"EDUCATION WILL BE OUR MOTHER": AN EXPLORATION OF RESILIENCE MECHANISMS RELATING TO THE EDUCATIONAL PERSISTENCE OF SUDANESE REFUGEES

Lucinda S. Spaulding

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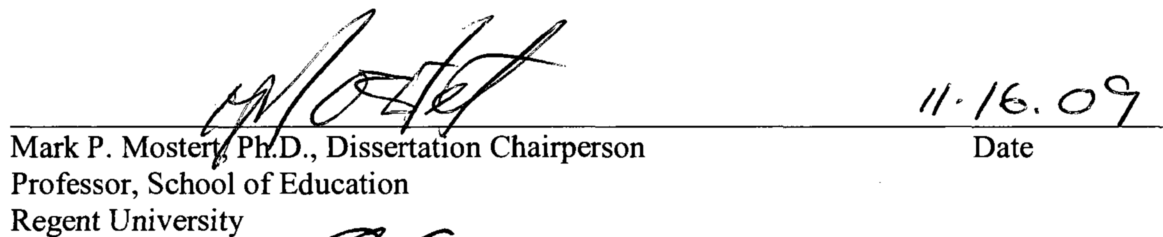
This dissertation has been approved for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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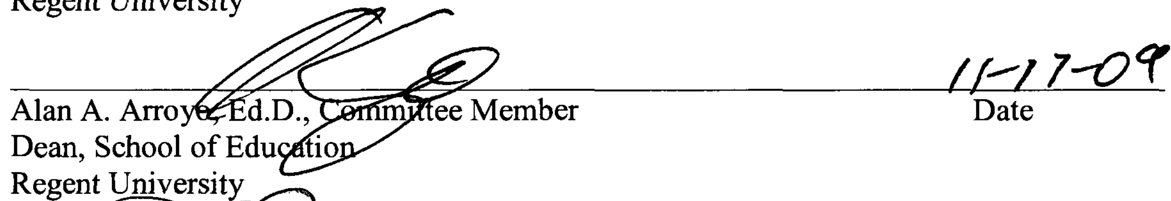

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the cultural and contextual resilience mechanisms operating in the lives of Sudanese refugees living in Virginia. A convenience and snowball sampling of 10 Sudanese refugees (1 female, 9 male) living in Virginia were selected to participate in this study. Through interviews, I gathered and documented participant narratives. For the purpose of triangulation, I collected demographic information and data about the level of traumatic events experienced and the impact of these events using quantitative instruments. I analyzed the data using grounded theory methodology in order to explore the meaning attributed to past events and understand how collective and personal history and culture contribute to persistence toward and achievement of educational goals. Findings from this study confirm prior research findings related to resilience as well as add to the literature base. This study reinforces the importance of turning points, the development of steeling effects, and the need to examine resilience mechanisms as opposed to generating lists of risk and protective factors. Furthermore, this study affirms the integral role of culture and context in the development of resilience. Additionally, this study uncovers a new phenomenon that has not yet been discussed in the literature, the concept of altruistic resilience, which I define as overcoming personal adversity for the selfless advancement of others who lack the means, resources, or opportunity to do so for themselves. These findings are depicted in a theoretical model that illustrates the development of resilience mechanisms in the adult Sudanese refugees who participated in this study.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to “Daniel” and the nine other Southern Sudanese refugees who shared their time and life stories. Thank you for sharing your strong and resilient spirits with me; I have learned so much from you.

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I wish to recognize several people who supported and encouraged me on this journey. I am deeply appreciative of my siblings, in-laws, friends, colleagues, classmates, and professors. Thank you for your friendship, prayers, and encouragement through the duration of this process.

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Though Dr. Kenneth Kavale passed away before this work was finished, I am grateful that he was willing to serve on my committee. It was an incredible privilege to have had the opportunity to learn from him and work with him.

I owe a tremendous amount of thanks to Dr. Mark Mostert, who was not only my dissertation chair, but also a teacher, a mentor, and a friend. Thank you for your guidance, for your counsel, and for constantly raising the bar and challenging me. Moreover, thank you for encouraging me to choose a topic that was close to my heart. While it took much longer to complete than many other ideas, I have never regretted this choice.

I remain in awe and appreciation of my maternal and paternal grandparents who immigrated to Canada in search of a better life for their children and grandchildren. Through faith, resilience, and hard work, you created a heritage and legacy for which I am profoundly grateful.

I would like to thank my parents, Fred and Evelyn Stevens. Mom, thank you for patiently working with me on homework for hours on end when I was young and believing in me long before I became interested in learning anything aside from sports and games. Dad, thank you for instilling in me a desire for excellence and modeling the value of what is truly important in life, you have always been my role model.

Finally, I wish to thank my best friend and husband, Tim, for always believing in me, always encouraging me, and always supporting me. Thank you for the multiple hours you spent transcribing interviews as well as for the countless miles you walked alongside me as we discussed and analyzed results. Most importantly, thank you for being as interested in and as passionate about this research as I am.

Sola Gloria Deo.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Organization of the Study

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of my motivation for investigating the role of resilience in Sudanese refugees. It is followed by an account of the history of Sudan leading to the journey of the Lost Boys and Girls, which is provided to give the reader the context for experiences of adversity and the impetus for their resettlement in the United States. Chapter 2 begins with a review of the literature relating to resilience, summarizes the development of resilience research over the last several decades, discusses research on related topics such as trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and concludes with a discussion of the literature specifically relating to Sudanese refugees and their resettlement experiences in the United States. Chapter 3 describes the research design that will be employed, in addition to providing a description of how participants will be selected, procedures that will be followed, instruments employed, and how the data will be analyzed. Chapter 4 discusses the findings generated from this study, and Chapter 5 is dedicated to relating the findings to the literature on resilience as well as discussing limitations, implications, and future research directions.

My Motivation for Conducting This Study

Several factors prompted my interest in examining the role of resilience in Sudanese refugees in the United States. First, through my experiences as an educator both internationally and in inner cities of the United States, I developed a deep curiosity in the concept of resilience, the phenomenon of personal success in the face of considerable adversity (Cefai, 2004; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). For each year I spent in the classroom, I could identify one or two students who seemed to "beat the odds." Despite

the adverse life conditions they experienced—perhaps living in extreme poverty; having observed or experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; parental neglect; physical or intellectual challenges—these remarkable children appeared to succeed academically, emotionally, and socially and to overcome the challenges in their lives. With some, I was able to identify one or two variables that may have contributed to their unexpected success, perhaps an exceptional trait or characteristic, or an adult who intervened and mediated on their behalf; but with others, it remained a mystery to me how they successfully adapted in the face of difficult life conditions.

Second, as an immigrant to the United States and as the granddaughter of four Europeans who immigrated to Canada shortly after their country was ravaged by Nazi occupation during World War II (WWII), I have for some time been generally interested in immigrant experiences and the role of resilience in their lives. Moreover, prior to immigrating to Canada, one of my grandfathers served first as an underground resistance fighter in occupied Holland and then as a "peacekeeper" for the Dutch Army in Indonesia (a former Dutch colony) immediately following WWII. While this mission in Indonesia started with the intention of eliminating remaining Japanese soldiers who had occupied the country during the war, it concluded with a brutal battle of Indonesians fighting for and eventually gaining independence from the Dutch. My grandfather spoke little about his war experiences, but at the age of 53 had a breakdown and fell into a deep depression that ultimately caused him to take his own life 3 years later. In these last 3 years of his life, my grandfather finally began to speak of the trauma and horrors he experienced. While PTSD was not yet a clear psychiatric diagnosis when he died, in retrospect, it is clear that he was likely suffering from this devastating disorder.

Consequently, I have been personally and professionally interested in the cross-section of immigration experiences and recovery from trauma. Hence, when I came across the children's story *Brothers In Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan* (M. Williams, 2005) as an elementary school teacher a few years ago, I was not only personally intrigued, but thought it would be an excellent story to read aloud and discuss with my fourth-grade students. My usually rambunctious students were uncharacteristically quiet and engrossed in the story about these young boys their own age who were forced by war to flee their homes and villages on foot, first seeking safety in Ethiopia, then finally settling in refugee camps in Kenya for several years, before immigrating to the United States as youths or young adults. Shortly after reading this story, I was surprised to learn that there were approximately 40 of these Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan living in the area of Virginia where I resided. My husband and I soon became involved with a local organization dedicated to assisting and supporting them and their family members still remaining in Sudan or camps in other countries.

Over the course of several months, my husband and I came to know one young Sudanese man named "Daniel" (pseudonym) quite well, and we began to observe how passionately and persistently he approached his education. His dedication to his studies and his commitment to learn were exceptional. As our friendship developed through the context of weekly or biweekly meals in our home, followed by some academic support, we learned more about Daniel's past experiences and his hopes and dreams for the future. He told us about the time he was offered the opportunity in Kenya to learn a trade, a prospect that would have allowed him to leave the refugee camp, earn an income, and become independent. However, he turned the opportunity down because he was resolved

to continue to learn to read and write; skills he knew were imperative for his future. We learned that he wants to return to Sudan and help rebuild his country by someday opening orphanages to provide the safety and education for young children that he frequently lacked as a child. Daniel also wants to earn a law degree so he can fight the corruption that plagues his country and has infested politics in Northern and Southern Sudan alike.

Daniel is clearly resilient. Rather than breaking him down, the negative life experiences of being separated from his parents at the age of 9 and living his most formative years in refugee camps with little food, education, or security only served to make him stronger and more determined. There are many other Lost Boys and Girls with similar experiences. The following is by no means a comprehensive account, but rather a summary of some of the significant events in the history of Sudan and the journey most Lost Boys and Girls experienced.

Background of The Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan

Sudan: A Country Divided

The largest country in Africa, Sudan covers 1,557,038 square miles and is bordered by nine countries: Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, and Uganda. In 1956, Sudan gained independence from British colonial rule, and Islamic-oriented governments have dominated national politics ever since. Just as the geography and climate of the country is divided, with deserts and arid mountains in the north and forests and tropics in the south, so are the people. Northern Sudan is predominantly urban, Muslim, and Arab-speaking; Southern Sudan is predominantly rural or nomadic, Black African, and animist or Christian, and various Nilotic languages are spoken. Although the South has most of the

country's natural resources (i.e., water, oil, uranium, copper), it was the Northern Arabs who were granted almost complete authority and were appointed rulers of the South at independence. Thus, Southerners were only appointed to 8 out of the 800 available administrative posts in January 1956 (Akol, 2005).

Even prior to and during colonial rule, Southern Sudan was plagued by atrocities perpetuated by the North. Southerners were frequently "hunted, killed, and enslaved by successions of northern potentates, and then were hunted and killed by British patrols as the region was 'pacified'" (Deng, n.d., p. 10). Not only were humans exploited as resources from the South, but natural resources were channeled or siphoned away to the North.

A civil war between the North and South raged from independence in 1956 until a peace agreement known as the Addis Ababa Agreement was signed in 1972. For 11 short years, Sudan experienced relative peace. However, in 1983 the president of Northern Sudan, Gaafar Nimeiry, imposed *shari'a* (Muslim) law on the South and divided the South into three regions. In response to this aggression and domination, the people of Southern Sudan rebelled and formed the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) under the leadership of Dr. John Garang.

The Dinka of Sudan

Dr. John Garang was born into the Dinka tribe, the largest ethnic group in Sudan (Deng, 1984). The Dinka inhabit the vast, rich savannah of Southern Sudan, divided by the Nile River and its many tributaries. As such, they are considered to be a Nilotic people group, with their language classified in the Nilotic category of African languages. The Dinka are also a fiercely proud people, so much so that they have been characterized

as ethnocentric (Deng, 1984). Cultural continuity is strongly maintained through oral literature and traditional drum, song, and dance. The family is the foundation of culture and instills and promotes value systems. Further, a Dinka child's intelligence is judged by the number of ancestors he or she can recite (Deng, 2004), demonstrating the importance of knowing one's background and identity.

Cattle are central to Dinka life, sustenance, religion, and culture. The importance of cattle in their way of life is demonstrated through over 400 words in the Dinka language referring to cattle and the fact that they consider themselves to be "loving slaves of cattle" (Deng, 1984, p. 2). Cattle not only provide for physical needs and sustenance through dairy and meat products, fuel and fertilizer, and bedding and utensils, but they also serve as "bridewealth" and "bloodwealth" and are believed to protect the Dinka from evil forces of illness and death. The Dinka preoccupation with cattle is evidenced through song (e.g., "ox-songs"), dance, and choice in names.

Boys and young men are generally given the responsibility of tending to their family's cattle. They often lead them to "cattle camps" far from their villages in order to find adequate pastures for grazing. Time spent in these cattle camps is very formative for Dinka youth. As most milk cows are left behind to provide sustenance for the village, the young men endure hunger and other hardships associated with this nomadic way of life. Deng (1984) explained that "these hardships of far-off herding often form the subject matter of ox-songs in which named persons are praised for their excellence, anonymous persons condemned for their weakness, and the singer is boastful while lamenting" (p. 85).

With such pride and value placed on the Dinka way of life, it is not surprising that the Dinka would be slow to tolerate oppression from the North. The primary motivation behind the aggression from the North was the Arab mission of *jihad* (holy war) to overcome and convert the Southern "infidels" (Akol, 2005). Attacks on villages where crops and cattle were looted and women and children were captured as slaves became more frequent. Further, Southern Sudanese schools were eventually taken over by militants from the North, with education co-opted as the crucible for Muslim indoctrination of the Southern Sudanese, including culture, law, and language. Akol explained the impact of this oppression on the highly independent Dinka: "The Dinka abhorred submissive behavior. It was seen as cowardice or surrender of one's rights. The Dinka first saw the taking of children to school as 'submissiveness' to foreign ways and as surrender of one's way of life" (p. 156). Through the formation of the SPLA/M, the Southern Sudanese (primarily Dinka) organized a rebellion to fight for political freedom and autonomy from the Northern oppression—a battle that would last for decades.

The Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement

The SPLA/M has been characterized as a Marxist movement with a radical socialist agenda (Werner, Anderson, & Wheeler, 2000) and was largely dependent on Ethiopia's Soviet-backed leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, for military training and acquisition of weapons. The objective of the SPLA/M was to "fight for a national revolution that would dismantle the narrow and exclusive economic and religious groups that dominated power in the country" (Werner et al., 2000, p. 524). Civil war had returned to Sudan.

Consequently, since 1983, greater than 80% of the population from Southern Sudan has been displaced (Schweitzer, Greenslade, & Kagee, 2007). In addition to the displacement of more than four million people, the civil war between Northern and Southern Sudan caused the death of at least two million people between 1983 and 2005. While the effects of this devastation were widespread, the children of Southern Sudan were most vulnerable. If not killed in battle or captured into slavery, thousands of children and adolescents were displaced, separated from their families, or orphaned. Though some girls were spared, most of the children surviving the Northern attacks on their villages were boys from the Dinka and Nuer tribes of Southern Sudan, many as young as 3 to 5 years old at the time of separation.

Exodus

Although the war began in 1983, the years of 1987 and 1988 marked perhaps the most devastating period in the history of Southern Sudan. Between 1987 and 1988 alone, Northern attacks on villages caused the death of approximately 250,000 Sudanese. Approximately 30,000 children, mostly boys and many below the age of 10, were forced to flee their homes and travel hundreds of miles on foot to seek refuge in camps across the border in Ethiopia. This exodus was only the beginning of a very long exile from home and loved ones, a separation that has left many, even to this day, still longing to return to their homeland and places of birth from which they were torn over two decades ago.

As young boys are responsible for leading the cattle to pastures and watering holes outside their villages, when Arab militias (*marahaliin*) from the North attacked their villages, many of the young boys were able to hide in the surrounding forests,

escaping the immediate danger. When they returned to their villages, they discovered that those who had not been killed had fled and everything was destroyed, a common scorched earth tactic still used in the Darfur region of Sudan. The boys, and a handful of girls, eventually banded together, and when it became clear that they could not locate their families, they began an arduous journey east. Though some knew they were headed to Ethiopia, a country they believed would provide safety, many simply followed, hoping that every step would bring them closer to safety and reunions with their loved ones. Others were sent by their families, as departure from their homes and villages was believed to be one's only chance for survival. Still others were recruited and escorted away from their villages by the SPLA/M.

Though the youth narrowly escaped harm when their villages where raided, they could not escape danger and devastation on their journey across the desserts and savannahs of Southern Sudan. They walked at night to avoid the scorching sun and marauding government troops, rebel recruitment squads, slave traders, and enemy tribes (Goodman, 2004); however, many were killed or injured by wild animals such as hyenas and lions (Geltman et al., 2005) or overcome by exhaustion, dehydration, and starvation. Occasionally, they survived on wild fruit or small animals, but most days leaves and bark from trees served as their only food sources. In particularly dry areas, some had no other choice than to suck water from mud or to drink their own urine (Williams, 2005).

When the children arrived in Western Ethiopia at the refugee camp largely run by the SPLA/M, their original numbers had diminished significantly, and they were sick, weak, exhausted, and starving. Seventeen thousand children eventually settled in at Pinyudo Refugee Camp, the "children's camp." For the first time in weeks for some,

months for others, the children received basic food sources such as lentils and flour and were given tools to build their own mud and thatch shelters. The refugee camp also provided opportunities for academic training.

Influences in the Camp

In addition to academic training, the children were exposed to other forms of training in the Ethiopian refugee camps. For example, Akol (2005) noted that "two powerful forces competed for their souls in a supposedly complementary fashion: the military and the church" (p. 20). Although the SPLA/M publicly denied that children were being used as child soldiers (Akol), there is evidence that thousands of children as young as 12 years old in western Ethiopia's refugee camps were receiving strict Ethiopian Marxist-style training as young as 12 years old (Eggers, 2006). The purpose was to transform them into fearless and ruthless elite troops called the "Red Army" (*Jiec Amar*) who would be committed without reservation to the leadership of the SPLA/M. Separated from family and cut off from the social values that shaped them in their communities, the boys were "taught to kill in strict obedience to their superiors" (Werner et al., 2000, p. 529).

Moreover, the SPLA/M quickly realized that refugees, particularly children, attracted foreign aid, and so they may well have encouraged the mass exodus of children from Sudan as a form of *aid bait* (Eggers, 2006). The United Nations (UN) and other humanitarian aid organizations were quick to mobilize food and shelter for the multitudes of unaccompanied children in the Ethiopian desert. The SPLA/M therefore not only profited from this steady pipeline of supplies, but also from the young boys, who once they were old enough, strong enough, and angry enough, could be easily recruited and

conscripted into military training. Conversations with Southern Sudanese refugees in Virginia confirm that they indeed were trained to fight. Although some were motivated to join the movement with the hope of returning home—a feat that could only be accomplished if one was prepared to fight and had possession of a firearm, most commonly an AK47—reports indicate that approximately half of the boys eventually became soldiers, but that few were willing (Eggers).

However, while the SPLA/M were in charge of administering the camp, church groups took responsibility for caring and educating the youth. Six denominations were present in the camps in Ethiopia: the Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church of Sudan, the Presbyterian Church of the Sudan, the Sudan Interior Church, the Sudan Pentecostal Churches, and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (Werner et al., 2000). As a result, in addition to gaining an education, the youth learned about the church and narratives from the Bible. Hundreds were baptized in large group baptismal services and chose Christian names such as Daniel, Simon, and John.

Both the military training and the Christian training had profound and formative influences on the children. Werner et al. (2000) explained,

> They saw themselves as a 'chosen generation,' committed to the liberation struggle, but fired up by their Christian faith and set apart for the decisive spiritual struggle being fought out with the *jak* and the forces of evil. Others found their place in the military struggle, bringing a Christian presence for the first time to the ranks of the SPLA. (p. 530)

The Fall of Mengistu

While life was relatively stable for a few years in the Ethiopian camps, it was not to last. In 1989, the government of Sudan was replaced in a coup and headed by an even more radical military power under the leadership of President Omar al-Bashir. The Bashir

regime supported Ethiopian rebel groups who, in 1991, eventually overthrew Mengistu Haile Mariam, the Marxist leader who was allied with the SPLA/M. Consequently, the SPLA/M in Ethiopia, along with the refugees they were training, were violently expelled from the country. The boys, many now becoming young men, were once again forced to flee for their lives.

The exile from Ethiopia brought about perhaps the most traumatic experiences the youth were yet to encounter. While being chased back to the Sudanese border by Ethiopian rebels, they were faced with crossing the Gilo River during the rainy season. Forced to either succumb to the armed rebel forces at their back or navigate their way across the swollen river, it is estimated that approximately 2,000 children and youth refugees lost their lives due to drowning or crocodiles while crossing the swift river current (Luster, Johnson, & Bates, 2009).

Of those that survived, some made their way home in search for their families. However, with the uncertainty of the whereabouts or status of family members, most of the group preferred to stay together, caring and supporting each other as they eventually made their way to Kakuma Refugee Camp in northwest Kenya. Upon their arrival, the youth banded together in groups of three to five and began to construct houses with mud bricks, grasses, and plastic (Luster et al., 2009). Approximately 12,000 from the original group settled in Kakuma (Werner et al., 2000).

Resettlement Experiences

Generally, the situation in refugee camps was far from ideal. Camps were routinely large and crowded, with layouts that were not very suitable for children or amenable for playing games or sports (Paardekooper, de Jong, & Hermanns, 1999). There

were frequent shortages of food, clothing, school materials, proper sanitation, and access to medical care (Bolea, Grant, Burgess, & Plasa, 2003). With close proximity to the equator, temperatures in Kakuma routinely reached 100 degrees, and sand storms frequently tore through the camp.

Despite significant hardship, life in Kakuma Refugee Camp soon provided the first opportunity for many to attend school on a regular basis. Kakuma was protected by the UN, and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) funded more than 21 primary and secondary schools in the camp. Classes generally took place under the trees along the dry riverbed, and students reported sharing one textbook with upwards of 15 other peers (Luster et al., 2009). Teachers were generally fellow refugees with a high school education with only modest training in teaching, if at all.

Life in the camp after finishing high school provided little stimulation or opportunity for the youth. As there were few jobs to be found within the camp, and as they were restricted from working outside the camp, "most of the youth had to cope with the monotony of camp life where one day seemed the same as the next" (Luster et al., 2009, p. 271). However, fresh winds of hope began to blow through the camp when in 1999 the UNHCR recommended that Kakuma youth be resettled in the United States. Between 2000 and 2004, close to 4,000 Sudanese youths from Kakuma were resettled as refugees in cities all over the United States. While the youths were primary young men, approximately 90 young women were also selected. Many of the young people, still under the age of 18, were placed in foster or group homes to support the start of their new life in America. Those who were older than 18 were often placed in shared apartments and provided 3 months worth of food and rent. Though supported by sponsors and local

church communities, these remarkable young men were soon left to navigate American systems of higher education, employment, and housing.

Many words describe these courageous young people. American media has likened to the term Lost Boys, a Peter Pan reference to a group of boys who banded together and decided to never grow up (Robins, 2003). Others would call them courageous, persistent, resourceful, or "chosen." Based on their ability to overcome the odds and not only survive, but to be successful in the face of such great and enduring adversity, these remarkable young men and women can be described as demonstrating extraordinary *resilience*.

Resilience

The theoretical framework of resilience guided this study of Sudanese refugees. Resilience is "the human capacity to face, overcome, be made stronger, and even transformed by experiences of adversity" (Grotberg, 2003a, p. 27). Of the original 30,000 children who fled their homes in search of refuge elsewhere, the 12,000 who settled in Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya, clearly demonstrated the capacity to be transformed and made stronger by adversity. Studies examining the psychological well-being of the refugees in Kakuma found that despite experiencing displacement, hunger, disease, and vulnerability to exploitation and abduction by military groups (Machel, 1996), they were "extremely resilient and [had] high expectations for the future" (Schweitzer et al., 2007, p. 282). Furthermore, when compared to children with similar cultural backgrounds but who had not experienced war events or forced migration, Sudanese children utilized a greater number and variety of approaches for coping with problems relating to daily life in the camps (Paardekooper et al., 1999).

Although all undoubtedly demonstrate some form of resilience in some capacity in their lives, many of the 4,000 young people who immigrated to the United States since 2001 continue to experience hardship. Some of the difficulties involve finding adequate employment to cover rent, living expenses, tuition, and monetary support for friends and family remaining in Sudan or refugee camps. Other stresses come from inadequate understanding of the terms and conditions surrounding credit, a concept virtually foreign in the refugee camps. Access to alcohol, drugs, and other substances acquired easily on college campuses in the United States proves detrimental to some. Clearly, faced with the pressure of making ends meet while also trying to study, some struggle to achieve their educational goals and professional objectives due to conflicting priorities. Perhaps all experience forms of racism, bigotry, or condescending attitudes based on language difficulties or unfamiliarity with American culture and systems.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to more fully understand the cultural and contextual resilience mechanisms relating to the educational persistence of Sudanese refugees living in Virginia.

Research Problem

Many Sudanese refugees immigrated to the United States with high hopes of earning an education, securing a good job, raising families, and possibly returning to Sudan to use their skills and knowledge to rebuild their homeland. Some, despite experiencing incredible hardship during their youth, demonstrate resilience by achieving educational goals and overcoming the odds. Others, however, struggle with competing life expectations and distractions and fail to achieve their educational goals and

objectives. As quantitative instruments measuring resilience and learner persistence have not been adapted or validated specifically for this population, these constructs needed to be examined primarily through qualitative methods that explore and account for cultural and contextual resilience mechanisms contributing to Sudanese refugees' perceived failures or successes in relation to educational goals.

Rationale

In addition to escaping political or religious persecution, the primary objectives of refugee resettlement in the United States are to achieve self-sufficiency, early employment, and integration into the host community (Clipper, 2008). Because education is a key protective factor in helping refugees become self-reliant (UNHCR, 2007), identifying and understanding the cultural and contextual resilience mechanisms that help Sudanese refugees achieve their educational goals is essential. By identifying resilience mechanisms, educators, psychologists, and resettlement workers can more effectively promote and develop mechanisms that help, while working to decrease or eliminate mechanisms that hinder.

Understanding resilience mechanisms in refugees is important for several reasons. First, on an individual level, it is crucial for refugees to come to terms with their past adversity and to live peaceful, meaningful, and productive lives in the United States. Second, on a national level, it is imperative that United States refugees achieve the goals of self-sufficiency, employment, and integration. Finally, on a global level, refugees who have the opportunity to study and live in Western cultures often return to their countries as prominent leaders, educators, and developers.

Deficiencies in the Evidence

Although resilience has been the focus of much research in the United States and other Western countries over the past several decades, it has generally focused on children or youth from Western cultures. A review of the literature reveals that we know little about resilience in non-Western cultures and people from developing countries (Masten & Obradovic, 2006). In particular, understanding the effects of war on children, specifically from the continent of Africa where some of the most violent massacres have occurred, remains an underresearched area (Dyregrov, Gupta, Gjestad, & Mukanoheli, 2000; Grigorenko et al., 2007). Furthermore, there are few studies examining resilience in early adulthood (Werner & Smith, 2001) or after the initial period of resettlement (Bolea et al., 2003; Goodman, 2004).

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were as follow:

1. What value and significance is placed on education in Southern Sudanese culture according to Sudanese refugees in Virginia?
2. What is the role of learner persistence in Sudanese refugees in Virginia prior to migration to the United States?
3. What resilience mechanisms help or hinder the attainment of or persistence toward Sudanese refugees' educational goals in the United States?
4. What role does education play in Virginia Sudanese refugees' hope for the future?

Population

The population for this study consisted of a convenience and snowball sampling of 10 Southern Sudanese adult refugees (1 female, 9 males) living in Virginia.

Participants were between 24 and 31 ($M = 27.60$, $SD = 2.01$) years old and had immigrated to the United States between 2001 and 2004 when they were between the ages of 15 and 25 ($M = 20.20$, $SD = 2.82$). As a result of civil war, the participants fled their villages to find refuge in bordering countries when they were between the ages of 4 and 10 ($M = 6.65$, $SD = 1.56$); they were separated from their parents for 17 to 22 years ($M = 20.10$, $SD = 1.73$).

Findings

This study filled several gaps in the resilience literature as it examined the development of resilience mechanisms in young adults from a non-Western culture who were past the point of initial resettlement in the United States. Moreover, this study specifically examined the development of resilience mechanisms relating to persistence toward educational goals, a concept that has not yet been the primary focus of any resilience research studies with Sudanese refugees.

The findings from this study reinforced prior resilience research findings. In addition to demonstrating the importance of turning points, the development of steeling effects, and the need to examine resilience mechanisms as opposed to generating lists of risk and protective factors, this study affirmed the integral role of culture and context in the development of resilience. Furthermore, this study generated a new model to add to the literature base on resilience. In addition to finding a high level of personal resilience in the lives of the participants, I identified a new phenomenon that has not yet been discussed in the literature, the concept of altruistic resilience, which I define as overcoming personal adversity for the selfless advancement of others who lack the means, resources, or opportunity to do so for themselves. These findings are all depicted

in a theoretical model that demonstrates the development of resilience mechanisms in the lives of this study's participants.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Review of the literature for qualitative studies has two purposes: (a) it grounds a study in the previous research and theoretical writings about the topic, and (b) it demonstrates the researcher's credibility and familiarity with the topic area (Rossman & Rallis, 1997). To fulfill these two objectives, I first provide a discussion of relevant definitions of resilience. Second, I summarize the historical context for resilience research and briefly discuss the seminal findings of early researchers responsible for launching and directing this area of study in the social sciences. Third, I trace the conceptual shifts that emerged as the study of resilience developed and matured. Fourth, I discuss cultural resilience research perspectives and related literature dealing with PTSD and recovery from trauma. Finally, I discuss resilience research that has been conducted with refugees, in general, and Sudanese refugee immigrants, in particular.

