion can be problematic because it concurrently blurs boundaries between competing paradigms. Heron and Reason (1997) illustrate this paradox by suggesting that while the constructivist paradigm is compatible in many ways with a participatory position, the "constructivist position fails to account for experiential knowing" (p. 274). *Experiential knowing* is knowing through engagement or knowing through participation.

In particular, Heron and Reason note three areas in the constructivist paradigm that fail to provide coherence with a participatory worldview: (1) ontological concerns, such as investigating the interplay between context and subjective-objective reality, (2) epistemological concerns such as values that privilege different ways of knowing, in particular practical knowing; and (3) methodological commitments based in cooperative relations between researcher and researched. For this proposed project, then, the participatory paradigm elaborates new ways to conceptualize the nature of reality through dialogic processes, and privileges collaboration, practicality, and participation -- issues that Heron and Reason argue were not fully accounted for in other paradigms.

Ontology of participation. Heron and Reason emphasize that a subjective-objective reality, an ontological concern, grounds the perspective of the participatory worldview. They argue that our interactive encounters with the world are shaped through our own terms of

reference, which are shaped by the interactions that others have in the world. These interacting worldviews both form and are formed by the context in which they occur. In terms resonating with this research design, these interactions occur in socially inscribed spaces constituted by participatory practices. In effect, "any subjective-objective reality articulated by any one person is done so within an intersubjective field, a context of both linguistic-cultural and experiential shared meanings" (Heron & Reason, 1997, p. 279). As Heron (1996) further explains, "It is subjective because it is only known through the form the mind gives it; and it is objective because the mind interpenetrates the given cosmos which it shapes" (p. 11). Thus, our social worlds are created and mediated through our own subjective understanding of the world, while this world is also created and mediated through the meaning making generated through the worldview of others.

Epistemology of participation. Related to the subjective-objective meaning making, the participatory paradigm includes an extended epistemology in that a person (a knower) participates in creating four types of knowledge: experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical. Heron and Reason define these four types of knowing as follows. *Experiential knowledge* means "direct encounter, face-to-face meeting: feeling and imaging the presence of some energy, entity, or person"; *presentational knowledge* emerges from experiential knowing and is "evident in an intuitive grasp of the significance of our resonance with and imaging of our world" (p. 281). *Propositional knowing* is "knowing in conceptual that something is the case" and *practical knowing*, which Heron and Reason argue assumes primacy, is "knowing how to do something, demonstrated in a skill or competency" (p. 281). They reason that practical knowing is crucial for an individual seeking change since *acting* in social worlds creates more profound experiences and learning opportunities than learning *about* social worlds. Furthermore, they argue that the tensions that position these four ways of knowing create a great challenge, *critical subjectivity*, for the knower. Critical subjectivity involves an awareness of the four ways of knowing and the tensions created among these different ways of knowing.

Heron and Reason's elaborated participatory paradigm extends a constructivist view from the notion that knowledge is co-created within a particular conceptual context by insisting that "any conceptual context is itself set within a wider and deeper experiential

context" (p. 283). Furthermore, they stress, "having a critical consciousness about knowing necessarily includes shared experience, dialogue, feedback, and exchange with others" (p. 283). The notion that critical consciousness is stimulated through exchange with others, then, necessitates particularly attuned methodological practices. Heron and Reason refer to this as *cooperative inquiry*, a collaborative form of action inquiry.

Methodology of participation. The salience of the participatory paradigm to my proposed project is further illuminated through paradigm and project design commitments to collaborative forms of inquiry. Collaborative forms of inquiry respond to the extended epistemology in ways that permit research participants to engage so that "critical subjectivity is enhanced by critical inter-subjectivity" (p. 283). To achieve this, participants engage in ways that "refine the way they elevate and consummate each other, and to deepen the complementary way they are grounded in each other" (p. 284). For example, this project is designed so that participants engage with each other throughout the research sessions by sharing their own insights and being open to receiving insights from others. Furthermore, this participation is not limited to interactions among participants, but also extends into the research design itself, thereby creating opportunities for co-theorizing through on-going critical engagement in how the research sessions are organized and managed as well as the social worlds that emerge.

This will no doubt be a challenging task since individual social worlds will be different, as evidenced by conflicts that emerged during the RWP 2009 – 2010 project. In response, the research team identified several strategies to minimize risks of confrontation; these strategies include more in-depth briefings with interpreters and cultural brokers prior to introducing topics, and seeking ways to reframe conversations. Because I expected contentious issues to emerge throughout the research cycle, I incorporated these types of strategies into the research project. First, I invited different Iraqi women to participate in the initial research design phase. Second, I asked individual women (English speaking Iraqi and non-Iraqi) questions about appropriateness of certain protocols or research questions. Third, I incorporated reflexive sessions into the research design so that issues could be immediately addressed. These strategies were used to increase awareness of potential conflict areas and increase participation in the research project.

In sum, a participatory paradigm supports the goals of this project in the following ways. First, it addresses epistemological issues relevant to the project by illuminating different types of knowledge and knowledge production. In particular, a participatory paradigm values practical knowing by recognizing and responding to the necessity of *having skills* to engage in the multiple social worlds that resettled refugees negotiate in their new communities. Furthermore, the participatory paradigm responds to the tensions between different ways of knowing, thus acknowledging the tensions presented by critical subjectivity for the knower, and reinforces the need for reflexive tools to explore those tensions. Critically investigating tensions between different ways of knowing and different types of knowledge is especially helpful for refugees as many are unable to exercise their knowing because of limited language skills, limited access to work opportunities, and limited public forums that allow for their knowledge to be visible. Finally, the paradigm calls for collaborative inquiry processes of data collection and analysis, and by doing so, expands opportunities to employ participatory practices.

By situating this project in a participatory paradigm, then, I attempt to strengthen the transformative, creative, and political characteristics of the project. To further buttress the transformative possibilities I remain attentive to an ethics of caring throughout the research cycle by incorporating a feminist perspective. A feminist perspective is attentive to the political nature of the research design, and fortifies the participatory positioning by privileging the lived experiences of the participants.

Feminist Perspective

> *The emphasis on voice in feminist scholarship and praxis reflects its centrality in affirming women's subjectivities and their agency*. (Cheng, 2001, p. 193)

This project seeks deeper understanding of Iraqi refugee women's resettlement experiences in Albuquerque by using practices that facilitate transformative experiences. It is framed by invitational rhetorical theory; a theory that is situated in a feminist perspective as explained by Foss and Griffin (1995)

> Although definitions of feminism vary, feminists generally are united by a set of basic principles. We have chosen to focus on three of these principles – equality, immanent value, and self-determination – to serve as the starting place for a new rhetoric. (p. 4)

In addition to principles articulated in invitational rhetorical theory, feminist researchers also are concerned with universal issues such as privacy, consent, and confidentiality, much in the same way other as other researchers.

Yet Olsen (2005) argues that feminist ethics in research have become more complex, thus more attentive to the specific context and increasingly draw upon ethics of care. To strengthen the principles articulated in invitational rhetoric, this project incorporates an ethics of caring espoused by many feminists (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Code, 1995; Collins, 1986; Hallstein, 1999; hooks, 1984; Lather & Smithies, 1997; Thompson, 1992; Wood, 1992). A feminist perspective creates theoretical and methodological ways to address the ethics of caring. Lorraine Code, for example, explores the ethics and politics of "knowing" another.

Code (1992) proposes, "that social scientific practice based on a commitment to knowing people as well as possible is a worthy epistemological paradigm to court" (p. 41). She further reflects that knowing others, even minimally, cannot be a neutral act and through this logic, gives the simple act of knowing a political tilt. She later writes "Caring depends for its effectiveness upon its provision of responsible knowledge about the other" (Code, 1995, p. 125). Code suggests, then, that an ethic of caring is dependent upon learning about the other through recognizing and honoring difference.

Hallstein (1999) elaborates an ethic of caring by conceptualizing a "post-modern caring." Her revisioned ethic of care moves from what she describes as its essentialist foundation into one formed through an inclusive, moral standpoint grounded in the communication and dialogue among different subjects. *Essentialism* is defined as "a belief in the essence, an inherent, natural, eternal female nature that manifests itself in such characteristics as gentleness, goodness, nurturance, and sensitivity" (Code, 1991, p. 31). While Hallstein's revisioned ethic of caring contains some of the specific characteristics of traditional or "essentialized" characteristics of caring, she argues that "revisioned caring insists on situating individual or competing claims within the knowledge produced about women's social relations, from women's standpoint, rather than just a woman's interest" (Hallstein, 1999, p. 40).

Thus, the ethic of caring that guides this research study is based in a political notion that getting to know others means getting to know about their particular standpoints, and the social, cultural, and historical circumstances that form that standpoint. An ethic of caring contributes to the spatial construction of safety, immanent value, and self-determination; conditions that enable differences to be explored, different meaning making to emerge, and opportunities to enact changes.

Juncture[4]

In this first chapter, I have introduced the Beautiful Iraqi Women research project. I provided an overview of how I became involved in the project, described contextual factors that influence refugee resettlement in Albuquerque, and discussed ways the research design is positioned in a participatory paradigm and viewed through a feminist lens. In Chapter Two, I explore the major constructs that form this project: invitational rhetoric, space, and participation. In Chapter Three, I discuss the methodological choices that inform my research design, describe research design process, provide information about the participants, and give detailed information about the content of each research and reflexive session. I also explain data collection, coding, and analysis methods. In Chapters Four and Five, I explore the research questions guiding this project. In Chapter Four, I explore ways invitational rhetoric occurred in this research space, discern actions that illustrate their functionalities, and discuss implications of structuring an invitational research space. In Chapter Five, I explore two contextual fields, a distressing context and a regulatory context, in order to understand the perspectives shared by Iraqi participants. Finally, in Chapter Six, I summarize the research project, then synthesize key research insights.

[4] At the end of each chapter, I use this term to signify transitory flows between the previous and subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This research project explores how Iraqi refugee women talk, and what they talk about, in an invitational research space. The research is framed by invitational rhetorical theory, situated in a participatory paradigm, and further positioned through a feminist perspective. The following research questions emerge from this theoretical mix and reflexively inform the research design:

RQ1: How is invitational rhetoric constructed in a short-term participatory project with Iraqi refugee women?

RQ2: In this invitational space, what do Iraqi shared perspectives reveal about Iraqi lived experience as resettled refugees?

I begin my review of relevant literature first by discussing the characteristics of invitational rhetoric. I then describe its evolution and explore the emendments[5] suggested by Ryan and Natalie (2001) designed to "clarify its [invitational rhetoric] epistemological grounding to demonstrate how it includes both internal and external sources of knowledge, and recast it as standpoint hermeneutics fused with rhetoric" (p. 70). I conclude by discussing the ways invitational rhetoric theory informs and strengthens this project design through its conceptual coherence with a participatory paradigm, a feminist perspective based in an ethic of caring, and its transformational possibilities.

Invitational Rhetoric

Invitational rhetoric, as noted by its name, is embedded in the notion of an invitation. That is exactly what this research project is, an invitation to engage in dialogic conversations. The deliberate use of the terms invitation and dialogic conversations is intended to provide deeper insights into possible ways communication strategies foster the external conditions that invitational rhetoric seeks to establish. Foss and Griffin (1995) define invitational rhetoric as an "invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination" (p. 5). An invitation can be understood as a "request for the presence or participation of someone" with the intention to have all participants jointly "consider and contribute to thinking about an issue so that everyone

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[5] Ryan and Natalie purposively use this term out of respect for Foss, Foss and Griffin. They suggest that this terminology represents their desires to "improve [invitational rhetoric] through a critical editing rather than the more audacious *amend*" (p. 86).

involved gains a greater understanding of the subtlety, richness, and complexity of the issue" (p. 7). As a mode of communication that strives to be non-judgmental and non-adversarial, invitational rhetoric facilitates and promotes greater understanding of different issues, as well as increases awareness of different motivations and rationales for those diverse perspectives. Invitational rhetoric strives to achieve its transformational potential through six key concepts: (1) offering; (2) willingness to yield; (3) invitation; (4) safety; (5) immanent value; and (6) self-determination.

Key Elements. The concepts offering and willingness to yield occur relationally in invitational rhetoric to create tensions that potentially produce transformation. As noted by Foss and Foss (2003), "receptivity to transformation by both speakers and audience is facilitated when the interaction assumes for the form of an invitation" (p. 4). Thus, the idea of an invitation starts the communicative interaction: this is one compelling reason that I will invite rather than select participants for this research project. Offering occurs when a speaker shares her perspective with others in hopes of expanding the possibilities of making sense of the world on one hand, and giving insights into her own experience of that world on the other. Willingness to yield describes the response audience members or listeners make to the offering from (an) other. A willingness to yield implies that a listener is open and willing to engage in the worldview of the speaker. Ryan and Natalie (2001) suggest that this type of interaction flow results in unique positions that cultivate invitational rhetoric's ability to "engage in a dialogue in order to reach mutual understanding, and thus a more democratic society" (p. 71).

The remaining concepts --safety, immanent value, and self-determination – are cast as "external conditions that allow others to present their perspectives in an atmosphere of respect and equality" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 7). Establishing these conditions, then, are prerequisites for the practices of offering and yielding.

Safety in a communicative situation means attending to circumstances that help people feel more comfortable and confident to engage with others who hold different perspectives. It encompasses a holistic view that attends to physical, emotional and cultural concerns. In order for this project to embrace a holistic concept of safety, then, I must understand what Iraqi refugee women need in order to feel safe participating in this research

project. This requires asking questions, engaging with participants, critically reflecting on my prior experiences, and including participants in the process of constructing the dialogue sessions: format, topic selection, and the place/space.

Attending to physical safety requires close attention to the literal space(s) where the research project occurs. This means, then, that the research space must be mindfully chosen in collaboration with participants and constructed in ways that add to the comfort and wellbeing of participants. For example, for refugees, a cold, impersonal room may trigger memories of other cold, impersonal spaces where interrogation occurred. Choosing a space within a church, synagogue, or mosque may evoke past memories or current recollections of tensions and violence between different religious groups. Meeting spaces that do not accommodate children or the elderly inadvertently exclude participants if the environment literally cannot accommodate particular demographics and fails to acknowledge wider sociocultural familial relationships. Physical safety also includes consideration of the time events are held, the geographical location where an event is held, and the ability of participants to literally access the space.

Cultural safety, on the other hand, is concerned with participants' worldviews, their culturally driven differences, and the degree to which research processes are responsive to these different positions. Wilson and Neville (2009) stress, "culturally safe research practice is primarily determined by those groups who are researched. It is about research participants feeling included, respected, and that they can trust the researchers and what they will do with the information shared with them" (p. 72). Foss and Griffin (1995) speculate that a sense of safety is necessary for participants to engage in what Oliver (2001) calls "working through" issues in order to make sense of the world and bring greater coherence to their lived experience. The concept of cultural safety, then, requires critical reflexivity, transparency about the research process and goals, and honest engagement with the research participants to assess the degree to which participants feel comfortable sharing divergent views – from each other, different from the key resource individuals who participate, and different from my views.

Immanent Value is conceptualized as the recognition of the intrinsic worth of all human beings, a principle based in the idea that "every being is a unique and a necessary part

of the patterns of the universe and thus have value" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 4). It is an acknowledgement that participants are vested with human rights, that participants are authorities on their own lives and as such, privileges the capacity for self-determination that is inherent in each individual. To enact the practice of immanent value is to recognize the basic rights of humans to participate, to be fully present as others speak, and show a willingness to yield to different perspectives. Valuing others requires humility and a willingness to acquiesce. When *value* is practiced in communicative situations, Foss and Griffin (1995) observed that participants feel they are recognized and appreciated.

Self-determination is used interchangeably with *freedom* in some invitational rhetoric texts, although the two concepts contain nuanced differences. Both concepts are described as the ability to choose or decide what is talked about and the degree to which a speaker chooses to disclose. Foss and Griffin (1995) define freedom, for example, in this way:

> Freedom in the rhetorical situation is viewed on several levels: as unrestricted content or topics for discussion, as the ability for all participants to speak, as unlimited options developed by both rhetor and listeners, and freedom of choice to reject the rhetor's perspective. (p. 12)

In this project, however, I choose to use the concept self-determination. I believe this term connotes a stronger sense of personal agency and, by doing so, situates the political potential of the project.

Invitational rhetoric, then, is based in the notion that communicators do not place restrictions on what is discussed. In this sense the condition of freedom within a research space is established by the researchers' willingness to yield to the pressing concerns and issues that are articulated by the participants. These exchanges occur through the communicative actions of offering and willingness to yield. Safety, immanent value, and self-determination are concepts that need to be nurtured and privileged in order to create spaces conducive for transformative communication to occur.

Invitational rhetoric: lines and emendments. Invitational rhetoric, as an alternative mode of communication, evolved from the feminist idea that viewing all rhetoric as persuasion is flawed; all rhetoric as persuasion reproduces patriarchal values of conquest and control of others, and represents a form of social violence (Foss & Griffin, 1996; Gearhart,

1979). As Ryan and Natalie (2001) explain, "Invitational rhetoric is grounded in feminist principles of equality, immanent value, and self-determination and replaces patriarchal values of domination, competition, and change" (p. 70). Change in this context does not refer to self-determined or selected change but change precipitated by a deliberate attempt to control an Other's thoughts and actions. Ryan and Natalie further clarify this point, "If it is possible to have understandings rather than change as a fundamental rhetorical goal, the invitational rhetoric demonstrates that intention means engagement in an issue rather than persuasion to a belief" (p. 70). Thus, invitational rhetoric presents a different conceptualization of how change can occur in different contexts.

For example, invitational rhetoric extended more decidedly into the public arena when Foss and Foss (2003) co-authored their public speaking textbook, *Inviting Transformation: A Guide to Presentational Speaking*; a text used in public speaking classes. Thus, while Foss and Foss extended invitational rhetoric as an alternative and practical mode of public communication, Ryan and Natalie (2001) moved to position invitational rhetoric into the political arena of everyday life by noting, "Invitational rhetoric becomes a feminist tool for everyday living and opens the door for a true participatory democracy" (p. 85).

Invitational rhetoric as political. Ryan and Natalie (2001) sought to extend invitational rhetoric through revising its epistemological stance and reframing it as standpoint hermeneutics rhetoric. In this section, I address these theoretical moves and discuss the ways the emended constructs add rigor and coherence to this research project.

A critique of invitational rhetoric focuses on its epistemological stance. Condit (1997) suggests that invitational rhetoric's stance on subjective knowing and the ways that this inwardly focused subjective knowing does not allow for other, external ways of knowing, creates inconsistencies within invitational rhetoric since this stance means that an individual can and will exclusively privilege her subjective way of knowing. In effect, rejecting external ways of knowing limits invitational rhetoric's ability to facilitate dialogic processes of offering and yielding different perspectives, a position that problematizes not only invitational rhetoric, but also the participatory worldview that grounds this project design. Ryan and Natalie elaborate, "because true subjectivist knowers resist looking

anywhere but to themselves for knowledge, this kind of knower as a participant in invitational rhetoric logically doesn't make sense" (p. 75).

Thus, Ryan and Natalie move to expand an internal focused subjective-knowing model into one informed through Code's (1991) dialogic model of knowing, a model conceived as a subjective-objective way of knowing. Ryan and Natalie reason, "This position would clearly release invitational rhetoric from Condit's (1997) accusation of separatist rhetoric and squarely move it into position as a form of political rhetoric that has the potential to release people from structural forms of oppression" (p. 75). A subjective-objective way of knowing as articulated by Code, and elaborated by Ryan and Natalie, resonates with this research project in three ways.

First, this type of knowing facilitates the practices of offering and willingness to yield since there is a greater openness to the other and to possibilities the other presents. As Ryan and Natalie explain, "Knowing other people parallels the kind of dialogue based in offering and willingness to yield" (p. 76). Second, a dialogic model of knowing safeguards the feminist ethic of caring that runs throughout this research design since that ethic of caring is based in part of Code's conception of knowing as caring, the same concept that describes a dialogic model of knowing. Finally, a subjective-objective epistemology resonates with the subjective-objective ontological foundation of a participatory paradigm, thereby creating greater coherence within this research design.

The second theoretical move made by Ryan and Natalie reframes invitational rhetoric as a standpoint hermeneutical rhetoric since, in their logic, "If, at the fundamental level, rhetoric is defined as the art of persuasion and hermeneutics as the art of interpretation, then it is clear that offering and willingness to yield are embedded in philosophical hermeneutic practice" (p. 77). This strategy, they reason, "highlights the dual necessity of understanding self and other and being able to articulate a point of view that has the potential to transcend difference in deep and humane ways" (p. 83). Their reframing illuminates ways a political standpoint recognizes and accounts for differences among participants, but also between researcher and researched, and allows these differences to be recognized and articulated. In sum, the authors conclude:

> We wish to argue that invitational rhetoric is actually a synthesis of rhetoric and philosophical hermeneutics bounded by feminist standpoint theory. Furthermore, when invitational rhetoric is identified as a hermeneutic practice, the interpretive and dialogic possibilities of offering and willingness to yield gain greater significance and resonance for everyday use. (Ryan & Natalie, 2001, p. 77)

By elaborating invitational rhetoric as a hermeneutic practice, Ryan and Natalie expand opportunities for multiple perspectives to inform each other, thereby allowing differences to be explored and considered. Thus, through theoretical shifts, Ryan and Natalie reaffirm invitational rhetoric's political ideological grounding and its ability to precipitate change that is grounded in an awareness that "persuasion as action is as much as result of understanding as it is argument" (p. 84). As a standpoint hermeneutical practice, the art of engagement through dialogue resonates with the spiral of self-reflective cycles that is incorporated into this research design and theoretically connect research design and analyses.

To summarize the preceding section, I have reviewed the characteristics of invitational rhetoric and acknowledged its relevance to this research project. I further explored the ways Ryan and Natalie (2001) emended invitational rhetoric by clarifying its epistemological grounding and recasting it as standpoint hermeneutics fused with rhetoric. I concluded by identifying key ways invitational rhetoric, in its different forms, add coherence and rigor to this research project and why it is appropriate as a theoretical frame. I now explore the characteristics of space and participatory practices and attempt to demonstrate ways space and participatory practices might facilitate transformative communication by creatively enabling the three principles established in an invitational rhetorical frame that I described earlier in this chapter: safety, immanent value, and self-determination.

I begin by reviewing broad notions of space. This initial entry point leads to a more thorough investigation of Soja's (1985) concept *Thirdspace,* and the reasons that *more*, or *different,* or *Third* spaces are necessary. I then investigate ways participatory practices help create these spaces. My examination of participatory practices includes a review of the ethics of participation, which can be seen as complementing a feminist ethics of care and contributing to an overall ethical frame for this project design. I conclude by reviewing ways participatory practices both respond to and are expressions of invitational rhetoric's concepts

of (1) safety as accountable practices; (2) immanent value as dialogic practices; and (3) self-determination as political practices.

Notions of Space

> *I have tried to show how the roots themselves are in a state of constant flux and change. The roots don't stay in one place. There is no such thing as a pure point of origin. (*Hebdige, 1987, p. 10)

Absolute space. A common notion of space brings to mind material and physical images: a classroom is a space where learning occurs; a mosque, church, temple or synagogue is a space where people worship; a hospital is a space for sick people, and a dog park is a space for dogs to play. These notions of fixed, definitive spaces can be understood as absolute space. Feminist geographers (1997) noted that establishing absolute space was a distinctive action for early explorers and mapmakers since "knowing once and for all where a place was on the surface of the globe was important to the development of trade and to the political domination of one country by another" (p. 6). Thus, absolute space connotes particular notions of stability and ownership. My starting point of politically demarcated space is relevant to theorizing issues of resettlement within larger discourses of forced migration since categorizations within forced migration literature often stem from characteristics associated with modern-day nation states, as theorized by cultural anthropologist Malkki (1992, 1994).

Malkki problematizes widely shared common sense ideas of place, country of origin, homeland, and highlights the ways metaphorical concepts of "roots" closely link individual and collective identities, and processes connected to belonging. Malkki (1992) illustrates ways these metaphors are reproduced not only in the "conceptual, visual device of the map, but is also (and especially) evident on the level of ordinary language" (p. 26). For example, she challenges researchers to reconsider the deeper political implications of claims to "homelands" or "nations", and the identities constructed through categories of people classified as "displaced" or "uprooted" (p. 25). Maalki further demonstrates how a sense of naturalized ownership of absolute space, its function, and the meanings attached to the activities within that particular space is legitimized through multiple discourses. In this sense, then, the "owners" legitimate the boundaries and purposes of the space and, in effect,

colonize a particular space. While Maalki is theorizing within the larger political economy, the effects of "space ownership" have particular implications for refugees in Albuquerque. Because there are few public spaces available for community groups, the research project was implemented in a community-owned space, the Family Focus Center, with the intent that participants could continue to use this space after the research project cycle is complete. The Family Focus Center is different from other community centers in Albuquerque in that it is not administered by the City of Albuquerque, but rather by a volunteer board of directors. The idea of looking for alternative community spaces was triggered through my experiences securing a community space for the 2012 – 2013 Refugee Wellbeing Project (RWP).

One component of the RWP is to organize public spaces where refugee and undergraduate participants can meet together to hold Learning Circles. In previous class cycles, Learning Circles occurred in different Albuquerque community centers, free of charge. In Fall 2012, however, there were problems securing community center space due to the city's new practice of prioritizing groups that can pay for space over those groups that cannot pay (J. Goodkind, personal communication, October 6, 2012). This meant that the RWP could reserve space (up to two months in advance) in one of Albuquerque's community centers, but if another group could pay money for that space, and wanted the space at the same time, the paying group was prioritized over the non-paying group that cannot pay. Although a community center is, in name and in previous practice, a space for all community members, the City of Albuquerque blurred boundaries between its position as steward of the space and owner of the space.

This assumed ownership of community centers limits resource poor groups' access to public space, and further constrains choices on places where refugee groups in particular can gather and open spaces in their new communities. This example illustrates ways that space(s) can move from its absolute meaning, e.g. a community center is for the community, to become space(s) where social relations are produced and reproduced.

Feminist geographers in the 1970s, however, began to question notions of stable spaces and to explore ways meanings and values of a particular space were linked to the social and economic processes that linked that space to other locations; not just from its "absolute" position as previously theorized. At this juncture, then, ideas of space began to

expand to investigate ways relationships within spaces are not only "socially produced" but also to learn *how* those relationships both constitute and are constituted by space (Women and Geography Study Group, 1997). In this sense, then, the powered relationships that constitute a space become increasingly relevant to understanding how the space came to be and continues to be conceptualized, inhabited, and used.

Socially produced space. Exploring the social production of space is relevant to this project since I assume there are few social spaces available for refugee groups to gather. In the following section, I explore ways space is socially produced, consider strategies used to inhabit or claim space.

To highlight the productive characteristics of space, I look to the expansive, trans-disciplinary theories explored by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre (1991) conceives of social space as a produced space, one that is both the outcome of past actions and one that permits new action to occur, thereby enabling some actions, and blocking others. His work draws attention to the interplay between ways particular spaces come to be defined and perceived, on the one hand, and ways they come to be animated on the other. In doing so, his theories underscore the importance of analyzing social and power relations that constitute spaces in general, but particular to this project, spaces for participation.

Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is socially produced and that "etched into every space are the traces of its productions, its generative past" (p. 110). As such, space is not just a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a "dynamic humanly constructed means of control and hence domination of power" (p. 24). He further suggests that social relationships exert their power and regulation through the space in which they exist, i.e. spaces in which they are lived and practiced. Social relations, Lefebvre (1991) contends, exist only in and through space; they have no reality outside the sites in which they are lived, experienced and practiced; a notion acknowledged by other researchers working with marginalized groups (Cornwall, 2002; Montero, 2004). Montero (2004) argues for close scrutiny of the actual processes that constitute relations and locations within a space, especially spaces for oppressed groups, by noting:

> The subaltern's situation is not that of the exotic to be saved. Rather, her position is "naturalized" and re-inscribed over and over again through the practices of locale and

> location. In order for her to ask the questions, the ground constructed by these practices must be rearranged. (p. 186)

Thus, Montero calls for a critical interpretation of not only the practices, but also the way that the *space* is constituted by the practices and naturalizes certain practices. No newly created space can be entirely cleared of these assumptions and meanings, nor can they be emptied of expectations and experiences. These ideas draw attention to the ways that particular spaces, and the practices within these spaces, become normalized and to a certain extent prescriptive of the function of that particular space.

An understanding of socially inscribed space(s) helps refugees, new community members, gain understandings of policies that regulate the everyday lives of the subjects who inhabit that space, gives insights into the cultural norms that establish ways of acting within that space, and provides additional data so that refugees, in particular, can gain greater confidence to participate in other types of space(s). Consider, for example, ways a school is socially inscribed, and the meanings embedded in the everyday experience of going to a local school to meet with school personnel.

School personnel may request that parents meet with a guidance counselor if there are problems with a child, or extend an invitation to engage with teachers during regularly scheduled parent/teacher meetings. The school spaces where these interactions occur can provide insights into cultural and institutional practices that help define who is a good parent, what U.S. education looks like, and how different actors involved in a child's education should interact. The simple act of receiving a visitor's badge, indicating that a visitor has been vetted, or understanding rules about who can play in the school playground and when children are allowed to play in playgrounds, gives insights into the safety and regulatory practices mandated by schools and other institutions. Likewise, the school design, the arrangement of classrooms, and the materials that are posted provide insights into the different values and lessons that the school strives to instill and enact. Observing who attends the meetings – a mother or father – gives clues about gender roles in child-rearing and parenting practices. A critical understanding of how the space of "school" functions in their new environments can be contrasted with the ways a school "space" functioned in other environments. A mere visit to a local school, a space inscribed with multiple values and

meanings, can produce multiple insights for refugees that, if explored in a critical way, can extend into other spaces.

Thus, even while space is socially produced with particular goals and uses of that space in the minds of the producers and users, the historical and cultural tracings of that space also contribute to its meaning and function. The interplay between the different influences in these spaces is expressed within the notion of *spatiality* introduced by Soja (1985) as a postmodern analysis of space and society, ideas he extended into another spatial dimension: *Thirdspace*.

Thirdspace. Soja (1985) introduces the notion of Thirdspace as follows: "in its broadest sense, Thirdspace is a purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings" (p. 2). Soja's conceptual design is informed by Lefebvre's (1991) critique of categorical logic that infuses epistemological frames as evidenced by Lefebvre's insistence, "Il y a toujours l'Autre"; There is always the Other (as cited in Soja, 1985, p. 53). Soja suggests that Thirdspace can also be understood as "Thirding–as–Othering" (p. 5), a place of extraordinary openness where binaries are disputed, power is understood as part of its ontological foundations, and "a place of critical imagination that can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referrers to be incompatible and combinable" (p.5). This recast Thirdspace, then, lends itself to the intersubjective and subject-object ontological foundations as articulated in a participatory paradigm.

Critical cultural studies scholar Paula Saukko (2003) points out that Thirdspace also expresses lived experience of space. She explains, "In a sense the lived space refers to the ways in which space is viewed and produced at the local and embodied everyday level" (p. 165). Attention to a research Thirdspace, then, calls for a "mode of inquiry that examines, or at least keeps in mind, the different dimensions of space or social reality. While the lived, discursive and contextual aspects of space and reality can be studied in separation, both analytically and empirically, they intertwine with one another" (Saukko, 2003, p. 167). She reasons that the multiple perspectives illuminated through a Thirdspace can best be imagined not as linear or vertical progressions but rather as spatially expansive metaphors that are

responsive to views that emerge from different locations and require complex explanations that, in her terms, "defy taxonomic categories" (p. 67).

Thirdspace, then, expands concepts of space in ways that open opportunities for more diverse and intersecting discoveries within that space. For this project, since refugees have experienced multiple regulated spaces in their resettlement journeys, Thirdspaces represent transformative spaces; spaces that encourage participation in ways that allow lived experiences to be critically examined and restoried. As bell hooks (1990) observes, "Spaces can be real and imagined. Spaces can tell stories and unfold histories. Spaces can be interrupted, appropriated, and transformed through artistic and literary practices" (p. 159). By incorporating a spatial analysis, I hope to create Thirdspaces that emerge from and within existing spaces through enacting invitational practices.

Social, psychic, and critical spaces. While different factors that influence the ways spaces are socially produced have been described in previous sections, the type of group or individual seeking space has a tremendous influence over how easily spaces can be inhabited, or transformed. Marginalized groups whose experiences do not fit into dominant worldviews, for example, may face particular challenges if dominant social and cultural groups refuse to acknowledge those experiences, either out of ignorance or disbelief. If policy makers and regulators do not understand, or do not have a desire to understand, a refugee experience of resettlement, then policy makers and regulators may be unwilling to open space(s) for refugees to talk about those experiences. bell hooks (1994) illustrates this condition in her reflections on the despair experienced by people of color following the deaths of several civil rights leaders in the 1960. Quite simply, there were no public spaces to collectively and politically grieve.

In a similar vein, Judith Butler (1997) illustrates the difficulties experienced by same sex partners to find social spaces to grieve for those who died from complications related to HIV/AIDs beginning in the 1980s. Oppressed and marginalized individuals or groups, as Fanon (1967) argues, may find that their abilities to collectively articulate and interpret events are curtailed because few social spaces are available that will publicly accommodate these different interpretations and worldviews. As the U.S. political scape changes, and the war in Iraq slowly evaporates from our national media and collective national consciousness,

working with Iraqi refugees to discover and inhabit social spaces seems crucial to integrating historicities and experiences with current realities.

Drawing on the works of Julia Kristeva, Frantz Fanon, and Teresa Brennan, Oliver (2001) elaborates notions of social spaces, and describes the effects of social spaces grounded in what Brennan (1992) describes as *loving attention*. Brennan argues that loving attention stimulates personal agency. Oliver takes this notion from its personal level to a social level and succinctly sums her claim as follows:

> Just as an individual cannot develop a sense of agency without loving attention from another and cannot develop a sense of meaning without the loving support of the social, an individual or group cannot develop a sense of social agency or social purpose without a loving social space in which to articulate that agency and meaning. (p. 44)

Oliver particularly stresses that within this supportive social space, what Julia Kristeva (1984) refers to as *psychic space*, oppressed people have opportunities to "work through" issues of oppression. Oliver (2001) elaborates possibilities offered within this psychic space by claiming, "It is within the psychic space that affects materialize between bodily organs and social customs. Our emotional lives depend on this space. Our words and our lives have meaning by virtue of their connection to affect" (p. 67). Thus, psychic spaces hold transformational opportunities through connecting embodied experience with language that represents that experience. Oliver (2001) further stresses that this psychic space holds possibilities for *witnessing* to occur. "Witnessing means testifying to both something you have seen with your own eyes and something that you cannot see; it produces subjectivity" (Oliver, 2001, p. 86). For Oliver, witnessing is transformative because is reactivates dialogue in ways that allow an individual to "reassert her own subjective agency into an experience in which it was annihilated and or reduced to guilt and self-abuse" (p. 93). Oliver (2001) reinforces the necessity of expression by noting "Affect can be deadly without a social sanctioned space in which, and symbols available with which, to express it" (p. 111).

While Oliver and Kristeva highlight the need for a psychic space to work through oppression, Lather (2007) frames her notion of necessary space as a critical space; a space where participants become critical agents in their own lives. These different articulations of

space – psychic, social, and critical – are conceptualizations of Thirdspace: a space that is transformative and life affirming. Thus, this project draws on the life-affirming characteristics of psychic, social and critical Thirdspaces to envision a research space that nurtures safety, immanent value, and self-determination. By casting the research space in this way, I hope to generate opportunities for different perspectives to be offered, received, and initiate a generative response during the research sessions. In the following sections, I discuss different ways participatory practices can expand and inscribe social spaces in order to expand opportunities for sharing perspectives, considering new possibilities, and identifying pathways for change.

Participation

> *We are nothing but whiners if we are not willing to put our concerns and convictions on the line with a willingness to honestly listen and learn something beyond our own assumptions. Something new might emerge through shared creativity.* (Terry Tempest Williams, 2004, p. 22)

In this project, I explore ways participatory processes create and are created through an invitational research space. My entry into this conversation evolves from Cornwall's (2002) suggestions that participation can be characterized by its generative and situated natures. She further argues there is a symbiotic relationship between participation and space. I take this to mean that participation within a space gives meaning and expansion to that space while space provides the materiality and the opportunities for participation. Cornwall elaborates this idea by noting, "On a metaphorical level, much of what the thinking is about when we think about participation is inherently spatial. The act of participating can be seen as bringing spaces to life as well as carving out new social forms with their own momentum and impetus" (p. 2). Cornwall explains that participation can also be meaningful and relevant, what I understand as *practical,* for participants in the way that it becomes situated in everyday life. She explains how this characteristic functions by observing:

> Treating participation as situated practice calls for approaches that locate spaces for participation in the places in which they occur, framing their possibilities with reference to actual political, social, cultural, and historical particularities rather than the idealized notion of "democratic" practice. (Cornwall, 2002, p. 29)

Treating participation in this way is akin to the process of "learning by doing," a phrase the Ambon-based team I worked with in Indonesia used to describe our method of facilitating dialogue among communities that were either displaced, destroyed, or intact; but all impacted by communal violence that had occurred five years prior to our project intervention.[6] Due to the possibilities that violence could (and did) erupt at any time during the project cycle, we realized that programming practices had to be carefully monitored throughout the process. Learning by doing, then, required on-going reflexive engagement in current practices, and describes a particular way of knowing that resonates with experiential ways of knowing described in a participatory paradigm (Heron & Reason, 1997) and an epistemological stance that frames this research project. Learning by doing and Cornwall's (2002) call to locate participation in real places both demand a critically engaged practice that is subject to examination, or critical reflexivity. The following review of literature concerned with participatory processes is based, then, on assumptions that enacted participatory practices are generative, situated, and transportable competencies.

Dimensions of Participatory Practices

In the following section, I review two dimensions of participatory practices that are particularly relevant to this research project: the ethics of participatory practices and the functions of participatory practices. In the ethics portion of this discussion, I focus on the potentially negative or unintended consequences of participatory practices by exploring ways that unexamined, pseudo, and/or exploitative practices could lead to knowledge appropriation. I conclude by investigating ways participatory practices can promote political and dialogic interactions.

Ethics of participation. In this section, I discuss two central ethical concerns of participatory practices: (a) appropriation of practices in ways that benefit the researcher at the expense of participants, and (b) researcher responsibilities. Assuredly, these two topics are not the only ethical concerns, but they are highly relevant to this project due to its emphasis on transformation as a result of participation. I use the term *appropriation* to mean taking something, knowledge for example, without crediting the source and in ways that appear to be unfair and lack reciprocity. In particular, I discuss ways to be aware of three sites where

[6] I served as head of office and program manager (International Catholic Migration Commission) for a reconciliation and resettlement project in Maluku, Indonesia, June 2002 – December 2004.

appropriation might manifest: (a) unexamined practices, (b) pseudo-participatory practices, and (c) exploitative practices.

One practice attuned to uncovering unexamined practices is reflexivity. What does this look like in a research project? Mike Oliver's (1992) essay "Emancipatory Research: Realistic goal or impossible dream?" is a reflection on ethical issues that surfaced for him as a result of his research with individuals who experience some type(s) of disability. In his introductory paragraph, Oliver reveals:

> After much critical reflection of my own work (is this what we mean by reflexivity?) during the 1980s, provoked by my involvement in the disability movement, I came to the inescapable and painful conclusion that the person who had benefited most from my research on disabled people's lives was undoubtedly me. (p. 15)

To address this disappointment, Oliver engaged in an "exercise in reflexivity" and called for the development of an emancipatory paradigm as an ideological grounding for research with disabled people. Although he professed to engage participatory methods throughout his career, he realized that in order for the participatory process to be beneficial to his participants, "the social relations of research production needed to change" (p. 17). This means the researched and the researcher need to negotiate terms of the research endeavor in a collaborative and transparent way. Oliver acknowledged that "participatory research, while it can be used as a vehicle for changing social relations, all too often leaves the relationship between the social and materials relations of research production theorized and untouched" (p. 18). Oliver's reflections demonstrate how a reflexive process can illuminate unexamined processes and their implications.

Scholars concerned with participatory practices in research (Caspari, 2006; Cornwall, 2002; Goeke & Kubanski, 2012) have drawn attention to ways certain practices, such as asking people to share information as an initial fact-finding mission, but then not acting on that information; or telling participants that they are co-researchers, but then not providing access to roles and responsibilities that constitute a co-researcher; can be used to create a sense of pseudo participation. To clarify what is meant by pseudo participation Montero (2004, p. 135) emphatically articulates what is *not* participatory:

> Sporadic consultation of groups that hold knowledge and information that is helpful to the researcher; calling groups together and giving them a script of what is expected of them in order to participate in the research; listening to people, then making absolute choices on what is relevant and reportable, and what is not.

In the absence of knowing what something is, Montero reminds that it is possible to know what something is not, and this recognition is illuminated through critical examination of the implications of research practices.

Unexamined practices, in contrast, can precipitate exploitative practices. Berngold and Thomas (2012) caution researchers against naively embracing a participatory, egalitarian notion in research spaces without carefully attending to the ways participatory practices can be manipulated to further oppress individuals. They explain: “Early forms of participation are abused in order to motivate the affected persons to cooperate and to disclose personal information by giving the false impression that they have a say in the research process” (p. 9). This statement calls to mind the process of conducting needs assessments following natural disaster and conflict-related crises, similar to the ways I experienced processes as a senior management team member of an international humanitarian organization’s 2008 Cyclone Nargis response team. [7]

In particular, I observed that while most responding organizations needed empirical data in order to raise funds to respond to populations affected by crises, these organizations could not guarantee that they would or could respond to those specific needs. While it is a humanitarian principle to disclose this possibility, few communities, especially those that are devastated by natural disasters, can actually afford to turn down the possible benefits of receiving assistance and, likewise, few organizations will stop gathering data to support on-going programming. Thus, communities may share the same types of information with several groups in hopes that they will benefit in some way. This process establishes communication forms that are ambiguous, and may be exploitative if funds received do not benefit those who shared the information. To counter this possibility, Berngold and Thomas stress that participation should begin early in the research process and that participation

[7] I served as Area Manager for Save the Children’ Cyclone Nargis emergency response program May 2008 – April 2009. I was responsible for operations in four field offices, supported a team of 400 national staff, and managed a 6 million dollar budget during my service.

should be a negotiated process, emerging from and informing throughout the entire research project cycle. Clearly, then, the research designer has distinct responsibilities to address ethical concerns that are keenly attentive to transparency in a research design constituted through participatory practices.

Researcher strategies and responsibilities. Researchers have ethical duties and responsibilities in all research projects. In a participatory project, there is a heightened urgency to mindfully engage with participants and to be responsive to their abilities and comfort to participate in the project by attending to practices that (a) inform participants; (b) build competencies of the researcher and participants; and (c) are accountable and transparent to participants. Careful attendance to these three ethical considerations could mitigate the risks of unexamined, pseudo, and/or exploitative practices.

Participants need basic information about the research process so they can make informed choices about their level of participation, and to more fully understand the implications of their participation. Achieving fully informed consent, in its full range of meaning, requires transparency about research goals and finding ways to convey these goals in particular language and grammar so that participants understand. For this project, for example, I provided agendas to participants, and reviewed the overall project goals prior to each research session. Also, participants were able to choose, based on reliable information, whether they wanted to participate in subsequent sessions.

In some situations, an informed style of participation calls for building specific competencies so that both researcher and participants engage to the fullest extent desired. The researcher, then, has the responsibility to identify practices that build skills and competencies so that participants can engage in ways that makes sense to them as well as articulate their perspectives in a group setting (Berngold & Thomas, 2012; Wilson & Neville, 2009). Co-developing competencies is likely be complicated by the different ways participants and researcher are positioned within the project. Often, the researcher will be seen, and may unintentionally (or intentionally) reinforce this view, as occupying a position of power over participants, while participants fit into this structure by seeing themselves as subjects within the research space. Further, as Freire notes (1972) many participants who occupy marginalized standpoints may have internalized external conditions of oppression.

This internalized oppression may complicate the ability to imagine oneself as being an agent of social change and an agent capable of transcending dominant conceptions of social roles.

Accountable practices are those practices that are transparent, and engage participants throughout the different stages in a project cycle: project design, project goals, project analysis, reporting modes, and resource allocations, especially financial resources and ways to allocate those resources (Berngold & Thomas, 2012; Hermann, 2004; Riecken, 2004). Managing financial resources can be an especially challenging and awkward practice to negotiate since too often, a researcher must declare how funds will be used prior to the actual expenditures, which in turn curtails the ability to be responsive to the current situation experienced by participants. Simple practices such as openly discussing how much participants should be financially compensated for their participation or re-conceptualizing the way funds are shared such as allocating block grants with larger amounts of unrestricted funds as opposed to multiple itemized expenditures are examples of ways that accountable spaces are constituted through participation and decision-making. I attempted to honor accountable practices early in this research project cycle by creating a research design team to plan and implement the project, outlining project parameters and defining which ones were non-negotiable, and disseminating information about the research objectives prior to the sessions so that participants could make informed choices about their level of participation.

This level of researcher/researched engagement in the production of the research requires continual negotiations throughout the project cycle. Maiter, Simich, Jacobson, and Wise (2008) argue for a *reciprocal* approach to ground interactions in ideas of equality and dignity:

> It [reciprocity] is an ongoing process of exchange with the aim of establishing and maintaining equality between parties. Reciprocity requires reflexivity. Reciprocity promotes recognition that partners have varying amounts and types of power in different situations and different interests in a specific project – and thus will benefit from different things. Knowledge, skills, and support are exchanged among all parties, but these exchanges may occur at different points in time, just as the underlying relationships among involved parties evolve over time. (p. 321)

Reciprocity, then, is more than a process to include in a research project checklist, but can be seen as a way of working, an orientation or an ethic to be honored throughout the process. Through its attention to maintaining respect, dignity, and value for all participants involved in the research, reciprocity necessitates accountability.

The ways research findings are produced and represented also highlight enacted accountable practices. The findings should be representative of the research process; this means that the multiple views and voices should be made visible in the representation of the results. This requires that participants share in creating a product in which they can see themselves and their views represented, and in a way that gives them a basis for further discussion or engagement on the particular issue.

The researcher is also accountable to the participants to have a well-informed understanding of the conditions that influence their everyday lives. By this I mean the researcher ought to understand the myriad sources that influence and position the participant, understand how daily routines interface with the research goals, and cultivate an awareness of the benefits and risks for those who participate. For example, some projects might publicize issues and findings that before were hidden or considered taboo (Berngold & Thomas, 2012). An example of uncovering taboo issues is in research conducted to learn more about wartime rape. While it is beneficial to acknowledge the existence of rape and respond to this type of violence, especially since increased awareness can be (but not always is) responsive to victims and can precipitate immediate lifesaving services, the research process places victims, their families, the communities where the violence occurred, and local advocates in grave danger if researchers and activists do not understand the implications of publicizing particular experiences that contest dominant political narratives (Lowry & Lutgen-Sandvik, 2010).

In sum, an *accountable* researcher is transparent about decision-making processes and resource allocations, clarifies the purposes of the research, understands the implications of participation, and implements research protocols that allow participants to make decisions about their levels of participation throughout the research cycle. The implications for recognizing these responsibilities is best expressed by Montero, (2000) in her concluding remarks: “Therefore, for participatory research to honor its name, it has to reject old

practices of excluding and silencing the people affected" (p. 138). In response, I suggest that participatory practices that are political and dialogic further attend to exclusion and silencing concerns. These types of practices can help achieve levels of engagement and the spirit of participation called for in this research design.

Participatory Practices

Political practices. Participatory practices can be understood as political in two ways. First, these types of practices hold potential to stimulate transformative experiences. Second, participatory practices open new spaces for voices, experiences, and knowledge from groups of individuals that have been excluded from conversations, thereby providing marginalized individuals and groups a political space to talk about issues that are deeply meaningful and have direct impacts on their daily lives. Liao (2006) encourages researchers to consider participation as an ongoing political struggle. She explains:

> To see participatory communication as essentially a political process is also to think of communication not in the positivist paradigm of modernization, which focused on the transfer of sophisticated hardwares and softwares from developed states to the developing areas, but in the liberating paradigm of participation through the active involvement of ordinary people. (Liao, 2006, p. 113)

She further grounds the political nature of participation by insisting that not only do individuals have a basic human right to have a say in the policies that regulate and order their lives, but that meaningful participation further serves to "redistribute political power to disadvantaged groups" (p. 112). This process in effect can redistribute political power; while at the same time provide experience and political acumen to members of marginalized groups.

Participatory processes create more political spaces as participants extend the participatory research experience, and the knowledge and skills developed through that process, into other areas of their lives. Montero (2000) is explicit in her views about the political potential of participation by outlining three types of change that can emerge: "(a) Change in the view of the world and what is usually called 'reality'; (b) Change in the view of society; and (c) Change in the conceptions of politics" (p. 134). These changes resonate with this project's goal to facilitate a process among Iraqi refugee women to critically

examine their experiences, and engage with others who can facilitate policy and practice changes.

Political participatory processes facilitate many of these noted changes by allowing a research participant to step back from her everyday life and critically examine her normalized routines and the social and institutional interactions that punctuate those routines, in a way that allows her to question how she interprets her life situation (Berngold & Thomas, 2012; Cornwall, 2002; Liao, 2006). When enacted within a group or community space, political participatory processes enable the articulation of different perspectives thereby opening new discovery spaces for unarticulated perspectives to emerge. The movement within these different perspectives is especially responsive to dialogue; a process that Liao (2006) insists is "power-charged" and is the "means for connections to be established among individuals and communities for a larger perspective" (p. 106). Dialogue, then, holds possibilities of transformation and has the capacity to extend and deepen the political space of participation.

Dialogic practices. Dialogic practices are generative; they generate new possibilities in part since listening to others, in a critical way, can reveal insights into our own values and beliefs, as well as the speaker's values and beliefs (Assister, 2000; Oliver, 2001). The characteristics of dialogic interactions in this project are based in the notion that subjectivities (and subsequently agency) are enabled through the address-ability and response–ability of individuals as communication, as described by Oliver (2001).

Dialogic practices, then, imply authentic connection and engagement through which one person is acknowledged as a human being through interactions with another person (Nelson, 1997). At the same time, individuals become more fully aware of differences between each other, thus gaining a greater awareness of the multiple intersecting positions that informs the perspective that is being shared. Montero (2000) sums this orientation succinctly, "It is by accepting the Otherness of persons that the full possibility of dialogue is established" (p. 133). Accepting the otherness implies a willingness to accept, or at least consider as valid, perspectives offered by other persons.

Juncture

To summarize, I have reviewed the major constructs informing this project design: invitational rhetoric, space, and participatory practices. In particular, I mapped invitational rhetoric's key constructs, and discussed ways it has been emended and empirically applied. I then surveyed different constructs of space and explored ways participatory practices can recast spaces as Thirdspaces; a notion I extended to include research spaces. Finally, I investigate two dimensions of participatory practices relevant to this research project: the ethics and functions of participatory practices. In the following Chapter four, I discuss aspects of research design.

Chapter 3: Research Design

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and explain the methodological choices made in this research project: a six-week participatory case study with Iraqi refugee women and invited individuals who are gatekeepers of or monitor access to refugee services. My interpretation of *methodology* resonates with the succinct definition Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offer: "Methodology focuses on the best means for acquiring knowledge about the world" (p. 183). I crafted the original research design as part of my dissertation prospectus that was approved by my dissertation committee on November 27, 2012, and then approved by the UNM Institutional Review Board (IRB) on January 30, 2013 (see Appendix B for IRB approval letter). I am especially attentive to methodology for two reasons. First, the methodological choices I make determine the strategies I use to address the research questions directing this project, thus attention to methodological choices engenders greater coherence throughout the research project cycle. Second, I use this opportunity to be transparent about choices that situate my analysis in ways to nurture productive and multiple interpretations, similar to the insights shared by Saukko (2003):

> The notion of methodology draws attention to the fact that the tools and approaches (methods) that we use to make sense of reality, are not mere neutral techniques but come with a knowledge of ideology that makes the 'reality' seem quite different (p. 25).

I am aware that methodological choices have implications for the Iraqi refugee women who participate in this project; I also assume that I do not know nor understand many of those implications. By revealing as much information as possible about the research design, and reasons I make certain choices, I hope to provide sufficient information so that Iraqi participants can make informed choices about their participation. I also intend to clarify the types and organization of data that, in turn, influence my responses to the research questions stimulating this project. The research questions are:

RQ1: How is invitational rhetoric constructed in a short-term participatory project with Iraqi refugee women?

RQ2: In this invitational space, what do Iraqi shared perspectives reveal about Iraqi lived experiences as resettled refugees?

This chapter is organized in the following manner. First, I orient readers to the localized genealogy of this research project. I then explain the rationale for approaching this project as a qualitative endeavor, discuss broad strategies of inquiry, and describe key research project elements. I then describe particular research elements: design, participants, space, active and reflexive research sessions, and Iraqi-identified issues. After situating the research project, I discuss methods I used to manage and make sense of the data: coding schemes and data analysis. For this project, I used three first-cycle coding methods: (a) provisional; (b) focused; and (c) affective. These coding schemes organized data in relation to invitational concepts and Iraqi-identified issues. To synthesize Iraqi issue-based perspectives inscribed with affective and contextual codes, I used a pattern coding method. Analysis was informed through hermeneutic and rhizoanalytic approaches. The discussions in this chapter, then, articulate and clarify choices and methods that inform the analyses and interpretations described in Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

Research Project Genealogy

This research project expands within the Refugee Well-being Project, a community-based research and intervention project originated by Jessica Goodkind. The RWP design has gone through several iterations since Goodkind first partnered with Hmong refugees resettled in Michigan to produce her dissertation research in 2003. Goodkind has since administered the RWP as a UNM research-based project for five years, connecting refugee families from West Africa, the Great Lakes Region in East Africa, and Iraq, with undergraduate students. In general, the RWP aims to improve refugee well-being by addressing the stressors of resettlement, building on refugee strengths, and providing structured learning circles so that refugees and their partner advocates, undergraduate students, can share cultural values and practices. The RWP also is an example of action research. Findings and recommendations that emerge from the research are shared with policy makers to influence the rules of law governing refugee subjects, as well as published in scholarly journals in attempts to create new conceptualizations of refugee mental health and wellbeing.