Definitions of Resilience

The term *resilience* comes from the Latin word *re,* which means *back*, and *salir,* which means *to jump* (Silva, 2004). These roots attribute the word with the idea of "bouncing back." Grotberg (2003a) defined resilience as "the human capacity to face, overcome, be made stronger, and even transformed by experiences of adversity" (p. 27). Others quite simply have defined resilience as *success despite adversity* (Cefai, 2004; Luthar et al., 2000) or *normal development under difficult conditions* (Dent & Cameron, 2003; Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Higgett, & Target, 1994; D. B. Miller & MacIntosh, 1999; Rutter, 1990, 2006). Irrespective, it is generally established that resilience involves two conditions: (a) the presence of some form of risk, adversity, or negative life condition and

(b) the demonstration of success or positive adaptation despite adversity (Gewirtz, Forgatch, & Wieling, 2008; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten & Obradovic, 2006; Rutter, 2006).

Historical Roots

Though the use of the term and the study of resilience in the social sciences gained greatest momentum in the last several decades, the concept of resilience is not new. Rutter (1985) observed that French physician Phillipe Pinel (1745-1826) wrote over 200 years ago about the "psychiatric risks associated with unexpected reverses or adverse circumstances, and it is reported that his initial question to newly admitted psychiatric patients was: 'Have you suffered vexation, grief, or reverse of fortune?'" (p. 598). Later, in the late 19th and early 20th century, the mental hygiene movement gained momentum. Based on the belief that mental illness was a personality disorder, rather than a "disease" of the brain or nervous system, the aim of the movement was to scientifically manage and control the population by emphasizing the healthy development of personality (Cohen, 1983). Due to compulsory education laws, schools were perceived as the preeminent vehicles for preventing mental illness and other social problems, and personality development began to be emphasized over and above intellectual development. Consequently, this movement caused an increase in the number of psychologists, psychiatrists, guidance counselors, social workers, and other mental health professionals in schools (Cohen).

As the discipline of child psychology developed out of the mental health movement, it was soon recognized that negative life conditions and experiences tended to result in mental disorders and maladjustment (Rutter, 1985). A prominent child

psychologist heavily promoting theories at this time was Bruno Bettelheim (1903–1990). Bettelheim (1967) was a pivotal proponent of the "refrigerator mother" theory purporting children's autistic behaviors were caused by emotional frigidity by their mothers. To treat the maladjustment caused by refrigerator mothers, Bettelheim recommended the removal of autistic children from their mothers and placement in residential environments with minimal demands, "allowing the child to regress and express infantile needs in an effort to discover a safe environment" (Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 128). His institution was termed the Orthogentic School and was characterized by a structured but permissive environment, and psychoanalytic, physical, and occupational therapies were emphasized over academic instruction.

Bettelheim (1967) claimed significantly high success rates, and his theories were generally well received by the psychological community of his time (Sutton, 1996). However, after his suicidal death in 1990, it was revealed that some of Bettelheim's academic and professional credentials were false. Further, former students began to make corroborating public statements about neglect and abuse they experienced at Bettelheim's hands while residing in his institution. It is now generally concluded by the scientific community that Bettelheim's methods for treating maladjusted children represented "no empirical evidence of worth" (Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 135).

Exemplified in Bettelheim's theories relating to autism, the discipline of child psychology emerged with an initial research emphasis on *vulnerability* or *risk* factors lying within the individual or home. Early studies generally relied on a pathological (i.e., disease) model for examining the effects of these factors in cohorts of maladjusted

children. Werner, Bierman, and French (1971) and Garmezy (1971) were seminal researchers in this line of research.

Werner et al. (1971) began their longitudinal study of vulnerability on the Hawaiian Island of Kauai. Beginning in 1955, Werner and Smith (2001) "monitored the impact of biological and psychological risk factors, stressful life events, and protective factors on the development of men and women who were born on the island in 1955" (p. 25). This was one of the first *prospective* studies examining the role of adverse life conditions in a cohort of people from birth through adulthood. Prior to this research, most psychologists used a *retrospective* approach to reconstruct the events and experiences that later caused young people to demonstrate mental health problems and maladjustment (Werner & Smith, 2001). However, the problem with this approach was, first, that only those who had developed mental health problems were studied; second, there was the assumption that negative outcomes inevitably followed negative experiences. In other words, retrospective research only examined the lives of the "'casualties,' and not the lives of the 'survivors'" (Werner & Smith, 2001, p. 2).

As their study progressed, Werner and colleagues (Werner et al., 1971; Werner & Smith, 1982, 2001) were surprised to discover that despite adverse biological and psychological conditions during infancy, childhood, or youth, approximately one third of the children considered *at risk* or *vulnerable* grew into successful, well-adjusted adults. Rather than following the traditional approach of analyzing the list of risk or vulnerability factors present in these individuals' lives, the researchers began to look for *protective factors*, "mechanisms that buffered or ameliorated a person's reaction to a stressful situation or chronic adversity so that his or her adaptation was more successful than

would be the case if the protective factors were not present" (Werner & Smith, 2001, p. 3). By studying the cohort from their mother's first prenatal doctors visit, the researchers identified protective factors and processes that explained successful adaptation despite the odds. The list of factors represented across the lives of individuals in the cohort included smaller family size; steady employment of the mother outside of the home; a positive self-concept; an internal locus of control; good reasoning and reading skills; positive temperaments; a close bond with at least one adult caregiver; an informal network of kin, neighbors, and friends; participation in extracurricular activities; and emotional support from a minister or leader of a church group (Werner & Smith, 2001).

Garmezy (1971) studied a different population: the development of children born of mothers with schizophrenia. Like Werner et al. (1971), Garmezy underscored the importance of not only looking back on causes of abnormal development (i.e., retrospective study), but emphasized the importance of what he termed to be *vulnerability research*, the selection of children from a community who are at risk for later developing psychopathology. In his vulnerability research, Garmezy identified a cohort of children to whom he assigned the term *invulnerables*:

> children whose prognosis could be viewed as unfavorable on the basis of familial or ecological factors but who upset our predication tables and in childhood bear the visible indices that are hallmarks of competence: good peer relations, academic achievement, commitment to education and to purposive life goals, early and successful work histories. (p. 114)

Consequently, the study of resilience emerged more by accident than by intention (Grotberg, 1997; Staudinger, Marsiske, & Baltes, 1993). Psychologists intent on examining the psychopathological ramifications of children exposed to adverse conditions in life concluded that their hypotheses were wrong. Rather than following the

expected negative life trajectories, one third (Werner & Smith, 1982) to one half (Garmezy, 1991; Rutter, 1985) of the children studied were happy and well adjusted despite adverse life experiences. This created a newfound interest in identifying protective factors, shifting the focus from risk and vulnerability to examining *resilience*, the concept of successful adaptation even in the face of negative life conditions. Prior to this time, the terms used to describe these children were *vulnerable but invincible* (Werner et al., 1971) or *invulnerable* (Garmezy, 1971). However, these terms were criticized based on arguments that no one is invincible or immune from negative life conditions; rather, some are able to cope and respond more positively than others due to varying individual and contextual factors. Although the term was not used consistently until approximately the mid-1980s (Grotberg, 1999), resilience eventually became the preferred term for describing these children (Mrazek & Mrazek, 1987). Studies gradually shifted from using a pathological, deficit, or disease model to employing a positive psychology model that emphasized health and protective systems (Clauss-Ehlers, 2004).

Paradigm Shifts in Resilience Research

Shifts in resilience research are relatively clear. In a 2004 review of resilience literature, Clauss-Ehlers identified three paradigm shifts in psychology research examining resilience: (a) change from a pathology-driven to a health promotion model of mental health; (b) a change from an exclusively trait-based approach to one that incorporates a socioculturally focused understanding of resilience; and, finally, (c) a move toward culturally relevant interventions at individual, family, and community levels.

First Research Paradigm: From Pathology Prevention to Health Promotion

Studies in the field initially relied on a pathological model, with researchers examining maladapted children with the objective of identifying risk factors contributing to the observable negative outcomes. However, following the groundbreaking work of Werner et al. (1971) and Garmezy (1971) demonstrating that not all at-risk children follow the predicted negative life trajectory, researchers began to look for the factors and traits that altered the outlook for these 'invulnerable' children. Consequently, early studies of resilience sought to develop lists of factors that would modify risk and protect children and youth from the sequelae of biological and ecological risk. The research findings converged, with the identification of three general categories of protective factors: (a) within-child factors, (b) within-home factors, and (c) outside-home factors (Cefai, 2007; Dent & Cameron, 2003; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Luthar et al., 2000; Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Masten & Garmezy, 1985; D. B. Miller & MacIntosh, 1999; G. E. Miller, Brehm, & Whitehouse, 1998; Morrison & Cosden, 1997).

Within-Child Factors

Werner and Smith (2001) identified two types of individual characteristics that served to protect high-risk youths on the island of Kauai: (a) characteristics of temperament and (b) skills and values. Characteristics of temperament include whether a child is easygoing or generally well behaved. Skills and values are concerned with tenacity, responsibility, positivity, and intelligence level. In related research, Christiansen and Christiansen (1997) found that children who overcame adversity often reported having an interest, hobby, or skill that garnered them some form of positive recognition, which "seems to provide a means of developing and maintaining self-esteem and

personal value and, in turn, increase resilience" (p. 3). Whether it is academic, athletic, musical, or artistic, when students have experienced success in a task, their self-esteem and self-efficacy are improved (Winfield, 1994). Findings from various studies concluded that children with increased resilience tend to have the following attributes: higher task-related self-efficacy; greater autonomy, optimism, self-direction, internal locus of control, social competence, and problem-solving skills; a sense of purpose and future; intellectual competence; superior coping styles; a sense of humor; a higher sense of self-worth and self-esteem; interpersonal awareness and empathy; and willingness and capacity to plan (Benard, 1993, 1997; Fonagy et al., 1994; Kumpfer, 1999; Masten, 2001; Morrison & Cosden, 1997; Qouta, Punamaki, & Sarraj, 2008; Rutter, 1985).

Discussing the resilient power of the individual to rise above even the worst of circumstances, Frankl (1984), a Nazi holocaust concentration camp survivor, described in his memoir the ability of an individual to rise above his or her circumstances in the fight for survival, relying on a sense of humor and the ability to choose one's own attitude. Concerning humor, he wrote,

> Humor was another of the soul's weapons in the fight for self-preservation. It is well known that humor, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds. (p. 63)

Frankl (1984) also recognized that everything can be taken from a person except "the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way" (p. 86). Borrowing Nietzche's words, Frankl explained, "He who has a *why* to live can bear with almost any *how*" (p. 97). Frankl believed that people are ultimately self-determining, not merely existing, but deciding what their existence will be and who they will become.

Within-child factors also include medical or biological conditions. Generally, children born premature or with low birth weights are at greater risk for developing physical and intellectual disabilities. However, although biological and medical conditions have significant implications for development when children are young, as they mature, environmental (within-home/outside-home) conditions become increasingly important (Keogh & Weisner, 1993).

Within-Home Factors

Within-home factors include the socioeconomic status of the family, the educational attainment of parents, and the level of parental responsibility for their children (Dent & Cameron, 2003). The family has long been recognized as one of the most important factors in child development (Gewirtz et al., 2008). Luthar and Goldstein (2004) observed, "all things considered and across diverse settings, it is the family that is the single most influential of external influences, being the earliest, the most proximal, as well as the most enduring of children's social environments" (p. 503).

Even decades before resilience research became prevalent, Freud and Burlington (1944) concluded that even

> war acquires comparatively little significance for children so long as it only threatens their lives, disturbs their material comfort, or cuts their food rations. It becomes enormously significant the moment it breaks up family life and uproots the first emotional attachments of the child within the family group. (p. 37)

Parental ability to cope with trials and trauma clearly has a significant impact on children. Even in the midst of danger or uncertainty, if a parent has the ability to provide a safe haven for his or her children, their internal representations of self and others remain intact, and they are able to cope with difficult environments. However, if parents are challenged beyond their capacity to cope with circumstances, there is evidence that

they withdraw from their children as they no longer view themselves as protective parents and are consequently unable to respond with appropriate care-giving behavior (Almqvist & Broberg, 2003).

Hence, childhood is viewed as one of the most impressionable periods of human development, setting a "unique and permanent stamp on future personality" (Ayalon, 1983, p. 314). Based on this premise, British psychologist John Bowlby (1907-1990) articulated the developmental theory of *attachment*. Bowlby (1988) argued that secure attachment with a primary caregiver in infancy translated into positive effects in a child's later development. That is, although securely attached children are not immune to exposure to trauma and suffering, they are better equipped to deal with conflict and crisis because of their "ability to be in touch with their emotions, to have access to strategies based on past experiences, and to communicate their fears and anxieties, coupled with their overall trust in relationships" (L. M. Williams, O'Callaghan, & Cowie, 1995, p. 50). Bowlby posited that the pattern of attachment developed in the early years determines to a significant degree the extent to which a child becomes resilient to stressful life events. However, secure attachment does not simply occur at birth, but rather is the result of caring and responsive parenting throughout childhood (Dent & Cameron, 2003). In fact, there is evidence indicating that the relationship "between the quality of early care in childhood and achievement even extends to age 19 as a predictor of dropping out from high school" (Ratner et al., 2006, p. 267). Rutter (1990) also supported the premise that secure attachments provided protection against future risk and adversity.

Outside-Home Factors

Outside-home factors include neighborhood and peer influences, levels of community support, school quality, and teacher expectations (Dent & Cameron, 2003). Among nonfamily protective factors, school-related factors are the most frequently identified in the normal development of vulnerable children (Cefai, 2007; Selig, Arroyo, Lloyd-Zannini, & Jordan, 2006). Schools provide settings for students to engage in meaningful extracurricular activities that foster a sense of belonging and improved self-efficacy.

Additionally, schools provide opportunities for students to form an attachment or bond with a caring adult, a relationship that is demonstrated to increase a student's potential to overcome challenges and experience success (Christiansen & Christiansen, 1997). The literature indicates that mentors, such as teachers, coaches, or school guidance counselors, serve as critical support systems for students who are at risk, and when children have a strong and enduring relationship with at least one caring adult, they are much more likely to overcome adversity in their lives (Luthar, Sawyer, & Brown, 2006; Mrazek & Mrazek, 1987; Sack, Angell, & Kinzie, 1986; Selig et al., 2006). Regarding the school context, Miller and MacIntosh (1999) observed that "probably one the most secure avenues for success in the United States—regardless of race—is the classroom. . . . A good education can preclude a life of poverty" (p. 161).

Thus, educational resilience generally refers to "the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences" (Martin & Marsh, 2006, p. 267). Cabrera and Padilla (2004) defined it as "students who despite economic, cultural,

and social barriers still succeed at high levels" (p. 152). Clauss-Ehlers and Wibrowski (2003) believed students possess educational resilience if they previously struggled academically but were able to overcome adversity and achieve success in school.

Accumulating Effects of Risk Factors

As the lists of protective factors accumulated, so did lists of risk factors. Risk factors are circumstances and life events that combine to threaten or challenge normal development (Dent & Cameron, 2003). Similar to protective factors, risk factors can be nested within the context of the individual, family, school, community, or broader society as a whole (Fraser, Richman, & Galinsky, 1999). Identified risks include low birth weight, poor nutrition, genetic abnormalities, insecure attachment during infancy, marital conflict, the death of a parent, chronic poverty, low maternal education, family strife, parental mental illness, being young at the time of the trauma, and an external locus of control (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Rutter, 1985; Svanberg, 1998). Moreover, longitudinal studies demonstrated that risks tended to accumulate over time (Doll & Lyon; Gewirtz et al., 2008). In other words, maladjustment or negative life trajectories were not as much the result of a single risk, but rather the result of exposure to multiple and accumulated risks over time (Fraser et al.; Luthar & Goldstein, 2004; Morrison & Cosden, 1997; Pollard, Hawkins, & Arthur, 1999). Schweitzer et al. (2007) referred to this as a "robust dose-response relationship . . . between the number of traumatic events and the level of psychological stress" (p. 283).

Second Research Paradigm: Resilience as an Interaction Between the Individual and Resources in the External Environment

Early studies used a model that tended to conceptualize resilience as a trait-based construct and the examination of single risk or protective factors as independent variables. However, as knowledge accumulated, researchers began to see error in the initial focus on simply identifying lists of risk and protective factors applied to any individual. It was soon recognized that the construct of resilience was a much more dynamic and interactive process than originally theorized. While research historically examined the effects of a single event such as the death of a parent or a traumatic experience, researchers began to study the *processes* or *mechanisms* initiated by these single events. For example, the death of a parent is not an isolated event, but rather has far-reaching ramifications altering family relationships, living conditions, parental supervision, and discipline (Fraser et al., 1999). Therefore, it is not the solitary event of a parent dying that introduces risk, but rather the chain of events thereby initiated. For example, "early parental loss predisposes to depression only if it leads to inadequate care of the children and to lack of emotional stability in the family" (Rutter, 1985, p. 603).

Rutter (1985, 1987, 1990) played a significant role in redirecting the research from the generation of lists of factors to the study of interaction effects among factors and the underlying processes of resilience. In a seminal piece published in 1985, Rutter argued that resilience is not simply the result of a longer list of protective factors than risk factors; resilience resides in how people deal with changes and respond to situations, decisions that are significantly impacted by a combination of early life experiences and current contextual factors that interact to create "a chain of indirect linkages that foster

escape from adversity" (p. 608). Although risk and protective factors can be viewed as indicators of the absence or presence of resilience, they do not explain how or why people respond as they do. The process of how people negotiate the risk situation focused attention on protective *mechanisms*, rather than protective *factors*.

Consequently, resilience research shifted away from examining fixed attributes of the individual toward examining protective mechanisms, which are individual variations in response to risks that change depending on the circumstances, exemplified through the discovery that "any one variable may act as a risk factor in one situation but as a vulnerability factor in another" (Rutter, 1987, p. 317). An example is the development of dissociation by children who endure chronic abuse. Although the act of dissociation from reality while the abuse is occurring allows the individual to "escape" and mentally endure the present trauma, there are adverse psychological effects, and intervention is necessary when dissociation continues after the victim is no longer in the abusive situation (Herman, 1992). The same has been said about the startle reflex. For children in war situations, the sharpness of the reflex may be the difference between life and death. However, once in a safe context, the reflex may have deleterious efforts on a child's ability to focus, concentrate, and be successful in school (Macksoud & Aber, 1996). Studies investigating mechanisms linking adult maladjustment to early family poverty suggest that it is family disorganization *following* the loss of income that more directly causes dysfunction (Doll & Lyon, 1998). Consequently, it is illogical to label one variable as inherently a risk or protective factor because it is the "process or mechanism, not the variable, that determines the function" (Rutter, 1987, p. 317).

Steeling Effects

Rutter (1985) also introduced the term *steeling effects*, the concept that overcoming adversity may actually serve to strengthen an individual's resistance to later adversity. This concept is also present in Grotberg's (2003a) definition of resilience in reference to people being "transformed by experiences of adversity" (p. 27). Concerning transformation, Grotberg (2003b) posited that it "is the greatest result of resilience, and it inevitably involves having more empathy and compassion—not pity—for others. It results in actions to help others. Life has meaning again. One gains a deeper sense of fulfillment and comfort" (p. 201). This idea of being transformed or made stronger by adversity has been likened to the medical notion of immunization against a disease. By being exposed to the disease (i.e., risk) an individual develops a strengthened resistance to it and is able to withstand later exposure to stress. Even more significant, Slone and Shoshani (2008) found evidence that exposure to war and political violence can actually result in advanced development in abstract reasoning, moral development, and awareness of ethical values.

Turning Points

Contemporary studies of resilience demonstrate that new circumstances and different developmental periods in life reveal that risk and resilience are not fixed, but rather can fluctuate and change (Doll & Lyon, 1998). In response, resilience research has identified *turning points*, new experiences that break the difficult cycle of negative conditions, opening up new opportunities by providing discontinuity with past experiences. Turning points include events such as marriage to a good partner, acceptance into the army, or new educational opportunities (Rutter, 1999a, 1999b). The

concept of turning points supports a life-span trajectory approach toward studying resilience. Some longitudinal studies (e.g., Werner & Smith, 2001) have demonstrated the power of turning points in the lives of individuals. Werner and Smith (2001) found that educational and relational opportunities encountered in adulthood opened up chances for shifts from negative life trajectories to positive life trajectories. In the context of my research with Sudanese refugees, immigration to the United States may have provided a monumental turning point experience in their lives.

Resilience is now viewed as the interaction between the individual and resources and stressors in the larger sociocultural context (Clauss-Ehlers, 2003). Consequently, the concept of resilience as a trait or quality that some possess and others do not has been replaced with the idea that resilience is an interaction between individuals and their environment and can be enhanced and fostered in *all* children and youth. In essence, studies shifted from focusing on protective *factors* to focusing on protective *processes,* also termed protective *mechanisms* (Luthar et al., 2000). An ecological model that emphasizes contextual factors and interactions between organisms and their environment now guides this resilience research paradigm.

Third Research Paradigm: Culturally Focused Resilience Research

Connor and Davidson (2003) observed, "resilience is a multidimensional characteristic that varies with context, time, age, gender, and cultural origin, as well as within an individual subjected to different life circumstances" (p. 76). Until recently, resilience research has focused predominantly on examining Caucasian samples living in Western nations (Masten & Obradovic, 2006). There is a dearth of research relating to resilience in ethnic minority populations or in developing nations (D. B. Miller, &

MacIntosh, 1999) and even less research evaluating the role of culture in resilience processes in these contexts (Clauss-Ehlers, 2003, 2004; Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2003; Rousseau & Gagne, 1998). In particular, understanding the effects of war on children, specifically from the continent of Africa where some of the most violent massacres have occurred, remains an underresearched area (Dyregrov et al., 2000; Grigorenko et al., 2007). This lacuna of research on children from developing countries is particularly troubling given the fact that in 2004, "political scientists counted more than 42 ongoing wars and armed conflicts worldwide, almost all of them in developing countries" (Neuner et al., 2008, p. 686).

Cultural Resilience

Resilience can be difficult to define because the identification of successful outcomes are culture dependent and value-laden (Kumpfer, 1999). For example, what can be defined as resilience in Native American youth is not that same as what would be defined as resilience in other North American youth; good family and tribal relations may be considered more important than competence in school and jobs. Thus, resilience is inherently culture-dependent. While examining the impact of armed conflict on children, Machel (1996) observed,

> The ways in which individuals and communities cope with, react to, and understand stressful events can differ markedly from one culture to another. Although many symptoms of distress have universal characteristics, the ways in which people express, embody, and give meaning to their distress are largely dependent on social, cultural, political, and economic contexts. Likewise, the manner in which different cultures deal with manifestations of emotional distress is based on different belief systems. (pp. 40-41)

Hence, researchers can no longer neglect to consider culture as a significant variable in the study of resilience. Culture is "the transmission of shared values, beliefs,

skills, and adaptive behaviors through shared participation across generations" (Clauss-Ehlers, 2003, p. 270). Clauss-Ehlers (2008) defined *cultural resilience* as "the way that the individual's cultural background, supports, values, and environmental experiences help facilitate the process of overcoming adversity" (p. 28). There is mounting evidence that in addition to context, culture plays a significant role in defining risk and protection factors and their processes (Rousseau & Gagne, 1998).

Cabrera and Padilla (2004) designed a qualitative study to examine the role of culture in the educational resilience of two college students from immigrant backgrounds who graduated from Stanford University. They found that the cultural backgrounds of these students played a significant role in development of their sense of self, as well as serving as a source of heightened self-worth. Furthermore, both students served as translators between their new culture and family members, a role that caused each to learn to be more self-sufficient and responsible, thereby enhancing their sense of self-efficacy. Moreover, though uneducated themselves, both students' mothers placed high value on gaining an education and were the driving force behind the students' educational attainment. Findings from other studies demonstrate that "an increased sense of ethnic identity contributes to greater resilience and coping among first- and second-generation college students" (Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2003, p. 574).

Another reason for engaging in cultural resilience research is because the power of specific risk indicators may vary in relation to different cultural and ecological contexts, making it "essential to take into account the influence of context or setting when risk and protective factors are considered" (Keogh & Weisner, 1993, p. 5).

Resilience Research With Refugee Children

Estimates indicate that as a result of war, almost 1% of the world's population are refugees or displaced people, with more than 50% of this population being children (Lachman et al., 2002). Impacts of war range from depression, anxiety, emotional and conduct disorders, and PTSD. In a systematic review of the prevalence of mental disorders in 7,000 refugees resettled in Western countries, Fazel, Wheeler, and Danesh (2005) reported that when compared to age-matched populations from these countries, refugees were 10 times more likely to have PTSD. Furthermore, research findings indicate that children who have experienced forced migration and are separated from their parents as a consequence of war trauma—as was the case with most Lost Boys and Girls—are more likely to suffer from symptoms of depression than those who were able to remain with their parents through the trauma.

Separation From Parents

In a study examining the effects of types of war trauma on Lebanese children, Macksoud and Aber (1996) found that of 10 types of traumas identified, four accounted for the greatest variance in the children's developmental outcomes: separation from parents, bereavement, displacement, and witnessing violent acts. In a child study investigating the effects of an Australian bushfire, researchers found that children's separation from their parents immediately following the event was a stronger predictor of adverse symptoms than level of exposure to the fire (Masten et al., 1990). In addition to illustrating the devastating effect of child separation from parents, these studies affirm the importance of analyzing not only risk factors and events, but also the repercussions or processes following the event. For example, for Masten et al., the trauma of the fire had a

more minimal effect on the children than did the subsequent separation from parents, indicating that processes as a result of risk events must be studied for greater understanding of effects.

Several studies have been conducted with youth who became refugees as a result of Pol Pot's murderous regime during 1975–1979 in Cambodia. A study conducted 4 years after 40 youth left Cambodia and their severe traumatic experiences behind reported that approximately half of the students participating in the research continued to experience major symptoms associated with PTSD (Kinzie, Sack, Angell, Manson, & Rath, 1986). However, findings indicated that the youth who were able to reestablish contact and live with a family member were better off emotionally and psychologically than those who remained in foster care and did not have contact with family. Furthermore, although Pol Pot's mission was to destroy Cambodian values and culture, the researchers discovered that it was these same values that helped the youth cope with the trauma they experienced in Cambodia as well as difficulties during resettlement.

Concerning the Southern Sudanese, children who were fortunate enough to remain with their parents through the diaspora generally faired far better in the camps than the boys and girls who were separated from their parents and had to survive as unaccompanied minors (Eggers, 2006). Geltman et al. (2005) conducted a study to determine the extent to which the traumatic events and resettlement experiences of Sudanese refugees were associated with clinical symptoms, psychological functioning, and general health status. They found that minors who were separated from their immediate family members during attacks on their villages were more likely to develop PTSD than those who remained with their families.

Effects of Migration

The effects of migration vary from individual to individual. For some, the experience is "a unique, intensive, and ongoing *restructuring* of the self, while for others it is related to anxiety and sorrow" (Rojas & Pappagallo, 2004, p. 44). If the migration was forced or sudden, as was the experience of the Lost Boys, the initial disorganization and uncertainty of a new country might be overwhelming. The resettlement process often involves learning a new language, economic hardship, culture shock, and the redevelopment of a new sense of identity (Rojas & Pappagallo). The typical journey of most Lost Boys and Girls involved at least three resettlement experiences—first in Ethiopia, next in Kenya or Uganda, and again in the United States. Part of the difficulty for many of the Lost Boys and Girls was that part of how they coped with separation from family was by banding together and traveling, living, and eating with the same group of young people for upwards of 8 years. However, depending on who was selected and where they received sponsorship, migration to developed countries such as the United States or Australia often triggered yet another painful separation (Bolea et al., 2003).

Pardekooper et al. (1999) conducted an exploratory study on the psychological effects of war and forced migration on Southern Sudanese children in refugee camps in Northern Uganda. They compared 193 Sudanese children with 80 Ugandan children with similar cultural backgrounds but who had not experienced war or forced migration. Findings from the study demonstrated that when compared to Ugandan children, the Sudanese children reported "significantly more traumatic events, more daily stressors, less satisfying social support, more different ways of coping, and more psychological

complaints" (p. 534). Moreover, Sudanese children were more likely to have been separated from their families (25.5%), tortured (28.0%), or sexually abused (9.0%).

Studies with unaccompanied Sudanese refugee minors in the United States indicate that resettlement was often a traumatic experience, especially seeing that moving to a new environment "entails a loss of history, values, and family experiences" (Bolea et al., 2003, p. 229). Interviews revealed that children experienced psychological and emotional pain caused by separation from friends and family. Their life narratives were broken as a consequence of war, death, and separation from friends and family and the difficulty of adjusting to how different their life in America was compared to life in Africa. Many were uncertain which parts of their home culture were acceptable to express in the United States and struggled to adapt to different customs and cultural expectations (Luster, Qin, Bates, Johnson, & Rana, 2008; Luster et al., 2009).