The RWP has several research components including a mixed method approach, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, but it is the mixed

theoretical approach that most significantly influences my participant-centered research design. Goodkind (2006) explains:

> I chose to use a research design that included a large qualitative component with many considerations in mind, both theoretical and methodological. Some of the most important ones involved making sure that the evaluation of the intervention was consistent with the principles upon which it was based – that it be participant-focused and reciprocal. In other words, I wanted the interviews to not only be useful for me but also to be valuable to participants by providing them with opportunities to share their experiences with each other and with me. Related to this idea, I wanted to ensure that refugees had the opportunity to speak in their own words, because others often speak for them (p. 82).

Although the RWP is no longer fully funded as a research project, a modified version was implemented (Fall 2012 and Spring 2013) through the University of New Mexico with institutional support from the departments of Communication & Journalism, Anthropology, and Psychology. Julia Meredith Hess and I were the instructors of record for the two-semester project. My orientation to refugee-identified issues is greatly informed through the experiences of being co-director of the RWP for the past year. To illustrate, one responsibility I had as the instructor was to listen to the undergraduate students' accounts of what occurred during the past week. Over 15 weeks, I listened to 17 undergraduates recount their experiences working with refugee families. I listened to approximately 150 refugee resettlement stories over a 16-week time period.

I have been involved in the RWP, however, since Spring 2010 in different roles: participant, interviewer, CAC member, childcare provider, data analyst, and grant writer. I also have produced two papers for class projects based on data collected from Iraqi participants, and co-created a theatrical performance conducted with children involved in a refugee assistance after-school program supported by Catholic Charities. To further understand domestic refugee resettlement policies, I was awarded a UNM future faculty grant to attend Northwestern University's Summer Institute on Forced Migration (July 2012). During the weeklong conference, I met leading scholars working on issues of refugee rights and resettlement. In short, resulting from my past three years' experience with the RWP, and

consistent engagement with refugee resettlement issues, I have a particularly situated perspective of refugee resettlement in New Mexico. Furthermore, the RWP has facilitated access to key stakeholders involved in refugee resettlement: refugee families, local service providers, the state refugee coordinator, and others positioned to respond and affect changes for refugee families. Without these relationships, I would not be able to conduct the type of research described in this project. This research project is grounded, then, in local issues, local relationships, and is grafted into a localized research trajectory. At the same time, this project extends these research trajectories by examining ways invitational rhetoric occurs in public forums with refugee participants and those who are gatekeepers of critical resources.

What adds to my understanding of invitational rhetoric is my relationship with one of its originators, Karen Foss, and her accessibility and generosity in talking through particular invitational rhetoric concepts or notions. I have been the instructor of record for two invitational public speaking courses, produced a text comparing and contrasting the two different approaches to public speaking used in the Communication and Journalism department, and introduced invitational concepts into other classes I teach. I also have listened to Karen retell the "invitational rhetoric story;" an account of ways her lived experience contributed to the development of a different type of communication, one that offers transformative possibilities. As a result, I have situated perspectives on the origins, trajectories, and possibilities of invitational rhetoric informed through multiple sources.

Crafting the Project

My search for appropriate methods to address and understand the goals of this project included an investigation of different research paradigms. My project landed in a qualitative research realm resonating with the following explanation:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their

natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005. p. 3).

From its position within a qualitative realm, the research project was crafted to highlight invitational rhetoric's organizing concepts: safety, immanent value, and self-determination. Rhetorical theory (Foss & Griffin, 1995) proposes that these concepts contribute to creating spaces receptive to sharing perspectives – one of invitational rhetoric's interactive and productive communication constructs - among individuals or groups who occupy different positions and hold different perspectives. To accommodate the multiple perspectives presented by different participants in this research project, I employed a variety of inquiry forms that are compatible with the philosophical assumptions that underpin invitational rhetoric constructs, as well as other theoretical lens framing this project, namely a participatory paradigm and a feminist perspective.

Strategies of inquiry. Strategies of inquiry describe ways a researcher moves between theoretical constructs and processes of collecting empirical data. Strategies of inquiry must therefore be both rigorous and flexible to accommodate the paradigmatic assumptions of the research design, as well as the research project-specific aims and questions guiding its implementation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). For this project, I employed collaborative, transformative, and practical inquiry strategies.

Collaborative inquiry strategies included collectively theorizing with research participants the different meanings and insights that emerge during the research project; these forms of inquiry are compatible with a participatory paradigm. Collaborative strategies are most noticeable in this research project during the reflexive research sessions that follow each active research session.

Transformative forms of inquiry are compatible with a feminist perspective. By this I mean transformative strategies allow participants to define and alter the processes that regulate the research sessions. In turn, these self-determined acts extend opportunities for participants to make choices that are relevant in the moment. In her discussions of feminism and participatory practices, Lio (2006) also addresses choice: "Feminism grows out of social and political movements aiming to bring justice into society so the marginalized can choose their positions instead of being pushed into positions where they are" (p. 106). In the research

project, Iraqi participants were able to make some choices, and while these choices may not have resulted in "changed positions," the choices nonetheless enabled Iraqi participants to monitor the visibility of their different positions.

Finally, I implemented *practical* strategies of inquiry consistent with the aims of practical knowledge, a key epistemological assumption informing a participatory paradigm. This means, then, that inquiry strategies utilized in this project produce practical and useful skills that can be applied in various settings of everyday life. Furthermore, practical forms of inquiry produce practical outcomes, e.g., a policy briefs and position papers that can be shared with various stakeholders concerned about refugee resettlement in order to extend the research project into the institutions that constitute the normative interactions and expectations of everyday life of the participants.

Strategic Research Elements

Strategic elements in this research project are:

- Research Design
- Participants
- Space
- Active Research Sessions
- Reflexive Research Sessions
- Iraqi-identified Issues

I paid careful attention to these strategic research elements, and their interactions since these elements were based in participatory processes. These elements interact to influence the outcomes and interpretations that occur within this project. I describe these elements in the following sections. Particular elements also are examined in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five, while the interconnectivities among and between these elements, including their generative capacities, are explored in Chapter Six.

Research design. Although I crafted a research design to include in my dissertation prospectus, the actual design and implementation protocols were a collaborative effort between Iraqi refugee women and me. My first post-prospectus foray was an interaction with an Iraqi refugee woman I knew through our mutual participation in the Refugee Well-

being Project's Community Advisory Council (CAC). I wanted to meet with Anna[8] before I spoke with other Iraqi women because I wanted to demonstrate respect and honor to her. Anna is an "older" woman (probably in her mid-fifties), and I believed sharing with her was a correct course of action because she was older, and I value(d) her experience. I contacted Anna by telephone and invited her to lunch. She, in turn, invited me to lunch at her house.

While we sat on her couch, interpretation mediated by her electronic Arabic/English translation device, she and I discussed this project. As we went through the research project goals and objectives, she consulted her translation device to help with words she did not understand; one word was *participation*. After tapping in the word *participation*, waiting to see what emerged, Anna finally looked up and said, "yes, sharing." The research design process began on a participatory, sharing note. We had a lovely lunch, I toured her backyard garden, and she told me about ways she and her friends used to spend time "storying together" in Iraq. I contacted other Iraqi women to work with me in the research project after my lunch with Anna.

I contacted Sara and Cici, also Iraqi refugee members of the RWP CAC, to see if they would help me organize and implement this project, and they agreed to participate. I was aware of their strong research skills, their abilities to understand and navigate resettlement issues, and their English language competency. I also knew that Cici and Sara adhered to different faiths; one woman identifies with Mandaean faith, while the other woman identifies as Chaldean Christian. I had been cautioned about differences based along religious lines; conflicts in Iraq often had differentiated groups according to religious identifications, and these differences had caused eruptions among resettled Iraqis during previous RWP sessions (2009 – 2010). I reasoned, however, that it appeared connections within the resettled Iraqi community were family-based, and collectives of families were religious-based. Realizing that the Iraqi community of refugees also included Muslims meant that the research project would benefit by inviting a Muslim woman to be on the team. Cici recommended Haya, a young woman she thought would be a good addition to the team. I do not know to which tradition of Islam Haya adheres.

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[8] Some Iraqi participants use pseudonyms. When pseudonyms are used, participants have chosen the names. Access participants are usually referenced by their position, e.g. Service Provider,

After Cici contacted Haya, we three met on the UNM campus to discuss the project, and Haya agreed to participate. On January 25, 2012, in the small library on the second floor of the Communication and Journalism Department at UNM, we met for the first time as the Research and Design Team (RDT). The RDT composition, then, was influenced by three criteria: (a) Iraqi women I knew, (b) Iraqi women I trusted, and (c) Iraqi women who had networking capacities within the different Iraqi refugee communities. The RDT met for three two-hour planning sessions. The initial meetings created critical spaces for us to get to know each other better, practice different ways we could accomplish goals during time-bound work sessions, and clarify research project goals and objectives so that Iraqi RDT members could explain the project to other Iraqi women.

The RDT members identified women to invite by thinking of every Iraqi woman anyone knew in Albuquerque. Because I cannot speak Arabic, and do not know many Iraqi refugee women living in Albuquerque, I did not contact any participants. The RDT Iraqi members, however, compiled lists of names, allocated names among each other, and then each RDT member became responsible for contacting, and being a contact for, their particular group. Iraqi RDT contacted 21women by telephone, explained the project from a semi-structured script, and then asked basic questions such as *Do you need childcare? Do you have transportation? Does this time work for you?* These questions were designed to help us accommodate different needs and desires of the participants. From this initial contact, sixteen women agreed to participate. Having to work, living too far away from the research space, and an inability to get buy-in from their husbands were a few reasons offered by women who could not participate.. Only one woman was excluded based on sampling frame criteria: a Palestinian woman who contacted a RDT member to inquire about participation because she had heard about the project from an Iraqi friend. The decision to exclude this one participant was a choice made by the RDT as we discussed the need to keep the space an Iraqi space.

The RDT, with Cici as team leader on this particular project, translated the English consent form into Arabic. I then submitted the Arabic consent form to the IRB for inclusion in this project's approval packet. Each participant signed English and Arabic language consent forms during the first research session she attended. Iraqi participants retained their

co-signed Arabic language informed consent, and I kept the English language consent form. Participants who returned to subsequent research meetings initialed her original English language consent form, so I was able to track participation since the research design did not require a sign-in sheet for each research session.

Participants were not required to attend each session, yet 15 of the 17 Iraqi participants chose to come to all research sessions. Participation was voluntary, and research project resources compensated participants for transportation costs, and offered an honorarium in recognition of the expert knowledge they contributed to the research project. Additionally, participants who received cash assistance, such as TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), included the hours they spent in the research space in their overall computation of work hours required by the state as a recipient of these funds. To document their involvement in the research project, I was required to sign a state form verifying participation.

Participants. There were two groups of participants: Iraqi participants and Access participants. While the sole criterion for inclusion in the Iraqi participant group was to be an adult (over the age of 18) Iraqi refugee woman, the pool of potential participants was limited to those Iraqi women who were known by the three Iraqi RDT members. Other participants, however, were invited based on their abilities to impact change in key issues identified by the Iraqi refugee participants. This group of invitees are categorized as Access participants and included:

- New Mexico State Refugee Coordinator;
- Program Directors of Refugee Services for Catholic Charities and Lutheran Family Services (the two refugee service provision agencies in New Mexico);
- Director of UNM Hospital Interpretation Services;
- Co-Director, Cultural Competency Curriculum for the School of Medicine, UNM
- Co-Director, Refugee Well-being Program, UNM.

In total, 30 women participated in the project: 17 Iraqi participants, six Access participants, five community volunteers, my advisor, and me. At my request, the Iraqi RDT agreed to invite Tema Milstein, my PhD advisor and faculty advisor on this research project, to attend research sessions two. Participants were familiar with her name because I had

included the IRB approval letter (which named her) in their welcome packets, and she is listed as a primary investigator in the Arabic and English versions of the informed consent forms. Tema's presence demonstrated additional institutional support for the research project, a concern for participants, and a willingness to learn more about refugee resettlement issues. Community volunteers did not participate in either active or reflexive research sessions, but assisted with childcare.

I did not collect standardized demographic data about participants. While this information may have been helpful, I did not feel justified taking this information from participants when it was not necessarily germane to the research questions. In lieu of demographic information, I asked participants to submit personal comments in response to the statement: *This is who I am*. Participants were informed that their responses would be included in my final dissertation text. Out of 30 total participants, 22 responded with written statements. I have reported their responses as presented to me. Their responses, in no specific order, are included in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant personal statements

I am a housekeeper and I live with my daughter. She is sick, but I am very happy. I am retired and I like this program very much because we talk a lot and find some solutions.
I am an Iraqi refugee and the mother and teacher of my kids in my language. I am also a student in the Catholic Charities to develop my English skills.
I am the lead interpreter.
I am a faculty member at UNM and Carmen's PhD adviser. I feel privileged to be included in this research and am very happy to have met all these women. I study cultural and environmental communication, or eco-cultural communication. I am also a mother and have lived in the Middle East.
I am a faculty member at the University of New Member and a researcher for the Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addictions.
I am a housekeeper and refugee. I am also a student in CNM. My problem is in language and I want to push myself to learn this language because it is important.

I am an Iraqi woman. I am suffering from a hard situation. I left my country Iraq because of the situation. Now I am living a good life about security things. But I still miss many things in Iraq, but I am here with my kids so that they will have a good life.

I am a woman, Jewish, a student, New Mexican, a daughter, a friend, Canadian.

I am an Iraqi refugee from the country of the sun and the rivers. I am an Iraqi mother concerned about raising and educating my kids. I am very happy that I am connected and related to my Iraqi country, but I am happier because I am a participant with the Iraqi women who are from my county. I am happy to meet them and happy to be in this program. Thank you, Carmen. I wish you success.

I am an Iraqi refugee. I came to America because of the situation in my country. I am married and I have kids. I finished my education in Baghdad. I have a Bachelors degree in physics, but I don't work here because I don't have the chance to get a job.

I am an Iraqi refugee and I am a mother.

My name is Julia Meredith Hess. I am a cultural anthropologist who believes that through listening to people, through getting to know them, and them getting to know me we can create mutual trust. Through sharing perspectives and knowledge, we can come to understand each other. This understanding is critical to creating real change—both in our own lives and in the world. My goal is to be someone who is always open to learning and seeing things in different ways. I feel honored to conduct research in conjunction with others, with the hope that this kind of research offers new ways of seeing and being, and in a small way contributes to positive social change.

I am an Iraqi refugee. I have a big family with three sons and one daughter and one husband.

Donna Jewell received her MFA in Dance from New York University's Tisch School for the Arts and is the Head of Dance in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of New Mexico. Ms. Jewell has been choreographing, performing and teaching in Europe and the United States for the last 20 years. She was a full-time faculty member of the Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance and a tenured faculty member of the Department of Theater at the Mozarteum College of Fine Arts in Salzburg, Austria.

I am a housekeeper. I have kids and I live with my husband and my kids. The things I am happy about are for my kids and their future. Despite that I am homesick. This is a good program because we are discussing many things, our lives, and our problems.

I am a program director for Lutheran Family Services Refugee and Asylee Programs and an advocate for equal and human rights.

I am a mother, a teacher, a dog person, a sewer, a person who likes to crochet, an artist, a lover, a fighter, beautiful, fierce, caring. I am a woman of the world. I am Native American.

I am a student trying to do good research where people feel valued, listened to, empowered and safe.

I am the mother who cares about everyone, and who wants everyone to be safe and happy. I'm the learner who is thirsty, then ready to share knowledge and love. Like earth, which is ready to have the seeds, waiting to grow and flourish, and then give fruits to everyone.

I am a community psychologist and faculty member in the University of New Mexico Departments of Pediatrics and Psychiatry, soon to be faculty in the Department of Sociology. I work collaboratively with communities to improve the mental health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. My research focuses primarily on developing and testing community-based mental health interventions with Native Americans, refugees, and immigrants in the United States, using community-based participatory research approaches. My interests include mixed-methods research and a wide variety of community-based participatory research projects and service learning opportunities that address the social determinants of health. I am also co-director of the Cultural Competency Curriculum for the UNM School of Medicine. I was born and raised in New Mexico, left for 14 years to complete my studies and to experience other parts of the United States and world, and then returned home in 2004. I became a community psychologist because I believe that engaging with communities to create social change and to work towards social justice is essential.

I am a student in Central New Mexico Community College (CNM); also I have a part time job. I have the honor to be in this program because it achieves a lot of things for the refugees, especially when staff of refugee services attend. Our thanks and appreciation for the wonderful efforts by the researcher Carmen Lowry.

I am currently an assistant professor in the Department of Journalism and Communication at the University of New Mexico. My parents, both descendants of Cherokee, Creek, and Scots-Irish families, grew up in southeastern Kentucky, deep in the Appalachian Mountains. They were the first in their families to finish high school at a mission boarding school and attended college due to the generosity of others – my mother at Berea College and my father on the G.I. bill. Both became public high school teachers who instilled in me not only the importance of education but also the idea that such opportunities should be available to all. Their influence and my own ability to attend Northwestern University on a full academic scholarship informed my later decisions to work for social justice as an instructor at one of the Historically Black Colleges and as a community organizer and labor activist in the Deep South during the 1970s.

Space. Research sessions were held at the Zia Family Focus Center (http://ziafamilyfocuscenter.org), a community space centrally located in Albuquerque, and attached to the Zia Elementary School campus (see Figure 1). After scouting several

locations, the RDT chose the Zia Family Focus Center for several reasons including its central location, its facilities that include a large kitchen space, safe rooms for children to play in, and an expansive outdoor playground (see Figure 2). There also is a small city park adjacent to the community center. The was a decision made by the RDT after we surveyed three other possible locations.

Sign in Arabic
Welcome Beautiful Iraqi Women

Figure 1. Research space

Figure 2. Playground in research space

All research sessions were held in the kitchen, a large room with small tables and chairs designed to accommodate middle-school aged children. In addition to cooking facilities, utensils, and a refrigerator, the kitchen has a big white board, a soft corkboard, and we were able to re-arrange furniture to create types of meeting spaces we wanted. The kitchen workspace is separated from the table and sitting space by a big counter. There is a floor to ceiling window on the east side of the room that looks to the Sandia Mountains, the long window on the south side opens up to the city park, and when the weather was pleasant, we opened the west-side door to a small courtyard. Our meeting space was enclosed and private, but still had vistas that extended into outside spaces.

Children, under the supervision of childcare providers, stayed across the hall in the small library or, if APS was not in session, played outside. The library, like the kitchen, has smaller tables and chairs to accommodate children who participate in the FFC's afterschool programs. Snacks were available to all participants. Participants met the Center Director; she explained the rules and discussed the after-school programs, reminding women that the FFC

has scholarships to support students whose families have limited income. Following her initial meeting with Iraqi refugee participants, the FFC Director worked with them to organize two free ESL (English as Second Language) classes.

Active research sessions. Iraqi refugee women were invited to participate in six weekly two-hour active research sessions on the following Fridays during 2013: Feb. 15, Feb. 22, March 1, March 8, March 22, and March 29. We did not meet on Friday, March 15, since this date was during the Spring Break session for UNM and for the Albuquerque Public School System (APS), so many participants needed to attend to their children. The RDT agreed to meet immediately following these research sessions for one-hour reflexive sessions; reflexive sessions are discussed later in this section.

All research sessions were held at the Zia Family Focus Center. Before participants arrived, I laid out agendas (in English) and meeting materials (notecards, paper, and pens to capture thoughts and comments) so participants were informed about the research session format for that day, and could provide written comments or feedback throughout the session. Submitted comments usually were written in Arabic, so the RDT translated these during the reflexive sessions. At their first research session, participants received a research packet that included a hand-written invitation from me, a notepad, a pen, a copy of the IRB approval letter, and a letter of support from the New Mexico State Refugee Coordinator. During active research sessions, RDT members recorded key information, in Arabic and English, on the large white board so participants could keep a record of what occurred during the sessions (See Figure 3). No one took official minutes during research sessions, but anyone could take notes since they had the tools to do so.

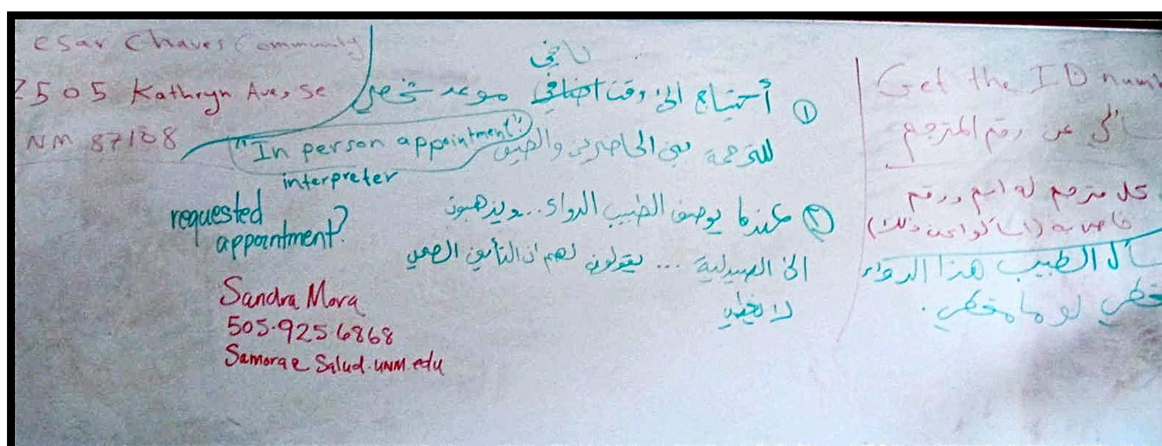

Figure 3. Arabic and English record-keeping during research session five

In addition, rather than have one designated interpreter, Iraqi RDT members shared interpretation responsibilities. This meant, then, that any one of the three RDT members, or any other participant who felt comfortable conversing in both Arabic and English languages, could interject and translate during the sessions. One RDT member sat beside me at all times so if I had a question, I had a way to obtain immediate clarification. So that women with children could participate, the project compensated a professional childcare provider, and five volunteers also assisted with childcare. Table 2 gives an overview of the six active research sessions.

Table 2

Research session participants and topics

Research Session	Participants			Topic
	Iraqis	Resource Persons	Volunteers	
RS1	15	0	1	Orientation and Planning
RS2	16	0		Issues
RS3	17	0	1	Issues
RS4	17	1*	1	State Refugee Policies
RS5	17	3**	1	Issues in Healthcare
RS6	15	2***	1	Local Refugee Services

*State of New Mexico Refugee Coordinator
** Director of Interpretation Services, UNM Hospital; Co-director UNM Hospital Cultural Competency Program; Co-director, UNM RWP
*** Program Director Refugee Services, Catholic Charities; Program Director Refugee Services, Lutheran Family Services

Reflexive research sessions. Reflexive research sessions describe the hour-long sessions that followed each active research session. I use the term reflexive in ways that follow Kim England's (1994) definition, "Reflexivity is a self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher" (p. 244). Reflexivity, then, describes my critical and mindful reflections of my impact in the research project. While the reflexive sessions in this project constituted spaces for individual reflection, it also extended to create spaces for group reflexive processes, thereby casting the space as a critical space (Lather, 2007). To structure reflexive sessions in ways that facilitated critical reflection, I referred to Berngold and Thomas's (2012) "focuses of reflection" from which "techniques and instruments can be derived that can facilitate reflexivity on the part of participants" (p. 13). These foci are: (a) reflection on personal biographies, (b) reflection on the relationships among the research team, (c) reflection on the context of the research project, and (d) reflection on the research project implementation and protocols.

Since group reflexivity is grounded in critical reflections and differing degrees of disclosure, reflexivity in this project first was assessed in terms of participant safety. Thus,

one way to envision these foci is to conceptualize a continuum that demonstrates levels of vulnerability. The most vulnerable spaces, personal biographies, are on one end and the least vulnerable spaces, talking about the project implementation and protocols, on the other end. During reflexive sessions, we held conversations about the context of the project (refugee resettlement), and the research project implementation and protocols. I did not note the same level of reflection about relationships among the research team members, nor did we share personal biographies in the research space. However, I did not ask for all Arabic conversations to be interpreted, so perhaps Iraqi participants were sharing in more intimate, reflexive ways, and I was unable to notice nuanced reflexivity.

Because I knew that there were possibilities that Iraqi refugee women had experienced trauma and violence in pre-resettlement spaces, and still may experience different types of trauma in their resettled spaces, I did not want to push participants to disclose anything that they were not ready to disclose. I trusted that the RDT would disclose to the degree that they felt most comfortable. These reflexive research sessions, then, became spaces where RDT members, and others who were present, could examine experiences, thoughts, ideas, and memories triggered within and from the research sessions, and then make choices about what to disclose.

At the onset of the project, I was unsure how to structure these sessions. Yet, I quickly discovered that Iraqi RDT members were comfortable asking their own questions, exploring different interpretations of the research meeting experiences, and offering different evaluations about the experiences. During the first reflexive session, I asked RDT members a series of questions I had developed to capture participants' experiences of the session. This was seen, perhaps, as ineffective since an RDT member remarked, "We should just ask the women." Moving on this suggestion, we changed techniques in active research sessions two and three. At the end of these research sessions, participants wrote comments (in Arabic) on notecards, then we discussed these comments during the reflexive sessions. Because there was so much activity during active research sessions four, five, and six, we did not ask for feedback from the participants. Instead, our reflexive sessions were open conversations about the interactions that occurred during the research sessions. While the reflexive sessions primarily were conducted in English language, Iraqi RDT members still conversed

with each other, at different times, in Arabic language. All reflexive sessions, except for the first one, were recorded and transcribed verbatim. This means, then, that when there were Arabic language conversations, I have inserted into the transcription [Arabic language], but have not transcribed nor translated the Arabic sections.

Iraqi-identified issues. During the first two research sessions, participants identified key issues that were important to them. These early identified issues included: access to citizenship information; concerns about experiences in the healthcare system; acquiring English language skills; and questions about discrimination and unfair treatment. Once issues were identified, I contacted and invited individuals positioned to help the Iraqi participants explore these different issues and to create changes if possible. Every invited guest participated in the research project. Issues are contextually explored in Chapter Five.

Methods

Data sources. There were three key data sources for this project: (a) my field notes, (b) transcribed audio recordings from active research sessions four, five, and six; and (c) transcribed audio recordings from all but the first reflexive research sessions. My reasons for choosing which sessions to audio record are described later in this section. Data sources were formatted into word documents and uploaded into Dedoose (www.dedoose.com), a web-based cross-platform program designed to analyze qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research.

Field notes. Field notes represent the "means through which researchers develop two important forms of subjectivity: empathic understanding of participants' experience, and successful representation of that understanding for others" (Lindolf & Taylor, 2011, p. 59). During each research session, I made notes on what I saw and heard. However, due to the participatory nature of the research sessions, field notes taken during the sessions were often scrawled fragments of events I witnessed or emotions I experienced. These notes, then, triggered memories of research project events when I sat to recall and write about the experience. From these field notes and session transcripts, I developed memos as described by Emerson, Frets, & Shaw (1997):

> Early on in the process of analyzing data, fieldworkers write *initial memos* on a series of discrete phenomena, topics, or categories. Later, as the fieldworker develops a

> clearer sense of the ideas or themes she wants to pursue, memos take on a more focused character; they relate or integrate what were previously separate pieces of data and analytic points. These *integrative memos* seek to clarify and link analytic themes and categories (p. 143).

For this project, I generated eight integrative memos on the following topics:

1. Paradoxical spaces
2. Sharing perspectives
3. Self-determination
4. Immanent Value
5. Safety
6. Transparency and Accountability
7. Issues
8. Discrimination

Field notes and memos were uploaded as Word documents into the Dedoose program for easy reference. Likewise, I uploaded project related email correspondence; grant proposals, and minutes from meetings conducted with various participants. Although these documents are not integrated into the coded dataset for this project, they provided insights into the research project context, and I consider them to be integral project documents.

Audio recordings. I did not audio record active research sessions one, two, and three since there were no outside participants, excluding my advisor's participation in research session two and my presence in all research sessions. My decision was an ethical one designed to foster safety and encourage participation among the Iraqi participants by minimizing surveillance. Following the initial reflexive research session, though, I realized that reflexive research sessions with the RDT do not require the same level of concern for safety or privacy as the active research sessions. I therefore began to audio-record all reflexive sessions, and recorded action sessions four, five, and six; these particular research sessions had Access participants present, and I wanted to ensure I could correctly reference vital information Access participants shared during the sessions.

Despite my inability to understand Arabic, audio recordings of the research sessions generated several insights as I began to hear patterns through the musicality of the sessions.

Lindolf & Taylor (2011) explain that participants' embodied experiences are often illuminated via visual representation, yet stress that audio may be an alternative sensory experience. Prior to seeing a pattern in the dataset, I first heard a pattern in the audio-recordings – a relieving first insight into my data analyses. Before I recorded any session, I announced that the session would be recorded so that everyone would be informed. Audio-files were imported into ExpressScribe, a free transcription program downloaded from their website (http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/index.html), and transcribed verbatim into word documents that were uploaded into Dedoose. Although Dedoose can accommodate audio files, I did not upload any because there is very little space available for audio files; so extra fees are applied to upload audio and visual files. In total, this project's dataset included field notes and 511 minutes of transcribed audio recordings from three action sessions and five reflexive sessions

Coding schemes. I used three stage-one coding schemes, and one stage-two coding scheme to organize data. To construct my coding schemes, I consulted Sandana's 2009 text, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, to determine appropriate methods. Since the manual is intended to be a reference tool and reviews 29 coding methods and their analytic possibilities, I was able to make well-informed choices about which coding processes best fit with my project goals. In the following sections, I describe my coding processes.

Stage-one coding. I first organized the data by coding invitational rhetoric concepts: immanent value, self-determination, safety, and sharing perspectives; and then I broadly coded issues. Miles and Huberman (1994) describe this as a provisional coding method that uses a general list of codes generated from relevant literature reviews, previous research findings, and the researchers' previous experiences. I then used a focus coding method to discern particular actions or expressions within the broad invitational codes, and as a way to refine the issues category.

Through this refinement process, I identified manifestations of invitational rhetoric concepts that were particular to this research project, and meaningful to this particular group of Iraqi refugee women. The refinement process, then, produced two strains of safety (procedural and psychic); located a distinct form of immanent value based in trustworthiness

of an individual perspective; identified observable expressions of self-determination; and discerned among the different perspectives shared. This coding scheme organized the dataset that is described in Chapter Four. I chose these two coding methods to address my first research question, "How is invitational rhetoric constructed in a short-term participatory project with Iraqi refugee women?"

Because I was interested in understanding Iraqi participants' lived contexts, ways that social organizing structures contribute to meaning making of lived experiences, I turned to affective and contextual coding schemes. In the final first-stage coding process, I applied an affective coding method to the refined issues. I chose this method for its capacity to "investigate subjective qualities of human experience by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences" (Saldana, 2003, p. 86). This particular coding method positions the dataset in response to the second research question, "In this invitational space, what do Iraqi shared perspectives reveal about Iraqi lived experience as resettled refugees?"

Second-stage coding. Following an affective coding process, I applied a second cycle pattern coding method. As Saldana (2009) explains, second-stage coding schemes are used to achieve "a better sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and or theoretical organization from your array of first cycle codes" (p. 149). Miles and Huberman (1994) define pattern codes as "explanatory or inferential codes…they pull together a lot of material into a more meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis" (p. 69). I used a pattern coding method, then, to cluster affective codes into contextual fields. Data organization was influenced through the interrelationships between different coding processes, and likewise, analytic approaches were influenced by the research questions and ways data were organized to respond to those queries. For this project, I used hermeneutic and rhizoanalytic approaches.

Hermeneutic and rhizoanalytic data analysis. I used a hermeneutic approach for analysis due, in part, to its theoretical coherence with this research project. In addition to other aims, hermeneutics seeks understanding, assumes that interpretation is situated in specific contexts, and is comfortable with ambiguity (Kinsella 2006). A hermeneutic circle, a process of movement between observed interactions and broader generalized interpretations of those observations, frequently characterizes this approach. In this project, meaning

making of invitational rhetoric occurred by moving between specific events (interactions and actions in the research sessions) and invitational rhetoric concepts (safety, immanent value, and self-determination). These movements occurred at multiple time points during the course of the study, meaning that analysis was an on-going process. I attempted to make sense of these movements through four iterative processes.

First, I translated invitational rhetoric into research procedure actions to animate its concepts. Second, I observed my own implementation of research procedures, since those procedures were designed to be invitational. Third, I observed and listened to actions and interactions that occurred during the research sessions to notice enacted invitational rhetoric concepts. Finally, during the reflexive sessions, the Iraqi RDT offered multiple perspectives on how actions and interactions could be interpreted as invitational rhetoric concepts. Their reflections helped me isolate particular actions that contributed to their feelings of safety, immanent value, and self-determination. The collective analyses that occurred during the reflexive sessions illustrate one way a hermeneutic approach fits within this project's participatory paradigm. Chapter Four's interpretation and analysis serves to further illustrate ways I used a hermeneutic approach.

Yet, as I moved into exploring the second research question, paying attention to its contextual emphasis, I began to notice ways hermeneutic circles of meaning making produced spurs that connected multiple phenomena. This is illustrated by movements among the interactions I heard during the active research sessions, interpretations and evaluations of those actions during reflexive sessions, listening to those interactions during the transcription process, and then going back into coded material to look for connections. I then incorporated a rhizoanalytic approach for two pressing reasons. One, it allowed me to synthesize the multiple occurring hermeneutic circles of meaning making that occurred throughout the project in ways that illustrated the interconnected complexities and multiplicities of Iraqi participants' lived experience as resettled refugees. Second, it addressed issues of representation, a concern compatible with feminist and transformative aims of this project. It addressed issues of representation through its insistence that the representation of any particular event is not confined to the interpretation of the specific event, but also through processes that produced the event, and possibilities embedded in the event.

A rhizoanalytic approach takes the figuration of a rhizome[9] to explore multiplicities in data, interpretation, thinking and writing (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). A rhizoanalysis redirects analysis away from identifying stable meanings of interactions to mapping possibilities produced through interactions. Thus, the analysis of meaning is important, but meaning and analysis are fluid, divergent, interrelated, and dynamic (Richardson & S. Pierre, 2005). Perspectives offered through this research project were captured and stabilized through audio-recordings, which then became written texts to be analyzed. Yet the question to be answered – what was revealed about lived experience – is one that requires analytical tools responsive to on-going change that occurs within lived experience. Leander and Rowe (2006) reflect my concerns about ways to present particular interpretations when the interactions are constantly moving and evolving relations, "At best, out methods of transcription freeze continuous streams of action as moments in time and space. As a result, they seem more fixed and more structured than the lived-through experience of participants would suggests" (p. 431). A rhizoanalytic approach is a non-representational approach, meaning that it is less concerned with stabilized meanings that emerged from a particular place and time, and more concerned with organic "on-going creation of effects" (Thrift and Dewsbury, p. 415). The analyses in Chapter Five and the synthesis presented in Chapter Six serve to further illustrate ways I used a rhizoanalytic approach.

Juncture

In this chapter, I described the inquiry strategies that drive my methodological choices and outlined elements of the research project. I then reviewed coding schemes I used to first organize my dataset within an invitational rhetorical frame, and then situate Iraqi participant issues into contextual fields. I ended by providing a description of the hermeneutic and rhizoanalytic approaches to data analysis. In the following two chapters, I apply these approaches in my exploration of the two guiding research questions:

RQ1: How is invitational rhetoric constructed in a short-term participatory project with Iraqi refugee women?

RQ2: In this invitational space, what do Iraqi shared perspectives reveal about Iraqi participants' lived experience as resettled refugees?

[9] Rhizomes are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

Chapter 4: Invitational Rhetoric in Action

This chapter addresses the first question guiding my research project: How does invitational rhetoric occur in a short-term participatory project with Iraqi refugee women? The major organizing principles of invitational rhetoric are safety, immanent value, and self-determination. In their germinal explication of invitational rhetoric, Foss and Griffin (1995) reason these principles interact to carve spaces where different perspectives, contested or confirmed, can be shared. Sharing perspectives occurs through pendulum-like repetitive processes of offering, and then considering, different interpretations of experience. The communicative repetition carries potential to create new pathways of understanding. In this chapter, I explore ways the invitational rhetoric concepts of safety, immanent value, and self-determination occur in the research sessions, discern actions that illustrate their functionalities, and discuss implications of structuring an invitational research space. I begin with a discussion about *safety*.

Safety in the Research Space

S*afety* is concerned with acts that influence ways an individual (or groups of individuals) experience comfort and confidence in sharing a personal, perhaps intimate, perspective with other individuals who hold different perspectives. In this project, differences among participants were especially expressed through the positionalities of those individuals who regulate access to federal and state mandated resources needed by Iraqi refugee participants. This means, then, that the Iraqi refugee participants were materially as well as psychically vulnerable to evaluations made by the Access participants, those participants who were recognized as gatekeepers of material resources.

I identified two distinct strands of safety that influenced this project's research space: *psychic safety* and *procedural safety*. *Psychic safety* is a personal sense of safety attentive to addressing participant vulnerabilities in ways that encourage Iraqi participants to engage in the research process. Responses to the RDT queries following research sessions one, two, and three were quite similar to this participant's response: "I feel safe because I see Iraqi people and I get to know them more and more and we all decide to solve our problems." Her comment illustrates the importance of creating a shared, communal space. Processes enacted by Iraqi refugee participants to identify and manage acceptable safety thresholds, on

the other hand, describe *procedural safety*. Attention to safety, then, creates conditions that encourage refugee participants to engage in the research sessions as a result of increased awareness of (a) participatory rules, and (b) implications of participatory practices. In the following sections, I describe the expressions and functions of psychic and procedural safety observed in the research project.

Psychic safety. The RDT worked to create a safe space for Iraqi participants. The RDT organized the research site, the Zia Family Focus Center, in ways that facilitated open discussion and greater comfort. We arranged snacks and tea/coffee, posted Arabic language signs on the external doors, and provided meeting materials - a folder with agendas, notepads, pens, relevant research documents such as the IRB approval letter, and a three-month calendar for planning purposes - to each Iraqi participant. Notecards were placed on meeting tables so if a participant wanted to share, but did not feel comfortable speaking, she could write her perspective. The research session interaction processes can be conceptualized as decentered since the Iraqi RDT members could choose to translate and re-direct conversations at any point. By having multiple interpreters, Iraqi participants were able to ask for clarification, add comments, or alter the conversational flow at any time during the research sessions. The research space and design, then, provided multiple participatory opportunities for Iraqi participants while still remaining attentive to the psychic safety of participants, such as trying to ensure that participants felt comfortable in the research space.

To promote more ease and awareness among participants, we invited the Family Focus Center Director to speak during the first session. She gave an overview of the Center's aims and purpose, and explained Center guidelines. In anticipation of the children who might accompany their mothers to the sessions, a professional (paid) childcare provider and childcare volunteers were recruited to work during each research session. While none of the women verbally acknowledged this child-care service as an expression of safety, two Iraqi participants commented that, "I feel safe because this is a school."

A number of comments illustrating psychic safety were expressed following the first and second research sessions. Participants gave written responses (in Arabic) at the closure of the first research session to the evaluative question, "Did you feel safe and why?" This

question engendered the following types of responses from Iraqi participants: “I feel safe because I know people, I get to know them better, and we are making decisions together”; “I feel safe because I see my friends”; “I feel comfortable and safe because Iraqi people are in the same room and we haven't seen each other in a long time”; and “I feel safe because I get to express my own view.” In response to the question posed following research session two “Was this session helpful?” participants responded in similar ways by noting, “Today’s session was very helpful because it will help us to meet our needs like learn English” and “We are happy because we can see each other here.” While post active-session questions posed to the Iraqi participants used different terminology, Iraqi participants consistently responded in ways that indicated the sessions were safe, and provided various reasons for feeling safe.

Many Iraqi participants expressed that being together promoted safety, and seeing friends and sharing was important. This experience in the research space - meeting with friends that one hasn’t seen for a long time, speaking in Arabic, acknowledging a shared history, and sharing similar challenging experiences, contributes to creating a psychic space, a space where individuals can “work through” things as described by Kristeva (1984). With the exception of my presence, and my advisor’s participation in research sessions two, no other non-Iraqi guests participated in the first three research sessions, only Iraqi women. During these first three sessions participants were free to speak in their language of choice, so for most participants, Arabic language allowed them to express themselves more easily. Members of the RDT would translate what they assessed as relevant information so that I could capture key ideas and thoughts. All participant responses reported above, for example, were written in Arabic on small notecards, presented to members of the RDT, who then translated and discussed the content during the reflexive sessions.

The first three active research sessions, unlike the last three, were not audiotaped; an intentional methodological decision made because I could not identify reasons to audiotape the sessions. I wanted to respect the rights of participants to speak freely, without additional surveillance, either through audio recording or photographing, when that level of scrutiny or knowledge of personal information was not warranted by the project. I clearly announced, prior to action sessions that were being audio recorded, that the session will be recorded and

often give a reason, as reflected in my opening statement in action session four, "Because we have invited guests, I am recording this session." My desire to record the conversations when Access participants were involved was based in the desire to capture the key messages institutional actors presented to the Iraqi women. I felt that this move provided a higher degree of transparency and accountability for the information shared to the Iraqi participants. Transcribed materials, then, are English language interactions, and Arabic language interactions that the RDT chose to interpret. This means, then, that many interactions and conversations are neither represented in the data nor in the subsequent analyses. While the research project is designed to strengthen relationships between and among participants, the project is not concerned with the content of personal conversations, but rather concerned with providing opportunities for interactions between participants.

In sum, close attention to psychic safety allowed participants to speak freely with each other, get to know each other, and share meaningful experiences. The methodological decision to minimize regulatory research practices, such as recording or requesting that all conversations be translated into English so that I could understand, helped create safer opportunities for Iraqi participants to gather with each other, know that their children are cared for, and discuss self-identified issues in their preferred languages in a safe and comfortable space.

Procedural safety. While psychic safety was integrated into the research project during the research design phase, procedural safety emerged as the RDT became more conscious of ways participants interacted, the emotionality expressed through the different perspectives, and the potential consequences of those different interactive styles.
This awareness precipitated a stronger level of process management about the ways Iraqi and non-Iraqi participants engaged. The desire to self-regulate is expressed in the following exchange that occurred during reflexive session three, regarding particularly strong outbursts from several Iraqi participants during the research session.

To start the reflexive session, I asked the RDT "What happened here?" Sara replied, "There was an explosion today. There were some very upsetting feelings." To which Cici responded, "Yes, but I think why? Why did she share this? I think because they feel more comfortable. They want more sharing and discussions." Despite the recognition that

openness and sharing was valuable and helpful, as they moved through the reflexive session and begin preparing for our next research session, Iraqi RDT members expressed concerns about managing the next scheduled research session – a session with two invited guests from local refugee service provision agencies.

Cici I know [Catholic Charities employee] as well. He knows his people, still that's going to be a tough day? Yes, they [Iraqi participants] may go for personal things. We should check for general questions. If you have a personal problem that just happened for you, then we…

Carmen Maybe what would be better, maybe we should ask people to write their questions down and they could give it to you all?

Sara Yeah and maybe…

Cici But, you need their participation

Carmen Yes, that's right. We do want people to use their voices and to talk.

Cici Or we can have rules and we can control them. So, if we see that [Iraqi participant], has a problem and that is personal. Well, we are going to help you as a team. "Please, this we do not accept. Stop. Go to another question." Like we cannot let them continue to do that. We have to decide. We know what will be useful to us.

Sara And, we are going to go around. One, interpreter in general, then we will make the decision, "This will/will not be useful."

Procedural safety emerged, then, as regulatory practices that enable the RDT to monitor multiple conversations, differentiate interactions, and manage group image. As an example of concern for others, the RDT wanted non-Iraqi participants to feel comfortable, and did not want the communication practices used by Iraqi participants - multiple conversations, babies crying, speaking loudly, or interrupting - to negatively influence the way the group is perceived by service providers and others positioned to impact policies and practices that are important to the Iraqi participants. Recognition and responses to these concerns – how to manage multiple tensions surrounding Iraqi refugee group perception, how to share specific perspectives, how to monitor participatory practices, and identifying strategies to achieve desirable outcomes - is further elaborated in this brief exchange during reflexive session four.

In another conversation, the RDT reflected on a particular incident between an expressive Iraqi participant and the New Mexico State Refugee Coordinator. We were considering strategies that encourage participation, but minimize the volatility of that participation. I suggested that we review issues already presented by Iraqi refugee participants, and then identify three or four questions we could present on behalf of the group. Sara, however, recognized the limitations of this idea and noted “That’s a good idea, but if we do that, we are shutting them up.” She then offered an alternative suggestion.

Sara	I think it will be very easy if we can set a rule. ‘Please, they are here to hear us. They are here to listen to what we are saying. We are not going to get anything if we are shouting or insulting. Let us be quiet.’ I mean insulting will not help anyone [regarding language was used during session].
Carmen	No, but I don’t want to stop anyone from…I want people to feel comfortable saying what they want to, but I want it to be a safe space for people.
Sara	Yeah, a safe place.
Carmen	So we have to find a way to manage that. And remember, I don’t know what people are saying…
Sara	Exactly. But we understand what they are saying. I feel embarrassed - attacking someone while we are here.
Carmen	Yes. Especially because the person doesn’t know, and then it really gets...
Cici	Yes, and especially what, for example, if one of us will tell her that someone is insulting, do you think that will be good for us?

This exchange is particularly illuminating for me because I witnessed the referenced incident and, while I recognized the emotionality of the exchange, I was not concerned because the communication style fit with my ideas and experience of how Iraqi people might interact. It was only during this reflexive session, when Iraqi RDT members talked through the situation, that I became aware of the volatility involved in the exchange. Procedural safety, then, are Iraqi-identified basic rules and processes enacted so that refugee participants understand how to engage within the research sessions. During reflexive session six, one RDT member characterizes the emotions expressed by one of the service providers as fear. However, the RDT member noted, “Why would she be scared? We don’t have bombs in

here." By sharing this insight, the RDT member gives an idea about the types of experiences that informs what safety means to her. It further provided, to the RDT, concrete regulatory behaviors and tools to use during the research sessions. One of these concrete tools used to regulate procedural safety was sounding the gong.

Sounding the gong. The gong is approximately 8 inches long and 5 inches wide and was crafted in the Shan State in Burma. I have introduced the gong as a tool in many classes I teach to center, quiet, and regulate group interactions. In this project, the gong functioned to quiet and re-order the room following verbal disruptions, "explosions" as described by one participant, or when participants – Iraqi or other – appeared to become uncomfortable with the level of interactions or perceived disorder during the research sessions. The gong managed Arabic conversations and Iraqi-refugee participation; it was not struck as a response to, or an attempt to, interrupt English conversations.

The following opening comments, from the beginning of research session five, demonstrates my respect for, and subjugation to, safety parameters and processes used by Iraqi refugee participants:

Carmen Hello everyone. I am very glad to see everyone today.

Haya [Translates/Explains]

Carmen For this session, because we are engaging with some guests, we are recording this session.

Haya [Translates/Explains]

Carmen Just to make sure that everyone is aware of that and bear in mind that I don't speak Arabic, so a lot of the Arabic - it doesn't get translated.

Haya [Translates/Explains and Group laughter]

Carmen What I would like for us to do, to have the guests introduce themselves. And the second thing I would like to do is talk a little bit to say, "here are some issues that have come up" and there are some specific examples that I know some of the Iraqi women would like to share – they want to share their experience of this so that others can hear what that experience is.

Haya [Translates]

Carmen And also to let everyone know that Haya has the gong, and if things get a bit crazy, she may take a moment to ring the gong so we can stop and take a moment to make sure everyone is comfortable and understands what is going on.

Haya [Translates/Explains. Group laughter and Arabic chatting]

During research session four, Iraqi RDT members strike the gong nine times during action session four, four times during action session five, and eight times during research session six. The gong, then, functioned in three discernible ways: (a) to regulate conversations; (b) to subdue the group; and (c) to manage emotionally charged interactions.

In this research project, then, keen attention to psychic safety helped create a space that nurtured relationships among refugee participants, some who had not seen each other in over two or three years, and some who had never met before. When basic safety concerns are addressed, participants shared more freely, and created or renewed friendships and social network systems. Procedural safety, a way of conceptualizing safety and group management in participatory contexts, enabled Iraqi participants, most particularly RDT members, to enact procedural strategies to (1) manage group perception; (2) expand the research space by accommodating multiple conversations in multiple languages; and (3) provide a concrete tool, the gong, that could be used by participants to regulate the session flow. In the following section, I will discuss the second invitational concept explored in this project: immanent value.

Immanent Value in the Research Space

Immanent value is based in the idea that "every being is a unique and a necessary part of the patterns of the universe and thus has value" (Foss & Griffin, 1995, p. 4). Immanent value, then, is about worth. In this project, notions of worth prompt the following types of questions: Do Iraqi refugee participants feel valued in this process, and further how are they valued? Do they feel listened to, and what actions caused this to happen? How is this known? Were they responded to? How are values of worth demonstrated to another person?

In this project, immanent value was expressed through dialogic interactions with others in ways that animated meaningful responses – psychic and action – from those who listened to their stories - their perspectives. When perspective exchanges occurred in a dialogic manner, connected through meaningful responses, the interaction produced a sense

of immanent value emanating from the trustworthiness of the offered perspective. The trustworthiness of the perspective is reinforced through the willingness of the listener to do something based on the accepted veracity of the offered perspective.

Listening. Listening emerged as a critical component due to its capacity to create conditions that favor actions that demonstrate immanent value. Listening elicits responses that can be evaluated by the person who offers a perspective. The following excerpt from reflexive session five clarifies this notion. In this example, the RDT discuss interactions with one invited participant, the Director of Interpretation Services (DIS):

Haya I think she [DIS] was very helpful. She was very good at listening to people and trying to help them.

Sara She wasn't taking a strong position [against us].

Haya Yes, like she didn't make us feel like, we didn't stress her…

Sara She didn't say, "Oh, it is out of control; we cannot handle this." No, we can handle this and there is a solution.

Haya Yes, she gave many suggestions like what she said about telling the doctor "I need to change the translator." And then she talked about going to tell your [our] stories and try to solve them.

This exchange is expressed during a reflexive session, so it presents an Iraqi generated meaning-making iteration of a "good interaction." The RDT report that the DIS listened to their concerns, and that she responded in particularly helpful and understanding ways. The DIS acknowledged Iraqi perspectives with psychic responses (e.g. you can handle this) and action responses (e.g. tell them you want a new translator). Immanent value, in this situation, is reinforced through ways that Iraqi participants (a) received confirmation that they could manage things, and (b) through the willingness of the DIS to access her influence and knowledge to encourage particular actions. The willingness and ability of the DIS, demonstrated through her comments such as "I can arrange that" or "We can do that" further confirm the trustworthiness of the Iraqi perspectives. The DIS is willing and able to move forward, step up and do something, because she has heard and believes the stories the Iraqi participants offer.

The three actions constituting the immanent value in the previous example are: (a) to listen, and give appropriate signs that one has been heard; (b) to welcome the challenges and the stories that are offered, through which the responder acknowledges the offered perspective; and (c) to offer participant-recognized helpful responses, so that there is materiality to the exchange. These discrete actions stimulate chains of interactions that strengthen a sense of immanent value grounded in the trustworthiness of the offered perspective. As closure to the conversation presented above, Haya concludes with the evaluative comment, "I liked her suggestions." In the following section, I elaborate psychic and action responses, and ways that these responses contribute to immanent value and trustworthiness.

Psychic responses. Psychic responses, responses that contribute to creating psychic safety are characterized by participant recognition. By this I mean participants recognize the response as one that acknowledges their perspectives as valuable, insightful, and necessary to understand and address the issues being discussed. Consider the impact of this statement made by the State Refugee Coordinator to Iraqi participants during research session four: "And that is really helpful to me overall [sharing stories]. Because if I don't hear, then I don't know what is going on." This response sends a clear message that for her to do her job – to manage and oversee all refugee service provision processes in the state of New Mexico – she needs to hear directly from refugees. In this particular moment, she needs to hear not just from any refugee, but also from these particular Iraqi refugee women who are concerned about their everyday lives.

To survey the range of possible psychic responses, I reference an exchange that occurred during reflexive session four. In this example, the RDT were discussing different interactions among invited Non-Iraqi participants and Iraqi refugee participants. We were comparing and contrasting group interactions with the two invited guests during research session four – directors of refugee service provision agencies in New Mexico.

Sara Did she [Provider A] write any notes? I didn't see her write any notes. She didn't write any notes.

Cici That's what we are going to see. We will see if she is going to follow-up with anyone.

Sara Okay…She [Provider B] was very supportive and she's a good listener. She is ready to learn and she told us, "I am ready to learn. I know there are some things that have happened, and they might be out of control, but I am here to learn and do my best." She is cooperative. She doesn't look to us as being bad people, lazy, who don't want to work, or who just want to live on assistance."

In this exchange, the RDT identified concrete cues that indicate whether a person is paying attention and, by extension, valuing the Iraqi participants' contributions. One cue is *listening*, an act discussed in previous sections of this chapter. The other identified cue is *taking notes*. If a person doesn't take notes, then how do they know what to do? How can they remember these stories or perspectives? How can they follow-up? Not taking notes suggested, perhaps, that the information shared by the Iraqis was not worthy to be shared with others; the information was not credible. If the offered perspective is questionable, then perhaps a logical meaning making flow might lead to the conclusion that the person who shared the perspective lacks credibility as well.

Furthermore, the impact of feeling less than trust-worthy, in this incident, seeped into destructive, grossly generalized and internalized expressions. Sara later expressed concern that Provider A, a recognized gatekeeper of refugee resources, views the entire Iraqi group as "lazy" or "bad." While I am confident that Provider A did not intend to promote these generalizations, some of her particular interactions, due to their negative psychic impact, led Sara to express a particularly debilitating evaluation of Iraqi people (herself), and a generalized distrust of Provider A. It is conceivable, then, that this evaluative position will influence future interactions between this particular service provision agency and other Iraqis.

While the psychic expressions of immanent value are discerned through recognition of the trustworthiness of a perspective, expressions of immanent value are further demarcated when an offered perspective stimulates an action response. In the following section, I describe and explore *action responses*.

Action responses. Immanent value garnered by Iraqi participants can be recognized through ways a responder listens to a perspective, thereby demonstrating that she is not only capable of creating opportunities (e.g. I can do that*)* but willing or perhaps even compelled, to perform an action on the veracity of the offered perspective, a process captured in the

adage, "I'll take you at your word." The following exchange, during research session five between the Director of Interpretation Services (DIS) of the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) and the Iraqi participants, illustrates this process. This excerpt emerges from a discussion on ways to share Iraqi-generated experiences of access at the UNM hospital or its primary care affiliate, the Southeast Heights Clinic.