Resilience as Recovery From Trauma

Studies of resilience are generally divided into two categories: (a) overcoming the odds by maintaining normal development despite risk and adversity or (b) recovery from trauma by adjusting successfully to negative life events (Fraser et al., 1999; Staudinger et al., 1993). The experiences of the Lost Boys and Girls generally fall under the latter.

Defining Trauma

Herman (1992) differentiated between disasters and atrocities; disasters are the cause of forces of nature, whereas atrocities occur at the hands of other human beings. When children are exposed to traumatic events in the form of atrocities, their ordinary emotional and psychological systems of control, connection, and meaning are disabled. Childhood trauma is defined as "the mental result of one sudden, external blow or a series

of blows, rendering the young person temporarily helpless and breaking past ordinary coping and defensive operations" (Terr, 1991, p. 11). Terr defined one sudden blow as Type I Trauma and longstanding or repeated ordeals as Type II Trauma. He explained that although trauma begins with events outside the child, after the events have occurred, a number of lasting internal changes occur within the child.

Effects of Trauma

When children experience traumatic events, their fundamental belief that the world is a fair and safe place is shattered, and they no longer see people as trustworthy or kind (Qouta et al., 2008). Psychic trauma sets in when children recognize the incongruity between their illusion of safety and their present vulnerability in the face of imminent danger (Shaw, 1987). Terr (1991) identified four characteristics related to childhood trauma: (a) repeatedly perceived memories of the traumatic event; (b) repetitive behaviors; (c) trauma-specific fear; and (d) changed attitudes about people, life, and the future.

The destruction of one's home is also a particularly traumatic experience for children, as the home not only provides shelter but is "the heart of family life filled with memories and attachment to familiar objects and feelings of security and consolation" (Qouta et al., 2008, p. 314). Moreover, when children witness violence toward their parents or family members, their symbolic representation of the family as a unit of security and protection is destroyed.

Many Lost Boys and Girls waited decades to learn the status of family members they had been separated from during their childhood. Some are still waiting. Consequently, many experienced what Boss (2004) termed as *ambiguous loss*: "a

situation of unclear loss resulting from not knowing whether a loved one is dead or alive, absent or present" (p. 445). Boss identified two types of loss: (a) when a family member is physically absent but remains psychologically present because there is uncertainty as to whether the individual is dead or alive and (b) when a person is present physically but absent psychologically due to conditions such as depression, dementia, or addiction. Due to sudden separation from family and departure from home and country, many Lost Boys and Girls experienced the first type of loss by not knowing whether their parents and siblings survived the massacres. Without the closure of knowing whether their families were dead or alive, many Lost Boys and Girls experienced what is termed *failed mourning*: "long and chronic numbing feelings concerning the loss" (Sagi-Schwartz, Koren-Karie, & Joels, 2003, p. 400).

When children experience the loss of a parent or family member, it is important to go through a process of healthy mourning (Bowlby, 1988). Healthy mourning can occur when the child had a secure relationship with the parent prior to his or her death, when the child is provided immediate and accurate information about the loss, and is given the opportunity to ask questions and participate in the grieving process of the family member (Sagi-Schwartz et al., 2003). However, the mourning process is delayed and may become a risk factor when there are lapses between when the death occurred and when the child is informed about the event (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988).

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

Studies demonstrate that children and youth exposed to war-related events are at risk for developing symptoms of PTSD. When they are unable to adapt to or cope with the traumatic situation, a sense of helplessness and fear emerges and children are

vulnerable (Shaw, 1987). According to the *Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed., text revision (*DSM-IV-TR*; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000), two conditions must be met in order to consider a traumatic reaction as a diagnosis of PTSD: (a) a significant stressor followed by (b) a distinct emotional or behavioral response. The emotional or behavioral responses characterizing PTSD include intrusive recollection, avoidance or numbing, and hyperarousal (APA). Intrusive recollection may involve re-experiencing the traumatic event through flashbacks or distressing dreams. Avoidant/numbing involves concerted efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, activities, people, or memories associated with the trauma. Difficulties such as trouble falling asleep, hypervigilance, an exaggerated startle response, and difficulty concentrating mark hyperarousal.

Furthermore, when children experience Type II Trauma through chronic exposure to violence and danger, they develop coping mechanisms that help them psychologically to escape the immediate reality they are experiencing, also increasing their likelihood of developing PTSD (Silva & Kessler, 2004). While dissociation from reality is an effective coping technique while trauma is occurring, problems arise when children are removed from the traumatic situation but cannot stop the psychological mechanism of dissociation, at which point professional intervention is necessary (Herman, 1992). Similarly, while repression may be an effective short-term coping mechanism to allow a child to block painful memories or experiences, it may cause psychological problems later in life if left unresolved (Paardekooper et al., 1999).

Without intervention, between 10 to 20% of children exposed to war are likely to develop psychiatric conditions such as PTSD (Lachman et al., 2002). Symptoms of PTSD

involve flashbacks and nightmares, the tendency to repress memories of painful or traumatic experiences, being in a general state hyperarousal causing students to be vigilantly alert for threats, and problems with concentration and irritability (Qouta et al., 2008). Failing to receive treatment, the effects of PTSD continue to plague up to 50% of children decades after they developed the disorder (Green, 1994). Like resilience research, studies show that as the level or severity of exposure to stressors increases, the likelihood of developing PTSD also increases (Green; Qouta et al.).

Examining the psychiatric effects of massive trauma on Cambodian youth, Kinzie et al. (1986) found that 50% of a sample of 40 youth developed PTSD in addition to prolonged depressive symptoms. The youth reported headaches and concern about their health, trouble sleeping and concentrating, nightmares and reoccurring dreams, being easily startled, feeling ashamed of being alive, and avoiding memories and discussions about traumatic events. A follow-up study 3 years later with 30 of these same youth indicated that PTSD persisted with 48% of the youth (Kinzie, Sack, Angell, & Clarke, 1989). Three years later, 29 of the original 40 participants were re-assessed and found to have a PTSD prevalence of 38%, indicating that although symptoms of PTSD persist, they appear to decrease marginally over time (Sack, Seeley, & Clarke, 1997).

In a study evaluating trauma and mental health problems of Sudanese refugees living in a UN refugee camp in Uganda, Peltzer (1999) found that of a sample of 100 adults, 32% suffered from PTSD. Furthermore, 94% had experienced forced isolation from others, 91% were forcibly separated from family members, and 83% lacked food or water. Among children (n = 56), 20% suffered from chronic PTSD.

Stages of Recovery From Trauma

Although no individual course of recovery follows the same linear sequence, there are three general stages of recovery through which people who have experienced trauma progress: (a) establishing safety, (b) reconstructing the trauma story, and (c) restoring the connection between survivors and their community (Herman, 1992). These stages are clearly evident in the life stories of the Lost Boys and Girls. The primary task of the first stage is to escape the trauma and establish safety. Although the refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya provided temporary shelter from harm, the youth continued to struggle with inadequate food sources and physical and psychological violence from without and within the camps. For many, migrating to the United States or other developed countries provided the initial opportunity for them to begin the first stage of recovery from trauma—establishing a basic position of safety.

The second stage of recovery involves the telling of one's story or truth telling. By reconstructing the traumatic event(s), survivors transform the traumatic memories into their life story, providing a context that allows the trauma to be meaningfully understood by the survivors (Herman, 1992). As a result, the telling of the trauma story becomes a testimony, which has "both a private dimension which is confessional and spiritual, and a public aspect, which is political and judicial. The use of the word *testimony* links both meanings, giving a new and larger dimension to the patient's individual experience" (Herman, p. 181). The survivor is only able to begin to face the task of creating a meaningful future after he or she has reconciled with the traumatic past and can thereby integrate the lessons learned from the traumatic experiences into his or her life.

Many Lost Boys and Girls are reluctant to share their life stories upon first arriving in the United States, but as they develop a sense of safety and community with those around them, they begin to share their stories, and, in doing so, "recognize a political or religious dimension in their misfortune and discover they can transform the meaning of their personal tragedy by making it the basis for social action" (Herman, 1992, p. 207). The telling of their stories allows the survivors to transcend them, bringing meaning and initiative to those who hear it. Many Lost Boys and Girls have begun to share their stories as a means for raising awareness and fundraising to provide support for those still in refugee camps, for the rebuilding of their homeland, or to provide support for refugees who have recently resettled in areas where they now live. Others have recorded their stories in books and memoirs, documenting and chronicling their remarkable journeys (see Akol, 2005; Eggers, 2006).

The third stage of recovery involves reconnecting with the past. Traumatic events often destroy bonds between individuals and their community (Herman, 1992). Being forced to flee their country to find safety and security in another, the Lost Boys and Girls were cut off from their families, communities, culture, and customs (Bolea et al., 2003). As they have become established in the United States and have come to terms with their past experiences, they have begun to look toward the future (Itto, 2008). For some, this has involved finding and reconnecting with family members who survived the civil war (see Luster et al., 2008) or returning to Southern Sudan full of hope and equipped with an education that will enable them to help rebuild their homeland (see Farajallah & Garrett, 2007).

Studies of Resilience in Sudanese Refugees

Resilience studies with Sudanese refugees have generally been conducted with minors shortly after resettling in the United States, with few focusing on their transition into adulthood or the role of educational persistence in their lives. Even fewer have been conducted within the theoretical framework of resilience, and none have specifically examined their experiences during the third stage of recovery from trauma.

Qualitative Studies

Schweitzer et al. (2007) conducted a qualitative study with 13 Sudanese refugees between 17 and 44 years of age who on the average had lived in Australia for 4.15 years. With the overall purpose of identifying and explicating coping and resilience themes, the researchers employed a semistructured interview asking participants to describe their experiences during three periods of migration (i.e., premigration from Sudan, transit, and postmigration in their host country). Three themes emerged characterizing their experiences across all three periods: religious beliefs, social support, and personal qualities. Comparison with others (e.g., those unable to escape harm's way in Sudan or not selected to immigrate to the United States) emerged as a fourth but less salient theme. While this study is useful for identifying general themes of how people who have experienced significant trauma can make meaning from those events, it does not specifically address the role of educational persistence or stages of recovery from trauma.

Using a case-centered, comparative, narrative approach to data collection, Goodman (2004) interviewed 14 unaccompanied Sudanese refugee youth to understand how they "cope with such extreme trauma and hardship and to develop ways of promoting healing and optimal functioning of child survivors" (p. 1179). Participants

were males from the Dinka tribe of Southern Sudan between the ages of 16 and 18 who had lived in the United States for 6 to 12 months. Through her analysis of the participants' narratives, Goodman identified four themes reflecting coping strategies: (a) collectivity and the communal self, (b) suppression and distraction, (c) making meaning, and (d) emerging from hopelessness to hope. Goodman noted that at the time of her study, the youths she interviewed were feeling safe for the first time in years and were beginning to experience the first stage of recovery from trauma.

Bolea et al. (2003) explored how Sudanese children, their U.S. foster parents, and social workers described their understanding of the migration experience. Bolea et al. also observed that the literature relating to refugee children and their exposure to trauma "has yet to focus specifically on culturally relevant, meaningful belief systems that surround the experience for Sudanese refugee children" (p. 220). Consequently, Bolea et al. examined refugee children's trauma using a qualitative methodology via a social constructivist view that considers responsible participation in the creation of knowledge. They found that experiences of migration, resettlement, and adjustment to the United States were all included in the children's definitions of trauma, and that others must understand this trauma and the meanings associated with their experiences in order to work effectively with the Sudanese.

Clipper (2008) explored the influence of education in the acculturation patterns of Sudanese refugees resettling in Southwestern Pennsylvania. The theoretical framework guiding Clipper's research was *acculturation theory*, a theory focused on the mutual change that occurs as the result of contact between two cultural groups, with an emphasis on the maintenance of one culture while also engaging in daily interaction with other

groups. One of Clipper's significant findings was that premigration education experiences were significant factors in Sudanese refugees' adjustment experiences. Using a typology introduced by Kunz (1981), Clipper reported that the educational background of the 10 Sudanese refugees she interviewed could be characterized as *strongly biased toward higher education.* Furthermore, Clipper's study demonstrated that Sudanese refugee participants identified acquiring an education for themselves and their children as their top priority and number one need. While the focus of Clipper's dissertation was on how Sudanese refugees adjusted to resettlement in the United States, it did not employ a resilience framework and therefore did not specifically focus on how risk and resilience mechanisms operate in their lives.

Luster et al. (2008) interviewed 10 Sudanese refugees living in mid-Michigan who were separated from their parents at a very young age ($M = 7.4$ years, $SD = 2.62$, range = 3–12 years). The purpose of their study was to examine Sudanese refugee experiences of "separation and ambiguous loss, their relationships and support systems while separated, and their efforts to reestablish family relationships" (p. 453). Using a modified grounded theory approach for analyzing the data, Luster et al. (2008) organized their findings according to events and processes the participants experienced: (a) separation, (b) the experience of ambiguous loss, (c) relationships in the refugee camps, (d) searching for families, (e) family reunification, and (f) reestablishing relationships with family members. Findings indicated that individual hope and elders in the refugee camps played significant roles in the youths' adaptation and survival. Concerning hope, Luster (2008) reported that hope of being reunited with their parents helped most of the youth find the strength to overcome adversity. Elders in the camps played a significant

role as they encouraged the young people to focus on the present and future rather than on the pain of the past.

Though it was not the primary focus of their study, gaining an education and the difficulties associated with it appeared to be a prominent theme in the reported narratives. In refocusing the young peoples' attention from the past to the future, the elders emphasized the importance of getting an education in order for the boys to help rebuild Sudan when the war was over. Additionally, Luster et al. (2008) reported that the majority of the youth mentioned that after reconnecting with their families, "their parents encouraged them to go to school and get an education. For example, one youth's mother reminded him of his uncle who had an education and that he was respected everywhere he went" (p. 452).

Perhaps motivated by their parents or their elders, most of the youth reported that their future plans included obtaining U.S. citizenship, finishing degrees, and returning to their family in Sudan and to help rebuild the country (Luster et al., 2008). However, gaining an education once in the United States proved to be difficult, as many refugee youth reported difficulty balancing work and education. In addition to facing financial obligations in the United States, the youth considered it their responsibility to support the financial needs of family members still in Africa. The youth interviewed indicated that at times they had to choose between sending money home and paying tuition for school. Overall, needing to meet financial responsibilities in the United States while repatriating funds to family back home made it difficult for the participants to devote time and energy toward being successful in school. As Luster et al. (2008) were primarily focused on the youths' struggles with ambiguous loss and the reestablishment of relationships with

family members, more research is necessary to explore pressures relating to work, school, and supporting family members abroad.

Mixed Methods

Bates et al. (2005) examined the resettlement experiences of unaccompanied Sudanese refugee youth placed in foster care through the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program. They were interested in learning the successes and challenges of the placements; how youth, foster parents, and caseworkers could have been better prepared; and the implications of these findings on policy and practice. Quantitative data was gathered to measure behavioral adjustment, time use, and PTSD; while qualitative data was gathered through youth focus groups, parent focus groups, and individual caseworker interviews. Findings indicated that on the whole, 12 to 18 months after resettlement the Sudanese refugee youth reported considerable evidence of resilience despite a history of trauma and adversity: 91% were in school, 94% planned to earn a 4-year college degree, 93% belonged to a church, 62% attended church at least weekly, 68% spoke to someone regularly about their feelings, and 95% reported having someone who could help them solve problems. However, the measure for PTSD indicated that they experienced more than two times the level of symptoms of children experiencing a single traumatic event.

Bates et al. (2005) also found that many schools were unprepared to address the needs of the refugee minors and supports varied greatly from district to district. Districts that educated large immigrant populations were prepared to provide supports such as English as a Second Language, however, smaller or more rural districts were not. Furthermore, it was found that the basic education provided in some refugee camps was inadequate, and no students had received any instruction in subjects like U.S. History.

The youth reported that the supports received in foster homes were valuable assets toward achievement of their goals. Supports included a home, meals, transportation, homework assistance, cultural interpretation, and brokering. However, emotional bonds took longer to form than anticipated, and many youth seemed to be looking for foster parents to act as mentors, rather than parents. Working out parent-child roles often proved to be difficult. In addition to some youth not yet coming to terms with the trauma and adversity they had experienced, many had learned to be fiercely independent, living without parents for years, and the new role of being a dependent youth within a family structure was a challenge that needed to be worked out between the youth and their foster parents. Bolea et al. (2003) reported similar findings about unaccompanied Sudanese minors: "They were children who had to learn to act like adults to survive, and then once here in the United States, were expected to regress and act like children again" (p. 231).

There are a few logistical and potentially prescriptive items to highlight from this study. First, it is important to note that Bates et al. (2005) learned that a translator was "not always needed as the youth were sufficiently sophisticated in comprehension and command of English" (p. 634). Additionally, despite the mixed-method design, the researchers "developed a stronger confidence in the qualitative focus group and interview process" (p. 648), as the quantitative methods proved taxing to the youths, and interpretation of questions seemed to vary.

Itto (2008) conducted a mixed-method study to determine the relationship between self-sufficiency and various economic and demographic variables among Sudanese refugees in Tennessee. His purpose was to address the problem of how to increase Sudanese refugees' economic self-sufficiency in order to decrease their

dependence on public assistance. Through ethnographic focus groups, Itto gathered information about Sudanese refugees' perceived barriers to self-sufficiency and integration. A questionnaire was used to gather information about perceived and predetermined barriers to self-sufficiency. Findings indicated that family income and employment were significantly related to self-sufficiency, but the variables of English language skills, education, and length of residence had no significant relationship to self-sufficiency. While this study demonstrates that English language skills and education are not directly related to levels of self-sufficiency, it does not demonstrate whether or not these skills are significantly related to increased opportunities for employment. Although this dissertation addressed Sudanese refugees' successful adaptation to life in the United States, it did so from an economic framework rather than a resilience framework.

Quantitative Studies

Employing a descriptive research design, Geltman et al. (2005) assessed the functional and behavioral health of 304 unaccompanied Sudanese refugee minors approximately 1 year after they migrated to the United States. They used the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ) to diagnose levels of PTSD and the Child Health Questionnaire to assess health-related quality of life. Findings indicated that 20% of the participants had a diagnosis of PTSD and were also more likely to have lower (worse) scores on all of the subscales of the Child Health Questionnaire. They also found that participants who had PTSD were more likely to have been separated from their immediate family members during an attack on their village, and the most traumatized participants had been in the village in close proximity to family members when attacks occurred. The researchers concluded that "unaccompanied Sudanese minors have done

well in general. The minors function well in school and activities; however, behavioral and emotional problems manifest in their home lives and emotional states" (p. 585).

Geltman et al. (2005) piloted the HTQ with 8 participants to "ensure comprehensibility and cultural appropriateness" (p. 586). One question was identified as culturally confusing, so it was translated into Dinka and then back-translated to ensure comprehension. Although these were commendable efforts, the researchers themselves noted that the HTQ "has not been validated with Sudanese individuals" (p. 587), and since this publication, I have not been able to locate any studies demonstrating that the HTQ is a reliable or valid instrument for measuring levels of PTSD in Sudanese populations.

Themes Among Studies of Sudanese Refugees

Hope for the Future Lies in Education

Multiple researchers found that the participants' hope for the future lay in education (Bates et al., 2005; Clipper, 2008; Goodman, 2004; Luster et al., 2008). Goodman reported, "For some, the hope that school provided, even the limited schooling they were able to get in the refugee camp, provided the impetus for them to remain in the camps despite the hardships" (p. 1190). Participants also communicated their desire to ensure a good life by graduating from high school and earning a college degree. Luster et al. (2008) found that earning degrees, supporting their families, and returning to Sudan to help rebuild the country were primary goals of most of the Sudanese refugees they interviewed. Goodman observed, "The valuing of education was one of the strongest themes of the narratives and a predominant one in every interview" (p. 1190). Perhaps

one reason for this is that although cattle, homes, and parents could all be taken from them, knowledge and education could not (Goodman). Moreover,

> The goal of independence and self-reliance lay in contrast to the refugee's lives of constant dependence on aid from others for survival. The sense of powerlessness experienced by the participants in the past was replaced with a sense of agency and power to affect change in their own lives. (p. 1191)

An Emphasis on Remembrance and Mourning

At the time of most studies of resilience research in Sudanese refugees, most participants had only lived in the United States for 6 to 18 months (Bates et al., 2005; Geltman et al., 2005; Goodman, 2004). According to Herman's (1992) stages of recovery from trauma, most were likely in the stage of remembrance and mourning, having reached a place of relative stability and safety. Analysis of the narratives reveals that most youth were beginning to come to terms with the trauma and adversity that they experienced in the past and were ready to look to the future. Goodman observed,

> many of the participants, now in the United States, were feeling safe for the first time since they left their parents' home, and the opportunity to reflect back on early experiences seemed possible in this new, safe situation. It is only in the context of feeling safe that they will be truly able to remember the traumas they have endured and begin mourning their losses and reconnecting with themselves and others. (p. 1192)

Goodman's observation is consonant with observations I have made through informal conversations with Sudanese refugees in Virginia. Many have become comfortable sharing their stories and are now hoping or making plans to return to Sudan for a visit to reconnect with family and friends (see Dietrich, 2009; Washington, 2008).

Current Political Landscape in Southern Sudan

A final but important variable to consider in this study is the current political climate in Sudan. In January 2005, after a 21-year civil war—the longest running civil

war in Africa—Sudan's central government from the North and the SPLA/M from the South reached an agreement for sharing wealth and power and signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Under conditions of the agreement, Northern Sudan agreed to cease imposing *shari'a* law on the Christian and Animist people of the South, conceded to share the nation's oil revenue, granted regional autonomy, and recognized the city of Juba as the southern capital, appointing John Garang, leader of the SPLA/M, vice president. In 2009, a referendum concerning the agreement will be held, and the people of Southern Sudan will have the opportunity to vote for independence in 2011.

Since 2005, some of the four million Southern Sudanese who were displaced during the 21 years of conflict have begun to return home. What they are finding is a region with little infrastructure and, consequently, few schools. For the few families who can afford it (generally newly appointed Southern Sudanese government officials), children are often sent out of the country, frequently to the neighboring country of Uganda, to receive an education. With estimates that only 20% of children in Southern Sudan are enrolled in primary school (Department of International Development, 2008), thousands of young children remain uneducated.

Southern Sudan is clearly in need of young, trained, and educated people who can help rebuild this region of the country. With the opportunity to live and study in developed countries, many of the Lost Boys and Girls are prime candidates for this monumental task. While they had little control over their decision to leave Sudan decades ago, many now have the opportunity to choose to return home. In November 2007, two Lost Boys from Cuba returned home (Farajallah & Garrett, 2007). One had earned a doctorate in veterinary medicine and had plans to help build Southern Sudan's animal

husbandry sector. The second was trained in agronomy, a skill that is in much demand in the agricultural-rich region of Southern Sudan. Both hoped that their example of returning to Sudan "might encourage other skilled Sudanese to return to help rebuild a region devastated by years of war and still lacking vital infrastructure and basic services after three years of peace" (Farajallah & Garrett. pp. 1-2). Determining to what effect hope for the future and a motivation to rebuild their country plays in the educational persistence of Sudanese refugees participating in this study is, therefore, significant.

Summary

This overview of the literature on resilience research lays the theoretical and conceptual foundation for the qualitative analysis of the narratives that will be gathered from Sudanese refugees in Virginia concerning their persistence toward goals despite past and present adversity. While various studies relying on qualitative and quantitative research designs have examined the American resettlement experiences of refugees from Sudan and have begun to demonstrate the significant role of education in their lives, few have done so within the theoretical framework of resilience or focused specifically on educational persistence, and hardly any have been conducted with young adult refugees who are experiencing Herman's (1992) third stage of recovery from trauma involving reconnecting with the past and renewing the bonds that were severed between them and their community. This study examining the cultural and contextual resilience mechanisms in the lives of Sudanese refugees as it relates to their persistence toward achieving educational goals aims to fill this deficit in the literature.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

I begin this chapter by discussing the research questions guiding this study, followed by an explanation of the research design used and a description of procedures, participants, and instruments. I conclude by explaining how the collected data will be analyzed using a qualitative, grounded theory approach.

Research Questions

The central purpose of resilience research is to identify protective processes and mechanisms that modify the effects of adverse conditions in an individual's life (Luthar et al., 2006). By identifying protective mechanisms specific to an individual or group, researchers, healthcare workers, social workers, and educators can translate findings into intervention efforts that ameliorate the effects of risk and adversity while facilitating environments that nurture healing and development (Slone & Shoshani, 2008). Doll and Lyon (1998) proposed the following research question, "Are there predictable and alterable characteristics, mechanisms, and interactive processes that enable some high-risk students to attain educational and personal success, despite seemingly poor odds?" (p. 349). While this general question can be applied to this study examining Sudanese refugees who have immigrated to Virginia, the specific four research questions guiding this study are as follow and are addressed through a qualitative grounded theory methodology:

1. What is the value and significance placed on education in Southern Sudanese culture according to Sudanese refugees in Virginia?

2. What is the role of learner persistence in Sudanese refugees in Virginia prior to migration to the United States?
3. What resilience mechanisms help or hinder the attainment of or persistence toward Sudanese refugees' educational goals in the United States?
4. What role does education play in Virginia Sudanese refugees' hope for the future?

Research Design

Quantitative Versus Qualitative

Resilience research can be categorized as either person-focused or variable-focused, with the former lending to qualitative research designs and the latter to quantitative designs. With quantitative measures, the goal is "to reduce data to numbers that represent a single criterion. [However] by so doing they remove those data from the rich detail that distinguish them from other similar data and from the contexts and alternative constructions that give them meaning" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 38). Understanding the rich, context-dependent data relating to how individuals construct meaning from their experiences is the primary purpose of culturally focused resilience research (Clauss-Ehlers, 2004; Goodman, 2004; Grotberg, 2003a).

Furthermore, although simple linear models characterize most resilience research, the accumulation of knowledge about the transactional nature of the interactive processes between the individual and the environment demonstrate that such models are no longer adequate (Luthar & Zigler, 1991). Contrary to variable-focused studies that have resulted in validated instruments and the potential for generating generalizeable findings, relatively little is known about resilience in non-Western cultures (Masten & Obradovic,

2006). Therefore, exploratory qualitative designs are necessary and more relevant for uncovering and understanding the way resilience manifests in non-Western cultures.

Moreover, due to the complex nature of cultural resilience mechanisms and the difficulties experienced when trying to isolate and categorize independent variables, Rousseau and Gagne (1998) argued that qualitative methods "provide us with a better calibrated definition of the concepts underlying the research and of the various interactive phenomena" (p. 619). Furthermore, quantitative designs require a priori assumptions about the range of relevant variables assessed (Schweitzer et al., 2007). Given the still emerging concepts of resilience research with Sudanese refugees, quantitative designs and assumptions would be premature and highly problematic.

There are clearly inherent problems with relying solely on quantitative, variable-focused research designs when it comes to culturally focused resilience research with non-Western cultures. Hence, the weight of my analysis in this study largely relied on qualitative data collected using *grounded theory*—an approach that allows for the development of theory that emerges from and is grounded in the research—and quantitative data collected using two instruments—the *Comprehensive Trauma Inventory-104* (*CTI-140*) and the *Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R)*—primarily for data triangulation and descriptive purposes.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was first presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* with three general objectives: (a) to provide a rationale for theory that was grounded (i.e., generated and developed) through data collection, (b) to outline the logic for and specifics of grounded theories, and (c) to validate qualitative

research (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Since the publication of this text, grounded theory has become an accepted qualitative research approach used by researchers across disciplines including education, business, psychology, anthropology, nursing, and social work (Fassinger, 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

In *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Glaser and Strauss (1967) posited that "current theory in sociology overly stressed verifying and testing theories rather than discovering the concepts (variables) and hypotheses based on actual field data from participants" (Cresswell, 2005, p. 396). This argument is consonant with this emergent stage of resilience research with Sudanese refugees as there is currently not enough known about the phenomenon to test theories and hypotheses. Rather, as Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued, the emphasis should be on discovering the concepts and variables through gathering data from the participants.

Grounded theory is a "general methodology" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273) with the ultimate aim of producing "innovative theory that is 'grounded' in data collected from participants on the basis of the complexities of their lived experiences in a social context" (Fassinger, 2005, p. 157). The application of grounded theory involves collecting data through systematic procedures, identifying categories or themes, connecting categories, and generating a theory to explain the process (Cresswell, 2005). Because theory is developed through the repetitive process of collecting and analyzing data, this approach is often referred to as the *constant comparative model.*

Grounded theory is used to either generate new theories or elaborate and modify existing theories (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). When a research phenomenon is novel or being pioneered, the generation of an original theory grounded in data may be necessary.

On the other hand, if theories already exist concerning an area of research, they may be elaborated and modified based on new data. For my research exploring the role of resilience mechanisms in Sudanese refugees' persistence toward educational goals, I anticipated that based on the maturing base of resilience research, my study would generally serve to elaborate and modify existing theories related to resilience, while perhaps generating original findings relating to the role of resilience specific to Sudanese refugees.

Furthermore, grounded theory is better characterized as a *style* of doing qualitative research, rather than a specific *method* or technique (Strauss, 1987). Therefore, although various guidelines and procedures have developed since the conception of grounded theory, they can be easily adapted to studies of diverse phenomena because they "allow much latitude for ingenuity and are an aid to creativity" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 273). Cresswell (2005) outlined three general approaches for conducting grounded theory research: the systematic design, the emerging design, and the constructivist design.

The systematic design is associated with rigorous, detailed procedures and emphasizes the use of open, axial, and selective coding in data analysis, as well as the construction of a visual picture or theoretical model of the generated theory. The emerging design deemphasizes specific, preset categories, but rather, emphasizes the importance of letting the theory emerge from the data: "the focus is on connecting categories and emerging theory, not on simply describing categories" (Cresswell, 2005, pp. 401-402). The overall focus of the constructivist approach is on the meaning ascribed by study participants. With this approach, the theorist uses active codes to explain how

participants feel as they experience a given process or phenomenon. In my research examining resilience mechanisms in the lives of Sudanese refugees, I was particularly interested in the meaning participants ascribe to their past experiences as it related to their persistence toward educational goals. Hence, I employed a grounded theory approach most closely resembling the constructivist design.

Grounded theory methodology is generally considered an interpretive work; therefore, the perspectives of the people being studied are central. Hence, grounded theory primarily relies on data collection through interviews, field observations, and documents (i.e., diaries, letters, autobiographies, and other media materials), with interviews generally being the "method of choice" (Fassinger, 2005, p. 158). Moreover, grounded theory methodology requires that *multiple perspectives* be sought systematically during the research inquiry (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As such, my data was collected primarily through interviews with multiple participants ($N = 10$).

Interviews

Interviews are valuable tools for allowing participants to tell their stories in their own words (Fassinger, 2005). For this study, interviews were conducted using a combination of the *standardized open-ended interview* and the *interview guide* (Patton, 1990). Standardized open-ended interviews use a format in which each participant is asked the same set of questions. Because questions are established in advance and each participant is asked the same question in a systematic way, the effects of the interviewer are minimized. Furthermore, the standardized open-ended interview is highly focused; therefore, time spent with participants is maximized. Additionally, data collected using

standardized open-ended interviews is easier to analyze because each participant is responding to the same set of questions.

However, the standardized open-ended interview has drawbacks (Patton, 1990). Primarily, its emphasis on using identical questions and wording with each participant does not allow the interviewer to explore topics outside of the prescripted questions. This is problematic, because the study of resilience is concerned with the way individuals uniquely respond in varying ways to the events and circumstances in their lives. Standardized open-ended interviews, however, place constraints "on the use of different lines of questioning with different people based on their unique experiences" (Patton, p. 286), causing the potential for valuable insight into the development of resilience in individual lives to be overlooked.

Accounting for this problem, Patton (1990) suggested combining the standardized open-ended approach with the interview guide approach. The interview guide maintains an emphasis on covering the same material and obtaining the same information from each participant, however, it adds flexibility by allowing the interviewer to "explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject" (p. 283), leaving the interviewer freedom to "build a conversation within a particular subject area, to work questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversation style—but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined" (p. 283). As theory emerged from my findings grounded in the collection of data, it was important to keep the conversation focused within the framework of resilience as it pertains to Sudanese refugees, while still allowing for flexibility and the exploration of topics that emerge during the interview. In my collection of data, I followed Patton's suggestion of starting

the interview using the standardized open-ended approach to ensure all necessary questions were answered and then shifted to the interview guide approach in the latter part of the interview to allow for the exploration of topics of interest that may arise.

A set of standardized-open ended interview questions (see Table 1) was developed from a comprehensive literature review of resilience research and studies with Sudanese refugees, as well as through insight and information gained through informal meetings and gatherings with Sudanese refugees in Virginia. Although it was not necessary to have a translator present during interviews (see Bates et al., 2005; Goodman, 2004) due to linguistic or cultural differences, some questions needed to be rephrased, and minimal prompting encouraging elaboration was at times necessary.

Table 1

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

Questions
Premigration to the United States 1. Please describe your life before immigrating to the United States, beginning with your childhood. 2. Please describe all of your educational and training experiences prior to coming to the United States, including your time in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya or elsewhere. 3. Please describe both your mother and father's views toward education and their role in your education. Were their views similar or different from your elders and members of your tribe? 4. How has your Sudanese culture influenced you in terms of your education? 5. What helped you cope and achieve an education in Africa? 6. What challenges did you face trying to get an education in Africa? How did you cope when you had setbacks?
Postmigration to the United States 7. How would you describe your adjustment to life in the United States? What helped or hindered you in terms of your adjustment in the United States? 8. What education have you attained here in the United States? 9. Are you finished your program of study? If not, do you plan to continue to study? 10. What are your educational goals? Have you obtained your educational goals? 11. What (or who) has helped you reach your goals? 12. What challenges have you or do you face reaching educational goals? 13. What actions do you take or decisions do you make to reach your educational goals? 14. Has your level of education helped or hindered you from achieving goals in life?
Future goals 15. Where or how do you hope to use your education in the future? What are your career goals? 16. Do you plan to return someday to live in Sudan or do you plan to remain in the United States? 17. Looking back, can you identify any turning points or events in your life that opened up new opportunities or changed the course of your life for the better? Do you see any turning points in your future? 18. In general, do you feel that you are in control of your life and future, or does life control you? 19. How have your personal beliefs influenced your life? 20. Overall, have your different life experiences (good and bad) made you a weaker or a stronger person?

The purpose of the questions pertaining to premigration to the United States was to gather information about the participants' cultural and educational experiences prior to immigration to the United States. Questions 1 through 7 were developed to account for the cultural resilience research emphasis on understanding how an individual's cultural background and prior life experiences facilitated the process of overcoming adversity (Clauss-Ehlers, 2008). Questions 1 and 2 were specifically designed to get a general picture of the life and educational experiences participants encountered prior to immigration in the United States. As secure attachments with a primary caregiver early in life protect against the effects of future risk and adversity (Bowlby, 1988; Rutter, 1990), by prompting them to describe their childhood through Question 1, I hoped to gain insight into the nature of the relationship participants had with their parents.

Resilience literature demonstrates that schools and teachers increase a child's potential to overcome challenges and experience success (e.g., Cabrera & Padilla, 2004; Christiansen & Christiansen, 1997; Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2003; Martin & Marsch, 2006). Furthermore, Clipper (2008) found that premigration education experiences were significant factors in Sudanese refugee adjustment experiences. Hence, Question 2 was developed to assess the presence (or absence) and type of education and training opportunities the participants were exposed to prior to U.S. immigration.

Given the recent emphasis on the critical role of culture in resilience research (e.g., Clauss-Ehlers, 2003, 2004; Clauss Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2003; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Kumpfer, 1999; Rousseau & Gagne, 1998), Questions 3 and 4 were included to explore the value and emphasis that Southern Sudanese culture places on education. Cabrera and Padilla (2004) found that the cultural backgrounds of students play a

significant role in their social, emotional, and educational development, and it is therefore of great interest to determine what effect Sudanese culture played in the participants' acquisition of an education prior to migration.

While resilience research traditionally aimed to produce lists of risk and protective factors, contemporary resilience researchers stress the importance of identifying the processes or mechanisms initiated by single or accumulating traumatic events (Clauss-Ehlers, 2003; Grotberg, 2003a; Fraser et al., 1999; Rutter, 1985, 1987, 1990). For example, although separation from parents (Geltman et al., 2005; Kinzie et al., 1986; Macksoud & Aber, 1996; Masten et al., 1990), ambiguous loss (Boss, 2004; Sagi-Schwartz et al., 2003), and forced migration (Bolea et al., 2003; Luster et al., 2008; Rojas & Pappagallo, 2004) can have deleterious effects on children, studies demonstrate that such experiences can also serve to transform and make individuals stronger (Grotberg, 2003a; Pardekooper et al., 1999; Schweitzer et al., 2007). Thus, questions 5 and 6 were developed to understand how various events and experiences served as resilience mechanisms with regard to achieving an education.

The questions pertaining to postmigration to the United States were developed to account for resilience mechanisms contributing to the participants' adaptation to life in the United States and their success or failure within American systems of higher education and vocational training. As resilience in this study was generally operationalized as achievement of or persistence toward educational goals despite adversity, Questions 7 through 14 were designed to explore whether or not the participants are demonstrating educational resilience in the midst of competing obligations in the United States (Luster et al., 2008).

Prior research (e.g., Bolea et al., 2003; Luster et al., 2008; Schweitzer et al., 2007) with Southern Sudanese refugees demonstrates that personal belief systems, social supports (i.e., peers, elders, foster parents), and personal qualities were all factors in adjustment to the United States. These factors were generally accounted for through Questions 7 through 14. Like Questions 5 and 6 pertaining to achieving an education prior to migration to the United States, Questions 11 and 12 were developed to understand how various experiences and/or individuals served as resilience mechanisms with regard to achieving an education once arriving in the United States. Question 13 was specifically developed to assess participants' levels of agency—their ability to intentionally influence their own circumstances, adaptive functioning, and self-development (Bandura, 2001; Benight & Bandura, 2004).

Resilience research has demonstrated that hope for the future plays a significant role in helping individuals overcome adversity (Clipper, 2008; Goodman, 2004; Ito, 2008; Luster et al., 2008). Frankl (1984) observed, "what man actually needs [to survive adversity] is not a tensionless state but rather the striving and struggling for a worthwhile goal, a freely chosen task" (p. 127). The questions pertaining to future goals were developed to understand the meaning participants ascribe to their experiences in terms of educational and career goals.

Questions 15 and 16 were developed to uncover the participants' hopes for the future, a significant factor in resilience studies (Goodman, 2004; Godziak & Shandy, 2002; Grotberg, 2000). Question 17 was constructed to explore the concept of turning points (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Werner & Smith, 2001) by challenging participants to identify events or processes that contributed to new experiences or opportunities in their

lives, as well as to identify the potential for new turning points in the future. Question 18 was specifically developed to assess participants' levels of self-determination toward achieving goals. Frankl (1984) noted,

> Man is ultimately self-determining. Man does not simply exist but always decides what his existence will be, what he will become in the next moment. . . . Man is capable of changing the world for the better if possible, and of changing himself for the better if necessary. (p. 154)

Question 18 also addressed whether the participant has a strong internal locus of control, a characteristic that Derrick (2000) identified as a significant variable in the development of learner persistence and, therefore, necessary for the demonstration of educational resilience. As prior research demonstrates that religious beliefs help individuals cope with trauma and adversity (see Connor, Davidson & Lee, 2003; Frankl, 1984; Schweitzer et al., 2007), Question 19 was included to gain insight into the influence of spirituality or personal belief in the lives of participants. Question 20 aims to explore Rutter's (1985) concept of steeling effects and whether or not participants feel they have been transformed by their experiences of adversity to become stronger and more resilient (see also Grotberg, 2003b, 2004; Slone & Shashani, 2008).

As suggested by Fassinger (2005), the interview content and structure was pilot tested in order to prevent "subsequent confusion or truncated responses from participants" (p. 159). Given established rapport, I conducted a pilot test of the interview questions with Daniel (a pseudonym). In addition to being familiar with the aims of my research, Daniel and I had an established relationship where I believe he felt comfortable offering direct and constructive suggestions for improving the interview process and content. Based on my own observations and Daniel's suggestions, following my

interview with him I revised some questions to ensure adequate depth and breadth of the topic.

In addition to the interview questions, I developed a Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix A) to gather data on the following demographic characteristics: age, gender, marital status, number of children, length of time in the United States, U.S. citizenship status, tribe, level of education obtained (abroad and in the United States), employment status, religion, and number of languages spoken.

Participants

The target population for this study was adult Sudanese refugees living in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Participants met the criteria for this study if they were born in Sudan, had previously lived in one or more refugee camps in Africa, and immigrated to the United States under refugee status. Following grounded theory research guidelines, I employed the process of *theoretical sampling*, "a process in which continued sampling occurs concurrently with data analysis that has commenced immediately upon receipt of the data; the introduction of new data is directed by the gaps, unanswered questions, and underdeveloped ideas in the emerging theory" (Fassinger, 2005, p. 162). The purpose of theoretical sampling is to verify emerging categories and their interrelationships and to refine the theoretical ideas. Theoretical sampling continues until categorical and theoretical saturation occurs.

I began theoretical sampling by using a convenience sample of purposefully selected participants I knew who met the criteria and were willing and available to be studied (Cresswell, 2005). Purposeful sampling allows for the selection of information-rich cases for studying in depth the issues of central importance to the research (Patton,

1990). I selected two participants through this method. Next, I employed a snowball sampling procedure by asking these two participants to identify friends or acquaintances that were willing to participate in this study (Creswell). I continued theoretical sampling and adding new participant data until saturation occurred and ended up with a total of 10 Southern Sudanese participants living in Virginia.

Procedures

I obtained approval from the Regent University School of Education Human Subjects Review Board prior to data collection and informed all participants of the purpose and procedures of the study, offering full assurance that participation was voluntary and confidential. Before interviews commenced, I asked participants to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix B). No participants under the age of 18 were approached to participate in this study, so parental or guardian consent was not necessary. I began by arranging interviews with two Sudanese refugees who I knew personally and who had already indicated interest in participating in my study. After interviewing them, I asked them to suggest other potential participants.

I gathered my data in the spring and early summer of 2009. Interviews were scheduled around dates and times that were suitable for the participants. I made attempts to schedule all interviews to take place in public libraries or community centers close to each participant's home. For the purpose of later transcription, I recorded interviews subject to the participants' approval. I began the interview by asking demographic questions and recording participant responses on the Demographic Questionnaire. Following the interview, I asked participants to complete the two quantitative instruments (i.e., the *CTI-104* and *IES-R*). Participants were given the choice as time permitted to

either complete the measures at that time and location or to take them home (along with a stamped and addressed envelope) to complete at a time most suitable for them, requesting that they return them to me within a week. If I did not receive the instruments in the mail within 1 week, I planned to follow up with a phone call and continue to call weekly for a total of 3 weeks until I received them.

The decision to interview participants prior to requesting their completion of the two quantitative instruments was made based on feedback from Daniel. Based on his knowledge of Sudanese culture, Daniel advised that participants would be much more willing to complete the two instruments honestly following the establishment of rapport through the interview. As a token of appreciation for their time, I provided participants with a $20 Walmart gift card after the interview and immediately following my explanation of and request to have the quantitative instruments returned within 1 week.

Instruments

Qualitative

The primary instrument in qualitative research involving interviews is the researcher, or the *human instrument*. Erlandson et al. (1993) explained that the human instrument "can be a very potent and perceptive data-gathering tool" (p. 82) by relying on "all its senses, intuition, thoughts, and feelings" (p. 82). Consequently, when the researcher is acting as a human instrument, investigator preparation is crucial. Morse (1994) explained that when researchers are well prepared,

> They can pick up subtle clues in interviews and latch on to, and follow, leads. The ability to follow leads also means that the researcher is well versed in social science theory. The researcher must be able to recognize remnants of other theorists' work so that when glimpse of interesting leads are present in an interview, these leads may be pursued and verified, or recognized as new and unique phenomena. The good researcher is familiar enough with social science

> theory that he or she can recognize an appropriate "framework" or paradigm for the study and still work inductively. (p. 226)

In addition to the abilities described by Morse (1994), I brought to this study my experiences as an immigrant, an educator, a researcher, and a close friend of a Sudanese refugee. As I indicated in the introduction of this study, as the granddaughter of immigrants and having personally experienced the process of immigration, I became interested in immigrant experiences. Moreover, though under very different circumstances than those of the Lost Boys and Girls, I too came to the United States to study and achieve my educational goals and have resettled several times since being raised in Canada, demonstrated through residing in the United States during college and my initial teaching experiences and then teaching English for a year in Japan before resettling back in the United States almost 4 years ago.

I also brought to this study my experiences as an educator. I have taught in preschool, elementary, and high school settings across Canada, the United States, and Japan. I have also been employed as a general education teacher, an inclusion teacher, a special educator, and an English-as-a-Second-Language teacher. Moreover, my teaching experiences in the United States have all been in inner-city environments with diverse student populations with varying cognitive, social, emotional, and physical needs.

Furthermore, I have spent the last 2-1/2 years in the doctoral program in special education and educational psychology at Regent University in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Through my studies, I have been challenged and prepared to examine and understand social phenomena through the lens of different worldviews, to think critically, and to conceptualize issues from multiple approaches and perspectives. While I have been well versed in quantitative research designs, I believe given my focus of inquiry, qualitative

research is the more appropriate approach for exploring the cultural and contextual resilience mechanisms operating in the lives of Sudanese refugees as it pertains to their persistence toward educational goals.

Finally, I brought to this study a desire to help the Sudanese refugee community in Virginia and the United States, in a large part motivated by a close friendship with a Sudanese refugee, Daniel. After coincidentally meeting at church the same weekend my husband and I began volunteering with a local organization dedicating to supporting the Lost Boys and Girls of Sudan in Southeastern Virginia, Daniel has been joining us (and sometimes other guests) for dinner in our home approximately once every 2 weeks since June 2008. Over dinner conversations I came to know him well and vice versa. Following the meal, I routinely helped Daniel with an English lesson or helped edit and revise academic or personal writing passages that he has developed. Much of his writing was based on his diverse life experiences, and through our collaborative work on his compositions, I learned even more about Daniel and his exceptional desire to better himself, namely, to earn a law degree, in order to someday work to improve conditions in his homeland by establishing an orphanage and school for disadvantaged children in Southern Sudan.

Either through the context of casual conversation or through academic support, my husband and I had many discussions with Daniel about his hopes and dreams for the future. As my husband is an attorney and Daniel would also like to earn a law degree upon completing his undergraduate studies, many of our discussions were about how he would get from community college (where he was presently studying) to graduate school.

Consequently, we helped Daniel research different programs at different universities and provided counsel based on our experiences in higher education.

Additionally, I recently had the opportunity to see Daniel realize a dream that burned within him for several years. After being separated as a 9-year-old from his parents for close to two decades, neither Daniel nor his parents knew each other's whereabouts or whether the other was dead or alive. However, a few years after immigrating to the United States in 2004, Daniel learned that both his mother and father were still living. Two years ago, Daniel spoke with his mother for the first time in close to 20 years. After being separated for what must have seemed like an eternity when considering the nature of a mother-child relationship, Daniel's mother begged him to return to Southern Sudan so she could see him before she died.

Since this first phone conversation—and his mother's first time using a telephone—Daniel dreamed of returning to his childhood village to visit his mother and father. However, for a young college student striving to balance work and studies, carefully apportioning his wages in order to cover living expenses and tuition, all the while supporting family members back in Sudan, this dream appeared elusive. However, through various means of sharing the word and raising support through the local newspaper, Daniel's home church, and family members of friends in the United States, I, along with others, was able to see Daniel's dream become a reality. In December 2008, Daniel returned to Sudan during his winter break from classes and was reunited with his parents for the first time in over 20 years.

While Daniel indicated that he was learning and gaining much from his friendship with me, I believe I learned and gained far more from him than he will ever know. I saw

in Daniel an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and wisdom that is unparalleled by any I have seen in North American friends. I saw an individual who does not make excuses for his future based on his past, but has persevered through the most difficult of circumstances to continue to take steps toward accomplishing his goals. I also observed in Daniel a resolute stand against profit or personal gain from the collective story of the Lost Boys and Girls that is so often told. Daniel is clearly an inspiration to many.

In addition to the experiences just described, I brought to this study personal biases. First, I believe immigrants are often grossly misunderstood and underestimated. The customs and values immigrants bring to the United States are often undervalued and are judged based on the fact that they differ from the norm. I believe their intellectual capacities and abilities are largely underestimated by the general population demonstrated by the fact that many immigrants are underemployed and working in unskilled jobs despite having various skills and training.

Furthermore, I believe the foreign policies of the United States and other developed nations often exacerbate rather than ameliorate problems in developing, war-torn countries. This was demonstrated through the dramatic development of child sex tourism in Cambodia after UN workers entered to stabilize the country after Pot Pot's regime. International interests in Southern Sudan's resources (i.e., oil) played a role in the conflict between Northern and Southern Sudan. Sudan is currently experiencing considerable instability and peace agreements are in jeopardy as a result of the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for the country's current president Omar al-Bashir. While the court's prosecutors and political activists consider the ICC warrant a victory, the volatile Darfur region is now facing increased insecurity

and major food and medical shortages as a result of al-Bashir's decision to expel all foreign aid agencies from the country as a backlash to the ICC's decision. While achieving justice on a worldwide scale is an admirable and worthy goal, in general, when developed countries try to "fix" underdeveloped countries, lack of cultural and contextual understanding of the underlying causes of the problems often result in intensification rather than improvement of problems. I believe one of the best things the United States and other developed countries can do to help underdeveloped and war-torn countries is to help immigrants and refugees from these countries to heal from their past experiences and provide opportunities for training and studying that will enable them to return to their countries prepared to bring effective and sustainable leadership and change.

These views shape my perceptions as a human instrument. To decrease bias, I consciously and continuously evaluated how these views influenced my analytical observations and decisions throughout the process of collecting and analyzing the data. I also used member-checking procedures to ensure that my findings accurately reflected the participants' experiences and the meaning they attributed to them.

Quantitative

While the weight of my analysis rested on qualitative methods nested in a resilience framework using a grounded theory approach, for the purpose of gathering descriptive information about the participants, I employed two carefully selected measures for gathering quantitative data about the traumatic events and the impact of these events on the subjects I included in this study. The rationale for this was that although efforts were made to ensure interviews were of sufficient breadth and depth, given the numerous and varying experiences of Sudanese refugees prior to migration to

the United States (see Bates et al., 2005; Geltman et al., 2005), even the most focused interview would be limited in sufficiently covering the diverse experiences encountered by the participants. However, by accounting for these experiences and their effects using carefully selected quantitative instruments, significant understanding and insight into the results gathered through qualitative methods was gained.

Furthermore, as past studies demonstrate, as young children and youth, Sudanese refugees experienced multiple traumatic events and experiences (Bates et al., 2005; Geltman et al., 2005). While accounting for these experiences was necessary, it was not the central focus of this study. Rather, the focus of this study was on the role of resilience mechanisms relating to persistence toward academic goals. Hence, I did not want to burden the participants by asking them to orally recount each and every experience of adversity that they faced, but rather, gather this information through a less obtrusive and more efficient manner by relying on self-report measures that participants can complete independently and on their own time schedule.

Although self-report measures have been critiqued for potentially being biased or lacking objectivity, it has been argued that as the stressfulness of any life event is naturally dependent on the individual's personal appraisal of the event, self-ratings in trauma studies are relevant measures (Luthar, 1991). While many self-report instruments have recently been developed and then adapted and validated with some refugee populations, none have been adapted specifically for use with Sudanese refugees (Geltman et al., 2005). Because each culture has its own geopolitical background and its own specific trauma related symptoms, instruments that have not been revised or adapted to reflect cultural differences among populations should not be used or relied on for valid

results (Mollica et al., 1992). Shoeb, Weinstein, and Mollica (2007) explained, "the actual traumatic events as well as the meanings attributed to them vary according to the specific historical, political and social context in which the trauma occurred. Thus, *for each refugee population, a different [measure] should be developed* [italics added]" (p. 449). To date, although some studies involving Sudanese refugees have used standardized measures to assess levels of PTSD symptoms or depressive symptoms (see Geltman et al.), the measures have not been adapted or revised and then demonstrated to be valid and reliable for assessing Sudanese culture-specific trauma-related symptoms. Therefore, results from these instruments were not used to make any classifications or diagnostic judgments about the participants, but rather, to systematically gather more information than interviews may permit about prior experiences and the effects on the participants.

The *CTI-104* (Hollifield et al., 2005; Hollifield et al., 2006; see Appendix C) was deemed the most appropriate and inclusive instrument for assessing the level and types of war-related events that Sudanese refugees selected for this study experienced. The *CTI-104* is a self-administered questionnaire for assessing war-related events in community-dwelling refugees (i.e., refugees who have resettled in communities outside of refugee camps). The *CTI-104* has 104 event items divided into 12 scales according to type of event. Respondents are asked to indicate for each item whether or not they experienced the event; and, if they did, the level of impact the event had in terms of threat to their life or fear of safety. Each item has five response options, 0 (*did not happen*), 1 (*a little fear or threat*), 2 (*moderate fear or threat*), 3 (*a lot of fear or threat*), and 4 (*extreme fear or*

threat). Results may be scored as either a dichotomous yes/no sum of responses or as the sum of 5-point severity scores to provide continuous data for statistical analysis.

Hollifield et al. (2006) found the instrument reliable and valid for assessing a wide range of traumatic war-related events. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total sample on the overall measure was 0.99, with the 12 scales ranging from 0.68 to 0.98 (with 10 scales being larger than 0.86). The test-retest reliability correlation was acceptable, 0.83. Hollifield et al. (2006) also determined that results from the *CTI-104* could be generalized to various refugee populations while also discriminating between war contexts. They concluded that the "validity of the *CTI-104* allows it to be a standard for research about the traumatic effects of war on refugees" (p. 537) and recommend "the *CTI-104* in its current form to investigators of refugee war-related trauma. It was intentionally developed to contain a broad range of events that represent a broad range of refugees" (p. 539).

The *IES-R* (Weiss & Marmar, 1997; see Appendix D) was adapted from the *Impact of Event Scale* developed by Horowitz, Wilner, and Alvarez (1979). The original scale was developed to capture the level of symptomatic response in the week prior to assessment relating to specific traumatic stressors. Because the scale was developed before the *DSM* adopted the diagnosis of PTSD, the original scale only measured two criteria for the diagnosis: intrusion and avoidance. When Weiss and Marmar revised the scale, they added seven items, six tapping into the new domain of hyperarousal and a new intrusion item tapping into the dissociative-like re-experiencing of an event when, for example, having a flashback. These seven new items were randomly interspersed with the seven intrusion and the eight avoidance items from the original scale, creating a 22-item

assessment with three subscales. Each item has five response options, 0 (*not at all*), 1 (*a little bit*), 2 (*moderately*), 3 (*quite a bit*), and 4 (*extremely*), and it was anticipated that it would take participants approximately 15 minutes to complete. The *IES-R* has been used in multiple studies (Cusack & Spates, 1999; Pfefferbaum et al., 2000) and has been translated into Dutch (Olde, Kleber, van der Hart, & Pop, 2006), Japanese (Asukai et al., 2002), and Spanish (Baguena et al., 2001).

The psychometric properties of the *IES-R* were most recently evaluated by Creamer, Bell, and Failla (2003). Data from their study demonstrated high internal consistency for the Total Scale (0.96) as well as the three subscales (Intrusion alpha = 0.94; Avoidance alpha = 0.87, and Hyperarousal alpha = 0.91). Creamer et al. concluded that "current data generally support the *IES-R* as a useful instrument in the assessment of traumatic stress" (p. 1495). However, although the subscales of the *IES-R* have been found to parallel the *DSM-IV-TR* (APA, 2000) criteria for diagnosing PTSD (Creamer et al.; Weiss & Marmar, 1997), like the *CTI-104*, this scale has not yet been demonstrated to be valid or reliable with Sudanese refugees. Therefore, data was used to assess general levels of PTSD symptomology for descriptive purposes only, but no diagnostic judgments were made about any participants in this study.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

The first stage of qualitative analysis involved verbatim transcriptions of the recorded interviews and checks for accuracy. Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of each participant. I completed the transcription along with the assistance of a respected and trusted volunteer.

Some qualitative researchers choose to use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). The benefits of such software include automating and accelerating the coding process, providing a more complex way to examine relationships in the data, and providing a systematic way to store and organize memos and data for analysis (Barry, 1998). However, the various CAQDAS programs that are now commercially marketed are unable to "define conceptual categories or themes, develop conceptual diagrams, write memos and journal, gain insight into phenomena, or develop theoretical understanding" (St. John & Johnson, 2000, p. 394). Moreover, CAQDAS packages tend to cause a focus on quantity instead of meaning and may inadvertently cause researchers to analyze their data in rigid ways that are incongruent with their selected methodology (St. John & Johnson). In short, CAQDAS distances researchers from their data, resulting in a loss of context and meaning, negating the very purpose of conducting qualitative analysis in the first place. For these reasons, aside from some assistance transcribing, I personally conducted all of the qualitative analysis procedures, relying on my insight and understanding as the human instrument to unfold the development of theory.

Analysis of the interviews was conducted using Strauss' (1987) guidelines for grounded theory. As a key characteristic of grounded theory and theoretical sampling, I began to analyze the data from each interview before waiting for the completion and transcription of all 10 interviews. By doing so, I engaged in the activity of *constant comparison*. Constant comparison involves analyzing each interview sentence-by-sentence or phrase-by-phrase in order to identify *indicators*—"small segments of information that come from different people, different sources, or the same people over

time" (Cresswell, 2005, p. 406). Through the constant comparison of indicators, I identified classes of events or behavioral actions that could be given *codes*.

Coding. The initial level of coding used is termed *open coding*. The aim of this unrestricted, provisional coding is to open up the inquiry by producing concepts that seem to fit the data (Strauss, 1987). These concepts were given labels that are close to the words of those of the participants (Fassinger, 2005). In some cases, *in vivo* codes were identified. In vivo codes are specific terms used by participants that help relate given categories to others and provide illustrative imagery. As concepts are compared with other concepts, they are eventually grouped into categories. Guidelines for open coding include keeping general questions in mind when coding the data, analyzing the data minutely, and taking time to write *theoretical memos* (Strauss).