DIS Another question I have is we do presentations about our services to physician groups, nursing groups, and provider groups if any of you would like to come and partner with us and present the needs that you are seeing and the issues you are seeing, we could arrange that and you could come as a special speaker and that would be helpful as well.

Haya You already have one?

DIS We go to standing meetings all the time. I could coordinate that.

In this example, the DIS willingly revealed her influence and position in the UNM Healthcare system by inviting Iraqi refugee participants to share their perspectives with other institutional actors who can influence policies and practices that affect experiences and outcomes in the healthcare system. To provide another perspective into meanings attributed to this same exchange, consider the RDT comments about the exchange just referenced. In this excerpt, Cici explains her perspective on reasons the DIS offered this opportunity:

> You know why she's asking us if we can go there to help her with meetings? Because she wants to make her point really live. She said 'when I go by myself, is not like you guys will be there and they will understand your problem.' She also is concerned about her department. It is very important in the hospital and she wants her department to work very well and to share concerns.

Cici's perspective on this particular incident emphasized values attributed to the interaction. In effect, the rationale offered by Cici suggests that participants were able to share perspectives that were so highly regarded and valued, that the DIS wants Iraqi refugee participants to share those perspectives with others who are involved in the healthcare space: physician groups, hospital administrators, and other provider groups. The RDT realization that their Iraqi perspectives could help, enable perhaps, the DIS do her job and make her department more productive and accountable further buttress the immanent value of their perspectives.

In short, the practice of immanent value is enacted in this research project through the dialogic interaction of listening and then responding in ways that demonstrate the trustworthiness of the offered perspective. Immanent value is not necessarily expressed through the act of one person offering a perspective and another person yielding to accept that perspective; rather immanent value is meaningfully expressed through offering a perspective and the capacity of that offer to garner a worthy response. Worthy responses are responses that respond to psychic safety and promote some type of action for the person who offers the perspective.

In this sense, then, enacted immanent value in this research project may stimulate political subjectivity and agency, as described by Oliver (2001) through her explications of dialogic interactions that animate political subjectivity through the address-ability and response-ability of individuals. Extending Oliver's ideas, I suggest that Iraqi participants were able to address key resource individuals in ways that precipitated meaningful responses thereby demonstrating Iraqi participants' address-ability and response-ability capacities. Acts of addressing and responding highlight agency or, as described in invitational rhetoric, self-determination.

Self-Determination in the Research Space

Self-determination, the ability and capability of Iraqi participants to make meaningful decisions about processes in the research space, is evidenced through two particular acts: (1) Iraqi-identified and regulated procedural processes; and (2) Decision-making authority. These self-determined acts allow Iraqi participants to discuss issues affecting their lives according to their desired specificity. In effect, self-determination in this study is most simply understood by considering the question, "Who gets to decide the rules of engagement?" This is a compelling question to consider relative to Iraqi refugee participation since their experiences of protracted and multiple conflicts while living in Iraq and extended into spaces that emerged due, in part, to their forced migratory patterns, might conjure memories of regulatory, unstable, and volatile systems.

Refugee status is conferred on individuals who have experienced forced displacement from their homes. They often have traveled flight trajectories that offer few opportunities to make self-determined choices. For example, refugees are not entitled to choose their country

of resettlement, they provide minimal input into decisions about the state or community where they are resettled, and have virtually no influence on the types of services or support that assist them in their initial resettlement. In light of these past experiences, this project strives to carve opportunities for refugee participants to make meaningful decisions in the research space. Self-determination in this project, then, is represented by Iraqi-participant acts that established operational practices during the research and reflexive sessions.

Iraqi-identified and regulated procedural processes. The RDT established operating norms in three spaces in this research project: (a) Iraqi-participant interactions; (b) research session topics, and (c) research session formats. To start, the RDT decided how to invite women to participate, by creating a list of all Iraqi women they knew and then breaking this list into three smaller groups. . Each Iraqi RDT member agreed to be a team leader for one group, and collectively agreed on the responsibilities team leaders had to their group. I offered no guidelines on constructing the groups, so Iraqi RDT members were able to construct group membership in ways they felt were most appropriate. Their commitment to upholding their responsibilities to each group was evident throughout the project, as key information was conveyed, usually via telephone, to group members according to their group membership in either Cici's, Sara's or Haya's group. The actual site of the research sessions – the Zia Family Focus Center – was vetted by the RDT during an initial consultative visit to the site; this visit included meeting with the center director and touring the facility prior to research project start-up. In this way, and by including Iraqi RDT members in constructing procedural elements of the research project, RDT members were able to convey clear information to participants. Participants, then, were able to make informed decisions about their participation based on the information provided by the Iraqi RDT members.

The RDT exercised their regulatory responsibilities during the research sessions, as well as in the reflexive sessions that immediately followed the research sessions. During the reflexive sessions, the RDT made recommendations and decisions about research session processes, as illustrated in this exchange that occurred during reflexive session two.

Carmen Do you think it was good to ask people, and I am asking you as well, is it good way to get people feedback like asking questions and having them write the answers?

Haya Yes.

Cici Yes, that's going to be good for us as a briefing we can say what they said.

Carmen We don't have to say, "Oh, I think people feel this way" because they can write it down, right?

Sara Yes, they can speak for themselves.

In this exchange, the RDT safeguarded opportunities for other Iraqi participants to participate through the space of speaking directly about personal experiences, while at the same the Iraq RDT members released themselves of the responsibility to speak on behalf of other Iraqi refugees.

Self-determined processes in the research sessions also were demonstrated through ways the Iraqi RDT cooperatively regulated the research session conversations so that Iraqi participant voices, including their own, are not muted or disregarded. These types of regulatory actions were not as evident during the first three research sessions since all participants (except me) are Iraqi. Because the purpose of these initial research sessions – understanding participant-identified issues and shoring conditions that encourage Iraqi participation– was dependent upon creating and securing a certain level of safety, there was less need to regulate interactions since participants were talking among themselves and could self-regulate more easily in one language. When non-Iraqi participants joined the research sessions, however, the RDT began managing the research session flow by regulating Arabic conversations among participants, as well as exchanges between Iraqi and non-Iraqi participants, through the use of multiple interpreters and sounding the gong. During reflexive session two, the RDT recognize the need for procedural management through our discussion about the ways participants interact among themselves, and how these actions might be perceived by outside guests.

Cici I have one thing, I don't want to be rude, do you think these three company [three Iraqi women) should sit together? I like it, but they are not much focused on us.

Sara It's okay. From my point of view, it is more friendly.

Cici Yeah, for you, but when we are talking they are laughing…does that matter?

Haya I like it because when the bell [gong] rings, they will stop. You need to have it with you all the time. It doesn't work when it is far away. Or one of us can have it and each time we can…

Sara Yes, if she [Haya] keeps it [the gong], then she's the interpreter.

Cici Is it bothering you [question to Carmen]? This is about you. If the State Refugee Coordinator is here…

Carmen Well, they can't do that when she is here. Maybe the way we set it up, it will be more formal. It will be more regulated. Like right now, I want people to talk in Arabic so that they are talking together.

This example illustrates ways decisions are informed by a concern for others, designed to assign roles and procedures, and a recognition of a fairly simple way to regulate conversations and manage participant behaviors through the use of the gong. The Iraqi RDT members were the only participants who struck the gong during the research sessions, and by doing so, re-affirmed their roles as co-facilitators of the research project.

Decision-making authority. Different practitioners working in participatory research models have demonstrated ways participant decision-making processes indicate type of participation (Berngold & Thomas, 2012; Wilson & Neville, 2009). In this project, decision-making authority is linked to the impact of decisions made, and the importance held by different stakeholders about decisions that were made. For decision making to have political importance, participants must have a stake in the decision – there must be some political or material consequences in the decision making process. Otherwise, while making decisions is a way to encourage participation, the act itself does not disrupt power dynamics. It may encourage certain practices, such as promoting a sense of ownership in the process and the product, whatever that may be, but simply making decisions is not enough to animate political subjectivity. In order for a decision-making process to hold political currency, the individual(s) must have some stake in the outcome or impact of the decision. Decision-making authority in this project is concerned with decisions that have value for the Iraqi participants, and the authority to make and reinforce these types of decisions was shared among the Iraqi refugee participants, the RDT, and me as student researcher.

To minimize decisions I would have to make in the research project, three research design team meetings occurred before we convened the first research session with other Iraqi

participants. Most logistical decisions about the research project were made during the design team sessions, and emerged from an interactive decision-making process where I presented the boundaries of the research, in terms of its purpose (my dissertation) and available resources. The Iraqi RDT and I then collaboratively assessed implications of different choices that could be made. The Iraqi RDT, with information about the research intent and resources, made and confirmed most decisions about how to implement the project. It was during the actual research sessions, however, that I became aware of my responsibilities to reinforce decisions made by the RDT, as illustrated in the following example during research session six.

Because of our experiences with "explosions" and volatility in previous research sessions, I tried to be clear on research session processes so that non-Iraqi participants would feel comfortable engaging with Iraqi participants. My opening statement of research session six, directed in particular to the two invited Access participants, directors of refugee service provision agencies, illustrates my attempt to be transparent about the research session processes that have been established by the Iraqi RDT.

> For our guests, I want to introduce three key people for you to know. We have multiple interpretations that go on. This is Haya, and she does a lot of the larger group management. This is Cici, she has done much interpretation and has been involved in research here in Albuquerque pretty much since she arrived; same thing with Sara. She also will be doing interpretation, so we sometimes have a lot of different conversations going on but. Why don't you, the two guests, introduce yourselves. And, what we would like to do is to tell you about two or three major issues that the women want to share this with you today because we see this [research session] as an opportunity for conversations.

Despite my explanation, Service Provider A demonstrates discomfort with our procedural guidelines. In response to my explanation that the refugee participants would first tell their stories, and then providers could respond, Service Provide A quietly disclosed, "I have reservations with that, we could easily get lost in the weeds." Being in the "weeds" connotes being in spaces that are noxious, unruly, abandoned and neglected. Too often, if someone is in the weeds, she is subject to annoying bugs and bites, and must be attentive to

potentially violent attacks from snakes and other creatures hidden among the grasses. One must take extra care to avoid falling into holes or crevices hidden by the wildly growing grasses. Indeed, for the participants, perhaps being in the "weeds" exemplifies some of their resettlement spaces. Being in the weeds suggest traversing unkempt spaces, therefore I attempted to reassure Provider A by replying, "Yes, you can get lost in the weeds. But, we're pretty good at this now." The following example illustrates how the concern about unruliness resurfaces again in this same research session, and my role in reinforcing Iraqi-participant decisions.

Provider A I wonder if we should explain the differences in services first and then address specific questions because that might answer some of those questions.

Carmen It could be…

Provider A Or, whatever they want.

Carmen Yes. Let's see. Does anyone. In particular we brought these people here from Catholic Charities and Lutheran Family Services to talk about employment and housing; those were the two issues you brought up. So, Provider A has suggested that she could explain the services provided, and then Provider B can explain her services. That's one option or you all can share a particular story. But it is up to you all about who wants to talk first

Refugee participants responded to my comment in Arabic, then Haya responded in English to re-affirm that Iraqi participants wanted to talk in specifics, and share their personal stories. By upholding their original decision to speak specifically, and not yielding to non-Iraqi pressure to change their procedural guidelines, Iraqi participants demonstrate their resistance to the idea that the meeting structure should change – that it should to become more manageable and regulated according to Provider A's perceptions. Tensions regarding procedural processes resurface later in this research session when Service Provider A restated her position:

Provider A I just want to make sure everyone hears this. I don't want to speak too much into specific issues. For my agency, I am going to speak more generally and then if you have specific issues I have cards [for case workers] and we can set up appointments for you to speak about your particular issue. I want to speak more generally about the topics of concern.

Haya Okay [1 minute Arabic conversation among participants]

Haya They prefer to talk in the specific. They prefer to present their questions so that everyone can understand and get the benefit of your responses because we all have the same issues.

Provider A Okay. I have to leave at 12:30. I have another meeting to attend to.

Carmen That's okay.

Provider A So I am happy to do that if that is the format that you want to do it.

This example not only illustrates my role in upholding decisions made by the Iraqi RDT and participants, it also demonstrates participant efficacy to take an oppositional stance against someone in a powered position as the director of a refugee service provision agency. Through this stance, Iraqi participants demonstrate trust that I will reinforce their decisions, and I reciprocate by affirming the trustworthiness of their decisions, even if a particular decision challenges other perspectives. This exchange also demonstrates Provider A's willingness to engage in ways that are not her preferred ways of engaging. In the end, Provider A yields to the desires of Iraqi participants to talk about specific experiences in their lives.

Self-determined procedural processes created opportunities for Iraqi participants to make meaningful decisions about how to engage in the research space. Procedural processes allowed Iraqi participants to speak about incidents with the degree of specificity they felt their experiences warranted. Iraqi participants identified key issues during the first session (choosing to examine issues such as English language competency, healthcare, and citizenship processes as opposed to other issues that are documented to be important to resettled refugees such as employment, childcare, or housing), to name themselves as a group (Beautiful Iraqi Women), and to use whatever language they felt most comfortable using during the research sessions: Arabic, Kurdish, Mandaic, Chaldean, or English. In this way content, as well as ways to create content, of the research sessions was determined by the Iraqi RDT and participants.

Self-determination in this research project manifested in multiple research components. First, Iraqi RDT members co-crafted the research design and made decisions about who to invite, how to invite participants, and ways to communicate important

information with Iraqi participants. Second, procedural processes such as multiple interpretations, allowing simultaneous small conversations, and managing multiple languages provided various ways for Iraqis to participate. Third, the RDT identified and then used a concrete tool – the gong – to regulate conversations and interactions during the research sessions. Finally, I respected Iraqi decision making authority by reinforcing the decisions Iraqi participants made and their use of regulatory procedures they determined were most effective.

Thus far in this chapter, I have discussed ways invitational rhetoric concepts of safety, immanent value, and self-determination manifested in this research project. In the following section, I explore ways participants shared different perspectives, and how sharing perspectives functioned in this research project.

Sharing Perspectives in the Research Space

For Iraqi participants, sharing perspectives addressed two objectives. First, it allowed Iraqi and non-Iraqi participants to get to know each other better, an objective related to a feminist ethic of caring (Collins, 1986; hooks, 1984; Wood, 1992). Second, by sharing their perspectives in an invitational research space, Iraqi perspectives challenged perspectives held by others in ways that precipitated multiple meaning-making spaces in which to explore specific perspectives emerging from particular Iraqi participant-identified issues. I will elaborate these two different functions of "sharing perspectives" in the following sections.

Sharing perspectives to know others. Sharing perspectives is a dialogic act of offering and yielding that occurs between individuals, and also occurs within individuals. Offering a perspective on a particular experience, then yielding to notions that there may be multiple meanings attributed to that experience, is one way that sharing perspectives can be understood as a reflexive process. Sharing perspectives, then, can be understood as reflexive and inter-subjective exchanges that, in this invitational research space, animated lived experience, challenged existing knowledge, and forged additional critical spaces to examine and understand different perspectives.

During the action sessions, sharing perspectives took the form of recounting stories about specific experiences to the larger group. Arnstein (2001) points to the stimulating effects of process when she explains, "unearthing and articulating experience does not

happen magically, but is facilitated by a method that values the communication of individuals' unique perceptions" (p. 165). This project, then, attempted to employ invitational processes for participants to share their perspectives in the research space. In particular, perspectives were shared in multiple sites during the research project:

- Between the Iraqi participants
- Within small group conversations during the research sessions
- Among participants and the RDT
- Interpretations between Arabic and English languages
- Between Iraqi and non-Iraqi participants
- Between non-Iraqis and Iraqi RDT members
- During reflexive sessions

These multiple sites of perspective sharing enabled participants to get to know each other, which is an effort Code (1992) refers to as a "worthy epistemological paradigm to court" (p. 41). Early in the research project, the RDT identifies the value of participants sharing and spending time together, as illustrated in this excerpt during reflexive session two.

Carmen	In general, how do you think today's session went?
Haya	I think it was better than last time.
Cici	They are now more comfortable. They participate and share more information.
Haya	It's like more fun.
Sara	And they know one each other.
Haya	And they know what's going on.

The Iraqi RDT members acknowledge increased participation through processes of getting to know others, having fun, and knowing what to expect during the research sessions. While the process of "getting to know others" has a focus on knowing another person, in this research space, the notion extends to include knowing what to expect during the research sessions. As participants understand more about the project, they are able to make informed decisions about whether they want to participate, and how they wish to participate.

Sharing perspectives to challenge and extend issue-based concerns. Iraqi participants shared their perspectives on issues they deemed important. By doing so, they introduced new realities that other participants may not have considered. Because the Access

participants expressed interest in hearing these perspectives, and since many Access participants responded to these perspectives in ways that demonstrated the trustworthiness of the perspective, Iraqi perspectives were able to challenge existing non-Iraqi understandings in ways that illuminated and problematized the impacts of institutional policies and practices regarding the issues. The generative function of sharing perspectives carved spaces for issues to be revisited from different perspectives, such as viewing issues in healthcare, for example, in terms of interpretation services, medical provider treatment, access to specialized care, payment systems, and insurance coverage. This suggests that once an issue is raised via a perspective, it can be referenced in different situations.

An exchange that occurred during research session five, between the DIS and Cici, illustrates ways sharing perspectives generates opportunities to discuss more perspectives. Immediately preceding this exchange, we are talking about interpretation services and how to give feedback about interpretation services. Cici decides to interject a new topic, or, depending upon one's perspective, goes off topic.

Cici Okay, then, that is practical and you can continue. And, I want also to mention something. I don't know your department, if they can give rules to the doctors that they do not accept children as translators for the parents and we talk about that. [She translates this for the Iraqi participants, and there is a one-minute conversation in Arabic]

DIS Okay, so that is….

Cici Just one moment [Cici continues to converse for two minutes in Arabic with Iraqi participants]

DIS So, are you saying that doctors are asking children to interpret?

[Multiple conversations, Arabic and English]

Cici No, they are allowing them.

DIS Oh, they are allowing.

Cici Yes, even if the doctor is sure that the son or daughter can speak English, he should not accept that translation. Not just because of the privacy issue, but because they [Arabic talking all in background] do not know the medical terms.

This exchange demonstrates Cici's capacity to identify an opportunity to present a pressing concern in the conversation, even though the particular issue of *children translating for family members* had not been raised in any previous research sessions. Through her willingness to listen carefully to what the Iraqi participants were saying, the DIS reciprocated by creating space for additional concerns to be raised. This exchange illustrates the interactive nature of carving space for new perspectives: the DIS willingly listened to multiple inter-related perspectives, and Cici's ability to recognize and access an opportunity to share a compelling perspective that resonated with other Iraqi participants. A similar type of exchange occurred during research session six, but produced a very different outcome than the exchange just described.

In the following exchange, Sara responds to an opportunity to talk about different topics following Provider A's discussion on the importance of learning English in order to secure a job. Provider A has just concluded her statements by noting, " …and learning English is rule numero uno." A small burst of Arabic follows this comment then Sara highlights the complexities involved with securing employment, even if a person is able to communicate in English.

Sara Iraqis are very clever, they want to work. Like for me, I came here with English. I have a Bachelor degree to teach ESL students in middle school and high school, but where did I work? I worked in a preschool. Because I don't have the equivalent certification. In order to get the equivalent, I have to go through re-certification, teaching, all of that. So that is the question. It isn't how much money for us; it is how can you help us find good jobs? We cannot just clean tables. Like if I am a teacher, if my father is a pharmacist, if my brother is an engineer, we cannot just wash tables or dishes.

Provider A I couldn't agree more. And, I love this work because I can see the future and the opportunities that all new immigrants bring and it takes time. It just takes time.

Sara Yeah, we know that. As you said now, "If you speak English you can have a better job." That is why I now ask what kind of better job can we have if we speak English? Let's put aside that maybe we don't speak it. If we speak it, what kind of jobs can we have? How can you help me to find a better job than a preschool worker when I am an English teacher?

Provider A Well, I am not a magic worker, but I would love to talk with you further about it and talk about different ideas and research some ideas that you probably don't even know about yet.

Sara This is the problem. It is not only my issue. We all have this issue.

Like Cici in the previous example, Sara also recognized an opportunity to extend the conversation, and forged a pathway to articulate different perspectives that appear counter to the perspective offered by the provider, mainly that speaking English helps refugees secure jobs. The tensions between these perspectives presented an opportunity to segue into different conversations about employment, certification, professional development, ethnicities, language, and livelihoods – topics relevant to the Iraqi participants. While Service Provider A offered to talk further about it, she did not offer to continue talking further about it in that moment.

A final example of how sharing perspectives created opportunities for more perspectives is illustrated in another exchange between Cici, Sara, and the service providers during research session six. We were discussing interpretation issues for refugees who go to the refugee service provision agencies, trying to ascertain determination criteria for interpretation services when Sara jumped into the conversation with a simple request:

Sara Excuse me, this is one issue that it for both organizations. They should have somebody there and prepare some stuff. Because you have a lot of clients that speak Arabic anyway. This is one issue we have always; we need somebody to translate things.

In this brief comment, Sara seizes an opportunity to publicly articulate a perspective that perhaps many other Iraqi participants share. Certainly funding is an issue, as all service providers have stressed the idea that interpretation and translation services are expensive, federal funds are highly regulated, and agencies are working with limited staff. Yet these seemingly stabilized and state supported perspectives are still challenged by Iraqi perspectives that offer alternative meanings to "this is the way it is."

Sharing perspectives to make meaning. Sharing perspectives also created opportunities for more meaning making conversations. This function is easily identifiable in the reflexive research sessions, since making sense of what happened during the research sessions was a major goal of the reflexive sessions. As an example, consider the following

exchange that occurred during reflexive session two. In this conversation, we are discussing what it means that the State Refugee Coordinator did not attend the session as she had promised. The SRC emailed a note to me the day prior to the meeting to say she was unable to attend, and she offered alternative dates. I am expressing my disappointment that she was unable to be present, not only because the participants were expecting her, but also because I am concerned that her non-participation reflects poorly on my abilities to garner outside support for the Iraqi participants. In effect, I am concerned about losing credibility. The Iraqi RDT members offer their perspectives on the situation.

Carmen Yes, well I can't even get the State refugee coordinator to come! I thought I could get her to come. I tried and…

Cici That's not your fault. We know that.

Sara We know that but from Iraqi's perspectives, this is not fair. Makes them upset.

Cici And they thought American people should

Sara care more….

Cici …make it so when they say something they mean it.

Sara should respect more…this makes us angry.

Cici And there were already women ready to talk with her today.

Carmen Yeah, maybe they were ready to talk to someone today.

Cici Yes, maybe next time you should…ah…you could let us know that she is not going to come. Yes, as example, like if anyone can't come and she calls a couple of days let us know.

Sara Yes, let us know because the expectations will be high.

Cici Yeah.

Sara They came with a high expectation.

Carmen Yes, that sounds good. I found out yesterday.

Cici Ahhh.oh… [Multiple Arabic among Cici, Sara, and Haya]

Carmen So, it would be a good thing to call and let people know about this.

Cici Yeah, at least you are going to be honest with them all the time.

Carmen Yeah, that sounds right.

This debriefing was highly instructive. For example, it never occurred to me that this project was a conduit for refugees to connect with the State Refugee Coordinator. Her lack of attendance was noted by many Iraqi participants via written feedback following this session, with one woman commenting, "She should keep her promise to us." Furthermore, this exchange instructs me on how to handle similar situations in a respectful manner. The Iraqi RDT members inform me that if this occurs again, if someone says that she will participate and then is unable to do so, I should inform Iraqi participants. Once I learned this, I started to copy RDT members on email correspondence with potential guests so that Iraqi RDT members had the same type of information I did on who might participate in our research sessions.

Juncture

My analysis in this chapter illustrates different ways invitational rhetoric concepts functioned in this research space. Close attention to the function of safety resulted in processes responsive to psychic and procedural concerns. Immanent value was confirmed by acknowledging the trustworthiness of Iraqi perspectives through listening, and then responding in ways that affirm the capacity to generate psychic and action responses. Finally, self-determination was enacted and reinforced through Iraqi participant decision-making authority. By maintaining procedural decision-making authority, Iraqi participants could discuss self-identified issues in ways they determined most appropriate. These operating concepts, then, allowed Iraqi participants to share their perspectives with the specificity they desired, in the languages they preferred, and created an invitational research space. In the following chapter, I address the second research question guiding this project: What do the shared perspectives reveal about Iraqi refugee participants' lived experience as resettled refugees?

Chapter 5: "Why did they bring us here if they cannot help us?"

In this chapter, I attempt to address the second research question guiding this project: In this invitational space, what do Iraqi shared perspectives reveal about Iraqi lived experience as resettled refugees? In Chapter Four, I discussed ways sharing Iraqi perspectives allowed for participants to get to know each other better, thereby revealing their different positionalities; create new meaning making spurs that revealed the complexities of Iraqi refugee resettlement in Albuquerque; and challenged existing notions of refugee resettlement experiences. Analytic goals in this chapter, then, are to examine those shared perspectives to understand how they provide greater insights into the issues discussed, the lived experience of those issues, and the contexts that enables or constrains those experiences. This means I attempt to present the contextualization and meaning making from an Iraqi perspective – a methodological move that addresses issues of representation.

Saukko (2003), for example, explains this movement is characteristic of new methodological approaches and is a "dialogic shifting between the scholar's Self and the perspectives of the Other people being studied" (p. 57). Moore (2001) suggests that studying lived experience from a subject's perspective holds researchers accountable to recognizing the autonomy that subjects may exercise, despite constraining conditions. She stresses, "Some individuals, under some circumstances, do imagine themselves, however temporarily, to be autonomous intentional agents or something closely approximating to this, and they therefore live their lives accordingly" (p. 264). Iraqi perspectives were described in Chapter Four; in this chapter, I extend my analysis to understand how the lived experiences presented through sharing perspectives can be interpreted and evaluated within the social contexts in which they occurred.

I begin by discussing ways the dataset was organized to explore lived experience. I then review coding procedures and code application to show how these approaches allowed me to notice contextual and affective patterns that I then bracketed into two dominant contextual fields: distress and regulation; and into a less dominant, but still noticeable, field of togetherness. I then explore particular stories that emerged from the research sessions in order to understand contextualized and specific refugee lived experiences.

Togetherness also presented as a contextual field, but was confined to the first three active research sessions and occurred through sharing space, language, and stories with other Iraqi women. Togetherness was noted when Iraqi women were together during the research sessions, and there were no non-Iraqi participants. While this context was not as dominant as the other two, togetherness, distress, and regulation are contexts revealed through this research project and are responsive to the research design.

Data Organization

To review the coding methods explained in Chapter Three, the major dataset for this analysis emerged from refined issues - Iraqi-identified issues that had been coded using a focus method. This initial analytical move refined the issues into the following types of categories:

- Systems and Accountability: issues concerned with the challenges of engaging in the multiple systems designed to assist refugee resettlement.
- Identification: issues related to being Iraqi, being a refugee, or other group identifications that differentiate individuals based on a defined taxonomy.
- Discomfort: issues that captured uncomfortable experiences of resettlement.
- Topical issues were directly linked to material spaces such as healthcare, citizenship, and money.