Throughout the process of collecting and analyzing data, I wrote theoretical memos to keep track of and link theoretical ideas that emerged (Strauss, 1987). Memos are notations of the researcher's reflexive thoughts throughout the research process, allowing the researcher to "elaborate on ideas about the data and the coded categories. . . . and explore hunches, ideas, and thoughts" (Cresswell, 2005, p. 411). As they accumulated, memos were continuously examined, sorted, and analyzed, which in turn produced new results and new memos. Through the progression of examining and sorting the memos, I produced additional theoretical memos "of greater scope and conceptual density" (Strauss, p. 18). Consequently, memo writing became more frequent, focused, and intense as the process evolved.

The second level of coding is *axial coding*. Axial coding involved organizing (sub)categories developed through open coding into (key)categories (Fassinger, 2005).

Strauss (1987) explained that axial coding "consists of intense analysis done around one category at a time. . . . result[ing] in cumulative knowledge about relationships between that category and other categories and subcategories" (p. 32). Axial coding led to the linking of categories from which the core category was eventually chosen.

The final level of coding in the development of theory is termed *selective coding*. Selective coding emphasizes "coding *systematically* and concertedly for the core category" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). Through the process of selective coding, theoretical memos became more focused and began to contribute to the integration of theory.

Categories. Next, I analyzed codes for the identification of similarities, differences, and uniformities. Underlying uniformities among codes were termed *categories*. Throughout this process, I continuously compared indicators to indicators, codes to codes, and categories to categories in conjunction with writing theoretical memos. Through the repetitive process (i.e., constant comparison) of collecting data and identifying indicators, codes (i.e., open, axial, and selective), and categories, theories began to emerge, which were modified and verified through the collection and analysis of additional data. Furthermore, all of the collected data were continuously reexamined through the back-and-forth process of collecting data, coding, making memos, coding, and developing more conceptually dense memos (Strauss, 1987). This process of generating and verifying indicators, codes, and categories continued until *saturation* occurred, the point where the data began to yield nothing new. At this point, from among the major categories generated, I selected a *core category* as the central phenomenon for the theory (Cresswell, 2005).

Strauss (1987) identified several criteria for selecting a core category. Primarily, a core category must (a) be central and related to as many other categories and their properties as possible, accounting for the greatest amount of variation in a pattern of behavior; (b) appear frequently in the data; (c) relate easily and naturally to other categories (i.e., not forced); and (d) have clear implications for a more general theory. Strauss described the purpose of the core category:

> It has the prime function of *integrating* the theory and rendering it dense and saturated as the relationships are discovered. These functions then lead to theoretical completeness—accounting for as much variation in a pattern of behavior with as few concepts as possible, thereby maximizing parsimony and scope. (p. 35)

Generation of theory. The final step in grounded theory research is to generate a theory based on the identified core category and the processes explaining it. Strauss and Corbin (1994) explained that theory consists of "*plausible* relationships proposed among *concepts* and *sets of concepts*" (p. 278). Given the constant comparison of data, the theory should be "dense," including many conceptual relationships about the patterns and processes surrounding the phenomena of study (i.e., resilience). These conceptual relationships may be presented visually through a theoretical model, as a series of theoretical propositions, or in narrative form (Cresswell, 2005). Diagrams and models are useful for identifying categories and interrelationships. Theoretical propositions provide hypotheses or statements indicating the relationships among categories. Narratives and stories are useful ways to describe the theory relating to the process under investigation. Decisions about how to present the theory were made as the theory emerged from the constant comparison process of analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data.

Quantitative Analysis

Analysis of the data gathered through the quantitative measures began with entering the data into an SPSS spreadsheet. Descriptive statistics were generated to report overall group ($N = 10$) and individual means on each measure and its subscales. Pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of each participant. Group and individual results were summarized in tabular and narrative form in order to get a general picture of the level of traumatic events experienced and its general effects on the participants in this study.

Linking Qualitative and Quantitative Data

There are three general reasons for linking qualitative and quantitative data: (a) to confirm or corroborate each other through triangulation; (b) to provide richer detail and elaborate or develop analysis; and (c) to initiate new lines of thinking through attention to paradoxes or surprises, providing fresh insight by "turning ideas around" (Rossman & Wilson, 1985, 1991). Given the emergent nature of the grounded theory approach to analyzing data, as qualitative analysis progressed, the quantitative findings were frequently compared and contrasted with the quantitative results to see if any correlations or connections could be made between data gathered. I began by evaluating the relationship between the two quantitative measures by examining whether or not the level of traumatic events experienced (measured on the *CTI-104*) was correlated with or could predict the level of PTSD symptomology (measured on the *IES-R*). I also considered the data gathered through the quantitative measures as I analyzed and coded the qualitative data gathered in interviews. In addition to examining whether there were relationships or key themes among the participant responses in the interviews, I looked for relationships

and themes between both quantitative measures and between quantitative and qualitative measures. Consequently, both the quantitative and the qualitative data guided the development of theory grounded in the data, and as the human instrument, I mediated the influence of the quantitative findings with the qualitative findings that emerged.

Summary

The focus of this study was on exploring the resilience mechanisms contributing to the educational persistence of Sudanese refugees in Virginia. With the resilience research literature emphasizing the examination of interactions between the individual and the environment, along with the lack of validated instruments for assessing resilience in Sudanese refugees, a qualitative research design was most appropriate. Grounded theory was the most suitable qualitative approach for exploring resilience in Sudanese refugees given its emphasis on accounting for the meaning participants place on processes or events relating to a phenomenon (i.e., resilience). Interview guidelines proposed by Patton (1990) were used, and collection and analysis of the data were conducted using grounded theory guidelines described by Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1994).

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The primary research questions guiding this study were as follow: What value and significance is placed on education in Southern Sudanese culture according to Sudanese refugees in Virginia? What is the role of learner persistence in Sudanese refugees in Virginia prior to migration to the United States? What resilience mechanisms help or hinder the attainment of or persistence toward Sudanese refugees' educational goals in the United States? What role does education play in Virginia Sudanese refugees' hope for the future?

Pilot Interview

Given my established friendship with Daniel, he served as my integral link with the Southern Sudanese community. As such, his input and insight concerning the methodology in addition to the content of the instruments was invaluable. The interview questions and quantitative instruments were first piloted with Daniel to ensure comprehensibility and item appropriateness. The interview took place on a Sunday evening in May 2009 in my home. Using the hybrid of the standardized interview questions and the interview guide approach (see Patton, 1990), the full interview lasted 52 minutes. After the interview, I asked Daniel if any questions were confusing or difficult to understand. He suggested that I replace the word "hindered" in Questions 6, 7, 12, and 14 with "challenge" (i.e., "What challenges did you face?"). He also advised me to speak more slowly to ensure the participants fully comprehend the questions.

The *CTI-104* (Hollifield et al., 2006) took Daniel close to an hour to complete. However, while Daniel completed it, he stopped to highlight words and terms that he

believed participants would have a difficult time understanding. With Daniel's input, I changed terms used in Item 1 ("ransacked" to "looted"), Item 32 ("immersed" to "held under water"), Item 43 ("interrogated" to "questioned"), Item 63 ("mutilated" to "body parts being cut"), Item 82 (added "and friends" after the word "allies"), and Item 84 (changed "disgraced" to "embarrassed"). Additionally, given the length of the instrument (104 items) and its potential for taking participants an hour to complete, I decided to have participants simply answer "yes" or "no" to the item rather than indicating severity of exposure, a time-saving option the authors provide for in their published description of the instrument.

The *IES-R* (Weiss & Marmar, 1997) took Daniel approximately 15 minutes to complete. Based on Daniel's input that some participants may not be familiar with the word "numb," I changed Item 13 from "My feelings about it were kind of numb" to "I had no feelings about it."

Discussing the procedure for asking participants to return the quantitative instruments, Daniel strongly suggested that I ask participants to complete and mail them back to me within 2 days. He felt that giving participants 1 week to complete them was too long and suggested that I inform participants that my professor was waiting for the results of this study, so I need the items returned as quickly as possible.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted at times and locations most suitable for the participants. The pilot interview was conducted in my home, and seven of the interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants per their invitation. Two participants selected a local university library as the setting for the interview. Seven participants

elected to complete the quantitative instruments immediately following the interview, and 3 participants chose to complete them on their own time at home. I received the quantitative instruments from these 3 participants 2 days, 4 days, and 13 days after the interviews took place, resulting in a 100% return rate on the quantitative measures for this study. General impressions following the interviews were recorded in theoretical memos (for an example see Appendix F). A summary of interview dates, locations, and instrument return dates can be viewed in Appendix G. As with Daniel, all participants were given pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality and protection of privacy.

Participant Characteristics

Overall Sample

The majority of the sample was males ($n = 9$) from the Dinka tribe ($n = 9$). A summary of information related to the participants' ages during different events and experiences is found in Table 2. It is important to note, however, that all ages/birthdates were estimates given to the participants by the UN prior to immigration to the United States, and several participants indicated that after reconnecting and communicating with relatives they believed they were younger than estimated.

Table 2

Total Sample Characteristics

Characteristic	Range	*M*	*SD*
Age at time of interview	24–31	27.5	2.01
Age when village was attacked	4–10	6.65	1.56
Duration of separation from parents (years)	17–22	20.1	1.73
Age at immigration to the U.S.	15–25	20.2	2.82
Years in the U.S.	4.5–8.5	7.7	1.14

Participants immigrated to the United States between 2001 and 2004, and 9 of the participants had become United States citizens. The tenth participant had plans to apply for citizenship when he was eligible. Length of time before gaining employment after arriving in the United States ranged from 2 to 14 weeks ($M = 7.94$, $SD = 4.19$), and at the time of the interviews, 5 participants were employed full-time, 4 part time, and 1 was looking for work (i.e., unemployed) based on having previously been employed as a seasonal worker. Participants were fluent in two to five languages ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.82$). All participants reported that they were Christians and members of a local religious community or church.

Four participants (3 male, 1 female) were married, 3 participants had 1 child, and 1 participant had 2 children. Concerning living arrangements, 3 participants lived with their spouse and 1 with a partner, 1 participant lived with a host family, and 5 participants lived with Sudanese roommates, including 1 participant who lived with his brother. Two participants had no other relatives or family members living in the United States; 8 of the

participants had relatives in the United States, most commonly cousins, aside from 3 participants whose brothers had also immigrated to the United States (1 lived locally, 1 in Michigan, and 1 in Syracuse, NY). When asked about who was most influential in helping them adjust to life in the United States, 3 participants reported a fellow Sudanese, 1 reported a Lost Boy organizer, and 6 reported a member or leader from their church.

The Comprehensive Trauma Inventory-104

The number of traumatic events experienced by participants was assessed using the *CTI-104* (Hollifield et al., 2006). One respondent left four questions blank and another respondent left one question blank. While it is impossible to ascertain whether respondents failed to respond due to not feeling comfortable with the question or simply not realizing they missed the question given the long list of 104 questions, I assigned 0s to missing values. This decision had no impact on the results, as using the dichotomous scale meant values of either 0 or 1 were assigned and total and subtotal results were calculated by summing only values of 1. However, in order to run the reliability analyses without losing the two cases where participants failed to answer every question, assigning a 0 was necessary. The overall internal consistency of the *CTI-104* using Cronbach's alpha was 0.93. The internal consistency coefficients for the subscales varied greatly (range = 0.16 to 0.89) in comparison to the coefficients reported by Hollifield et al. (2006; range = 0.68 to 0.98). This is likely due to the small sample size ($N = 10$) used in this predominantly qualitative study compared with the sample Hollifield et al. (2006; $N = 252$) used in their quantitative study validating the instrument.

In terms of total number of traumatic events experienced, participants in this study reported a range of 38 through 87 with the total sample experiencing an average of

61 (*SD* = 13.88) of the 104 traumatic events listed on the instrument. This is a significantly higher mean than Hollifield et al. (2006) reported. In their purposeful sample of 252 Kurdish and Vietnamese refugees dwelling in three localities in the United States, the average number of traumatic events reported was 32 (*SD* = 27). Moreover, although this instrument was not administered for the purpose of *diagnosing* the level of PTSD in my participants, according to Hollifield et al. (2006), given the range of traumatic events experienced, 100% of this study's participants would be clinically considered to have a high risk of having PTSD (0–27 events = low risk; 28–104 events = high risk).

While the interviews revealed varying experiences and varying responses to these experiences, findings from the *CTI-104* demonstrated that there were many traumatic experiences common to every participant in the study. Twenty-two of the 104 items on the scale were experienced by every single participant in this study. On the psychological injury subscale, every participant reported having their home (or important place like school or workplace) severely damaged or destroyed, fleeing or hiding from soldiers or enemies, being threatened with harm or feeling like they were in serious danger, and the death of a family member and death of friends.

On the witnessing abuse, injury or death subscale, every participant reported seeing their family or friends get seriously injured or ill because of war; seeing other people get seriously injured or ill because of war; seeing someone's body parts being cut off or blown up; watching other people die; helping ill or wounded people (included refugees); seeing dead bodies or parts of human remains; digging up, burying, or

handling dead bodies or parts of human remains; seeing injury or death of many people at once; witnessing mass graves; and seeing injured or dead animals.

On the hearing about injury or death subscale, all participants reported that they heard that children or other innocent people were injured or killed, and they heard about mass killings and people being put in mass graves. On the deprivation and discrimination subscale, all participants reported having little food, water, or clothing because of poverty or discrimination and having to live in poor conditions (i.e., fleeing, in mountains, and poor shelter and hygiene). On the displacement subscale, all participants reported having to flee from their home or community because of danger. Concerning separation and isolation, all participants reported not being able to see a family member who was dying or not being able to witness a burial. Responding to the difficulties during migration subscale, all participants reported thinking that they would not ever be able to leave a refugee camp and being separated from family members during fleeing and migration.

An itemized summary of percentage of participants responding "yes" to experiencing the 104 traumatic events is in Appendix H in addition to descriptive statistics for the total sample disaggregated by subscale and a summary of descriptive statistics disaggregated by participant and subscale.

Impact of Event Scale-Revised

While the number of traumatic events experienced by participants was evaluated using the *CTI-104*, the impact of these events on participants was evaluated using the *IES-R* (Weiss & Marmar, 1997). The overall internal consistency of the *IES-R* using Cronbach's alpha was 0.88. The internal consistency coefficients for the avoidance, intrusions, and hyperarousal subscales were 0.62, 0.84, and 0.77, respectively. With the

exception of the avoidance subscale, reliability coefficients are above the accepted social science cut-off of 0.70 (Nunnaly, 1978) and are consonant with the reliability alphas reported by Creamer et al. (2003).

Scores on the *IES-R* total scale ranged from 1.46–3.88 ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 0.73$). On average, participants experienced more intrusion symptoms ($M = 2.78$, $SD = 0.89$) of PTSD than avoidance ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 0.63$) or hyperarousal ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.00$) symptoms. Participant scores from this study were higher than the scores Creamer et al. (2003) reported for their total sample ($N = 274$) of Vietnam war veterans (*IES-R* total scale $M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.00$; intrusion $M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.09$; avoidance $M = 1.90$, $SD = 1.00$; hyperarousal $M = 2.55$, $SD = 1.14$). Although the *IES-R* was not administered with the purpose of diagnosing PTSD in the participants, according to the cut-off score (1.5) determined by Creamer et al., 80% ($n = 8$) of the participants in this study could be classified as demonstrating PTSD symptomology. However, as this instrument has not been validated with a Sudanese population, no diagnostic decisions were made. A summary of the total sample results on the *IES-R* subscales and total scale is in Table 3. A summary of individual results on the *IES-R* subscales is in Appendix I.

Table 3

Total Sample Descriptive Statistics From the IES-R

	Range	Total possible	*M*	*SD*
Subscale				
Avoidance	1.50–3.75	4	2.41	0.63
Intrusions	1.50–4.00	4	2.78	0.89
Hyperarousal	0.83–4.00	4	2.18	1.00
Total score	1.46–3.88	4	2.46	0.73

Statistical Analysis

I conducted a Spearman rank-order correlation analysis to determine if there was a significant correlation between results on the *CTI-104* and the *IES-R*. There was no correlation in the data set between results on the two quantitative measures. There are a few potential explanations for this finding. One is the possibility that participants did not fully understand the directions of the *IES-R*. Although I verbally explained the purpose and instructions accompanying the *CTI-104* and the *IES-R* to all participants, in retrospect, I believe the instrument prompt may have been a little ambiguous and difficult to conceptualize. The published instructions from the *IES-R* were as follow:

> *Instructions*: The following is a list of difficulties people sometimes have after stressful life events. Please read each item, and then indicate how distressing each difficulty has been for you *during the past 7 days* with respect to the disaster. How much were you distressed or bothered by these difficulties?

It is likely that participants may not have been focusing on their responses in the past 7 days, but rather, their general response over the years since the traumatic event

occurred. Additionally, although the prompt requested individuals to think about one stressful life event (or disaster), the participants in my study experienced or witnessed an average of 61 (*SD* = 13.88) traumatic life events and may have been thinking about multiple events in response to the 22 different questions on the instrument.

On the other hand, when considering this quantitative data in relation to the qualitative data, these statistically nonsignificant findings may actually be highly significant. In response to Question 22 on the standardized open-ended interview ("Overall, have your different life experiences [good and bad] made you a weaker or a stronger person?"), every single participant responded that through adversity they become stronger. Given these qualitative findings, it should not be surprising that there was not a positive linear correlation between the number of traumatic events reported on the *CTI-104* and scores on the *IES-R*. In fact, although this was not the case, one might even expect a negative or inverse correlation between the two scales. I discuss this phenomenon in greater detail later in the analysis.

Individual Characteristics

The following is a narrative description of each participant in this study. These descriptions were generated using results from the *CTI-104* (see Appendix H), the *IES-R* (see Appendix I), and the demographic questionnaire responses that were gathered at the beginning of each interview.

Daniel

Daniel is a 28-year-old single Dinka male who was born in Northern Bahr Al-Ghazal Province, Sudan. Daniel left his village when he was 9 years old and reunited with his parents in December 2008 after being separated for 21 years. In November 2004,

at the age of 24, Daniel immigrated to the United States and is currently a permanent legal resident. He hopes to become a U.S. citizen within the year. Daniel gained employment in the United States 2 weeks after immigrating and currently works full time since completing his studies for the year at a local community college. Daniel recently transferred from community college to a 4-year institution to complete an undergraduate degree in government with a concentration in pre-law. In addition to knowing some tribal languages, Daniel speaks English, Swahili, Arabic, and his Dinka dialect.

Daniel experienced 70 (rank = 3) of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104*. On the *IES-R*, Daniel ranked 7th with a total score of 2.11 on a scale of 0 through 4. Daniel reported more intrusion symptoms ($M = 3.00$) of PTSD than avoidance ($M = 2.50$) or hyperarousal ($M = 0.83$) symptoms.

Joseph

Joseph is a 31-year-old single Dinka male who was born in the town of Awiel, Bahr Al-Ghazal Province. Joseph left his home when he was 6 or 7 years old and has been separated from his family for more than 22 years. Joseph immigrated to the United States in February 2001, found work after 3 months, and has obtained U.S. citizenship. Joseph is one class short of earning his associate's degree and currently works full time. Joseph has one infant child, and speaks Dinka, English, Swahili, and Arabic.

Of all the participants, Joseph experienced the greatest number of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104* ($n = 87$, rank = 1). On the *IES-R*, Joseph ranked 8th with a total score of 2.00 on a scale of 0 through 4. Joseph reported an equal number of intrusion ($M = 2.25$) and avoidance ($M = 2.25$) symptoms, with considerably less hyperarousal ($M = 1.50$) symptoms.

Timothy

Timothy is a 28-year-old Dinka male from Bahr Al-Ghazal Province. Timothy believes he was 10 when he left home and has been separated from his family for over 20 years. Timothy came to the United States in February 2001 at the age of 19 and found work 1 month after immigrating. Timothy is currently employed full time and at some point in the future hopes to earn his associate's degree in business. Timothy speaks English, Dinka, Arabic, and Swahili and has gained U.S. citizenship.

Timothy experienced 59 (rank = tied for 5th) of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104*. On the *IES-R*, Timothy ranked 3rd with a total score of 2.89 on a scale of 0 through 4. Timothy reported more intrusion symptoms ($M = 3.25$) of PTSD than avoidance ($M = 2.75$) or hyperarousal ($M = 2.67$) symptoms.

Moses

Moses is a 28-year-old Dinka male from Bahr Al-Ghazal Province. Moses was 6 or 7 years old when he left home and was separated from his family for 20 years. He was recently reunited with his family in Sudan during the spring of 2009 and married while he was there. Joseph is hoping to bring his new wife to the United States in the near future. Joseph immigrated to the United States at the age of 21 in April 2001 and gained employment 3.5 weeks later. Due to seasonal layoffs, Moses was unemployed at the time of the interview, but was looking for full-time work. Moses has gained U.S. citizenship and speaks five languages, including English, Dinka, Arabic, Swahili, and a "local [Sudanese tribal] language."

Moses experienced 55 (rank = 7) of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104*. On the *IES-R*, Moses ranked 6th with a total score of 2.89 on a scale of 0 through 4.

Moses reported more avoidance symptoms ($M = 2.63$) of PTSD than intrusion ($M = 1.63$) or hyperarousal ($M = 2.17$) symptoms.

Mark

Mark is a 27-year-old Dinka-Bor male who is from Jonglei State. Mark immigrated to the United States in March 2001, gained employment after 2 months, and has become a U.S. citizen. In May 2009, Mark graduated from a state university in Virginia, earning his bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in community health. Mark is working part time, but since finishing school he has been looking for full-time work or a second or third part-time job. Mark was separated from his family when he was 7 years old and after 22 years was reunited in 2006 with his mother who was living in Kenya. While returning to Kenya, Mark married his "sweetheart," a young woman he knew as a girl in the Kakuma refugee camp before immigrating to the United States. Mark and his wife have 1 child, and at the time of the interview, Mark was hoping that all the paperwork would be processed within the next month in order for his wife and child to immigrate to the United States. Mark speaks English, Arabic, a Dinka dialect, and Swahili.

Mark experienced the least number of traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104* ($n = 38$, rank = 9). On the *IES-R*, Mark ranked 10th with the lowest total score of 1.46 on a scale of 0 through 4. Mark reported more avoidance symptoms ($M = 1.88$) of PTSD than intrusion ($M = 1.50$) or hyperarousal ($M = 1.00$) symptoms.

Luke

Luke is a 29-year-old Dinka male from Northern Bahr Al-Ghazal. Luke was separated from his family at the age of 7 and returned to Sudan in 2005 after 18 years.

Sadly, just months before Luke's return to Sudan, his father passed away from complications with diabetes. While returning to Sudan, his family made arrangements for Luke to be married. He currently has two sons with another child on the way. He was able to make arrangements for his wife and children to immigrate to the United States in January 2009. Luke immigrated to the United States in January 2001, gained employment exactly 56 days later, and has become a U.S citizen. Luke is currently working full time while going to school part time (two courses a semester). He has eight more classes to complete before earning his associate's degree. Luke speaks English and Dinka fluently and knows some Swahili and Arabic.

Luke experienced 59 (rank = tied for 5th) of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104*. On the *IES-R*, Luke ranked 5th with a total score of 2.47 on a scale of 0 through 4. Luke reported an equal number of intrusion ($M = 2.63$) and avoidance ($M = 2.63$) symptoms, with less hyperarousal ($M = 2.17$) symptoms.

Paul

Paul is a single Dinka male from Jonglei State. According to UN officials, Paul is 27 years old, however, conversations with his family have led him to believe he is 2 years younger. Paul was separated from his family when he was 4 years old and has not yet been reunited with them. In September 2001, at the age of 19, Paul immigrated to the United States and gained employment 2 months later. In May 2009, Paul graduated from a state university in Virginia with a major in business. Paul is currently working part time because of his studies, but is looking for full-time work. Paul is also studying for the Graduate Management Admission Test and hopes to attend graduate school to earn his

Master of Business Administration. Paul has gained U.S. citizenship and speaks English, Arabic, Swahili, Dinka, and some Amharic.

Paul experienced 48 (rank = 8) of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104*. On the *IES-R*, Paul ranked 9th with a total score of 1.71 on a scale of 0 through 4. Paul reported more avoidance symptoms (*M* = 2.13) of PTSD than intrusion (*M* = 1.50) or hyperarousal (*M* = 1.50) symptoms.

Abraham

Abraham is a 29-year-old single male from the Moru tribe in Western Equitoria Province. Abraham left home when he was 7 years old and while fleeing saw his mother killed. Abraham has not yet been able to make arrangements to return to Sudan to be reunited with his father and sister. Abraham immigrated to the United States in May 2001 at the age of 22 and gained employment 14 weeks after arriving. Abraham currently works part time while attending school. He is studying to be an engineer. Abraham has become a U.S. citizen and speaks English, Swahili, Arabic, Moru, Dinka, and another tribal language.

Abraham experienced 58 (rank = 6) of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104*. On the *IES-R*, Abraham ranked 4th with a total score of 2.69 on a scale of 0 through 4. Abraham reported more intrusion symptoms (*M* = 3.50) of PTSD than avoidance (*M* = 1.75) or hyperarousal (*M* = 2.83) symptoms.

Job

Job is a 25-year-old single Dinka male from the Upper Nile Province. As they lived in the city of Juba when the civil war become intense, when Job was 5 years old his father arranged for him and his two siblings to stay with their grandfather in a rural

village believing it was safer. When the village was attacked, Job and his siblings saw his grandfather killed as they fled. In 2007, Job returned to Sudan to be reunited with his siblings and attend the funeral for his parents who had recently been killed in a car accident while traveling from village to village still looking for their children. Job immigrated to the United States in September 2001 at the age of 18 and gained employment 3 months later. Job has earned his associate's degree and is currently working part time while taking classes in pharmacy school. Job has gained U.S. citizenship and speaks English, Swahili, Dinka, Arabic, and Amharic.

Job experienced 76 (rank = 2) of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104*. On the *IES-R*, Job ranked 1st with a total score of 3.88 on a scale of 0 through 4. Job reported more hyperarousal symptoms ($M = 4.00$) of PTSD than intrusion ($M = 3.88$) or avoidance ($M = 3.75$) symptoms.

Leah

Leah is a 24-year-old married Dinka woman. Leah was separated from her family when she was 7 years old. At this time, her two younger sisters and baby brother were killed. In addition to being the only Lost Girl interviewed, Leah is the only participant who immigrated to the United States as a minor (15 years old; December 2000), lived in a foster home, and had the opportunity to attend high school in the United States. After graduating from high school, Leah earned an associate's degree as a nursing assistant and currently works full time as a nursing assistant at a local hospital. Leah plans to return to school to get her registered nurse degree, but took time off after marrying a Lost Boy from Virginia and having a child. When her husband completes his degree in 1 year,

Leah plans to return to school. Leah is a U.S. citizen and speaks English, Dinka, Arabic, and Swahili.

Leah experienced 60 (rank = 4) of the traumatic events listed on the *CTI-104*. On the *IES-R*, Leah ranked 2nd with a total score of 3.22 on a scale of 0 through 4. Leah reported more intrusion symptoms ($M = 4.00$) of PTSD than avoidance ($M = 2.50$) or hyperarousal ($M = 3.17$) symptoms.

Analysis

Transcription of Interviews

All interviews were transcribed by a trusted volunteer who is familiar with the Sudanese refugee community in Virginia and possesses a good understanding of African accents and culture due to time spent in Kenya and Tanzania. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, including nonwords such as a "click," which is a Dinka sound used to emphasize the correctness or truthfulness of a profound statement. A sample transcript can be viewed in Appendix J.

Once receiving the transcribed interview, I listened to the interview while reading the transcription in order to check for accuracy. In some instances, a few days passed between the date of the interview and the date I received the transcription, so this task also served as a refresher of the interview, reminding me of the nuanced expressions and tones the participant used, which would be difficult to decipher simply through reading the text. After completing my check for accuracy, I printed a paper copy of the interview and began my analysis of the data.

Grounded Theory Analysis

Analysis of the interviews was conducted following Strauss' (1987) guidelines for grounded theory. Thus, I began with the three-step process of coding the data (i.e., open, axial, and selective).

Open Coding

Open coding is the unrestricted process of opening up the inquiry by reading the transcript line-by-line and identifying concepts and categories that seem to fit the data (Strauss, 1987). Rather than waiting for the full set of interviews to be completed, I began the process of open coding immediately upon receiving the first transcribed interview and completing the check for accuracy. Using a printed script of the interview, I read through the text and highlighted and underlined key terms and phrases and wrote notes and descriptive terms in the margins. Open codes were developed using sociological constructs and *in vivo* codes. Sociological constructs are words I applied to the category (e.g., "ambiguous loss") based on my own theoretical knowledge of the field under study (Strauss). *In vivo* codes are particular words or phrases used by the participants (i.e., "parent to myself"). At this stage in the analysis, I tried to keep codes as literal and descriptive as possible (see Miles & Huberman, 1994). To organize the codes, I developed a modified version (see Table 4) of a spreadsheet published by Cresswell and Brown (1992).

Table 4

Sample of Spreadsheet Used to Code and Categorize Individual Interview Data

Broad categories	Category	Properties/*in vivo* codes
War	Diaspora	"I don't know where I was going, I was too young, so I was following people" (p. 1) "I left my country when I was young" (p. 11)
	Confiscating property	"they took cattle" (p. 1)
	Slavery	"and took some kids too as a slave, especially in our home town" (p. 1)
	Witnessing death	"it's real horrible because I pass through people who been killed" (p. 11) "I came to Ethiopia a lot of people dying the same age" (p. 11)
Separation from parents	Ambiguous loss	"I left my parent and I don't know where they gone" (p. 11)
	"Parent to myself"	"We were too young, no parent nobody, so and we didn't enjoy our childhood, because 7 and 8 years old were like this, fighting each other, fighting over food, fighting over everything" (p. 1) "I don't have parent over here [in the US], I'm just parent to myself, I'm the one who helped myself" (p. 12) "I have never have parent who were supporting me since I was young" (p. 13)

As I analyzed and coded more interviews, I became increasingly theoretically sensitized as I progressed through the constant comparative process of interviewing, writing theoretical memos, analyzing interviews, writing more theoretical memos, and then completing the same sequence of events with each consecutive interview. Strauss

and Corbin (1994) discussed this particular phenomenon, and I became personally aware of it as I realized that my open coding spreadsheets from each interview were getting longer and more detailed despite the fact that later interviews were not necessarily longer or denser than earlier ones. Once cognizant of this, I realized it was important for me to return to my initial interviews and recode them through the more theoretically sensitive lens that I acquired as I progressed through the interviews and analysis. By doing so, I also heeded Strauss' (1987) warning to not become "too committed to the first codes" (p. 32) in order to avoid becoming too selective too quickly. After I felt satisfied with the level of analysis applied to the open coding of each individual interview, I began the next step, axial coding.

Axial Coding

Axial coding is "intense analysis done around one category at a time. . . . result[ing] in cumulative knowledge about relationships between that category and other categories and subcategories" (Strauss, 1987, p. 32). I began axial coding by constantly comparing each interview's spreadsheet of the categories identified through the process of open coding. Although I had already begun to do this informally through theoretical memos noting common themes in interviews and through notes in the margins of transcripts and notes in the spreadsheets, at this stage in the analysis I systematically compared each interview and developed similar spreadsheets as the one described above, however, each spreadsheet focused on a single category and its subcategories that emerged through the process of axial coding. At this time, I applied sociological constructs and used *in vivo* codes from all 10 interviews in order to generate a comprehensive compilation of data revolving around the "axis" of one category at a time.

The axial coding process generated codes around the following 15 categories (see Appendix K): Dinka culture, separation, personal beliefs, war, education, Sudan (past and present), turning points, adversity, significant individuals, locus of control (internal/external), goals, returning to Sudan (permanently/temporarily), level of education (helping/hindering), adjustment to the United States, and refugee camps. These categories that emerged are consonant with many themes found in the resilience research literature, and I discuss these themes in greater detail in the Results section of this chapter.

Selective Coding

Selective coding involves "coding systematically and concertedly for the core category" (Strauss, 1987, p. 33). Given the focus of my research questions and the content of the participants' responses, through analyzing the 15 spreadsheets that were generated from the process of axial coding I came to center on the participants' educational experiences at the different stages of their lives including their (a) childhood in Sudan, (b) youth in refugee camps, and (c) young adulthood in the United States. I also noticed general themes in responses relating to (a) traditional training and education while in Sudan, (b) the mechanism of formal education in refugee camps—most notably in Kakuma, and, finally, (c) the nature of elective educational experiences in the United States.

Generation of Theory

The three stages and the processes the participants experienced in these stages served as the *core categories* (i.e., central phenomena) from which the theory for this study was generated. According to Strauss and Corbin (1994), theory consists of

"*plausible* relationships proposed among *concepts* and *sets of concepts*" (p. 278). The following is a discussion of the conceptual relationships between the core categories generated through the process of selective coding.

Results

This section is organized around the series of events and processes experienced by the participants: (a) childhood in Sudan: "traditional ways"; (b) youth in refugee camps: formal education; and (c) young adulthood in the United States: elective education. The evolution of these events and processes is visually depicted in a theoretical model that I constructed from the data and depict section by section throughout this discussion of results.

Childhood in Sudan: "Traditional Ways"

The first question of the interview prompted participants to describe their life before coming to the United States, beginning with their childhood. In general, participants spoke very little of and had few memories before their lives were interrupted by civil war. Only two of the participants spoke about their life and recollections about life in Sudan before their villages were attacked. Daniel shared,

> In my childhood I have never [thought] of anything going to school than just follow ups what my father and the people around me does. Is the business like farming, taking care of cows, looking after, like first look after goat and then as you grow up you take care of the cows and take the responsibility of your dad's farm, that's what we do basically as a Dinka.

Mark recalled,

> Every morning I have to drink fresh milks. My mom has to milk cow every morning and I have to drink milk the whole day. We have our chicken. And then my mom boiled eggs and we eat eggs and we were having everything. Life was really enjoyable. We have our sorgum, which is very sweet. So life was really enjoyable. We have beans, corns, and we have sheeps and goats, everything was

> really, really very nice when I was a child before civil war, we were really, really very happy.

On the other hand, when prompted to describe their childhood, 8 of the 10 participants immediately began to relate memories of their village being attacked or needing to flee their homes in order to escape harm. I was able to learn more about the participants' lives prior to their villages being attacked and the influence of their culture through asking them about their parents' views of education (Question 3) and how their Southern Sudanese culture influenced them in terms of education (Question 4).

Aside from Daniel, who attended school for 1 week before his mother found out and "went and beat [him] up in the school," none of the participants reported attending school as children in Sudan before war reached their village. However, they had already begun to get an education; as Luke described it, "they educate kid in traditional way by which there is no school system." He proceeded to explain that the "traditional way" is to teach young boys how to (a) "take care of cattles. Start from goat, sheeps and then after that you take care of your family wealths [cows]"; (b) "how to be warriors, to take your cattle from enemy that will come to take your cattle"; and (c) "how to cultivate the crop." Timothy shared, "in our tradition our life is we cultivate, so we survive cultivating, we survive with animals, which is cows. We take the milk, cow milks, and we cultivate and that's what we eat."

Additionally, girls are trained to "become good wife. How to be responsible in their families and learn thing that the lady usually do like cooking, these thing, household stuff." Leah reported learning from her mother that "you have to take care of your family and you have to see ways that you can help your family and be able to provide food and everything."

This education in the "traditional way" meant that some participants did not even realize their country was one of many on the African continent. Luke admitted, "I didn't know the country that I live in was called Sudan. So I was living in a small area that in my mind is just Dinka living in the whole world—that's all." He went on to explain, "having cow and hav[ing] small farms, that [was] the only education." This sentiment was summarized by Timothy, "in our village we do not have education, civilizations, so we just depend on traditionals."

Reasons for not attending school varied. For some, their parents "didn't even know about school," or "they didn't think about education because none of [their] village [went] to school." Daniel said, "going to school in Southern [Sudanese] mind is not a good kid actually." For others, parents chose to keep them out of school in order to take care of the family's livestock. Joseph explained that children are kept home "to take care of the goat," and Job further elaborated,

> We just depending on the crop we plant. And sometime we go dry throughout the year and we will not have crop and then just depend on animal. So life was not easy for them, because of threat they will not even think about putting anybody to school.

Several participants mentioned that if there is only one son in the family, that son will not go to school. Timothy said, "if you are one [child] you will not go to school," but rather, will "keep the cow, cattle, and sheep and goat." However, if there is more than one son, "one will go to school and one will take care of the cattle." Paul explained that most of the villages give "leadership to [the] older son, and the younger son is always with [the] mother. . . . so the middle son they kick to school." Joseph provided this account,

> Back in Sudan, we keep the cow, cattle, and sheep and goat and they need someone that can take them to the forest for grazing and if you don't have no young kid to go and look for those, they will not let you, so they have to keep you so you can't go to school.

For others ($n = 5$), their parents supported formal education and the participants felt they would have eventually been sent to school had the civil war not "interrupted" their lives. As his father was affiliated with the military, Paul and his siblings would have gone to school because his father "had open mind a little bit." Despite his mother's resistance to education, Daniel recalled that his father was prepared to sell a goat in order for him to get a school uniform, a requirement for attendance. Luke shared hearing about the British giving families cows in exchange for taking children to school while Sudan was still under British rule:

> They give you cow and they take your kid and educate him. And when those few kid came back they make a difference. And for those whom their kid was taken they believe on education. So and when they believe on education, one of my uncle was the person who was believe in education. And his son went to school back in 60s who became a Ph.D. holder in Germany. He's in Germany actually right now.

Perhaps the richest and most valuable education gained by all participants before their abrupt departure from home, however, was their training in Southern Sudanese culture and customs. In the narrative responses of the participants, several prominent themes emerged, centering around (a) not quitting, (b) hard work, (c) community, and (d) a sense of purpose.

Not Quitting

When asked how their Sudanese culture influenced their education, multiple participants highlighted the importance of finishing what you have started. Daniel stated, "If you start something, you need not to leave it half way. No matter what you do or what

hard obstacle you have, you need not to leave that half way, you have to finish it. That's my culture." Joseph noted multiple times ($n = 4$) that if you "put your heart in it" you can finish what you have started. Paul reiterated this idea when he said, "part of our culture, we don't give up easily. I don't know about Dinka who will just give up." He went on to explain that

> when the Dinka person know that is the right thing, he will not give up. He will be going the same direction unless [his] capability will not take [him] there. But if [he has] a feeling that [he is] capable of doing . . . the right thing he will persist to get it.

Fueling a determination to not give up easily is the emphasis on competition in Southern Sudanese culture. Daniel used the analogy of wrestling as a child: "you make sure you are either thrown down or you throw somebody down, but you can't surrender to somebody stronger, or run away." Luke explained how when they were children they would make model cows out of clay and compete to see who could make the best one: "it was something in culture that we need to do competition about." As a result, "that attract[ed] us to work hard."

Hard Work

As young children, the participants had the opportunity to observe the work ethic of their parents and grandparents. Leah observed,

> My mother [took] care of herself and house too. . . . she told me when I was little, no matter who's going to marry you, you have to be strong. You have to take care of your family and you have to see ways that you can help your family and be able to provide food and everything.

Job explained,

> Our people they are farmers. So life is not easy. You, if you don't work hard you cannot get food. So we saw our parents even when I was taken to the village I wake up in the morning around 8:00 I find my grandfather awake already around

> 5:00 and he's in the garden cultivating. So I saw in him how hard work. . . . do consistent work, will always plant a lot of crop and they life will be better.

Community

Dinka life and culture is centered upon community and welcoming others. Mark observed that, "Dinka people we are very social people. We welcome foreigners, those who don't belong to us, and there is a lot of respect." For Timothy, "our culture, Sudanese we welcome people, you know, even somebody you don't know. . . . They welcome you, they give you food. . . . We welcoming people like that." While recounting the history of Sudan, Timothy went on to explain that when the Arabs first began to inhabit Sudan and began to initiate business with the Dinka, "we welcomed them."

In addition to welcoming and feeding foreigners, Dinka culture embodies the age-old adage, it takes a village to raise a child. Mark explained that

> the child is raised by the community. If my child is outside there and one person see my child doing bad thing there, he will start or she will start beating [disciplining] the child. And when we come up and we see it, he or she will say, ok, he was doing this and we have no problem with that. So there is a lot of respect in our culture, not really very individual.

A Sense of Purpose

As children, the participants were either trained in Christian values ($n = 2$) or in tribal traditions ($n = 8$). However, as Paul put it, "Dinka culture is more like conservative Christian. The culture is way conservative. . . . You are taught to respect your mother and father and respect other people." Consequently, the participants gained values that as Paul further explained, "help people get along with people." These values reinforced or perhaps contributed to the cultural emphasis on community, but also the idea of being created for a purpose. Job said,

> My belief was to be a better person. You know, contribute to community and to society around us, one day. And that's what—which is a Dinka moral belief of do a good thing to be part of the community. *You know that you came on earth for a purpose; God* [referring to the Dinka God, Nyahl] *didn't create you for nothing* [italics added]. So it's always challenge to us as a Dinka culture to live better and be able to support community in a better way.

Discussing purpose, Job elaborated with this comment, "the Dinkas believe, before we know Christianity, that we have a purpose. We have a purpose that we are born here on earth."

Childhood in Sudan: Summary

The first research question guiding this study was: What is the value and significance placed on education in Southern Sudanese culture according to Sudanese refugees in Virginia? As depicted in the theoretical model found in Figure 1, while still young children growing up in their villages in Southern Sudan, the participants in this study gained an education in the "traditional ways" of their parents and ancestors. Though none of the participants received what would be considered a formal education through a Western lens, their parents and community members taught them valuable lessons about living in community, not quitting, and working hard. Moreover, they learned that their life had purpose and that they had much to contribute to their families and communities. Though these were not academic skills per se, these lessons in "traditional ways" would soon serve as powerful mechanisms that would enable the participants to not only be successful in their future studies, but also to develop the personal resilience necessary to survive what no human being—let alone a child—should ever be forced to witness or endure. The attitude embodied through the saying "I cannot quit no matter what" would soon mean the difference between life and death for these young participants and their peers.

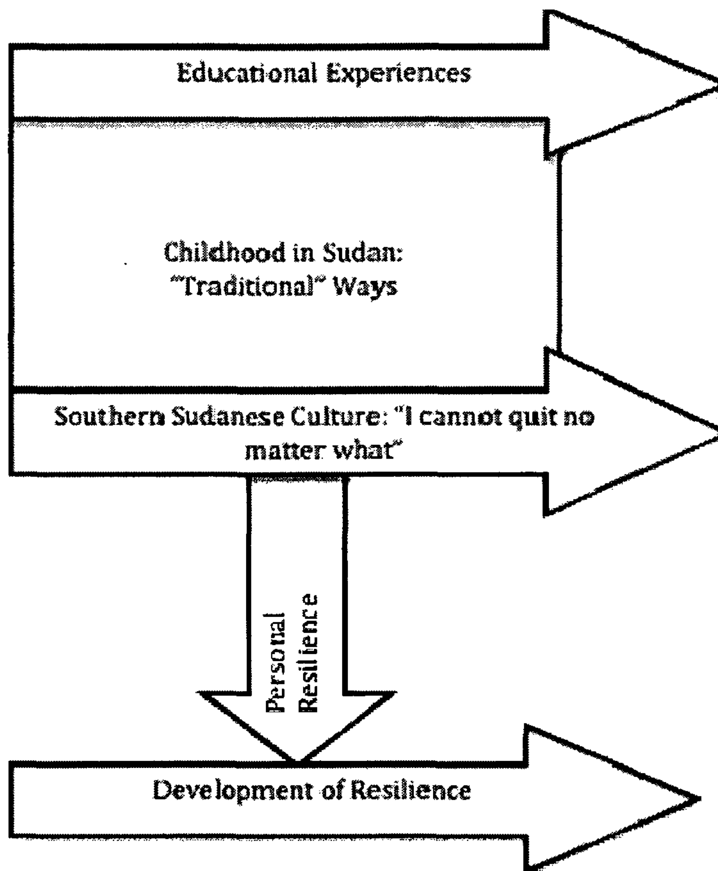

Figure 1. Theoretical Model A of the development of resilience in Sudanese refugees.

Turning Point: Fleeing Sudan

While this study's participants were impressionable young children learning the culture and customs of their ancestors (i.e., the importance of not quitting, hard work, community, and a sense of purpose), civil war was already brewing in parts of Sudan; however, it was largely believed to be a "city problem." Job explained that although civil war started in 1983, they were "not affect[ed] until 1987 when it reached our villages. It start in 1983 and it was considered to be a city problem, it was in the big cities then, you know the government and the intellectual in the cities." He went on to explain that

"clashes about the political war and tension" started in the cities, because "that's where the politicals were." Consequently, many Southern Sudanese living in villages were either unaware of the extent of war raging in their country or were aware, but believing it was a "city problem" did not imagine it would reach their villages.

Job's father, who was educated and lived in the city of Juba (now the capital city of Southern Sudan), sent his three young children to live with their grandfather in a rural village believing they would be safe there. However, as all Southern Sudanese soon learned, there was no safe place. Mark noted that part of the reason was due to the fact that "people were mistreated from the cities, the intellectuals from the South . . . the Christians who were soldiers, and the Christians who were teachers, they were the first victims. So they run away, some of them run to the village." As a result, the Arab militias from the North began attacking the villages in the South, and by 1987 thousands of Southern Sudanese were caught off guard and viciously attacked with little to no warning.

The threat of attack was so far from Mark's mind as a young child, that when attacked, he thought the sound of gunfire was fireworks.

> They attack the village and I can hear the sound of gun and it was, it start with excitement you know we were kid. . . . We hear the sound of the gun: "TOW, TOW" and it was quiet . . . and "TOW TOW" we didn't pay attention it was like, and immediately it was "Du, du, du, du, du" "du, du, du, du, du" and then we hear people crying, "Wo, wo, wo, wo, wo"! And we respond with happiness. We were real not aware of what was going on. It sound good.

The gravity of the situation, however, soon dawned on all participants. While every single participant reported in the *CTI-104* that they saw friends and family injured and 90% reported seeing friends or family killed because of war, 2 participants shared seeing a parent or grandparent killed while their village was attacked. As a young child,

Abraham was in his mother's arms when she was shot while fleeing their village. He painfully recalled,

> I saw her fall down and throw me away and I see the blood. . . . She just fall down and start rolling under the grass. So that time I went my own way, so I stay in bush because they still shooting people.

Job, who had fled with his grandfather when their village was attacked, described how

> I kept calling him, "come, come, come" and the bullet were just going like that [motioning that bullets were flying by his head] . . . so I came back because he was not responding, so I came back and I saw him and the blood was coming out everywhere. And then for some reason my conscience told me to put my hand and last chance on his heart and he was not breathing so I knew he was dead.

Diaspora

Escaping their village alive was only the beginning of the difficulty these young participants were yet to experience. Due to the swiftness of the attacks, children were separated from parents and siblings were separated from each other. In Abraham's words, "the war scattered people." Timothy concurred, saying that "a lot of people separate when fighting going on in village," Leah told me, "I lost my two sister and my brother."

Mark recalled seeing "people running, people running, people running" and reported spending the night "there in the jungle" or "hid[ing] in the bushes." Eventually, the children began to follow others who were fleeing their villages. Moses reported, "I don't know where I was going, I was too young, so I was following people." Job was in a similar predicament, "We run with this group of people together. And we didn't know where they were going. We just saw a crowd running in that direction, so we just followed them."

As they eventually discovered, they were headed toward Ethiopia. The journey, however, was long, hot, and arduous. Mark recollected that "on the way there we face a

lot of hardship: hunger, disease, snake, lion, hyenas, and any other things," adding that much of the difficulty was due to the fact that "there were no preparations [before leaving their villages]. So you don't have food, you don't have any—whatever you are wearing, that is it." Because the children "didn't have a pot to cook food" or "some water container to carry water," they often went days without eating or drinking. Job reached a point where he "took to drink [his] own urine so [he could] get water." Although at times wild fruits and roots could be found, as Mark noted, there was also the problem that "a great number of people" needed to share limited resources along the way.

The travelers were also under constant threat of attack. Job recalled, "Our enemy plane would come during the day and bomb us." Consequently, in addition to avoiding the high heat of the day, the groups chose to travel under the blanket of darkness at night to remain undetected. After dark, however, animals posed constant threats. Job said, "Wild animals at night they will now start a hunting journey for their food." As the children had no weapons to protect themselves, animals "like the hyena and the lion" would attack and many became their prey.

Consequently, the participants saw many people die. The children were perpetually aware of the constant threat of death. Abraham recalled, "I see a lot of my friends died. . . . people died because of water, disease. You can see just, you see dead body." They knew that if they stepped out of the long line of people walking east they would die. Job described this survival mindset, "when you are tired [and if] you drag yourself out of line, [at] the end of the day nobody will walk you up and you will just remain there and . . . you will die there or the animal will come and eat you."

Nonetheless, in the midst of such devastation and adversity, the participants continued to have the strength of their Southern Sudanese culture modeled and demonstrated to them. At one point along the way, Luke decided to give up and go back. He explained, "If there is a way then I should die at home." However, shortly after he and a few others turned around to head back to their ravaged village, they met neighbors who knew them and "took [them] back again and we catch up [to] the group." Despite such limited resources and their own struggle to stay alive, the neighbors' acts of kindness, motivated by the Dinka respect for others and a strong sense of community, likely saved Luke's life.

Demonstrating personal resilience, Job sold his clothes and shoes in exchange for "a pot to cook food. And also for small food to eat." This sacrificial act by a 5-year-old for his 7-year-old brother and 2-year-old sister probably saved their lives. However, within days Job reported that his "feet [were] burning blister[s] because of rough ground." He told his brother, who was carrying their young sister, "leave me behind because I can't walk." Again, modeling the strength of the Dinka commitment to family and respect for each other, his brother refused. At this point, Job shared,

> We drag ourself out of the line because there was this endless line, where all children are walking. And then when you are tired you will drag yourself out of line. And when you drag yourself out of line, nobody will wake you up and you will just remain there. . . . You will die there.

However, as the line reached "nearer and nearer to the end," an older boy that the siblings recognized from their village stopped and asked, "Why you guys waiting?" Job's brother answered, "I have my brother here and he can't make it. Because his feet burning blister." As Job explained with great emotion, "this person offered himself and I will never forget him in my life. So he carried me until we reached Ethiopia."

Ethiopia

Several participants agreed that their arrival in Ethiopia was a turning point in their lives. Job recalled,

> When I reach Ethiopia, that's when I breathed a little bit. Now safe. . . . before then I was start cursing myself, why God do you let us go through this? I wish God didn't create me. But when we went to Ethiopia and then [the UN] now start bringing in food, and everything was a little bit better at that point.

In addition to achieving some semblance of safety and refuge after their long journey, their arrival in Ethiopia marked the first opportunity for most participants to begin primary school. All of the participants recalled attending school in Ethiopia, first "under the trees" and then in "a little primary school" with mud walls and simple rooms. However, most participants indicated that they "had a little bit of education in Ethiopia, but it was not much." Luke remembered that school was like a game. "We don't know what is the good about education. Nobody have a clue. . . . But we just take it because we were told to go and take it, so it's something like a game, keep play and just keep going," but intermittent, as Job pointed out, "sometimes go, sometimes you don't go," as did Paul, who said, "[I] attend class sometime if I want to." Abraham explained his understanding of why their school attendance was so sporadic: "Sometime the security is not safe because they have war, so they say that we don't want these children to go to school because if the enemy come to attack, maybe they kill a lot of Lost Boys in the school."

Unfortunately, this threat became reality when in 1991 civil war erupted in Ethiopia. Job understood that "the government who sympathize with our settlement was overthrown from power so we have to run away." Hence, once again, now as youths, the participants were forced to flee for their lives because, as Job further stated, "When the

Ethiopian government [told them] to leave the country . . . they didn't let [them] know in a peaceful way, but they send military shooting."

As they were chased back to the Sudanese border, the youth were faced with yet another significant challenge—crossing the Gilo River. For a majority of the participants, this proved to be an incredibly traumatic experience. One participant—Paul—was injured while crossing: "I was running trying to cross the river because of attack behind me. And when I cross the river, I was carried away by the current. It was overflow and drop me on other side and injured me in rocks and trees." Abraham recalled,

> When I reach in the middle of the river, my arm is stop, paralyze and just one hand. And I swim, I try, it's very hard for me and the river is very strong. And I drop three times in the river. Up and down, and actually one of my cousins he saw me start slipping and he help me and pull me out from the river. And he says, "What happened to you? You're a good swimmer?" I said, "I know I don't know something happened to my arm, I don't know." And he said, "If I am not here, maybe you're gone." I said, "Thank you so much, you help me and that is a blessing. And God['s] plan to help each other."

Many of the participants' friends were not as fortunate as Job and Abraham. Abraham related, "The Gilo River is a terrible river. It's taken a lot of people. They don't know how to swim so [they] lost their live. Yeah, a lot of people died." The river was not the only danger—Mark said, "They shoot a lot of people who are killed in the water," and Job said, "Those who didn't help to teach themselves how to swim drown in the river or eaten by crocodile in the river. We lose a good number."

Surviving the crossing of the Gilo River did not mean the participants were out of harm's way, as once back in Sudan the youth were again targets for the Northern militia. Several participants recalled being attacked, including Mark, who remembered,

> They dropped 2 bombs when we were in Pashala. . . . A few people were killed. If you see this bomb land, it was a big hole, like this room, and it go first under ground and when it came out, even the soil is like a bullet, the soil itself.

Consequently, they began to "run again. . . . because it was dangerous in Sudan."

In addition to constant threat of attack, the participants once again found themselves traveling in conditions similar to their journey to Ethiopia. Abraham said, "The same thing happen to us; no water, no food, and people died a lot. A lot of Lost Boys dies because of no food, no waters, and disease too," and Luke recalled, "We still have problem of starvation. No food . . . and we were also failing at the same situation."

However, as in Ethiopia, the UN eventually became aware of their plight and began to provide aid and to assist in guiding this resilient group to the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya. While arriving in Ethiopia was a turning point for a few of the participants, the arrival in Kakuma was a more significant turning point for many of the participants. Mark remembered, "There was the safest place. When we were welcomed there it was, the environment was not good, it was dry, windy, but that you know, we were not really worried about enemy any more." Another participant—Moses—remembered that their life began to change in Kenya, "There is not a lot of dying in Kenya, there is not a lot of bad things happen I can see, just only school." Paul considered this circumstance to be a new start, because, "Kenya, this is where I grew up in Kakuma, Northern Kenya."

Youth in Refugee Camps: Formal Education

The Sudanese youth who survived the journey to Ethiopia, the violent expulsion from Ethiopia, and the difficult passage to Kenya, were developing a personal and collective resilience due to a myriad of factors. In addition to the strength of their Southern Sudanese culture, either personally propelling them to keep going or aiding them through the sacrificial actions of others, the youth began to develop another culture

different from the Sudanese culture of their childhood. Not supplanting, but rather augmenting their already strong and resilient culture, the youth were beginning to develop a new and distinct culture, the Lost Boys and Girls culture.

"Lost Boys and Girls" Culture

Paul reported that while in Ethiopia they were called "children of war." However, after being expelled from Ethiopia, and still having no safe place to go in Sudan, Western journalists become aware of the continued plight of these children of war and soon gave them the name Lost Boys. Through the narratives of the participants, several Lost Boys' [and Girls'] characteristics began to emerge.

"Parent to myself." Growing up without parents had a significant impact on the participants, and almost every participant made some reference to this fact. Joseph shared, "Before I came to the U.S., my life was really messed up because I was raised without parent," and Moses related, "We were too young, no parent, nobody, so and we didn't enjoy our childhood" and "I have never have parent who were supporting me since I was young." Joseph had a similar experience: "I was raised without parent. So that's why . . . we have to advise ourself. Because we grow as young guys without parent or relative we have to advise ourself." By "advise ourself," Joseph was referring to the fact that as young people without parents guiding them, they needed to look out for each other: "if you see your brother is going to wrong way, you have to advise him."

However, due to sudden and prolonged separation from their parents, the participants suffered ambiguous loss, "a situation of unclear loss resulting from not knowing whether a loved one is dead or alive" (Boss, 2004, p. 554). Moses shared, "I left my parent and I don't know where they gone." Mark recalled that he and his siblings

thought, "All my parents were killed, and they thought all of us were killed." Job reported, "I did not find out whether my family [died]. So I was hoping somewhere, but how can I get the news?" This separation from parents and ambiguous loss, however, served as a profound resilience mechanism in the lives of the youth.

"Education will be our mother." In addition to finding safety in Kenya through the provisions of the UN, the participants finally had the opportunity to formally begin to study without the interruption of war and insecurity. Paul noted, "Kenya, that is where I start fully going to school." Abraham saw his formal education as transformational, "Something changed my life in Kakuma. Yeah, education. Education changed my life in Kakuma. . . . because I am proud to go to school. So these things changed my life." Job recalled, "When I came to Kakuma then I found education, which is something that changed my life too."

Although schools were quickly constructed and education was provided on a regular basis in Kakuma, the participants continued to face many hardships. The most prominent in all the narratives was lack of food and dealing with hunger. Joseph reported, "Empty stomach make other people drop out," and Luke related, "When you spend most a lot of hours in the school, your stomach will bother you. You have no food, no food that you eat and you feel like you can not go to school." Additionally, Abraham recounted, "In Kakuma we go to school but it is very difficult. Sometime you go to school you don't eat anything. . . . At the end of the day you [are] tired and not able to read sometimes." Ever-present hunger, as Joseph shared, meant that "you can't pay attention to teacher for hunger."

In addition to a shortage of food in the camp, resources were extremely limited. Multiple participants reported a lack of school supplies. Joseph said, "Each one of us have to share pencil, you have to cut it in three so that three people can use it and exercise book we have to cut it too, so that two people can use it." Paul recalled that a class of 50 students "will be given 10 mathematics books so you have to fight over those few books you have."

Moreover, the challenge of needing to share texts was exacerbated due to the fact that the only light the youth could depend on was the limited hours of sunlight at the end of the school day; after dark, there was no way for them to study. Leah reported, "It wasn't easy try to go back to school in the morning and come back and do like house stuff and cook and then go get water, it's like a couple miles away. . . . You don't study." Adding to these problems, some participants mentioned that the teachers were poorly qualified. For example, Mark felt, "They are not well-qualified teachers because they are not paid good by UN. If somebody got diploma somewhere or high school certification, you can teach in high school. High school teaching high school. It was common." Mark also highlighted the lack of educational materials: "We don't have material labs like chemistry and biology, we don't have equipment in refugee schools."