Once I had refined the issues into organizing categories, I began to apply affective and contextual codes to highlight the lived experiences of these issues.. I then reviewed the dataset to discern patterns in code application frequency and code co-occurrence. Frequently applied affective codes were then refined through a pattern coding method that reflected two salient contextual fields I define as *Distress* and *Regulation*. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I describe these contextual fields to illustrate different facets of Iraqi participant lived experiences.

A Distressing Context

Distress describes the uncomfortable, paradoxical, and often painful context of being an Iraqi refugee in the New Mexico context. My definition of distress is adapted from Peter Suedfled's (1997) explanation of distress as an affective response to incidents that "challenge normal assumptions about order, predictability, safety, and identity" (p. 850). In this

particular study distress appears to permeate contextual fields of lived experience and manifests as psychic pain, obligations, and discrimination.

Psychic pain. The notion of *psychic pain* captures the despondency and disappointment reflected in participants' comments about their experiences engaging in systems that govern their everyday lives as resettled Iraqi refugees. In Chapter Four, I discussed ways that the research design addressed psychic safety, a move that, in effect, created safe spaces for expressions of psychic pain. The notion of psychic pain emerged during reflexive session one when Sara, an Iraqi RDT member, told me, "People are suffering and we don't see a way to change things." I pay close attention to this type of characterization because of the meanings I attribute to the term suffering; meanings that include extreme distress; an existential crisis of not being able to make things better. I recall my colleague, a gender-based violence program manager based in El-Fashir in North Sudan (2005[10]), recounting experiences of Darfurian families, fleeing from repeated assaults on their homes and bodies, and seeking refuge in crowded, sprawling camps. "The women are suffering," Sabinty said. I do not routinely hear comments about suffering, so when the word is used, I consider it code for extreme distress, psychic pain, and a cautionary cue to proceed with great care and mindfulness.

Iraqi participants describe psychic pain through comments such as, "People may not believe us," and "We are not imagining things." The situations that precipitate these types of comments are not those that can be easily addressed by changing particular practices or policies because, too often, the comments cannot be causally linked to a particular experience. Instead, psychic pain results in part from the collective disappointment of Iraqi refugee resettlement experiences. As one Iraqi participant lamented during the fourth research session:

> Don't even bother yourself now, because I have tried everything. Lawyers, going this one, this one, this one, and I get the same blocked wall every time and no open doors. I go to this one, this one. It won't make any difference, they are not open.

During this same research session, another Iraqi participant expresses a broad concern by asking the invited healthcare participants, "What happens when I cannot pay? This is an

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[10] I served as the Senior Gender and Protection Advisor for the International Rescue Committee in Sudan from January 2005 – December 2006.

expensive country!" Following this research session, an Iraqi RDT member offers her insights into the sources of these types of comments:

> I have heard other women after the sessions saying "they won't do anything, only talking." As if they cannot trust anymore with other people. So I said "no, we need to follow-up with them." So, it was a good thing what type of things can you do to tell us. People need to see results. They are done. We have been here four or five years, telling these stories and nothing happened; nothing has changed.

These comments are not merely emotional venting mechanisms; they give insights into the despondency resulting from repeated incursions into systems that often do not make sense to Iraqi refugees, and as a result, may not be responsive to their particular needs.

A different iteration of psychic pain, one nested within frustration, is illustrated in an exchange during research session six. During this research session, due to the complexity of issues being discussed (refugee services), there is a high degree of participation among Iraqi participants, resulting in multiple conversations and interactions. At one point, Provider A attempts to manage this energetic field by purposefully bringing her hands slowly down to rest on the tabletop, while cautiously addressing the Iraqi participants, "Whoa. Calm down. We are here to help you." During the reflexive session immediately following this research session one RDT member retorted, "How does she expect us to calm down if she is not respecting our problems?" Psychic pain is compounded, then, by *lack of understanding:* lack of knowledge about a particular person, her situation, and an unwillingness to listen to the experience in ways that lead to an ability to understand the experience. The subtlety with which a lack of understanding is conveyed is captured in a statement offered by one Service Provider during her introductory comments to the Iraqi women, "and, as you can imagine, we know all of your needs."

The project design, with its emphasis on creating psychic spaces where Iraqi women collectively decide what to talk about and how to talk, is an attempt to counter individualized experiences of psychic pain by providing opportunities for women to talk about collective experiences and identify pathways to "story together", the term used by Anna to describe how women in Iraq would visit and spend time together. The psychic spaces created in the active research sessions, especially in the initial three sessions where only Iraqi women

participated, help illuminate different ways distress is experienced, including in one's obligations to family members and other Iraqis and through one's awareness of the different types of discrimination experienced in the New Mexico context. I will now discuss ways *obligations* contribute to a distressing context.

Obligations. Obligations are responsibilities that resettled refugees have for other Iraqi refugee families, and members of their discrete family residing together or in close proximity, i.e. the same apartment complex or same neighborhood. The first person or family who arrives in a particular place is a key access to resources for other refugees who arrive, a phenomenon Hess (2009, p. 167) refers to as an "anchor relative," someone who is the first to "resettle and gain a foothold in U.S. Society" in an effort to find employment, save money, and learn about resettlement issues. This means once a family gets established in a particular city, other family members can petition to be resettled in that same city with their extended family or with known families. Speaking English, knowing how to navigate social service systems, understanding how to maintain telephone service (national and international), knowing how to enroll (and transfer) children in schools, having a valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle, knowing who to talk with to obtain legal documents – all of these skills are in high demand for newly arriving refugees and for refugees who do not have these types of skills, even if they have been resettled for a longer period.

Local refugee resettlement agencies, Catholic Charities and Lutheran Family Services, perform the initial reception services such as meeting families at the airport, preparing an apartment for the family, and providing a small amount of cash to tide the refugee family over until they can be enrolled in entitled services. Since both agencies currently employ Arabic speaking staff, an Arabic-speaking person is able to greet newly arrived Iraqi families at the airport. There are, however, limited numbers of case managers assigned to the two refugee service agencies, resulting in limited amount of time to spend with newly arrived refugee families, and likewise, even less time for refugee families who have been resettled for three, four, or five years. Thus, resettled refuges often assist other refugees in navigating the resettlement experience, even while they continue to navigate new regulations that emerge in their own resettlement experiences.

Since Albuquerque has such a small Arabic speaking refugee population, the need for interpretation and translation services does not meet the federally mandated threshold designed to ensure access to services. During research session four, the State Refugee Coordinator attempts to explain, to the Iraqi participants, these types of regulatory constraints:

> What we are running as a program is a federally funded program. And at a Federal level, there are pretty strict restrictions on what we can do. So there are strict timelines. There is eight months if you are on refugee cash assistance. If you are eligible for TANF you have longer. There are limitations on how long we can help you with case management and employment services. And on top of those time limitations, there are limited funds coming in so we have to do as much as we can with what we receive. And, that is what we are trying to do as a state right now…but the funding isn't there to provide some of the support or pay for some of the things that you are talking about right now.

The State Refugee Coordinator is not the only one who attempted to explain the financially constrained operating environment. Discussions during research session five with service providers also highlighted financial and programming constraints.

In the following excerpt, I directly engaged one service provider to determine specific guidelines about interpretation services. I hoped that by asking a specific question, we would receive specific information.

Carmen I am going back to interpretation. If people want to make an appointment with you, how do people make sure that there is interpretation? Do they need to tell you?

[Multiple Arabic conversations]

Provider A We determine in the office based on their language, how long they have been here. We provide interpretation for people who have been here for less than five years. And, we are hiring an Arabic interpreter, so we will have someone on staff and in the office that can help.

Carmen Right, people can still tell you, talk directly to you and say, "I would feel more comfortable with an interpreter."

Provider A Absolutely, and if we have the funding and depending on where they are in those five years, we can see if a staff person is available, we can do that. Let's say that they are have been four years, then they need to bring in a friend of theirs. I want people to understand that interpretation is incredibly expensive. Probably within two weeks, I'll have an Arabic speaking on staff.

This conversation suggests, then, that ultimate responsibility for helping Iraqi refugee families rests with those Iraqi refugees who are already resettled because there is no assurance that a particular service (in this situation, interpretation) will be available due to financial constraints, staffing shortages, or imposed timeframes. As Provider A explains, "let's say they have been here four years, then they need to bring in a friend of theirs." While this sounds like a reasonable request, the request presupposes several things. First, the friend that comes along must be comfortable conversing in English language and should also have an understanding of the issues that will be discussed. Second, the friend who accompanies must be available during "normal" work hours for the agency. Normal work hours are usually during times when people are working, attending school, or taking care of children. Third, the friend must also have some means of transportation – this is an especially challenging issue for refugees resettled in Albuquerque for, unlike other major cities such as Seattle, Boston, or Atlanta, Albuquerque does not have an extensive public transportation system. The simple request to bring in a friend is predicated on the friend being available, being knowledgeable, and being willing and able to assist.

The distress associated with assisting other refugees, or the obligation to assist, emerges not from the tasks associated with assistance, but from the responsibilities to follow-through with subsequent cycles of interactions that are required as refugees navigate multiple systems. Asking a friend to assist with some aspect of refugee resettlement is not a one-time commitment; it results in subsequent meetings to make sense of things, to work things out, to secure employment, to fill out paperwork, etc. Distress is similarly engendered through a political awareness of what could happen if certain administrative or personal tasks are not addressed. Cici's story, recounted during reflexive session six, deftly addresses this distress and concern:

> I will tell you an experience about that. My parents they are, after six months, they should have the travel loan come by mail[11]. They don't receive it. I go to the caseworker, after nine months, because my brother and sister have received it [loan repayment schedule], and I don't want my parents to have problems. I said to him [case worker], "Okay, we don't have the bill yet." He says, "Don't worry, sometimes they come after one year." He didn't even try to call and check. He just say, "Don't worry, don't worry." After that, he was busy and he said, "Take this form and call because you speak English." So I called them and I was so tired because I do everything for my parents. I do guardianship for my brother, I go to court, and I do everything because I speak English. So, I called them and tell them that we haven't received the bill. I give them my parents' names and then they tell me "We don't have your address. We called [refugee service agency] and they did not give us your address. But, we'll send it now."

This incident illustrates the complexity of one particular issue that all resettled refugee families encounter (travel loan repayment), and highlights the responsibility for those already resettled to facilitate this particular process, even if another party is administratively responsible to facilitate the process. Regardless of who is "supposed" to help arrange the travel loan repayment in the above example, or other administrative tasks associated with refugee resettlement, if the task does not get done, the individual refugee (and her or his family) suffer the consequences. While a case manager or social service agent may receive a written reprimand if there are reasons to believe the person has been negligent in her/his responsibilities to support refugees, ultimately, refugee families bear the brunt of administrative mismanagement, whether through negligence, ignorance, spitefulness, or because case workers are responsible for too many clients.

Consequences resulting from administrative mismanagement or ignorance can have tremendous impacts on the everyday lives of refugees. Delinquent payments of any type can result in bad credit reports that influence a refugee's ability to get loans for vehicles and secure safe housing. An inability to negotiate with apartment complex companies could mean that refugee families risk losing a substantial (up to75% of monthly income) housing deposit

[11] Refugees resettled in the U.S. who arrive via airplane are required to reimburse the U.S. government airfare costs from their country of flight origin to their U.S. resettlement destination.

because the family makes a choice to move from a cramped apartment into a larger, more affordable house, an event recently experienced by a refugee family in Albuquerque. Participation in healthcare systems, even with the assistance of an interpreter, can lead to a refugee patient being subjected to excessive screening tests that are invasive and expensive, such as an unnecessary endoscopy - a story recounted by one Iraqi woman during research session two.

These examples highlight diverse ways inattention or inability to understand tasks and responsibilities associated with basic living functions for refugees can easily morph into dire situations unless someone, a friend perhaps, is able to assist, translate for, and accompany other refugees. The psychic pain associated with obligations, then, is a resettled refugee's awareness of these potential outcomes, coupled with the stress of trying to help others manage their resettlement experience while taking care of their own and their family's resettlement business. The awareness of potential consequences is especially potent in the healthcare space and, particularly, around issues of interpretation.

The focus on interpretation highlights responsibilities family members feel when they attempt to negotiate healthcare on behalf of their family members – parents and children. During research session five, where we focused on issues in healthcare systems, an Iraqi participant shared her experience of taking her child to the UNM hospital. Another Iraqi participant translated this woman's experience to the Director of Interpretation Services, UNM Hospital:

> The second thing she mentions here is when the interpreter interprets, they don't interpret the whole thing, they don't get the details, about the symptoms the patient has, so they are missing a lot of things. They are just saying, "He's sick and he has this." They don't interpret everything and the mother of the patient thinks it is very important for the doctor to hear what is important for the child.

Although unable to linguistically participate to the desired degree, the mother in this example is keenly aware that for the doctor to help her child, the doctor or provider must know particularities about the child; symptoms or behaviors that the mother knows because she observes them on a daily basis. In this situation, distress is compounded by the awareness that perhaps not everything that is important is being conveyed; an awareness of what *might*

happen if the diagnosis is incorrect. What if her child doesn't get better? What if the child experiences more sickness and discomfort? The Iraqi mother's distress, then, is influenced by her obligation to help her child feel better, her awareness that she may not be able to fulfill that obligation to the extent she would like, and an understanding of the implications of not being able to share important and potentially life-saving details about her child's sickness.

The awareness referenced in the previous paragraph emerges from recognizing the constraints of particular systems or processes. An awareness of constraints does not necessarily lead to changes in the practices that constitute the constraints, but rather a recognition of how difficult it can be to engage in meaningful ways, in self-determined ways, within those constraints. This type of recognition also is illustrated through the discussions that emerged from talk about discrimination.

Discrimination. Discrimination refers to the awareness of differential treatment based on classification. Iraqi participants have been conferred refugee status by the U.S. government, and their position within that classification, especially the number of years in the U.S. and the type of visa obtained, determines their access to different services. Being a refugee, then, has particular meanings for Iraqi refugees, and those meaning making processes are informed through diverse experiences. For example, one Iraqi participant expressed a political view of Iraqi refugee uniqueness when she reflected on the incongruence between benefits the U.S. receives due to its access to Iraqi oil and the type of benefits entitled to Iraqi refugees resettled in the U.S.

Other Iraqi participants question the fairness of employment practices for those who are here "illegally" and the Iraqi refugees who are "legally" in the U.S. and are further legitimated by working with the U.S. government in Iraq prior to being resettled in the U.S. A logical reasoning for Iraqis who worked for the U.S. government in Iraq might follow the flow of: "If I am good enough to work for the U.S. government in Iraq, then I am capable of doing work in the U.S." This logic, however, is not robust enough to extend from the U.S. military governing entities in Iraq into the regulated professional (and often privatized) workspaces of pharmacies, medical facilities, schools, and hi-tech companies in the U.S.

During research session five, one Iraqi participant addressed this logic in her request to the healthcare participants:

> Is there is any possibility to be a volunteer medical interpreter because I know English and medical terms, because I am a doctor. So I am Iraqi so this is beneficial for me, the Iraqis, and the hospital also of course because it is volunteer.

Despite the logic of her suggestion, the Iraqi doctor was unable to easily contribute in the medical setting, and unable to participate in a meaningful way by assisting other refugees navigating healthcare systems. The DIS responded, "Part of the reason why it could have been seen as difficult or why the answer was no at the time – It is because we are dealing with healthcare around privacy, and HIPPA laws." Whereas this reasoning might not make sense to the Iraqi refugees, the willingness of the DIS to be honest in her explanations was appreciated and shored trust in subsequent information she shared. Although her explanation helped Iraqi refugees understand some of the logic for why a trained professional cannot participate in ways she would like, it did not create opportunities to address unique circumstances that frame refugee experiences.

During research session four, Sara was interpreting another Iraqi participant's experience and explained to the state refugee coordinator, "What she is trying to say is we are refugees. We don't have jobs, we don't always have the language, and we want some flexibility. It isn't right to treat us like other people." A conversational excerpt between the RDT and the State Refuge Coordinator, during research session four, illustrated how Iraqi refugees tentatively approached discrimination issues:

Cici But you know what, illegal people they took a lot of spots [housing and employment] from other legal people. I don't want to speak badly.

SRC Well, I don't want to say that that is unique to New Mexico, but it is part of New Mexico.

Being "part of New Mexico" creates localized New Mexico resettlement experiences. For example, RDT members seemed to be acutely aware that some certification processes such as the GED test, New Mexico DMV (department of motor vehicle) test, and the U.S. citizenship test are available in Spanish but not Arabic. This means Iraqi refugees must master English language to the extent that they can pass certification tests, but Spanish-speaking individuals

do not have to meet this same requirement. Through sharing perspectives and accessing new meaning making opportunities, the Iraqi participants were able to gain insights or confirmations into their experiences of discrimination. Conversations around "legal" and "illegal" defined some forms of discrimination as noted in this Iraqi participant comment:

> But you know, and I would like to be honest with you Many of them, part of them are not legal here, but they have jobs because they have relatives. But we are legally here, but we do not get jobs.

Other types of discrimination manifest around perceived identifications. "If you are from the Middle East, everyone thinks you are Muslim" and "Why do they ask about your religion [in the healthcare system], isn't that discrimination?" During research session four, and in conversations with the State Refugee Coordinator, one participant recounted her son's experience seeking employment:

Haya: And, this other lady is talking about her son was working for a company, and the managers let the Mexican work, and…

Cici: Yes, they prefer…

Sara: There is racism. That is what she is saying, racism between the Iraqi refugees and the Mexicans.

Haya: She [Iraqi participant] is saying that someone tells her son if he wants a job, he needs to change his Iraqi name to a Mexican name.

Experiences of discrimination specific to the New Mexico context surfaced throughout the research sessions, adding to the stress of securing housing, finding meaningful employment, and mastering life skills necessary to engage in everyday life.

Confirmed discrimination, discriminatory experiences shared by one participant and then confirmed by other participants, is particularly persuasive as noted in an experience with the Albuquerque Housing Authority. In this conversational excerpt from research session five, Sara responded to the State Refugee Coordinator's comment that there is a two-year wait-list for subsidized housing programs. Sara shared her experience of submitting a housing application, and later learns that she is no longer in the system and has, in effect, lost her place on the housing waitlist.

Sara: For me, I went there and thank god I speak English. I asked to see the director, because I wanted to see the letter. I said, "I want to see the letter because you said you sent me a letter, but I didn't get it." But they couldn't find it. So they put me back into the system again. So I think there really is racism in the programs. I have heard that not just for me, for others as well. They will not send messages, and then they will say you are out of the system, and out of compliance.

Haya: Yeah, they did that to us.

Sara: See?

Immediately following this exchange, Sara continued to reflect on this incident, trying to determine what precipitated the lost letter, reaffirming that there is a clear infraction and lack of transparency from a state-supported federal affiliated agency:

> But, why are they saying that, "we are sending you a message or a letter regarding your application" but then they didn't do that. They couldn't show it [the letter] to me! I said, "I will be out of your system if you show me the copy of the letter," because they have to have two copies; one for me, and one for them. But, they didn't find it. So the director put me back into the system because they did not find any message.

The State Refugee Coordinator listened to this exchange, and then addressed Sara:

> I have contacts with those departments, so I can talk with them and see if there is anything that we can do. To get clearer on what the waitlist looks like. And, in terms of the issues with funding, I can talk with ORR (federal Office of Refugee Resettlement) and let them know what our needs might be and see if enough states tell them about issues, they might be able to change the funding.

While the State Refugee Coordinator responded to access concerns she did not offer immediate relief to complaints that access is blocked due to discrimination. Rather, she addressed administrative and structural changes that could be made in the future implying, similar to the conclusion made by Provider A during session six, that "it just takes time."

In another thread of discriminatory experience, some participants recognized the value of having someone on the "inside" to help you out. The following conversation regarding employment practices between Iraqi participants and the State Refugee Coordinator illustrates how "insider advantage" works.

Haya	[translating for an Iraqi participant] Okay, so she has filled out a lot of applications and didn't get any job. No one called back.
Sara	And, she says that they know English, so it is not a problem if they do or do not speak English because he worked as an interpreter there [in Iraq] with the Americans.
Participant	[clarifies with interpreters in Arabic]
Cici	So, you see? We can speak English, but if we don't have someone who can recommend us…
Sara	Push us.
Cici	We don't get a job – nobody is going to care, to take our papers. The people here take care of the person who is recommended over someone they don't know. And, some of them, even if they aren't qualified, maybe they still get a call. All those people who get jobs, they have somebody inside to push the resume for them.

Being an Iraqi refugee in New Mexico appears to be understood within a context that favors certain groups over other groups. Even though there is an awareness that being a refugee differentiates Iraqis from other U.S. citizens, the New Mexico context highlights differences and preferences based in other types of group membership – namely knowing influential people who are positioned to help others out, and being able to participate in Spanish speaking worlds. This notion that they are 'refugee' holds little political currency in the New Mexico context where political difference between "legal" or "illegal" status is contested and fluid.

In sum, issue-based experiences expressed by Iraqi participants during the research sessions appear to occur within distressing contexts characterized by feelings of psychic pain, an intense awareness of familial obligations to assist others in resettlement processes, and experiences of discrimination resulting from multiple classifications: Iraqi, refugees, Middle Eastern, non-English speakers, non-Spanish speakers, outsiders, and legal residents who are unable to participate in specific professional spaces due to stringent regulatory contexts that are not flexible to respond to unique circumstances of being an Iraqi refugee. In the following section, I further contextualize Iraqi refugee lived experiences in regulated contexts.

A Regulated Context

Experiences shared during the research session, and processes used during the research sessions, illuminated the regulatory characteristics of resettlement space. The regulated context is characterized by systems of rules often unintelligible to Iraqi refugees, interpreted differently among service providers, and a lack of awareness about accountability measures within service provision systems. The regulated context is further constrained by Iraqi participants' thwarted desires to engage in systems governed by these rules as demonstrated, for example, by the inability of an Iraqi doctor to volunteer at the UNM hospital, and for other certified professionals to secure employment in their professional fields such as pharmacy, teaching, and medical services. As one Iraqi participant remarked to a service provider, "It isn't how much money for us, it is how can you help us find good jobs?" While Iraqi participants identified spaces where rules and regulations were especially confining, an incident that occurred at the Family Focus Center following research session five illustrates regulatory pervasiveness and *everyday regulations*.

Everyday regulations. The research session had just ended, and many of us were talking, sharing refreshments, and there was a pleasant buzz of interactions in the meeting room. Then, an unknown woman appeared in the doorway of the meeting room and questioned, "Who is in charge here?" Three Iraqi women followed this woman into the room, and silently sat down together at one of the small tables. I approached the woman, introduced myself, and then asked, "How can I help you?" To which the woman, who happened to be the school principal, replied that these three women had been smoking cigarettes on the school playground. She stressed that this was against the rules, and implied that it was especially problematic because there were children playing nearby. One of the women looked to me, and softly murmured that she was very sorry. I assured the principal that this would not occur again, and she left still appearing to be very troubled by this event. I broached the incident during the following reflexive session with the RDT.

Carmen: First, we have to make sure that we restate the rules so that people know they cannot go onto campus.

Cici: Yes, because she was smoking and then [conversation in Arabic]

Carmen: Yes, so the principal came into our room and, well. We just have to let people know that they cannot be wandering around the campus. We don't have visitors' badges, but we can be here, in this room, and in the children's room. I will follow-up with the principal, a little letter, so that she knows we are serious about following the rules.

Cici: Was she [principal] mad?

Carmen: Well, there are different issues here. In particular, there were people the school did not recognize walking around and that is a safety issue and smoking is a problem because it is against the rules.

Haya: Even outside?

Carmen: Yes, even outside. But after school hours you can go outside and you can smoke. But, during school hours, we cannot do that.

This incident revealed a range of potential consequences for not knowing the rules. For example, the principal of Zia Elementary School, the school that shares campus space with the Family Focus Center, could lobby to ban the Beautiful Iraqi Women from using the Center out of a concern that safety on "her school campus" is compromised when groups not affiliated with APS use the Family Focus Center facilities during regular school hours. Furthermore, the women who smoked on campus were not aware of general rules about what constitutes "acceptable" behavior on school campuses. Later that day (after school hours), I toured the school campus looking for signs or notices that indicate "No Smoking Allowed." I could not find any signs specific to smoking; instead, I discovered a general sign (see Figure 4). I concluded, therefore, that the rule the women had violated is simply one of the many unarticulated rules that govern behaviors in everyday contexts. That very evening, I sent a letter to the school principal.

Figure 4. Research space regulations.

As I reflect on this incident, I am reminded of my responsibilities as lead researcher to know the research space, and to clearly explain rules and regulations so that participants do not violate unarticulated rules. My inattentiveness to the research space resulted in this transgression. But the consequences for my ignorance, in this case, are minimal compared to the potential consequences for the three Iraqi women who violated a rule, effectively crossing into a non-compliant space, simply because they did not know the rules. Information that I, in my position and authority to regulate compliance to the rules, did not think to tell them.

Although the above example illustrates my oversight in explicitly recognizing rules, the research design was constructed on assumptions that the resettlement space is a heavily regulated space. Therefore, identifying and implementing immediate solutions to problems was not a major objective of the project, although entering into an action research project with a somewhat anti-solution stance can be problematic. The action aspects of the project, rather, were designed to open opportunities to learn more about the regulatory spaces, to meet with individuals who have power within those spaces, and to engage in conversations about how these spaces affect Iraqi refugee families. In particular, tensions emerged from the Iraqi desire to participate in their worlds, and regulations that made participation difficult. The notion that Iraqi refugees are ready and desire to work, for example, was reiterated by

several participants including one participant who, in conversations with the State Refugee Coordinator about different employment support programs, pragmatically suggested, "We just want this to help the refugees stand by themselves and to have a job."

The conversations during the research session referenced above (research session three) surveyed multiple topics since the State Refugee Coordinator has oversight over programing conducted with funding funneled through the New Mexico State Office of Refugee Resettlement. Because the State Refugee Coordinator does not directly implement programs, she is not poised to make immediate practice changes, but rather positioned to influence policy changes, and then mandated to monitor policy implementation practices defined in standard operating procedural documents. In response to concerns about safe and affordable housing, she explained:

> I think when it comes to housing it is a difficult system for everyone. And it certainly is not unique to any of you, it is a difficult system and it takes a long time and a lot of our programs [all very quiet right now] there are a lot of steps and it is a bureaucracy, and that doesn't make it any easier, I am not going to say it is easy.

The State Refugee Coordinator reiterated what appears to be a consistent storyline: accessing services is difficult for everyone, refugees and non-refugees. In a similar way, service providers participating in research session six presented their agency operational spaces as tightly constrained by funding priorities and allocations. In this following excerpt, Service Provider A overviews the operational context for her organization:

SP A: So the United States lets in like 75,000 refugees every year. And the federal government supports that but for a very short amount of time. Some other countries like in Europe will bring refugees in and they will pay years of schooling, and cash assistance but they only resettle maybe 500 or 1,000 refugees every year.

Haya: [Arabic translation]

SP A: And I only share this because I know that it seems that there isn't enough money, not enough people, not enough interpretation at this level, and you are right: there isn't enough. We aren't the government but we take government money, state and federal money. We are a private non-profit. So you could imagine that we know all of your needs. We have a sense of what you need but we are limited with the amount of staff we can pay money to and the amount of programs that we are given. We have to do a lot with a very limited amount of funding.