Participants were also troubled by thoughts and worries about their distant parents and siblings. Joseph shared that he really struggled with school when he would think about the parents he left behind: "I don't know if they still alive and there was no communication so you can call them and see how they doing. And there is no way they can reach you and talk to you too." Job could not shake images of what he had seen,

which made it difficult to study: "It is very hard for a child to see somebody die in front of you."

Nonetheless, in spite of hunger, lack of resources, and concern for their families, each participant was resilient and persevered through school. Much of what motivated them was the inverse of what challenged them, evidenced through the saying created by the Lost Boys and Girls that "education will now be our mother and our father." As they did not know whether their parents were dead or alive or whether they could depend on parents in the future to take care of them, education filled the familial vacuum. Luke concluded that the youth in Kakuma quickly realized that "education will be like your mom and your daddy and your sister." This notion was reinforced through the encouragement of the elders in the camp, UN aid workers, and their teachers, so the youth channeled their worries about their families into their studies, realizing that as unaccompanied youth in a refugee camp, the only hope for the future was through education. This finding is consonant with Rutter's (1985, 1987, 1990) emphasis on resilience *mechanisms* as opposed to protective *factors*. Although ambiguous loss and separation from parents would traditionally be viewed as a risk factor in resilience research, the fact that the youth in this study responded to this risk by using it as a motivation to excel academically transforms it into a resilience mechanism as opposed to a risk factor.

Moreover, the youth quickly realized that through gaining an education they would one day be in the position to help their fellow Sudanese, a sentiment described by Luke, who said, "With education you will help your families, you will help your country," and Timothy, who said, "If you are educated, you can help a lot of people."

Several participants observed that people in positions to lead and help others were those who went to school. As Daniel observed,

> Who went to school is the commander of the SPLA, he is the one distributing; the one who went to school before is now working with NGO; who went to school before is now the teacher; who went to school before is now a local clinical officer.

The participants were born into a culture where few saw the need for formal education and therefore had "no generation ahead of [them] that went to school." In the refugee camps, however, the participants acquired a new appreciation of the role of education as a way out of refugee life and a way to help their people. Their experiences and observations heavily shaped and influenced the development of this new cultural perspective. Daniel said, "I have been to refugee camps and I have seen that if you have a little education that you are better off than anybody. I have been to Western Ethiopia [in a refugee camp]. . . and whoever have education is the ones taking care of people." Paul's comment that "a lot of people with better living standard are those with education" was reinforced by Mark, who observed that "if you perform well and get a 'B' you might be employed by UN and teach in high school."

Participants also recognized that the skills they gained in school would enable them to find out the well-being and whereabouts of family members. Daniel had an uncle in the refugee camp who was able to read and write and who wrote a letter on his behalf and sent it through the Red Cross to Daniel's village in Southern Sudan. However, the letter was returned to the refugee camp because no one in his area "was able actually to read and write." This unfortunate event filled Daniel with a burning motivation to become literate. Luke, however, was more fortunate: "I write a letter home and I got a

letter back, so the Red Cross, they took papers, whatever letter you write and search for your families because we haven't heard from them for years. And I got letter."

However, in addition to their new Lost Boys and Girls identity within a "refugee culture," the youth continued to rely on the strengths of their Southern Sudanese roots. Specifically, the Dinka emphasis on competition and not quitting served as a significant resilience mechanism in the participants' academic motivation and success. Participant after participant echoed the role competition played in their studies, summarized by Mark, who said, "We compete, and compete, and compete!" Depending on the individual, they were competing to be in either the top 3 or the top 10 of their class. Mark continued, "What I like most was getting number 1. . . . [Competition] was the big thing. We compete 24-7. That one helped me a lot." In addition to motivating them to get good grades, competition also inspired the participants to attend school in spite of hunger. Luke explained, "What push you again, when you see the other kid he still continues [despite hunger], he don't want to be down. So I was feeling like, no, [I'll] keep on."

The refugee youth also maintained their Southern Sudanese cultural emphasis on community. Several participants mentioned the fact that they traveled in groups and then upon reaching refugee camps lived in groups and supported each other, because as Daniel shared, "I have to depend on the people around me like Lost Boys. . . . I am depending on these people always. They just like family to me." They also helped each other through difficult times. Moses related, "If you have food, you call somebody and come and try to help him. We shared a lot." Joseph said, "We help each other. So whoever food have at that time we share, we eat together."

Youth in Refugee Camps: Summary

As depicted in the expansion of the theoretical model (see Figure 2), the participants continued to develop personal resilience as a result of the cultural and contextual influences in their lives. After they were violently expelled from their homes and country (i.e., turning point: fleeing Sudan), the participants became refugees and given the label Lost Boys and Girls as a result of their unique journey and experiences. The experiences the participants were exposed to on this journey caused them to develop a second culture with its own distinct values and norms. This second culture, however, did not replace the Southern Sudanese culture of their childhood, but as the model depicts, became integrated with their South Sudanese culture and allowed them to develop new mechanisms for dealing with adversity. These new mechanisms (e.g., "education will be our mother") in tandem with the mechanisms acquired as children (e.g., "I cannot quit no matter what") caused the participants to develop a high level of personal resilience, which in turn enabled them to overcome extreme hardship and persevere toward their personal and educational goals.

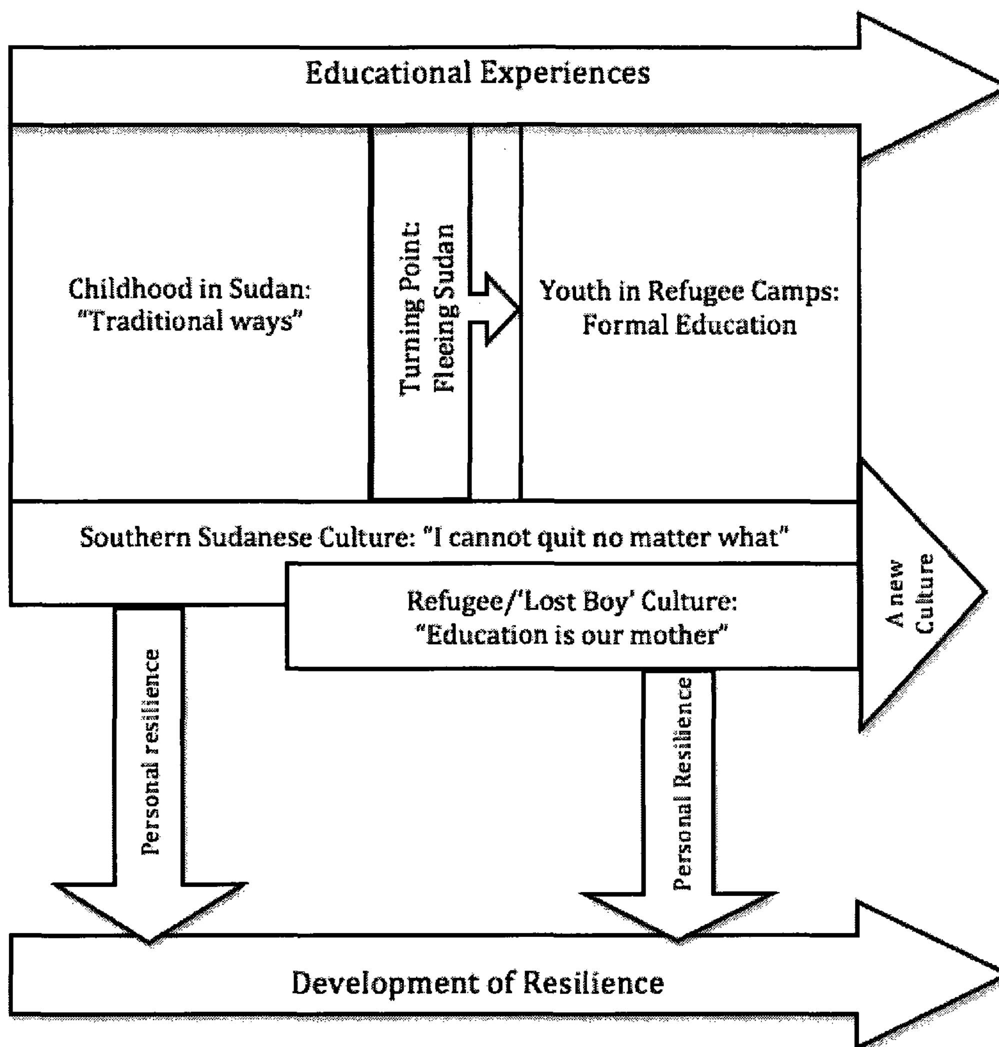

Figure 2. Theoretical Model B of the development of resilience in Sudanese refugees.

The second research question guiding this study was: What is the role of learner persistence in Sudanese refugees in Virginia prior to migration to the United States? As adoption of the mantra "education will be our mother" demonstrates, learner persistence played a significant role in the participants' lives as refugees. In order to elevate education to the role of being a surrogate parent, the participants had to find ways to cope with the tremendous obstacles that threatened their progress. In addition to dealing with physical challenges such as profound hunger, restricted access to water, and limited

school supplies and educational materials, the participants had to battle on a daily basis the ambiguous loss of their loved ones, the difficulties associated with being an unaccompanied minor, as well as the impulse to return to Sudan to join the SPLA/M, a decision that was a death sentence for many of their peers.

Turning Point: Migration to the United States

Although the participants were motivated to complete high school and had high hopes of escaping refugee life, those who finished high school in Kakuma ($n = 6$) were faced with a new challenge: What next? As Mark put it, "You cannot even dream of university. Where will you do it? How will you do it? You got no money, you have nothing." Daniel, who was sponsored by Jesuit Refugee Services only to attend high school in Kenya, said, "After I finish [in] 2000 I don't really have any other hopes because that's what we have agreed." Also, there were few employment opportunities in the camp, and they did not have the freedom to search for jobs outside of the camp. As Mark recalled, "We don't have anywhere to go. You are then in the camp, no jobs, nothing." As the reality of their situation set in, the young people developed what Moses termed "the refugee mind," explaining,

> Because you are under somebody and feed you, dress you, tell you what to do, and you locked up over there, you cannot have access to travel to wherever you want to go, you can be there in one place for 5 years, 5 to 10 years. So you don't have access to free yourself. And the same food you eat everyday, the same thing, the same drink you doing every day. Because you are under somebody, you know feeding you every day. It's like if you live in shelter or jail you know what I try to say. If you've been locked up—whatever the food they bring to you don't have choice, you don't have choice.

Mark expressed his misgivings after finishing high school: "After we finish[ed] high school we didn't know what would be next." As a result, many of their peers returned to Sudan to fight with the SPLA/M. Luke explained that this was because

> there was no vision that something good will come someday in Sudan, we will be in peace, or I will get out of situation in Kakuma. And I know the only way to get out of [the] situation in Kakuma is to go and join the SPLA [Sudan People's Liberation Army] and fight. . . . Either one of the two. When you fight and kill somebody or you get killed. That was the option. But God has his own plan for the dream that I had never dream about it, made it to happen that I am here in America right now.

Thankfully, before any of this study's participants chose to return to fight with the SPLA/M, a choice that resulted in the death of many young Sudanese, an opportunity that they had never even dreamed possible opened up—immigrating to the United States.

When word first began to spread in the late 1990s that the United States, as well as the governments of Canada, Australia, and England, were considering resettling Sudanese refugees, the participants had a hard time believing it was true. According to Luke, hearing about a process to come to the United States was "like a dream. Nobody was believing it." They were told, "We will give you a land to go where you can live with no worry, you will not worry about a gun to kill you, and you will have food to eat, and you will have education." These promises seemed too good to be true; however, a year later the officials "came back again and they said for those people who did not [take] photos, we need your photos and your biography." Eventually, the young people began to see their names on the list of people selected to come to the United States.

Six of the 10 participants reported coming to the United States as a significant turning point in their life. In Joseph's words, "When I came over here it changed my life," and Mark added that when moving to the United States "in 2001 that was the first time I realized I know from now my life change[s]."

Young Adulthood in the United States: Elective Education

Initial Adjustment

When the participants first arrived in the United States, they were full of hope, optimism, and excitement. As Luke put it, "[It] was so exciting, very, very exciting, ever in my life. I was happy in coming to America." Although many were overwhelmed by the cold and snow that they encountered upon arriving during winter months, they were encouraged by the warm welcome they received by parishioners from the American churches that sponsored and assisted them when they first arrived. When they were first brought to their apartments, Paul said, they "thought everything, difficulties [were] over," and that "[we] were thinking that everything [i.e., hardship] is now over." The church people brought food, "took them around," and showed them how to use light switches, door handles, and keys, as well as refrigerators, microwaves, and stoves. Learning that a regular workday in the United States was only 8 hours, Job remembered that "everyone was saying 'if I get a job then I will not go to bed. I will just work throughout so I can get money,'" and added that "when we first came to America, we didn't know, we thought American was like heaven because it's the richest country in the world."

The excitement, however, soon faded as the participants began to miss friends and family they left behind, look for jobs, consider enrolling in school, and learn more about their living conditions. Several participants reported feeling homesick shortly after arriving, and Timothy recalled missing "some people [who] were left back," while Luke commented that "we were so happy for the first week. But after 2 weeks kind of things were changing a bit for me. Thinking about people that I left in Kakuma. . . . I got

homesick." Leah echoed these sentiments when she lamented, "I left my friends back in Kakuma."

Compounding the participants' homesickness was the fact that when they first arrived, it was difficult to get around as navigating public transportation was challenging and they did not have driver's licenses or own cars. Luke described how this led to a real sense of isolation: "We [didn't] have car and it seem we got nowhere. We stay inside every day." Daniel was equally confused:

> It's different than in Kenya. In Kenya the conductor has to come and say we need this amount of money. Here you have to put in machine so there's a lot you have to know. But if you don't know, its hard actually. One just small things may make you look strange because you don't know it actually.

Moreover, although the participants received American cultural orientation before leaving Kakuma, they came with inaccurate expectations and lacked a great deal of necessary information for adjusting to their adopted country. For example, participants reported that they were not aware that after 3 months of assistance with living expenses they would have to fend for themselves. Luke explained, "We were not told about being responsible [for your own apartment] after 90 days," and, as Job observed, "We didn't know we would have a lot of bills."

Quest for an Education in the United States

The participants arrived in the United States with a strong desire to begin their studies. They brought with them the "education will be *our* mother" mentality, but it seemed to have shifted almost to an "education will be *your* mother." Multiple participants, like Peter, mentioned that if they could become educated, they could "take that knowledge and share with other people and everybody might come up." Moses wanted to get an education so he could "take care of the country [of Sudan] or help

rebuild the country." However, as they slowly adjusted to the culture and customs in the United States and began to pursue educational opportunities, the participants faced many unanticipated challenges.

Several participants ($n = 3$) had not yet completed high school but were over 18 years old when they were selected to immigrate to the United States, because as Mark explained, "We start our education very late." Aside from their late start, Daniel reported that their education was frequently "interrupted by war." As such, the participants arrived fully expecting to be able to begin high school in the United States at the grade they left in Kakuma. However, they were not aware that they were too old to enroll. This was Luke's experience:

> People who give us orientation we got some wrong, sometimes something that are not true, like when you go to U.S. you will pick up from your grade. If you are in 12 grade you will start in 12 grade. But they didn't tell us about age. So if you are at certain age you will not be able to go to high school.

Paul had a similar experience: "I think I was not informed or I would have gone to high school. But I was working and came here above age." Talking about the struggle some of his friends faced, Mark, who had completed high school, commented that because of the "system [they] are forced to take what they are not supposed to take." He expounded by adding that although they lacked the necessary foundational skills learned in high school, "because of their age they are forced to go to college and it's difficult."

Age at time of immigration also impacted Leah, who came to the United States as a minor. Because she was 15 when she immigrated, she went "from sixth grade [in Kakuma] and I came over to America and I jump to 10th." Consequently, when trying to enroll in Algebra II, a guidance counselor told her that she could not take the course: "She told me that I wasn't smart enough to take Algebra," Leah recalled. However,

demonstrating her resilient spirit and Dinka character that does not surrender in a fight, Leah proudly shared, "I went anyway and I took it. I got A."

Even the participants who had completed high school before immigrating to the United States ($n = 6$) had to delay their studies longer than they anticipated. Several participants mentioned that lack of records documenting high school completion was a hindrance, as they had to earn their Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) or pass placement exams before being accepted into their programs of study. Luke reported taking the GED exam three times before passing. Job also had educational problems: "I went to apply for admission [to community college] and they said you don't have high school diploma or GED for us to admit you." Paul was accepted into his community college program following a successful placement exam, but he ran into difficulty with his financial aid application: "Financial aid was telling me to bring the proof that you finish high school, and there was no proof."

Once documents were in order to begin studying, participants encountered more hurdles. Several commented on difficulties related to their level of spoken and written English. Paul shared, "English, they were tough to us. Those areas that need you to read, read, read. But those areas with mathematics, we get off easy because there's few English inside." Luke noted, "We couldn't understand most American with their accent and talking fast," and Paul commented, "Some of us we start off at disadvantage side, English as second language, you have to adjust and get to know the system." Job took a more pragmatic approach: "Because I'm English as second language I need to give myself more time, more time, more time."

Not having the opportunity to use a computer prior to immigrating to the United States also posed a challenge for many participants, ranging from difficulty with typing, "I have to learn to type so that I will be writing my papers"; difficulty with research skills, "doing the research you have to go on the computer"; to difficulty with assignments, "teacher will post some assignment on the computer and you have to go do it." Paul said it best: "The computer part is tough. And I think [for] most Sudanese today in general it's still tough. Because everything is on computer now."

The participants were also quick to realize that the educational landscape in the United States contrasted significantly with that in Kakuma. While in Kakuma education was free and provided by the UNHCR, the participants soon realized that if they wanted an education in the United States, they needed to finance it or obtain financing on their own. After living in an environment that fostered the "refugee mind" through free (albeit limited and scarce) food, clothing, shelter, and education, coming to the United States where postsecondary education was elective rather than freely provided was perplexing.

Several participants had to delay their educational goals after arriving in the United States because of financial pressure. Daniel recalled, "When I came here, I wanted to enroll in school. And people said, how can you enroll in school if you don't have money? You have to wait for a while, a year." Moses echoed these sentiments when he said, "I have to pay my room, where I live in, and what I am eating, and then maybe my school fees." Mark was more succinct: "So I need money and I need education. Sometimes they don't go along." Paul agreed, saying, "we are working, but working and school at the same time is not easy." Moses also delayed his plans to enroll in school for

a year because he could not finance his education while helping friends he left behind. He explained,

> all my friends that would survive, I know them and the situation they were in camp. You know, so if you have a chance to come over here and make money you can send them $100 or $200 and help them out over there. So and that's a reason that I wait a year.

The struggle to support friends and family remaining in Africa was a prominent theme in most interviews.

Supporting Those Less Fortunate

Friends and relatives in Kakuma. While many left Kakuma still experiencing the ambiguous loss of their parents and siblings, they also left behind surrogates who had become "just like family" during their stay. Timothy shared, "Some are still there. . . . some [of] the people were left back." However, before the participants left the refugee camp, many of their loved ones had serious conversations with them about their future. Job related,

> When I was leaving the refugee [camp] that day when I was coming to the United States, I had [a] serious talking with my family and friends. [They said], "you are going in a better land, that when you are there, don't forget about us. Go and do your best and support us in any way."

Shortly after arriving in the United States and becoming settled, the participants began to receive phone calls from friends and family in Africa. These contacts were persistent. Moses shared that "you leave your people over there but they just keep calling you," and Daniel said that when friends and family called, they reminded him of their Sudanese origins, that "God sent you and you know our suffering." Job chuckled as he said, "I'm the only one [from my family in the United States]. So I get called every day now! You know, the Lost Boys, it's something you will get used to!"

Family in Sudan. Shortly after arriving in the United States, the Lost Boys and Girls community began to develop communication and network systems across the United States, Canada, Australia, and Africa. Luke explained, "[When] I first came here we stay and we were trying to find the families. That [was] the first priority; I want to know where my parents [were]." Within a few years of immigrating, many participants were able to locate or learn of the well-being of the family members they were separated from decades earlier. For some, this was a momentous and joyous occasion; for others, the news was devastating, crushing their remaining slivers of hope. Job, whose parents sent him and his siblings from Juba to a rural village during the civil war, hoped for years that he would find out about his parents: "I did not find out whether my family dead. So I was hoping." In 2007, this was the news he learned about his parents:

> They came back [to Sudan] because they run to a different country. So they were doing the same thing we were so they didn't know where we are so they were also going from town to town looking for us, but because of the roads they involved in a car accident and they lost their life.

In December 2007, Job returned to Sudan for the first time in 20 years, reunited with his siblings, and attended his parents' funeral.

A common theme in the participants' responses was sharing about the death of loved ones: "my family are not alive" (Timothy); they "die because of food, hunger, disease" (Abraham); "We were 4 boys and 2 girls. And when we came to Ethiopia, those ones [1 sister and 2 brothers] they pass away with my parents" (Timothy); "my brother was killed," "my mother was victim of war," and "I see a lot of my friend died" (Abraham); "my older brother was dead" (Luke); "my grandfather was shot. And he lost his life" (Job); and "I lost my two sister and my brother" (Leah). These qualitative findings were reinforced by the quantitative findings; on the *CTI-104* every participant

reported the death of a family member because of war (Question 12) and every participant reported the death of a friend due to war (Question 13).

With experiencing so much ambiguous and confirmed loss, the news that a family member was still living was like a miracle for many. Hence, Moses said, "if you['re] lucky and find one of your relative, you try to help them out." The participants eagerly shared their profound responsibility to take care of relatives in Sudan or those still remaining in refugee camps in Kenya or Uganda; in Luke's words, "although it's hard on me, so *let me have that responsibility* [italics added]."

The participants in this study took and continue to take their responsibility for their families very seriously. Although they were not specifically asked about it, all except one participant mentioned supporting family members in Sudan or paying the tuition for young relatives to attend school in Kenya or Uganda. Many participants paid for medical procedures or treatment for family and relatives, with one even flying his parents to Nairobi to receive necessary medical attention. In general, the participants were not quick to forget where they came from or the type of life they left behind. Joseph put it this way: "When they call and tell me the situation back there [it] makes me focus on working and help them out, because *I've been there and face[d] that situation* [italics added]."

The level of compassion and identification with their people in Africa combined with their Southern Sudanese work ethic and the value placed on taking care of their own motivated the participants to work hard. Several reported working two or three jobs in order to make additional money to support their relatives. Ironically, by working so much, the participants soon lost their financial aid eligibility. This irony did not escape

Daniel, who said, "I really need to work so that I can help my family back home and if I work more hours I will not get financial aid." Losing financial aid, as Moses noticed, is "affecting more of the Sudanese over here. So you try to help yourself but you cannot help your people back there." Job agreed:

> I was working three job and that would make me a little more money and those money I didn't have them because I have to send them to relative back in Africa. So that one could not make me qualify for financial aid if I apply.

Despite the fact that a large portion of their wages were sent to Africa to pay for their relatives' tuition, medical bills, and living expenses, these funds were credited to them as income because the money was sent personally and directly and was not sent through an organization as charitable giving for tax purposes. As a result, many of the participants made "too much money" and lost their financial aid eligibility, causing the participants to choose among some difficult scenarios: (a) participants could choose to work less in order to keep their financial aid; however, this meant they could not support their relatives as much; (b) participants could continue working the hours they were, but they would lose their financial aid and have to either spend a larger portion of their earnings on their tuition, and therefore have less to send back, or take out loans; or, (c) participants could choose to stop attending school in order to maintain their level of support for relatives. While the participants' life experiences in Sudan, Ethiopia, and Kenya were relatively similar, the lives of the participants began to diverge as they responded in varying ways to life challenges in the United States.

Personal Resilience Versus Altruistic Resilience

By approximately the fourth interview, I began to identify two types of resilience emerging in the participants' narrative responses to questions pertaining to life

postimmigration to the United States. The first form of resilience is *personal resilience*. Personal resilience is the traditional form of resilience, which Grotberg (2003a) defined as "the human capacity to face, overcome, be made stronger, and even transformed by experiences of adversity" (p. 27). Every participant demonstrated personal resilience, indicated through the fact that in response to Question 22 from the standardized open-ended interview questions, every participant reported that their various life experiences made them stronger. However, with regard to persisting toward or achieving their educational goals, several participants demonstrated what I have termed *altruistic resilience*.

Neither Joseph, Timothy, nor Moses had met nor were actively working toward their educational goals at the time of the interview. Given the emphasis of this research and my focus on examining the resilience mechanisms in Sudanese refugees as it relates to their achievement of or persistence toward educational goals, I initially perceived these three participants as failing to demonstrate resilience as usually defined. However, I soon saw the bias and error in this perception as I began to reflect on the interviews, make comparisons among answers, and write memos about my thoughts and observations (see Appendix F). I soon realized that these participants were indeed demonstrating resilience, but it was for the consideration and welfare of others, rather than themselves.

Altruism is "unselfish regard or devotion to the welfare of others" (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2009). Several participants in this study were demonstrating altruistic resilience rather than personal resilience by intentionally delaying or sacrificing their own educational goals in order to devote themselves to ensuring the education and well-being of relatives in Sudan. Joseph explained, "What make[s] it difficult is the life

back in Sudan is real, real hard for people who live back there, so it make[s] me think not to finish my education." Timothy was collaborating with his brother in Syracuse to put four young relatives through boarding school in Uganda: "I have to send the money to buy the clothes, shoes, books. . . . I'm responsible for them. . . . when I go to school [there's] nothing that can help them." When forced to choose whether to put himself or his young relatives through school, he chose them.

Moses had a great deal to say about supporting family in Sudan versus supporting himself in the United States. For example, he said, if you are fortunate enough to locate one of your relatives, "you try to help them out. . . . you put relative first." Putting relatives first meant postponing personal desires for the advancement of others. He shared that even if "you get a scholarship, you still talking to your people [and] you still have that feeling of trying to help them out even though you don't have nothing." He went on to warn what could happen to those who chose to focus on their studies rather than helping out relatives:

> [You] try to make yourself a somebody and then you [lose] everything. You [lose] your family for those 6 years you've been following education and now you finish and it's not easy to get a job to where you can try to find where your relative are.

For Moses, the pressing needs of family in Sudan took higher priority than his own desire to go to school:

> If you're somebody that try to bring your people up and you know [the] situation that they were in over there . . . you can say, "oh education, maybe I will get it back later" and *then [you] may help people in the situation they are in now* [italics added].

Luke was working toward his educational goals by taking two courses a semester while working full time, but his studies were not progressing at the pace he had imagined when he first learned of the opportunity to immigrate to the United States: "I was even

calculating [that] by 2005 or 2006 I might get my bachelor degree if things went well." However, in May 2009 he was still eight courses short of earning his associate's degree. The reason was not that he lacked resilience or focus on his goals, but rather, he chose to support multiple relatives in Africa: "I have 7 kids that I am taking care. They are going to school in Kenya. I'm supporting them." While Luke expressed some sadness that he was not further along in school, he harbored no resentment: "Whatever little thing I'm sharing with them [I] say (*click*) *it's time now for me to take care for others* [italics added]." Luke was also at peace with the repercussions of his decision to put the success of others before his own opportunity. With two young children of his own and another on the way, he said, "I'm still appreciating that I have this opportunity to come here. Although I will not get that much, my kid will get it."

The remarkable thing about each of the participants who were demonstrating altruistic resilience by clearly delaying or sacrificing their own goals for the advancement of others was that they did not indicate that they felt forced into the situation or that they were without a choice in the matter. Rather, when asked whether they felt that they were in control of their own life or if life was controlling them (Question 19), each one responded that they were in control: "I am the one in control . . . it depends on me" (Joseph); "I'm in charge of my own life now. I'm the one who know[s] where I am going" (Timothy); "I am the one who control my life. I know which direction I can take it" (Moses); and "although I am not satisfied with everything, I am in control" (Luke). Luke elaborated and said something very interesting: "If I was not in control of my life I should not [be] supporting other people." When prompted to expand on this, in reference to delaying his own goals in order to support family, he answered, "[It is] my will to do.

Because if you cannot support your life, that means life is controlling you. You will not even think about other people."

In the same way these four participants demonstrated personal resilience in addition to altruistic resilience, the remaining participants demonstrated both forms of resilience. However, rather than postponing their education, they found coping mechanisms that enabled them to persevere toward their educational goals.

Mechanisms for Persisting Toward Educational Goals

"You can take a loan." For several participants, accepting loans was the solution to the dilemma of supporting relatives versus attending school. Job, who completed his associate's degree and was working toward a pharmaceutical degree at a 4-year university in Virginia said, "I took a loan and that loan now is huge—actually by the time I graduated I will have over $100,000 loan." However, as a result, he "can now work, get a job supporting [himself] and be able to support [his] family back in Africa." Mark, who just graduated with his bachelors' degree in economics in May 2009, believed it was a blessing to be able to apply for a loan, something that was not available to refugees in camps. As he expressed it,

> We have seen a lot of opportunities that our age mate American don't see. You see, in American education system your financial aid that is one. You see, and sometimes people ignore it but it help. You can take a loan and when you take a loan you graduate and you can pay it off little bit by little bit. That is one factor too. Sometimes people say ok, no I got basic [minimum wage] job that is work by hand and you work there and work there, it will take you nowhere. So American education system, when you get a bachelor degree or somewhere is valuable; wherever you go it's helpful.