Haya: [Arabic translation]

SP A: And refugee resettlement in the US was designed to be a partnership. That we will receive refugees; give you legal status, a little bit of funding, and a lot of opportunity. And so, I say that because I want you to know that [Service Provider B] and I and our organizations do everything we can to be creative and efficient with the funding we are given and to provide as many services for as long as we can. And I think the more you understand that, the more expectations will be realistic about the money and staff we do have.

Haya: [Arabic]

By sharing her perspective on her agency's operational constraints, and how these constraints affect her ability to provide services, Service Provider A attempted to garner understanding from Iraqi participants. She later stated that changing the norms of these constraints, increasing the cash assistance each refugee receives upon arrival in the U.S. for example, is literally "an act of congress." This move deflects action from the political space of making policy changes toward the personal space of understanding and accepting policies and practices. By doing so, it erodes the political efficacy of individuals and entities to engage in conversations with policy makers in efforts to use personal experiences to inform policy changes. This exchange demonstrated tensions service providers may experience because, while they are aware of the paucity of political will to support refugee resettlement, they are nonetheless the "face" of U.S. policy and directly responsible to refugees for whatever consequences emerge as a result of insufficient support for refugee resettlement. While changing legislative policies that affect refugee resettlement is daunting, especially because refugees cannot vote and so have little political efficacy, there are accessible opportunities to change policies and practices in healthcare spaces.

Regulating healthcare space. Experiences in healthcare spaces dominated the research sessions. This is due, in part, to the extension of the research project from the RWP, a project framed around refugee health and well-being. As a result, this research project has full support of Jessica Goodkind who, in addition to crafting the RWP design, is co-director of the UNM Cultural Competency Program. Jessica further used her political influence to invite the Director of Interpreter Services (DIS) for UNM hospital to participate. This meant, then, that the Iraqi participants were able to discuss their healthcare concerns with decision

makers and those positioned to create and monitor pathways for change. The challenges with volunteering or even gaining employment with the healthcare systems has already been discussed in previous sections of this chapter. The following discussion explores ways Iraqi refugees and representatives from the UNM healthcare systems approached and discussed interpretation services and quality of care for refugee patients.

First, participants provided several in-depth, specific stories about their experiences with interpreters and providers in the healthcare system. During research session five, Cici shared an incident that highlights the interrelatedness of healthcare issues.

> Another issue we have that is a problem is sometimes, maybe not just this once. We don't know why all the doctors don't know which medications are covered by our insurance. I might have this, and another one has blue Cross or UNM Cares, but we need to let the doctor know, or if the doctor knows, the companies where they are covered, because when they give us a prescription we take to pharmacy and they ask us you going to pay or not, so if we say we are not going to pay, we have to fax the doctor again to change it, blah, blah, blah and go through all of this and for some medication it is important that we take right away. And, this has happened actually to my father, they give him antibiotics and he was not covered, and they go back to call, and he should have already started that antibiotics, and then we have two weeks between the time we get the prescription and it gets worked out.

Cici's story highlights regulatory constraints, distress, concern for others, time requirements, and interpretation issues experienced in the healthcare space. Regulatory concerns in this situation manifested in insurance and pharmaceutical spaces with health consequences resulting from these regulatory concerns. Certainly these spaces are difficult for many U.S. citizens to navigate and may become even more difficult as ideological wars are fought around "Obamacare," one name given to the recently passed federal healthcare law that is in its initial implementation phase. UNM Hospital recently (May 21, 2013) convened a community meeting to answer questions and explain changes people can expect from this new healthcare law. Yet despite the explanations and informational filers, the U.S. healthcare system is unlike the Iraqi healthcare system, and navigating its clinical and financial spaces is a stressful journey.

Nonetheless, because there is a "patient rights space" independent from refugee status, ability to vote, or ability to speak English, refugees can engage as political subjects to create changes in healthcare systems. During research sessions five, the DIS recognized the concerns that Iraqi participants raise, and encouraged refugees to ask questions, i.e. to participate, in the healthcare setting:

> So, for me, I have the same problem even when I see the doctor. I always ask the doctor to make sure the drug is on my formularies. This should be part of your questions at the end, 'Is this part of my plan?' And then he can check before he writes the prescription.

The DIS offered Iraqi participants more scripts and lines they can use to enhance the quality of their experience in the healthcare setting: "Ask for an Iraqi interpreter," "Ask for the interpreter's ID number," and "I'm sorry, but could you please arrange another interpreter." These scripts, and their capacities to effect immediate change, were further explored during research session five - the research session dedicated to talking about healthcare.

The RDT had planned for this healthcare-focused session, and several Iraqi women arrived prepared to share their stories. One Iraqi participant, a physician, translated stories for other Iraqi participants. One incident previously discussed in this chapter recounts a Mother's story about concern that critical information about her child's sickness was not shared with the attending provider. Another incident, shared below, illustrated the confusion that emerges when actors in the healthcare systems share different ideas about the diagnosis and medication required to treat a particular illness. The Iraqi physician participant translated for another Iraqi participant:

> So, after the doctor prescribed the medicine, the interpreter (this was a phone interpreter) told her that the dosage should be six times a day and should be for two lines per day. And, she was confused because she understood from the doctor that it should be given twice a day. So, she told the interpreter that this is what I understand [twice a day]. The interpreter insists, though, 'no, I am the interpreter and this is the right thing.' So, when she took the medicine from the Walgreen's pharmacy, and she saw the directions that said "two times per day" she went back to the doctor and said, "there must be a mistake" but the doctors said maybe the interpreter made a mistake.

The Iraqi participant translating this story concluded, "so, the real issue is interpretation; the most important thing is to share details because it is important for the doctor to know everything."

After listening to this story, and another incident describing how one Iraqi woman was subjected to an endoscopy test because the interpreter reported the patient was concerned about colon cancer (which the woman recounting the story said was untrue – she had stomach pains and ulcers), the DIS asked for a few minutes to check-in with participants to clarify what she has heard.

> So, we are talking about being in an appointment or being in an exam, right? And, maybe the interpretation is not going well. Maybe they are not capturing the details and they are leaving details out. You have the right to stop and request another interpreter. And, they will have to hang up and the interpreter would direct you back to customer support who will connect you with another interpreter. So, if you feel that way, patient safety and patient rights are very important to us and you have the right to do that. And, I ask that you do.

The DIS used the opportunity to check in with participants about what she heard, as well as then responded by introducing accountability processes, and patient rights and responsibilities with Iraqi participants. She further explained how interpretation services worked. The UNM Hospital telephone interpretation service is not managed in-house, but rather is a contracted service. The DIS explained,

> So, for our telephone services, we use a vendor. It is a contracted service, and we can have them investigate situations that occur. So, if you would like to write a complaint, we could have that translated and then take that forward with them, with the vendor.

The DIS also stressed, "It is important to get the interpreter ID number. Every interpreter on the phone will tell you their ID number." Some Iraqi participants, however, appeared surprised to hear that there are scripts for interpreters and that they are legally required to give their ID number for quality control purposes:

Cici They don't do that, ever.

Haya Yes. They mention their name only.

Cici Yes the interpreter says, “Welcome, my name is…and I am going to translate for you.” That is my experience for five years. We never hear a number, just a name and just” I am going to interpret for you.” This is new information available to us.

DIS Every interpreter should follow a script when they greet you. The should say, “My name is, my interpreter number is” If they are not doing this, I need to know about it as well.

Haya Well, they don’t!

Sara I have never heard that – in the five years I have been here.

Later in the conversation, Jessica Goodkind brought the discussion back to the issues of interpreters and also encouraged the Iraqi participants to take action if they are not satisfied with the interpretation service they receive:

> And, I know that there might be more issues, but I want to add to what [DIS] was saying. If the interpreter on the phone is not doing a good job, and you want to get a new one, well, I know this may be awkward because you might have to tell that interpreter, but you should still do it or you can tell the provider, in simple language, “I need a new interpreter.” And then the doctor [provider] can tell the interpreter. I just wanted to say that because sometimes it is awkward to say it, but you should say it if you think they aren’t doing a good job.

The DIS followed with the comment, “you can say ‘I am sorry, but please arrange another interpreter’ and they will have to arrange that.” She further explained why patient feedback is so important:

> I cannot answer all your questions because I am not a doctor. But, what I do think we need to do is to create a system so that we can get real time feedback from you. I can’t go back now because I don’t know the doctor and I don’t know details, but if you all tell us while it is happening, then we can create a path to get that information to me, I could address it immediately.

From this initial interaction with the DIS, an accountability strategy, co-crafted by Iraqi participants and the DIS begins to emerge, and is refined during two subsequent meetings between Iraqi refugee women, and different actors working with the DIS, namely the newly

appointed diversity manager, and the single certified in-house Arabic interpreter who works with the DIS. This accountability plan is further discussed in Chapter Six.

Iraqi Togetherness

Iraqi togetherness was noted in two ways in this project. First, it emerged as the dominant contextual field during the research sessions, especially during the first three active research sessions. It was expressed through processes of Iraqi women sharing stories together, meeting new women, and speaking together in common languages. Following these sessions, in and in response to two direct questions about safety and helpfulness, Iraqi participants remarked they felt safe because they were with other Iraqi women; they liked the sessions because they were able to meet other Iraqi women, and to talk about issues that were important to them. Togetherness, then, facilitated experiences that were safe, and allowed participants opportunities to engage with each other. Togetherness evolved, it seems, from simply being with other Iraqi women.

The other expression of togetherness is noted through its political potential. Togetherness was recognized as a strategy to counter the ambiguity generated through the highly regulated contexts of refugee service systems, and as a political means to hold these systems accountable. For example, there are routine events related to refugee resettlement experiences that all refugees must engage and resolve: repaying the travel loan, securing appropriate visas, enrolling children in school, finding safe housing and meaningful employment. Through talking together, sharing concerns and experiences, these individual issues consolidated into collective, political issues evolving from political spaces of refugee resettlement.

For example, during the final reflexive session, Cici recounted challenges working with a local refugee service provider to figure out why her parents had not yet received their travel loan repayment schedule (this conversation is also referenced in Chapter Four). She eventually contacted the appropriate government agency, conversed with them about setting up a repayment schedule, and provided her mailing address so that the documents could be sent.

Cici Yeah, so just after 10 days I have the bills. And of course, because we are late, they said we should pay $150 for being six months late. So, they want us to pay a total of $300 or $400. So, I called them and I said, “Okay, guys. I know we are late, but

because you sent the bill so late, I can't pay all this now." Then they asked, " Do you want to push [have an extension] it back like three months?" I said, "No because anyway I am going to pay." Then they said, "Okay, then, just pay what you want. But just send it to us, $20.00 or $50.00, whatever you want.

Sara You should have mentioned that in front of everyone because they keep telling us we have to pay this amount, so you should have mentioned it. This is important. We want our people to know because some of them really complain about the huge amount they have to pay and they have no jobs, no assistance.

Through her response, Sara recognized that there are other Iraqis who would benefit from knowing that there are opportunities for negotiation; that seemingly stringent rules may not be as stringent as conceived. However, in order for individuals to express their experiences so these experiences can reconfigure as collective experiences- political experiences - there must be a space for togetherness.

Juncture

In this chapter, I have described lived experiences expressed by Iraqi refugees within distressing and regulated contexts, and the sense of togetherness that evolves when Iraqi women share space, time, and stories. Distress was expressed as (a) psychic pain emanating from a chronic inability to make changes despite the desire and ability to do so; (b) as associated with the political awareness that accompanies an obligation to assist other refugees with resettlement challenges while simultaneously managing one's own family obligations in the resettlement process; and (c) as related to experiences of discrimination experienced in the New Mexico context. The notion that refugees exist in a regulated context was illustrated through attempts to engage in systems that do not receive adequate inputs or support to fulfill their mandate; such as state and federally funded services designed to increase access to housing, employment, cash assistance programs, and educational opportunities. While healthcare systems in general are recognized as highly regulated contexts, it is within the healthcare system, the UNM system in particular, that opportunities to effect change were identified. Togetherness emerged within spaces shared by the Iraqi women, and recognized for its capacity to transform individual problems into political issues.

In this chapter, and in Chapter Four, I explored the two research questions guiding this project by highlighting ways invitational rhetoric concepts of safety, immanent value, and self-determination nurtured spaces for Iraqi refugee women to share their perspectives.

Iraqi-shared perspectives revealed lived experiences that occurred within distressing and regulated contexts. In the next and final chapter, I give a comprehensive summary of this research project, and explore invitational research as praxis.

Chapter 6: Invitational Research as Praxis

This research project was informed by several interwoven strands of inquiry: Concern about impacts on ordinary Iraqi citizens since the 2003 U.S. led invasion and occupation of Iraq; experiences of forced migration in different international contexts; knowledge of resettlement challenges for refugees in Albuquerque; and a desire to identify and implement research methodologies that value participation, honor experience, and generate possibilities for change and awareness. Through my doctoral program, I have been able to parlay my philosophical questioning about refugee resettlement practices and policies to culminate into this dissertation research: a short-term research project grounded in invitational rhetoric principles and collaboratively produced with Iraqi refugee women.

The pragmatic project goals were to learn about Iraqi refugees' resettlement experiences and create accessible and welcoming entries into the different spaces that govern refugee resettlement processes. The theoretical goals were concerned with learning how invitational rhetoric contributed to achieving the pragmatic goals. Thus, the project had both action and research dimensions. The project, then, was conceptualized with the intention that participation in the project would generate opportunities for desired change and analysis of how that occurred would contribute to existing communication theory, and to understandings of how theory can be applied to praxis. The entry point into this final chapter is once again through the research questions explored in the project:

RQ1: How is invitational rhetoric constructed in a short-term participatory project with Iraqi refugee women?

RQ2: In this invitational space, what do Iraqi participants' shared perspectives reveal about their lived experiences as resettled refugees?

In the remaining sections of this chapter, I synthesize the multiple analyses and events that occurred throughout the research project cycle. I begin by briefly summarizing the project design, including the origin of its name. I then review key findings that respond to the research questions, and include praxis recommendations that emerge from the analyses. I conclude my summary with a discussion on the project constraints. For the final section, I apply a rhizome figuration to illustrate the spatial and generative capacities of the research

design, a move that reveals the multiple actions that ruptured into emergent research spaces to produce action. Finally, I add to applied theory by using invitational research as praxis..

Research Project Summary

The Beautiful Iraqi Women case study was conducted through weekly active and reflexive research sessions over a six-week period, resulting in six active research sessions and six reflexive research sessions. With the exception of my dissertation advisor (who attended research session two) and me (I attended every session), only Iraqi refugee women participated in the first three active research sessions. Access participants, individuals invited to participate due to their positions as gatekeepers of refugee services and resources, were present during the fourth, fifth, and sixth active research sessions. The first three research sessions, in addition to being spaces where Iraqi refugee women experienced togetherness and shared stories about their lives in the languages and ways they desired, also were spaces where Iraqi participants decided on issues to discuss in future sessions. The final three research sessions, then, evolved from the particular perspectives shared by the Iraqi refugee women in the first three research sessions. Only Iraqi participants attended the first three sessions. Iraqi participants chose the name of the project – Beautiful Iraqi Women – the closure of the first research session, as I explain in the following account, "*What's in a name?*"

What's in a name? I was slightly anxious as I prepared for the first active research session; I did not know what to expect. I recall typing the first agenda, and naming the project in 16-point, bold font at the top of the document: "Iraqi Refugee Women's Forum." I stared at my one printed agenda while waiting for the copy machine to warm up. Then it dawned on me: I had named the group. By naming the group, I had begun to establish the research agenda, and had done so without being mindful of the possible consequences. Rather than reprint the agenda, because that would take far too much time, I instead blocked out the name with a small piece of paper, made copies of the agenda without a project title, and distributed these agendas at the beginning of the first research session. At the closure of the first session, someone asked, "What's the name of this project?" I gleefully replied, "It doesn't have a name – what do you think it is?" The participants conferred and then the name was written, in Arabic on the whiteboard: *Beautiful Iraqi Women*.

The project name, then, was one of the first participant-generated actions for the project, and a juncture of awareness for me. I do not know what choosing their own name meant for the Iraqi participants. Yet, it was meaningful for me for several reasons. First, I could not have generated that name, only Iraqi participants could decide on such an intimate, self-identified name. Second, I became more aware of the multiple ways groups of people and their interactions are labeled by themselves and others, thereby positioning groups in particular ways. Third, I noticed how easy it was to exercise control within a research project, even if the project was designed to be a collaborative, participant-centered project. Finally, I realized the critical role of reflexivity. If I wanted to share power with Iraqi refugee participants in the research space, I had to become attentive to congruency and transparency among my intentions, research protocols, and analysis as the research project evolved so that issues identified to be discussed, and ways to discuss those issues, were Iraqi participant-generated decisions.

Research Questions

The first research query was concerned with understanding how key concepts in invitational rhetoric – safety, immanent value, and self-determination – crafted spaces that encouraged Iraqi refugee women to share perspectives about their resettlement experiences. My analyses suggest that an invitational space facilitated an environment where Iraqi refugee women shared their experiences in ways in which they felt comfortable and with the specificity they desired. In turn, Access participants, individuals representing and regulating refugee access to services, had opportunities to listen and respond in ways that reinforced the trustworthiness of the perspective offered by Iraqi participants. Immanent value of the offered perspective was acknowledged through a meaningful response – psychic and/or action – to that perspective. Self-determination was expressed by the ways the Iraqi RDT identified and managed regulatory procedures.

The second research query was concerned with learning more about the social contexts from which Iraqi participants' lived experiences as refugees emerged. By situating Iraqi refugees' lived experiences in localized environments, specific characteristics of localized contexts were revealed. My analysis revealed that Iraqi refugee participants' lived experiences occurred within distressing and regulating environments that were relieved

through Iraqi togetherness. Because the analysis was contextualized in local interactions, the study also extends insights into the larger institutional contexts that regulate refugee resettlement. I elaborate insights emanating from guidance provided through the research questions in the following sections.

Research question one. The first research question is concerned with how invitational rhetoric was constructed in the project. The concepts explored included: safety, immanent value, self-determination, and sharing perspectives. Close attention to the function of safety resulted in processes responsive to psychic and procedural concerns. Immanent value was affirmed by acknowledging the trustworthiness of Iraqi perspectives through listening, and then responding in ways that confirm Iraqi participants' capacities to generate psychic and action responses. Finally, self-determination was enacted and reinforced through Iraqi participant decision-making authority. That authority, in the research space, was fortified through my recognition of that authority and my subsequent willingness to reinforce procedural rules during the research sessions. As Cici pointed out, during reflexive session six, "I like when you tell them (Service Providers A and B) that we three (Iraqi RDT) are moving around and that anyone can talk. Still, she does not trust us." By maintaining procedural decision-making authority, Iraqi participants could choose to discuss self-identified issues in ways they determined most appropriate. The animated concepts of safety, immanent value, and self-determination allowed Iraqi participants to share their perspectives with the specificity they desired, in the languages they preferred, and contributed to the creation of an invitational research space.

My interpretations stemming from the first research question generated three key insights into ways invitational rhetoric was constructed in the research space. First, the project illustrated ways invitational rhetoric concepts can become operational acts performed by research participants, and by doing so, illustrates ways safety, immanent value, and self-determination can be cultivated and assessed in research spaces. Second, through close attention to these key invitational rhetoric concepts, the research space was inhabited by the Iraqi participants in such a way that their resettlement experiences were expressed as they were experienced – in distressing and sometimes volatile ways. By claiming the research space as an Iraqi research space, the research project privileged their ways of

communicating. This move blurred lines between different culturally held notions of acceptable forms of communication in public forums. Finally, Iraqi refugees were able to share perspectives that challenged and extended other perspectives held by refugee service providers, resource gatekeepers, and other Iraqi participants. By doing so, Iraqi refugee participants' ways of being and knowing in the world were legitimated, politicized, and recognized as vital information to inform and transform current ways of understanding and implementing refugee resettlement processes. In short, these key insights interacted to create an invitational research space by identifying actions that nurtured a safer psychic and procedural environment, and legitimated different realities that emerged from Iraqi perspectives about refugee resettlement.

Research question two. The second research question explored what Iraqi shared perspectives revealed about their lived experiences as resettled refugees. My analyses suggest that perspectives shared by the Iraqi refugee women emanated from lived experiences within distressing and regulated contexts, yet these contexts were relieved through experiences of togetherness. Distress manifested through psychic pain; obligations to help others comprehend and navigate resettlement processes; and experiences of discrimination particular to the New Mexico context. Distress was intensified by ways Iraqi refugee participation in institutions that regulated their resettlement experiences was often thwarted by regulations that: (1) seemed unintelligible to Iraqi refugees; (2) lacked clear accountability processes attributed in part to constrained funding, inflexible program criteria, and lack of opportunities to learn from refugee experiences; and (3) were not responsive to particularities that constitute being an Iraqi refugee.

Yet discussions that occurred regarding healthcare space, although highly regulated and a source of great distress for many Iraqi refugee participants, created an opening into the healthcare space via "patient rights" pathways. This newly recognized entry point into the healthcare context is an example of ways that participation can transcend refugee-based constraints since the space of patient rights is defined within universal rights, regardless of other identity or political categorizations that frustrate many Iraqi refugees. While the pathway to engage within healthcare systems is more clearly accessible via patient rights, the nexus between (1) refugee engagement; and (2) UNMH accountability processes needs

further attention if Iraqis, or any other group or individual, use this pathway. In particular, individuals who wish to access this pathway must know *how* to access the pathway. In order for an accountability process to be effective and beneficial, people have to know first that it exists, and then be able to access the process.

Transforming or transcending refugee resettlement challenges requires collaboration with refugees, especially at the local level where resettled refugees are, ultimately, the ones who suffer the consequences and impacts of decisions made by those who may be geographically and culturally distant from the everyday lives of resettled refugees. Current federal policies mandating refugee resettlement practices are not responsive to the diverse localized contexts where refugees are resettled, nor are they responsive to particular characteristics of the different refugee populations that are resettled. The Albuquerque affiliate of Catholic Charities, one of nine national refugee resettlement organizations that contract with the federal government to implement refugee resettlement policies, and a participant in this project, clearly articulates its agency's perspective in statement written to be included in this research document:

> We believe that the current timelines for resettlement which were created by federal mandates are grossly out of touch with the needs of individuals. At their shortest, these timelines can be as little as 30 days. Under the most generous interpretation of the federal mandates, the resettlement process might stretch to 8 months. In either case, we believe that those timelines are insufficient to adequately orient an individual to life in the United States, develop the skills and language abilities to succeed in employment, and set individuals on a course to joining the middle class. (See Appendix D for complete statement)

As can be gleaned from this statement, while this project privileged learning about ways Iraqi refugee women experienced resettlement issues, it also revealed insights about the structural contexts in which refugee resettlement agencies operate.

Like refugees, local affiliate organizations also are subject to political and social forces that dictate parameters without an understanding of, or perhaps a concern for, the impacts of those policies. In short, there needs to be more spaces for the various stakeholders concerned about refugee resettlement to share experiences at the local level so that program

and policy practices are locally produced. With its small, Albuquerque-based refugee population, stakeholders in the state of New Mexico can have a direct impact on changing Iraqi refugee resettlement stories by working together more efficiently and effectively. To do this, however, refugees must be invited to participate in planning processes and valued through their participation so that their perspectives can be acknowledged and incorporated into new refugee resettlement strategies. While bringing together different actors who hold different perspectives on a particular issue generates numerous ideas and possible actions, it also can be chaotic and appear unmanageable.

An invitational approach, however, can mediate and regulate difficult conversations as demonstrated in this project. Through establishing procedural rules that were Iraqi-identified and meaningful to Iraqi participants, and institutionally legitimized through my reinforcement, Iraqi participants were able to express their perspectives in ways that reflected their experiences. In effect, an invitational approach managed volatility and difference through its theoretical fidelity to the organizing concepts of safety, immanent value, and self-determination. There are, of course, many constraints that influence how difference among groups can be valued. I discuss some constraints that were particular to this research project in the following section.

Research Constraints

In this section, I discuss constraints particular to this research project. I use the term *constraint* rather than limitation to convey the idea that these particular constraints are conditions I could not control, rather they were conditions that necessitated project design flexibility. These constraints were (a) Iraqi participant pool; (b) languages; and (c) issues.

Iraqi participant pool. Iraqi women known by the three RDT members were invited to participate in this project. I did not expand the participant pool by seeking information from either Lutheran Family Services or Catholic Charities; as primary resettlement agencies, they would have the most current information about newly resettled Iraqi families. Furthermore, the Iraqi women who participated were those who could attend a Friday morning meeting. The project attempted to accommodate women who needed childcare assistance as a condition for participation by providing professional childcare services during the meetings. Iraqi women who worked or attended school during that time period, however,

were unable to participate. Furthermore, the only criterion for participation was to be an Iraqi refugee woman, meaning there was no specific group or demographic targeting. A segmented participant pool may have produced different interpretations from those presented in this document.

Languages. I did not have a designated interpreter during the research sessions, nor were all Arabic conversations in the active and reflexive research sessions translated. I felt comfortable while others spoke in Arabic due to my exposure to the language through an introductory language course at UNM (Fall 2010), a six-week intensive language course in Cairo, Egypt (Summer 2011), and work in Sudan (2005 – 2007). Nonetheless, I am unable to understand Arabic conversations in general, and Iraqi Arabic conversations in particular. While my inability to track Arabic language conversations might appear to constrain my credibility as a researcher, it nonetheless provided Iraqi RDT members greater control over what was shared with non-Arabic speaking participants during the research sessions, and what is represented in this text.

This linguistic constraint highlights structural issues about the contextual environment when research participants cannot communicate in the dominant research language. Language competence, social identities, and how these interact with the ability to access resources create a power infused context of research (Edwards, 1998). For example, transcripts analyzed in this project are mediated through the interpretations offered by the Iraqi RDT. As Edwards (1998) remarks, "Directly quoting passages of third person interpretation from recorded interviews in written text clearly signals one aspect of interviewees' lives – in many circumstances, especially their access to public resources, they can only communicate with the aid of another (bilingual) person" (p. 200). A constrained ability to participate in a dominant language is one way to recognize Iraqi refugee positionalities in their social worlds. Language constraints in this project were addressed through (a) having multiple interpreters, thereby allowing multiple interpretations; and (b) structuring research sessions so that Iraqi RDT interpretations could be challenged, confirmed, or elaborated by other Iraqi participants since both English and Arabic languages were recognized as research languages.

Issues. Issues discussed were those identified by Iraqi participants as salient and meaningful in their lives. During the first three research sessions, Iraqi participants identified issues, and I contacted Access participants who were able to respond to those issues. The content and aims of the research meetings, then, were developed from an Iraqi perspective and in alignment with the invitational orientation of the project: creating opportunities for Iraqi self-determined choices. This project design element, then, contributes to reasons why Iraqi participant lived experiences in the research project were primarily described within distressing and regulated contexts. This means, then, that the representations in this document do not include many accounts of pleasurable lived experiences. However, I tend to agree with one RDT member who commented during reflexive session six, "If you don't know what is bad, how can you make a good environment?"

In the preceding sections, I have summarized my interpretations of the Beautiful Iraqi Women project. In the remaining sections, I address two topics. First, I review actions and spaces that stemmed from the research project. I then synthesize analyses that emerged from the research questions, and the acts and events that erupted out of the stabilized six-week research space, to produce new ways of conceptualizing invitational research – invitational research as praxis. In order to accomplish these final tasks, I employ a rhizome figuration to illuminate the interconnections between the evolving research spaces in this project.

Thinking Rhizomatically

I was first exposed to a rhizome metaphor through readings in one required graduate course called *Theorizing Culture*. Rhizomatic application possibilities were further refined in a paper produced in another class called *Critical and Cultural Studies*. Although this methodology or orientation is not common in communication research, a rhizome figuration is an adept conduit to notice the non-linear, generative capacities of this research project, and then to write about those capacities. Honan and Sellers (2008) explain that rhizomatic methodologies can include ways texts are produced through an "approach to writing that is partial and tentative, that transgresses generic boundaries, and allows the inclusion of the researchers' voice(s)" (p. 111). This rhizomatic approach to writing can be seen in this document, in the multiple sections where I reflexively engage with the text, suggesting then, that rhizomatic writing encourages situated reflexivity.

An actual rhizome, though, originates in botany. It is an underground plant stem (sometimes referred to as a creeping rootstalk) capable of producing shoots and roots systems of a new plant. It is a hardy plant, capable of sustaining itself though its ability to propagate in unfavorable conditions. One of the characteristics of a rhizome is that it has no beginning nor end nor center; it is always in process of becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). A rhizome runs near or on the surface, but at any juncture or disjunction it can erupt into more plants. Whenever a rupture occurs, the rhizome will send roots down into the earth while also shooting up stems. It is a self-sustaining entity; it is sustained through an underground communication nutrient system. It runs horizontally and can become multi-dimensional at any point. Irises, ginger root, and turmeric are examples of rhizomes. In this project, I consider spaces that extend from this research project as junctures, the actions that occurred within these spaces as off and up shoots, and efforts to connect or access these junctures examples of internodes.

While cybernetic analyses of the connections between spaces might provide a seemingly similar image of a rhizome, it is the dexterity and strength of the rhizome that is particularly compelling to me. An expanding, self-sustaining living entity animates the possibilities of work conducted in this research project – work focused on lived experience. Furthermore, a rhizome recognizes the interconnectivities of spaces, responds to the liminal or paradoxical nature of those junctures, and demonstrates ways movement into new spaces carries debris, seeds, soil and remnants from other spaces. A rhizome figuration then, through its multiplicities and multi-directional runnings, encourages multiple dimensional and spatial readings to make sense of issues raised in this research project. In doing so, it allows for readers to enter this particular Iraqi refugee resettlement conversation at any juncture, with awareness that what is observed at that particular point has already been formed and is constantly being informed through different experiences. When seen rhizomatically, the generative nature of this project, its internodal eruptions – junctures of adaptation or new growth – become easier to recognize. In the next section, I recognize generative actions that occurred in emergent spaces extending from this research project.

Emergent Spaces

The main research space, Zia Family Focus Center, is where all active and reflexive research sessions occurred. In previous sections of this document, I have described the Center and explored what occurred during the research sessions. In this section, I highlight research actions that are located outside the primary and stabilized research space, the Zia Family Focus Center. In effect, the practices employed in this research project decentered the stable research space, space constituted by its materiality and the implementation of time-bound research activities, to reveal multiple research spaces generated through the research project. These multiple spaces are represented in Figure X. While this visual figure represents the generative characteristics of the research design, it cannot yet incorporate temporal characteristics. By this I mean, I do not know the chronological, relational, or interactive progression among the multiple actions due, in part, to the rapidity and spontaneity of expansions. Extensions, actions that grew out of the stabilized six-week research space, stemmed into the following spaces: (a) New Mexico Office of Refugee Resettlement; (b) Lutheran Family Services, a refugee service provider; (c) Catholic Charities, a refugee service provider; (d) Academic spaces; and (e) healthcare spaces, mainly those associated with the UNM Hospital and its primary provision affiliate, the Southeast Heights clinic. First, however, I describe the extensions from the primary research space, Zia Family Focus Center.

Zia Family Focus Center. The Zia Family Focus Center (http://www.ziafamilyfocus.com) was the primary space where time-bound research and reflexive sessions occurred. I explored descriptions and analyses of what happened during these sessions in Chapters Four and Five. In particular, this space is where Iraqi refugee participants expanded the sense of togetherness that was consolidated during the first three research sessions. One particularly fun “togetherness” event took us to Santa Fe via the New Mexico Rail Runner.

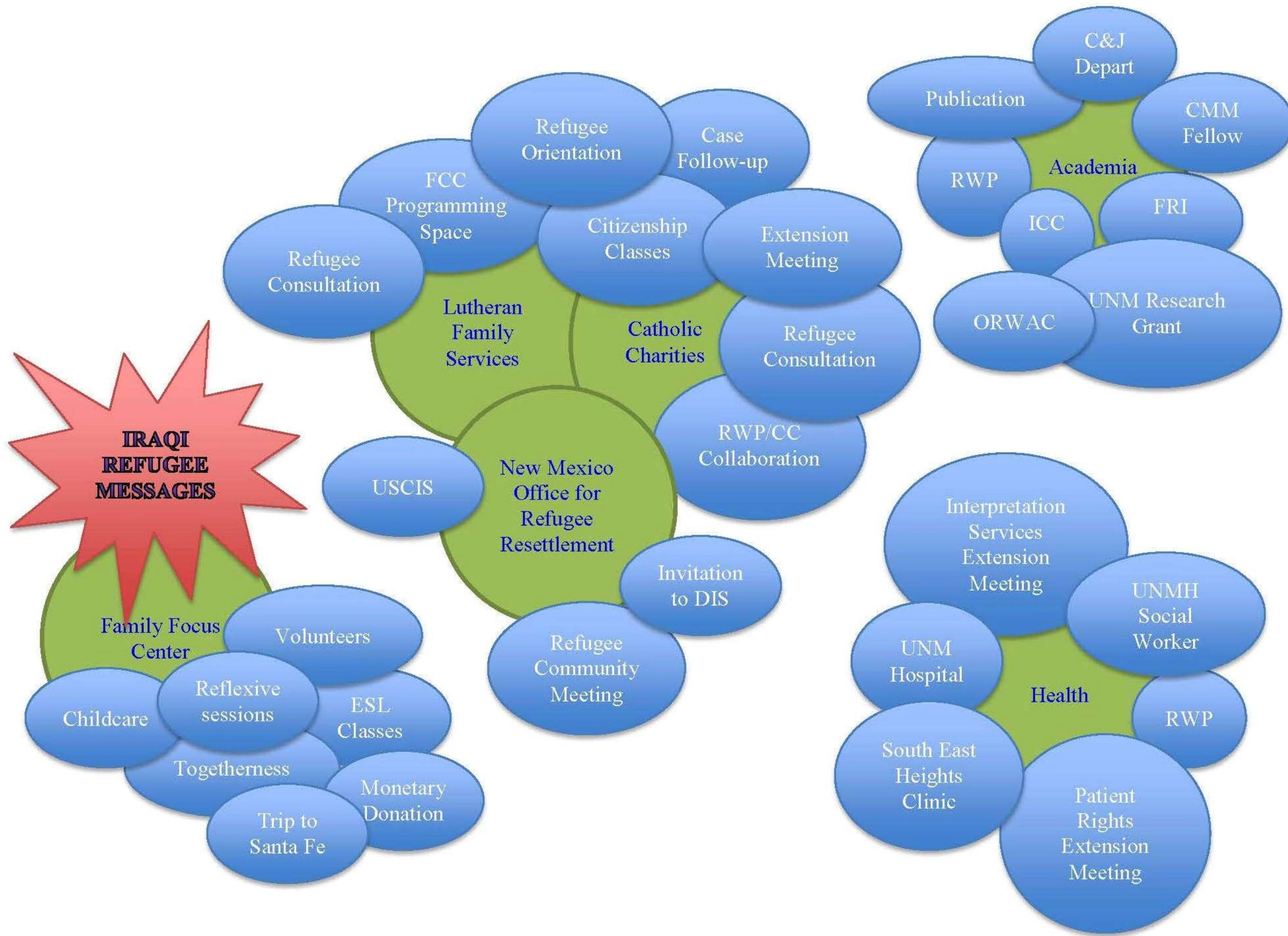

Figure 5. Rhizomatic Extensions.

In April 2013, after the six-week research project cycle had ended, 12 Iraqi refugee adults, 13 of their children, and I traveled by train to Santa Fe. I learned from conversations on the train trip that while there is a limited train system in Iraq, some Iraqis had never traveled by train before, nor had they visited Santa Fe, New Mexico's state capital located only one hour away from Albuquerque. I had originally envisioned that the trip would be an advocacy trip, but, when we made final decisions (during research session six) about the Santa Fe trip, the group wanted to have lunch and to have fun. While in Santa Fe, we had lunch at an Afghan-owned restaurant, Istalif. In an unanticipated encounter, one Iraqi participant recognized an acquaintance working in the restaurant. The women previously worked together in Saffron Café, a small restaurant that had been located in the University District in Albuquerque.

The stabilized research space in the Zia Family Focus Center produced additional relational opportunities. As I reported in Chapter Three, five community volunteers participated in this research project. Four of the five volunteers are UNM faculty, meaning that their exposure to the research project and the participants might facilitate more programming, research, or employment opportunities through the university. One volunteer was an undergraduate student in the RWP course. She volunteered to assist with childcare because she wanted to support Iraqi refugees, in addition to the support she offered to a refugee family involved in the RWP. Finally, I developed a collegial relationship with the director of the Zia Family Focus Center. Two anonymous donors contributed a total of $680.00 to the Family Focus Center in honor of the Beautiful Iraqi Women project, and I provided technical assistance to the director on crafting and submitting an Albuquerque city community grant to support before school programs for children.

New Mexico Office of Refugee Resettlement. The State Refugee Coordinator supports the goals of this research project, as evidenced by her letter of support submitted to the University of New Mexico. She attended one research session as an invited Access participant, and attended another extension meeting on May 17. During this extension meeting (also held at the Zia Family Focus Center), three Iraqi refugee participants, the UNMH Director of Interpreter Services, the UNMH Diversity and Equity Inclusion Manager, the State Refugee Coordinator, and I talked about smoothing pathways between the initial

state-supported refugee health screening processes and the UNM health system. In addition, we provided input into a patient rights flier designed to help Iraqi and other Arabic speaking populations access accountability systems in the UNM Health system. The State Refugee Coordinator extended an invitation to the UHMH Director of Interpreter Services to attend the regularly scheduled refugee health meeting. Furthermore, she extended an invitation to the Iraqi women to help them identify ORR resources, and contacted the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to arrange a USCIS training and orientation. In addition, following her participation in research session four, she gave her contact information to the Iraqi participants, encouraging them to contact her.

To facilitate actions that occurred within this space, I maintained email correspondence with the State Refugee Coordinator. I usually do not contact individuals by phone since there is no record of those conversations or agreements; emails, however, leave a trail. During one of the project's extended meetings (May 17), the State Refugee Coordinator suggested she could convene a community meeting for refugees. This meeting has not yet been confirmed, but the opportunity to talk about the meeting – its content, its location, etc. – created an opening for Iraqi refugees and the others to maintain contact. Through the research project, and in a public forum, Iraqi participants strengthened their access to resources in the New Mexico Office of Refugee Resettlement via interactions with the State Refugee Coordinator.

Lutheran Family Services. Lutheran Family Services (LFS) (http://www.lfsco.org) recently opened a sub-office in Albuquerque. Until their arrival, Catholic Charities (CC) was the sole provider of refugee services. LFS, then, is coping with logistical challenges associated with opening an office in a new area, at the same time they are negotiating program challenges as they attempt to provide critical services to refugees in a new area. The director of LFS attended one research session as an Access participant. In preparation for that meeting, knowing the meeting was a strategic opportunity to show ways LFS and CC worked together (even though they compete for limited funds), LFS made an English/Arabic document that explains the different refugee programs administered by LFS and CC. She also provided business cards of one LFS caseworker so that, if Iraqi participants wanted to contact a caseworker to talk about a specific event, they had a contact name and number. The

caseworker, in this particular situation, is an ethnic Karen refugee from Burma and does not speak Arabic, so participants who contacted this particular person would need to speak English. Prior to this research session, I had become aware that LFS was recruiting an Arabic speaking caseworker, and asked the LFS director to share that job announcement with the Iraqi participants, which she did. I later learned, as I made one of my spontaneous visits to the LFS office, that LFS now has an Arabic speaking caseworker on staff.

I had several in-person meetings with LFS staff to discuss programming issues. As a new agency, LFS is open to suggestions and in process of creating their programs. For example, LFS recently contacted the director of the Zia Family Focus Center (FFC) to talk about FFC hosting LFS's afterschool program for refugee children. LFS staff has contacted at least one Iraqi RDT member about short-term interpretation work, and initiated an introduction between the New Mexico state director of refugee health and me. I, in turn, have provided information about the internship program sponsored by UNM Department of Communication and Journalism (C&J).

Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities (http://www.ccasfnm.org) is the other refugee service provider in the state of New Mexico. Many Iraqi participants were familiar with Catholic Charities, and its prior director of refugee services, Marshall Jensen, because CC provided initial resettlement services to Iraqi refugees arriving during the years 2007 – 2010. The newly appointed director for refugee services attended one research session, and then, on April 5, the director for community involvement, Marshall Jensen, attended an extension meeting. During this meeting, Marshall provided extensive information about their citizenship preparation classes and resources. Following the active research session and the extension meeting, several individual meetings were scheduled among the director for refugee services, the director for community involvement, and Iraqi participants. The director for refugee services has contracted with one Iraqi RDT member to provide assistance on the development of a childcare provider certification program.

At my invitation, the director for community involvement attended one of the RWP's citizenship classes, held at the same time as the RWP Learning Circles, to determine how the two groups (RWP and CC) could work together to support Iraqi refugees preparing for U.S. citizenship. One Iraqi participant from this research project attended that class, and another

participant and her family attended a subsequent RWP citizenship class. I initiated two in-person meetings with the director for community involvement (at the CC office) and maintained a series of email correspondence with both directors so that they would know what to expect from their involvement in the research project. For more information about Catholic Charities' experience in this research project, please refer to their statement (see Appendix D for statement).

Academic space. While I consider myself to be an activist, for the past four years I have been a student centered in an academic space. To forge these two positionalities, I looked for resources within the academic space that would nurture this research project. UNM affiliated institutions awarded two supporting grants: $500.00 from the Feminist Research Institute (FRI) and a $5,000.00 research grant through the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA). GPSA funds did not come with any award requirements. In addition to supporting this dissertation research, the GPSA grant also covered costs for three interpreters (Kinyarwanda, French, Iraqi Arabic) to support the Refugee Wellbeing Project 2012 – 2013. As requested by the FRI, and in acknowledgement of their support, I presented my dissertation research during one of their scheduled colloquium.

Healthcare space. As previously discussed in Chapter Five, healthcare space appeared to be a fertile and productive space for Iraqi refugee participants. Discussions in the initial research session with UNM healthcare representatives spurred two meetings that occurred after the research project cycle was complete. The first meeting was on April 19, where three Iraqi women, the DIS, and an UNM certified Arabic dual role interpreter (from Morocco), and I met to discuss interpretation issues. The second meeting occurred on May 17th, where, in addition to the previous participants, the newly hired UNMH Diversity Manager and the State Refugee Coordinator also participated.

Concrete outcomes emerged from these meetings: feedback boxes with posted Arabic instructions are now located in the UNM Hospital and Southeast Heights clinic, the DIS explained why hospital intake forms ask for religious affiliation (so that a spiritual or religious person can be called in case of an emergency or if the patient requests), and all participants present during that meeting now have a better understanding about how patient

contacts are used to determine interpretation services. The State Refugee Coordinator also invited the DIS to attend the next refugee health providers meeting to facilitate referral pathways between initial state refugee health services and on-going UNM healthcare services. In addition, one UNM social worker sent me an email requesting more information about the "support group for Iraqi refugee women." She wanted to refer a client.

The expansions and work described in the preceding paragraphs illustrates my perspective of particular generative and spatial elements produced through this research project. If all participants who engaged in this research project were to map new relationships that emerged, or new possibilities that arose, or new knowledge that germinated through their participation, and these mappings were overlaid in such a way that the map became multi-dimensional, the collective map would indeed appear wildly rhizomatic, unintelligible, unkempt, and unruly. Yet this collective and collaborative map of participation in the space of refugee resettlement might closely resemble and resonate with lived experience of refugee resettlement.

Invitational Research as Praxis

In this concluding juncture, I present two ways the invitational research produced in this research project can be translated as praxis, or action. I suggest that invitational research can be seen as transformative and rhizomatic. I leave this text by consolidating the invitational research that was produced through this project into invitational strategies of inquiry that can be accessed for future participatory action studies.

Invitational research as transformative research. Invitational research has the capacity to transform research spaces into Thirdspaces, spaces that are brought into being by practices that occur in the space, and the persons who perform those practices. Thirdspace created in this project was a space that allowed refugee women who had experienced structural violence associated with forced displacement to talk about present challenges in ways that respected their abilities to choose what to disclose or how to participate. In this Thirdspace, and in the process of this communication, Iraqi participants could find solace in the company of other Iraqi refugee women.

Invitational research as rhizomatic research. Invitational research carries the capacity to generate growth through new relationships that develop from the invitational

research space. Through a commitment to getting to know others, a key aim of the invitational act of sharing perspectives, participants in this research space began interacting with individuals outside of their normal social worlds. If a participant did not feel comfortable interacting, she was able to observe others interacting. These new relationships stimulated opportunities for other relationships and possibilities to form. The rhizomatic function of the research also is evidenced through the multiple decentered research spaces revealed, and the actions and productive work that expanded those spaces.

Invitational Strategies of Inquiry

In the introductory section of Chapter Three, I listed three inquiry strategies used to design this research project: collaborative, transformative, and practical. Strategies of inquiry are collections of skills, practices, and biases that are used in a research project to connect theoretical frameworks with the act of doing research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Those particular strategies were appropriate and helpful. Now, however, I add invitational to that list. *Invitational strategies of inquiry* are applied strategies consistent with the aims of invitational rhetoric.

Invitational strategies engender safer research spaces for participants. Creating safety within the research space creates a hospitable space for participants. An invitational approach to safety is predicated on the premise that a researcher does not fully know, nor can she fully comprehend, the complexities of lived experience participants bring to the research space. Safety, in an invitational research space, evolves through an expansion of the research space that is noticed through the clarity of its boundaries, the ability for those parameters to be named by participants, and the responsibilities of the researcher to respect and reinforce the space participants envision through their desires, and form through their participation. Invitational strategies, then, are animated by, and created through, participation.

Invitational strategies affirm value and trustworthiness of participants. The art of sharing perspectives is a repetitive process of offering and yielding, of addressing and responding. This repetitive process does not imply endless cycles that confine circular stances, but rather offers continuous opportunities to affirm lived experience that produce these perspectives. Invitational strategies affirm value through processes of listening, and

responding in ways that are meaningful, and in ways that are specifically responsive to the offered perspective. Invitational strategies, then, recognize and value difference.

Invitational strategies secure opportunities for participants to make self-determined choices about how to engage in the research space. Invitational strategies expand possibilities for different types of participation since a researcher cannot know the full range of participative possibilities imagined by participants. Through its commitment to securing self-determined choices, invitational strategies recognize the ability and capacity of participants to communicate their political subjectivities.

Invitational strategies engender safer research spaces for participants, affirm value and trustworthiness of participants, and secure opportunities for participants to make self-determined choices about how to engage in the research space. When applied in research projects, these strategies are capable of interweaving into invitational research space. In an invitational research space, participants experience safety, are valued, and make self-determined choices. Through these acts, invitational research spaces are spaces of unlimited possibilities.

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Appendices

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Appendix A

New Mexico State Refugee Coordinator Letter of Support

New Mexico Human Services Department

Income Support Division
PO Box 2348
Santa Fe, NM 87504-2348
Phone: (505) 827-7250; Fax: (505) 827-7203

Susana Martinez, Governor
Sidonie Squier, Secretary

Graduate and Professional Student Association
University of New Mexico
SAC Box 103, MSC 03 2310
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001

Dear New Mexico Research Grant Review Committee Members,

As the New Mexico State Refugee Coordinator, I am pleased to offer my support for the research project "Everyday research: Iraqi refugee women and resettlement." This project will support a doctoral dissertation and provide invaluable information about the challenges Iraqi refugee women and their families face. I am also pleased to express my continued support for the Refugee Well-Being Project. Both projects increase collaboration between the state and the University of New Mexico.

As the New Mexico State Coordinator for Refugees I am aware of the challenges refugees face as newcomers to our state. Refugees have often experienced multiple traumas related to war, displacement, conditions in refugee settlements, and family separation. In addition, the economic challenges refugees face once they are resettled significantly impact well-being. The Refugee Well-Being Project serves as an important bridge for refugees by increasing social support, access to resources, and providing a context for learning about U.S. social and cultural systems.

The proposed research with Iraqi women is sorely needed. When refugees first arrive in Albuquerque, they receive high levels of support. After the Reception and Placement period financial support significantly decreases. I fear that many refugee families may struggle, particularly those families without an employed household member, or with underemployed household members, as well as those with limited English language proficiency or access to community support. By focusing on Iraqi refugee women, this research project offers opportunities for women to become more engaged with each other personally, and to participate in the basic activities of a democratic society: articulating their views on issues that are relevant and meaningful.

My role requires a high level of coordination with other state entities. I will most certainly welcome the data that emerges from this research project and share it with our collaborative partners. Furthermore, it will be a pleasure and honor to welcome the research participants to my office and facilitate other visits when they come to Santa Fe to share the research findings. I look forward to learning first hand from refugees more about their everyday victories as well as challenges as they resettle in our state.

I urge you to fully fund this project. You can count on my full support and collaboration to respond to the issues raised in this project, and find more ways to encourage civil engagement, especially from refugees, in the policies and practices of our state.

Sincerely,

Kresta-Leigh Opperman
State Refugee Coordinator

Access • Quality • Accountability

Appendix B

Basic Beliefs of Alternative Inquiry Paradigms

Issue	Positivism	Postpositivism	Critical Theory	Constructivism	Participatory
Ontology	naïve realism "real" reality but apprehendable	critical realism "real" reality but only imperfectly probablisticticaly apprehendable	Historical realism virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values crystallized over time	Relativism- local and specific constructed realities	Participative reality subjective-objective reality, co created by mind and given cosmos
Epistemology	Dualist/objectivist; Findings true	Modified dualist/ objectivist; critical tradition/community; findings probably true	Transactional / subjectivist; value mediated findings	Transactional / subjectivist; created findings;	Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos; extended epistemology of experiential, propo-sitional, and practical knowing;
Methodology	Experimental/ manipulative verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/ manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/dialectical	Hermeneutic/ dialectical	Political participation in collaborative action inquiry; primacy of the practical; use of language grounded in shared experiential context

Source: Guba and Lincoln, 1994

Appendix C

IRB Approval Letter

Institutional Review Board
Human Research Protections Office

January 31, 2013

Tema Milstein
Communication and Journalism
tema@unm.edu

Dear Tema Milstein:

On 1/30/2013, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	An invitation for your presence and participation: Iraqi refugee women and everyday research
Investigator:	Tema Milstein (Faculty PI) Carmen Lowry (Student Investigator)
Study ID:	13-005
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
IND, IDE, or HDE:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• 13-005 Consent Dialogue Session 013013 • 13-005 Consent Service Providers 013013 • 13-005 Application 013013.pdf • Sample Issue impact and response map • Sample dialogue session format

The IRB approved the study from 1/30/2013 to 1/29/2014 inclusive. Before 1/29/2014 or within 30 days of study closure, whichever is earlier, you are to submit a continuing review with required explanations. If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 1/29/2014, approval of this study expires on that date.

Category:	EXPEDITED: CATEGORIES (6) Voice, video, digital, or image recordings(7)(b) Social science methods
Determinations/Waivers:	None

To request continuing review approval or closure, you are to submit a completed 'FORM: Continuing Review Progress Report (HRP-212) and required attachments 45 days prior to 1/29/2014.Approval of this protocol will expire if the IRB does not grant continuing review approval before 1/29/2014.

Sincerely,

J. Scott Tonigan, PhD

IRB Chair

Appendix D

Catholic Charities Statement

Catholic Charities was pleased to participate in Carmen Lowry's project "Iraqi Women and Everyday Research." We strongly support her efforts to understand and explain the experiences of refugees in our community and her willingness to delve into individuals' experiences and how they have struggled to negotiate their way in their first years in the United States. We also believe that much of her analysis and the stories told by the Iraqi women she worked with reveal broader systemic issues in the United States' refugee resettlement system and we sincerely hope that her work and the work of other scholars can highlight the structural failings of our current refugee resettlement system.

Ms. Lowry allowed our agency the opportunity to comment on her work and to offer additional context to the work of refugee resettlement. Catholic Charities believes that the refugee resettlement system in its current form is dysfunctional, insufficient, and does not offer refugees the dignity that they should be entitled to and that our faith mandates. Quite simply, current federal resettlement policy virtually guarantees that refugees will be resettled into poverty and the supports that individuals are offered are insufficient to adequately integrate individuals into their local community and connect them to the supports that they need and deserve. Our agency deeply believes in the mission of refugee resettlement and maintains an abiding commitment to serve refugees with dignity. However, our own efforts should not be exempted from our criticism of the refugee resettlement system. We do not offer individuals adequate support to ensure their successful transition to life in the United States.

As Ms. Lowry's work aptly points out, many individuals struggle to achieve financial self-sufficiency during the resettlement process. We believe that the current timelines for resettlement which were created by federal mandates are grossly out of touch we the needs of individuals. At their shortest, these timelines can be as little as 30 days. Under the most generous interpretation of the federal mandates, the resettlement process might be stretch to 8 months. In either case, we believe that those timelines are insufficient to adequately orient an individual to life in the United States, develop the skills and language abilities to succeed in employment, and set individuals on a course to joining the middle class.

A core principle to our agency's approach to human service is the use of a person-centered model of service delivery that assesses each individual's needs, barriers, and strengths and crafts a plan of service to assist that individual to achieve their goals and aspirations. Although widely accepted in human services as a best practice, the refugee resettlement system violates this principle in nearly every regard. The resettlement system's emphasis on early employment favors placing individuals in low-wage, low-skill positions over assisting an individual to train, recertify, or study to achieve their goals. Similarly, the refugee resettlement system utilizes a one-size-fits-all model by treating an individual with significant barriers to integration and self-sufficiency the same as an individual with few barriers and English proficiency.

Ms. Lowry's analysis brings to light that even years after resettlement, individuals continue to be confused by navigating health and human services in the United States, the immigration system, and paths towards self-sufficiency. Although Ms. Lowry focused on a relatively small segment of the refugee community, we believe that incidence of these long-term struggles is alarmingly high and future studies will find remarkable similarities across refugee communities.

Too often government officials, national voluntary agency staff, and local resettlement staff laud the benefits of refugee resettlement and note that the program has quite literally saved millions of lives from the danger and squalor of refugee camps and forced migration. Although this assessment undoubtedly has truth, it places too low of a bar for ourselves. The resettlement system cannot be complacent with forcing individuals to choose between death and poverty. Our resettlement system cannot declare its mission done when individuals no longer face the danger of conflict and strife abroad. Our mission will only be complete when refugees arrive to welcoming communities where our country assists them to achieve meaningful self-sufficiency and integration. We hope that by offering these brief comments that we can contextualize Ms. Lowry's work within the resettlement system and utilize her findings and the findings of other promising scholars to advocate for a comprehensive reform to the resettlement system.