With the possibility of taking a loan in order to study, Mark went on to say, "I see no excuse for me to say I don't have to go and do it [finish school]. No excuses, I am blessed to be here in the U.S."

"The land of opportunity." As already noted, the participants saw "a lot of opportunities that [their] age mate American don't see." Although life in the United States was not quite the rosy picture that was painted in Kakuma, and living and studying proved more difficult than they anticipated, the participants recognized that unlike refugee life in Ethiopia and Kenya, in the United States they were provided great opportunity, and it was up to them to make something of it. For example, Job said,

> America is the land of a lot of thing. There are good thing and there are bad thing that you could do. You could destroy yourself with a period of time, if you choose to. But with those thing I think I choose the way that is better for me and will be more worth it to me in the future.

Paul observed that people who are born in opportunity do not necessarily understand that that is the case: "Some people, especially those born here, they don't see opportunity. Because they were born in opportunity." He went on to explain, "I think through the difficulties I [had] when I was young and the lack of opportunities, they help me, like when I see opportunity, now I use it wisely." Mark noted, "Your future achievement is not determined by your IQ, but I think by your will and endurance. I endure a lot."

"Join the group." Continuing to demonstrate both their Southern Sudanese cultural emphasis on community and their Lost Boys and Girls culture of sharing, several participants discussed the benefits of deciding to "join the group." Mark was adamant that the only way to make it through school and support family is to "come together and share the costs." He explained that you can "rent apartment, six of you in apartment and then go to school and you work hard, that is the only way."

In addition to relying on "the group" as a coping mechanism for achieving academic goals, several participants were trying to get people together to organize ways

to support and assist their people back in Sudan. Luke wants to start an agricultural nonprofit organization:

> We don't produce enough food in Sudan and it's a region especially in Southern Sudan, it's a region that can produce enough food even for some [other] part of Africa. We have Nile River, a good rainy season, we have fertilized land, and nobody using it, so I'm thinking actually that would be a good business to start.

To start this business, Luke is "trying now to get people coming together. . . . a minimum of 12 to 15 people to contribute, put their hands together and have an organization. I think that the vision will work better than individual."

The support of spouses and siblings. Three of the four married participants viewed their spouses as helpful in achieving their educational goals. Moses said, "If I bring my wife I can let her work. Whatever small income that she make might help family back over there [in Sudan] and I will go back to school." Moses went on to explain, "If she come over here and work, even though level job, minimum wage, she might help me and help herself and people back there. . . . and I will follow my education." Mark, who was hoping to bring his wife and child to the United States in 2009, planned to take a year off before applying to graduate school in order to help her adjust to life in the United States, learn English, and become strong: "[My wife] has to be capable and if she's strong and she can speak well and she's behind me I will keep going." Leah is married and has a young child. She plans to go back to school to get her degree as a registered nurse after her husband completes his bachelor's degree in May 2010: "[My husband] is supporting me 100% . . . he support me whatever I do, he really support me 100%."

Mark has a brother who also immigrated to the United States and had already earned both a bachelor's and a master's degree. When asked if the brother was older, Mark responded,

> No, he's younger than me! . . . I took responsibility of family. I let him go to school. And I said when you graduate you will help me and I will go back to school. . . . When he was doing this I was supporting family. 2002-2005, that was the time I was working two jobs, three jobs. . . . So when he graduate last year I let him pay my mom apartment in Kenya. . . . He's supporting now.

Mark was fortunate to have a brother to share the responsibility of supporting family, demonstrated through the fact that he himself has just graduated from college with a bachelor's degree. However, by taking responsibility for his mother for a time in order to allow his brother to focus on his goals, Mark was also exemplifying a high level of altruistic resilience.

"You have to give up some of your social life." Several participants noted that they had to make sacrifices in order to work and study simultaneously. Paul was adamant that "you have to give up some of your social life," and "when it comes to weekend, this is where I am always, here, in the library studying." Mark had a similar view: "[I] never roam around like my friends. Go to malls, Walmart, you know and roam around like enjoyment. No, no, I don't have that one." Job coped by staying up late: "I stay up late, which is because I'm working and study. I study long hours every night. I always go to bed around 3:30 or sometimes 4:00 [a.m.]. Not enough hours of sleeping." Mark had a similar rigid routine:

> [I] go to school in the morning and when I finish my classes, straight to work. Come [home] at night late. Study after two o'clocks. Wake up in the morning. If I have class, go to class. And then from there to job. I don't know my neighbors. I don't have time for myself. . . . Never have Saturday or Sunday off.

Encouragement from Sudan. A few participants were fortunate enough to have the support and understanding of family in Sudan. Abraham told me that his uncle is happy that he is in America and does not want him "to come back without papers. That means degree in Sudan." Abraham recalled that his father also told him to study:

> He said do what you want to do. Don't give up. . . . don't worry about what is here. . . . life [here] is still miserable. So don't worry about that. If you get degree, if you get education you will change your life.

Moses felt that the people in Sudan today "want whoever kid come to this country" to get an education so they can "bring people up," and that "if you have a chance to come [to] this country, the government encourage[s] you [to] try to influence everybody."

Hope for the future in Sudan. Many participants were motivated to persevere toward their educational goals by a desire to "bring up" their people and "rebuild the country." Although several participants commented that there were "still people fighting" (Joseph) in Sudan and "there might be war again" (Timothy), in general, participants were hopeful for the future. Most were encouraged that the people of Southern Sudan seem to be focused on education now more than ever. Timothy said that "even the older people, they know about education," and "everyone is want[ing] to go." Moses stated, "Now [the leaders] want everyone to be educated." Despite the desire for education, Luke noted that the problem is that "they don't have teachers to teach them," and there are currently few people who are educated. Mark explained,

> Our people really need help. If you talk to them now you will cry. They say, you kid who are there you are blessed and you are our blessing. You work hard in America and please sometime come and help. Either education you can teach or clinic or hospital, we need all different kind of, you know, specialization.

Although "it will be slow" (Luke), the participants were generally hopeful that things related to education will change in Southern Sudan. Luke, who slowed down his

studies in order to send seven children to school in Africa, was hopeful that if the education system improves and more children in Sudan have the opportunity to go school, then his responsibility for them will be alleviated and he can begin to focus more on supporting his own studies.

Sense of purpose. The Dinka moral belief that you are born for a purpose and are meant to do good and contribute to community continued to serve as a strength for the participants. Leah was adamant: "I have a lot of plans. The reason why I'm still alive today there is a purpose that God left me, among my siblings. And that's the purpose to give back, to help people." Job said,

> You know that you came on earth for a purpose. God didn't create you for nothing. So it's always challenge to us as a Dinka culture to live better and be able to support community in a better way. So that belief is helping me and I do hope it will make me to become a better person in the future.

"Putting God first." Faith in God and His provision served as a significant coping mechanism for most of the participants as well. In addition to seeing the opportunity to come to the United States as a result of God's provision, the participants found great strength in their faith. As Mark said, "My faith in God help me a lot. It is in God that I hope and sometimes things happen in my life when I say ok God, I want to do this and I want you to help me, it give me hope." He continued, "He's my best friend. God is there whatever you ask . . . and he protects. . . . When you live according to God's will he will help you." Moses added that, "I believe in God. . . . Sometimes I ask God, maybe you can pull me in the right direction so I can get in a good place." Joseph was even more decisive, saying, "Without God then you can't make it." In a distinct reference to his resilience, Mark explained, "When I reach a dead end and I try everything I can, God will do something. I learned that through my experience. And I believe in God 100%, God is

there always looking after me." For Luke, the fact that God continued to give him life helped him:

> if God give me life to live. . . . I have a belie[f] that I will do better thing as days keep going. I hope I will achieve something better. The more I live the more I think I will push myself.

Young Adulthood in the United States: Summary

Figure 3 demonstrates another expansion of the theoretical model of the development of resilience in the Sudanese refugees in this study. Upon immigrating to the United States, the participants were exposed to a third context and culture that caused them to develop new values and norms that they soon began to integrate with those previously acquired from their Southern Sudanese and Lost Boys and Girls cultures. As the model demonstrates, this third culture valued making the most of "the land of opportunity," and the participants did so by taking loans, joining the group, sacrificing their social life, and being motivated by a desire to help loved ones and contribute to the rebuilding of their homeland. However, while all the participants had high hopes of quickly resuming their education and completing degrees in just a matter of years, their plans were soon thwarted by the heavy responsibility of supporting friends and family in Africa and policies that affected their financial aid eligibility. As a result (and as indicated in the model), the participants began to diverge in their responses to these challenges, with some demonstrating personal resilience and others demonstrating altruistic resilience. Participants demonstrating personal resilience were making significant personal sacrifice in order to achieve their educational goals. Those demonstrating altruistic resilience were sacrificing the pursuit of their own educational

goals in order to ensure the well-being and educational advancement of family members remaining in Kenya or Sudan.

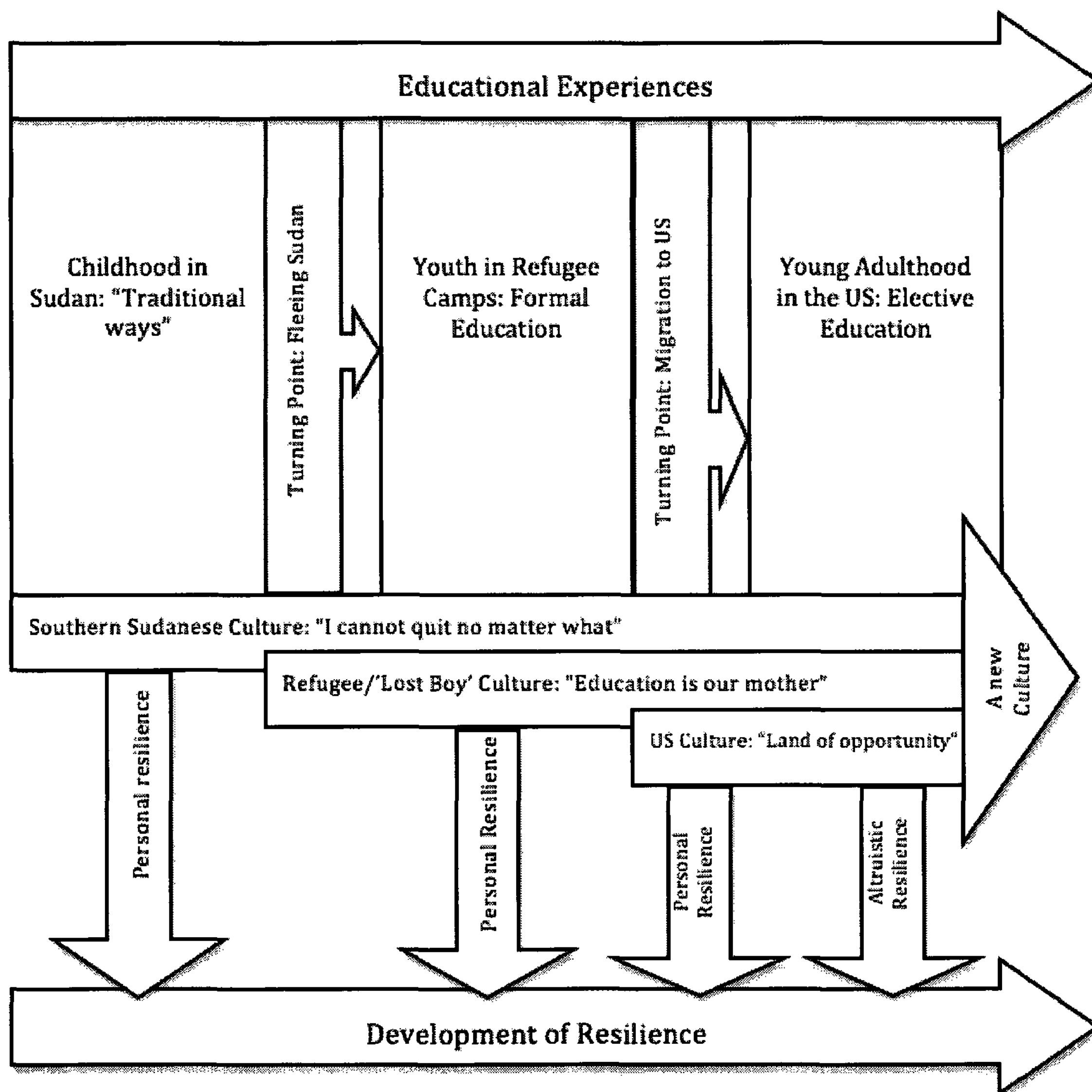

Figure 3. Theoretical Model C of the development of resilience in Sudanese refugees.

Findings from this section address the third research question guiding this study: What resilience mechanisms help or hinder the attainment of or persistence toward, Sudanese refugees' educational goals in the United States? As discussed, the participants who were meeting or progressing toward their educational goals were employing several

resilience mechanisms: accepting loans, joining the group, giving up their social life, and maintaining a focus on their goal of contributing to the rebuilding of their homeland. By adding these resilience mechanisms to those already acquired (i.e., valuing hard work, not quitting, "education will be our mother," etc.), this subset of participants were achieving or progressing toward their goals.

Turning Point: Returning to Sudan

Despite varying responses to adversity in the United States, all the participants were focused on the future of Sudan and hoped to return someday not only to reconnect with loved ones, but also to help rebuild the country. Several participants discussed returning to Sudan to "bring their people up," not only as a motivational factor in their studies, but also as a significant turning point in their future. Job predicted, "My turning point will be if I [can] achieve my dream of building a pharmacy in Sudan." He plans to "talk to people [in the US] about the situation in Sudan and let them know about people [dying] every day and night and the only medicine they can get is pain killer for all diseases." Moses is eager to return to Sudan because "there's a lot of opportunity in business," and by starting a business, he can support himself and provide jobs for other people. After reaching his goal of becoming a physician's assistant, Mark wants to return and "build a clinic in Sudan," while Leah wants to start a medical training center:

> My goal is to go back there to Sudan and work as an RN and I want to open a school . . . [a] medical career institute . . . to empower women to be able to go back to school and be able to support [their] family and learn in the medical field.

When asked about returning to Sudan permanently, the participants diverged. Five planned to return to live in Sudan permanently after achieving their goals in the United States. For example, Daniel said, "Sudan is a place to go back into later, yes. Because it

will be useless on my side to get educations and not going back and maybe help." Mark agreed, saying, "I will go back, I have a lot of thing to contribute to our country." He further explained, "I will move to Sudan and try to do a lot of thing, there are a lot of things there I can contribute. And they need us. From the government to the community level." Abraham had similar thoughts: "First I have to get my degree, I have to work more and get more experience, and then I go back to Sudan." He planned to return permanently "to live, to stay with my father . . . I need to go to help him when he's around 60." Job was equally resolute: "I will definitely go back, because I would like one day to die in Sudan, to be buried in Sudan."

Others were still uncertain (n = 1) about moving back permanently, or planned to return, but only to visit or to stay temporarily (n = 4). For most of these participants, the threat of war was the overarching reason they were hesitant to return permanently. Joseph explained, "There's still people fighting. . . . I might choose over here because I don't want to go into war and then go and run." Joseph elaborated that the "U.S. is a better place to live anyway because it's quiet place, no corruption, but back there even if I get a good job there is still war, I'm gonna run so that might interrupt me."

A better future for their children was also a factor in some of the participants' responses. Moses noted, "You don't want your kid facing a lot of difficulty." He went on to explain, "I want them to get a good life or good education later on in the future and that's the reason that I want to raise my kid over here in this country." Hence, Moses felt that to "live over here is better." With a similar rationale, Luke told me, "This country [the U.S.] actually, I am not leaving it for good. Although I'm having a hope of helping people back in my country, it's good for my kid to get a better education here." However,

that did not mean they would not help their people in Sudan. Luke was pragmatic, saying that he would "help people there while still living here in this country."

Whether planning to return permanently or intending only to visit, all of the participants recognized that things were changing in Sudan, and there was a lot of opportunity. Luke was positive about the future of Sudan: "There are changes going on in Sudan and those changes give me hope," as was Moses, who said, "There's opportunity over there, and opportunity that there are some people who have been here [in the United States] before me and they went over there and change the country . . . there's a lot of opportunity in business."

In summary, all of the participant responses point to the fact that education—either their own education or the education of youngsters in Sudan today—will play a significant role in the future of the country. This finding answers the final question guiding this study: What role does education play in Virginia Sudanese refugees' hope for the future? Whether demonstrating altruistic resilience or personal resilience, or planning to return permanently or only temporarily, the desire to complete their own education or finance someone else's was fueled by their hope for the future. In some shape or form, every participant in this study was investing in the future of Sudan through investing in their own education or another's. Moreover, despite voicing some concern over political instability and ongoing threats of violence, all the participants hoped to be part of "bringing up" the people of Southern Sudan and were hopeful for the future because of the recent emphasis on education and new opportunities for business and entrepreneurship.

Emergence of a New Culture

A final element of the theoretical model deserving discussion relates to the emergence of a new culture (see Figure 3). As a result of their childhood in Sudan, growing up as youths in refugee camps, and becoming young adults in the United States, the participants in this study have a new culture that they described as a "mixed culture." Paul explained, "I have a mixed culture. I have a little bit of Ethiopian, Kenyan, and American. So I am a different person now." For some participants, this merging of their Sudanese culture, their refugee culture, and their American culture posed a challenge, as Paul discovered:

> When [Lost Boys] go back to Sudan they have difficult time, everybody laugh at them, they say these people are different people, because back there the culture is not mixed, they are kind of confined in one place. But to some of us who have been going through all different countries with different cultures and different language[s].

Paul added, "If I go back now to Dinkaland some people will say I don't know the language, the Dinka language, because mine is mixed," and that because he lived outside of Sudan for so many years, "the way I will be conducting myself [I] will not get along with them." Two participants specifically spoke about taking the good of each culture they experienced and leaving the bad. Mark explained, "When I see something good in America I take it as my own. And keep whatever is good in Dinka. So I am forming my own culture." Thus,

> In our tradition, anything that is not really necessary and I am here I will let it go, give it aside. And it does not mean I'm ignoring my culture, my culture is very rich, but anything that is good in America culture I take it as mine.

Leah held this view as well:

> I would take certain thing that would benefit me in American culture, but I'm still Dinka. I still have what Dinka women do. But whatever in Dinka that's negative towards women I would take it away.

For the most part, however, the participants saw their life experiences in multiple countries and cultures as a source of strength. This finding reinforces Grotberg's (2003a) research indicating that people can become stronger and experience personal transformation as a consequence of overcoming adversity, exactly as Paul said, "I think going through all the difficulties and different lives and different countries makes me strong." Job concurred, "For the hardship of life we went through it make me be able to see the life differently." He went on to explain,

> Even though if I face a small problem today, like I do not have money to pay whatever my bill is and I knew, this now will be the end of my will. I know I came to America with no money in my hand. I came to America and did not have a car. Now I drive a car, so I see myself, I did not have it now, but that's not going to be like that. I hope tomorrow, if I did not have something, tomorrow will be better. So that overall, the hardship taught me a lot.

Mark, acknowledging that perceptions of adversity were "different from person to person," for him, adversity in his life had made him a stronger person:

> It make me stronger. Like sometimes when I get challenges and think back where I was, now I have a lot of energy. I have a lot of food now. I have soda in my cooler, I can eat anytime I want. What keep me not going?

Theoretical Model

The conceptual relationships between the distinct and formative periods in the participants' lives and the processes they experienced while surmounting the challenges that these periods presented are visually depicted in the complete theoretical model found in Figure 4.

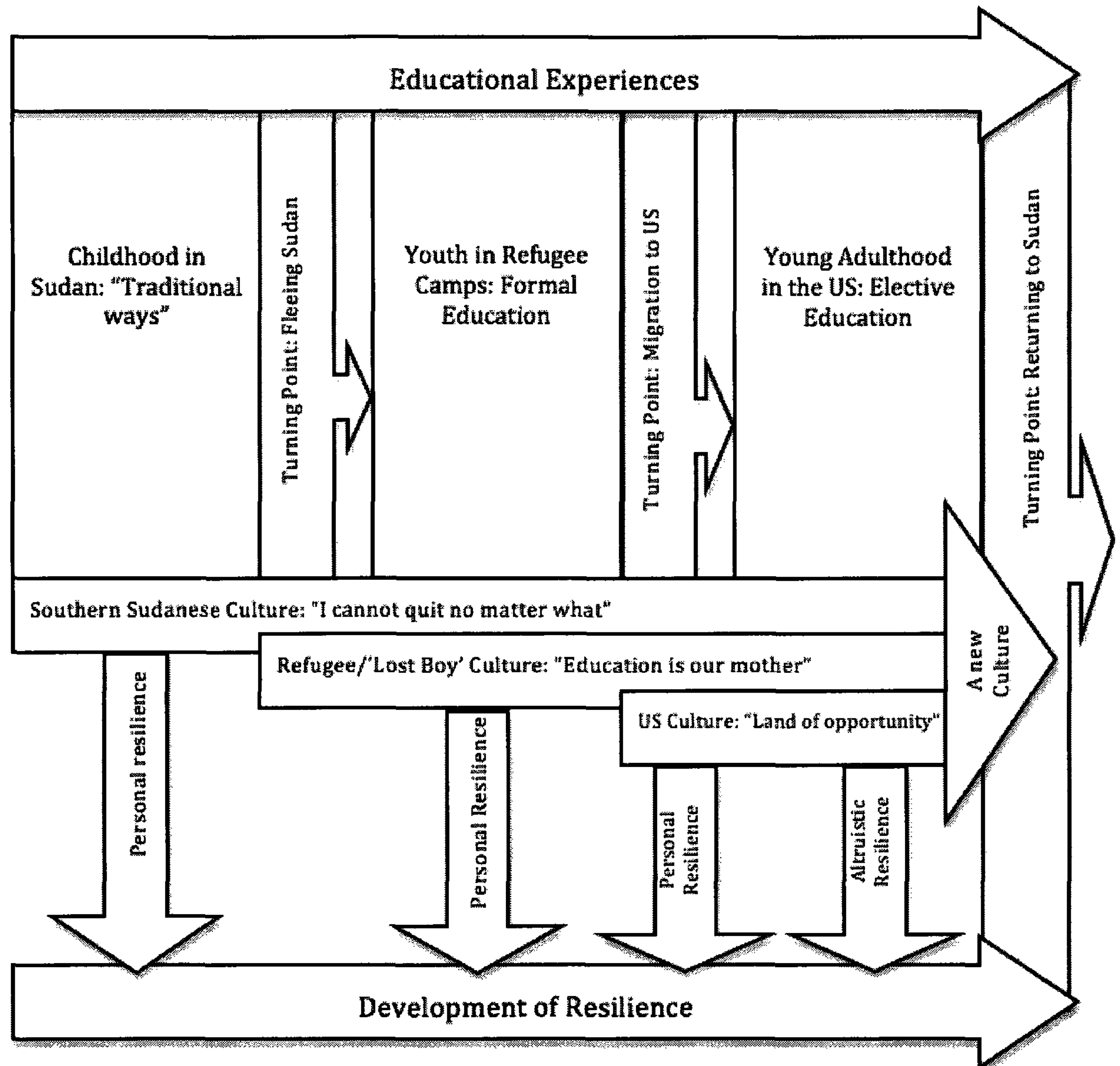

Figure 4. Complete theoretical model of the development of resilience in Sudanese refugees.

Formative Educational Periods

Three specific periods with corresponding processes emerged from the data: (a) childhood in Sudan: "traditional ways," (b) youth in refugee camps: formal education, and (c) young adulthood in the United States: elective education. As depicted in the model by the top and bottom arrows, as the participants moved through these distinct

periods in their lives, they were progressing in their education while simultaneously becoming more resilient as a result of the geographical and cultural contexts they experienced. Additionally, each formative period in life was followed or preceded by significant turning points that propelled the participants (willingly or unwillingly) into the next period. These turning points served as transitions between each period and are depicted in the model in arrows to the right of each block representing each period.

Though it would not be considered an education through a Western lens, as very young children the participants acquired a formative education in "traditional ways." Though they did not learn to read or write and many did not even realize that there were countries in the world aside from Sudan or even regions beyond "Dinkaland," the lessons they learned before leaving home provided a valuable education that served to carry them through some of life's most challenging tests.

However, as a consequence of civil war, the participants experienced a significant turning point in life when they were expelled from their homes and forced to become refugee children, soon termed Lost Boys and Girls. This turning point concluded with the safe arrival at Kakuma Refugee Camp in Western Kenya, at which point the second period began.

In Kenya, the participants were finally provided the opportunity to begin a formal education. They began to acquire basic skills such as reading, writing, mathematics, and English, in addition to learning history, geography, and science. With little to do in the camp by way of recreation, and little hope of success outside of the camp without an education, going to school and competing with classmates for grades became the center of life in the refugee camp.

Being selected to immigrate to the United States served as another significant turning point in the lives of the participants. While inside the camp, there were few employment opportunities and the participants had little hope for the future after completing high school. The opportunity to immigrate to the United States opened possibilities that the participants reported they had never dreamed would be available to them.

In "the land of opportunity," the participants finally had the chance to determine their own future. While all had goals of earning degrees, for some this goal was attainable and worth working toward and making sacrifices to achieve. For others, supporting friends and family they left behind was the more urgent need.

While some have returned to Sudan for a visit ($n = 7$), for many participants completing their degree and returning to Sudan will serve as a monumental turning point in their future (see Figure 4). Whether returning permanently or temporarily, all of the participants see contributing to the restructuring and rebuilding of their country as a prominent goal.

The Development of Resilience Mechanisms Through Cultural and Contextual Influences

As the participants progressed through these distinct and significant periods and turning points in their lives, they began to acquire new cultural customs and values and assimilate them with the customs and values they already held. As depicted in the model below the blocks representing the periods, in addition to their primary Southern Sudanese culture, which valued persistence (i.e., "I cannot quit no matter what"), hard work, community, and a sense of purpose, the participants soon acquired a distinct culture, a Lost Boys and Girls culture that adopted the saying "education is our mother," a

resilience mechanism that motivated them to survive and overcome the various challenges of refugee life. This mechanism could only have developed in the crucible of life in a refugee camp without parents.

Upon immigrating to the United States, the participants were exposed to a third culture, an American culture that required choices with significant implications for them and their relatives. In this land of opportunity where they had the freedom to determine their own future, the participants soon began to demonstrate two forms of resilience, personal resilience and altruistic resilience. Those predominantly demonstrating personal resilience continued to prioritize education alongside a commitment to support relatives in Africa, and they relied on various resilience mechanisms to cope with the challenges that arose. These mechanisms included taking advantage of federal and private loans, making the most of opportunities, "joining the group" to share expenses, giving up a social life, and being motivated by their faith, a sense of purpose, and hope for the future of Sudan.

The participants who predominantly demonstrated altruistic resilience elected to put their own goals and motivations aside for a time in order to take responsibility for the welfare and education of relatives in Africa. These participants took full advantage of the land of opportunity, not for personal gain, but rather to "lift up" those they left behind. Just as they themselves were physically carried through the desert to Ethiopia and helped across the raging Gilo River, these participants were now shouldering the burden of helping others figuratively cross the desert of illiteracy and overcome the swollen rivers of disease and starvation still persisting in Southern Sudan and refugee camps in Kenya and Uganda.

As a result of their geographic and cultural experiences in each period, the participants developed coping mechanisms (i.e., "I cannot quit no matter what," "education is our mother," and "land of opportunity") that contributed to the development of their personal and altruistic resilience. Consequently, as illustrated with the arrow on the right of the model, the participants collectively formed a strong and resilient new culture, a "mixed culture" that they will someday bring to Sudan when they reach another significant turning point (see arrow on far right of the model) by fulfilling their dreams of "bringing up" their people by becoming lawyers, teachers, health care workers, politicians, and businessmen, returning either permanently or temporarily to open medical clinics, pharmacies, training centers, businesses, and to develop the agricultural sector of their country.

In summary, the model depicts several ongoing and circular processes. As the participants progressed through the distinct periods of their lives, they were gaining an education in varying forms, while also developing coping mechanisms as a result of their cultural and contextual experiences that, in turn, enabled them to become resilient in the face of considerable adversity. The development of resilience allowed them to persist in their education and continue to overcome significant challenges. The participants are now at a point in their lives where they have the freedom to choose to exercise their resilience for their own advancement (i.e., personal resilience) or for the advancement of others (i.e., altruistic resilience). Whether demonstrating personal or altruistic resilience, all participants are contributing to a hopeful future for Sudan by either preparing to personally contribute to the development of their country through the skills and education

they gain here or by funding the education of their kin, thereby breaking the cycle of illiteracy by "bringing up" Sudan's next generation.

Member Checking

As a final step in the analysis of these findings I conducted a member check with Daniel to ensure validity and reliability. Discussing member checking, Erlandson et al. (1993) explained that "because the realities that will be included are those that have individually and collectively been constructed by persons within the context of the study, it is imperative that both data and interpretations be verified by those persons" (p. 31). To verify that the findings discussed above were accurate and that the theoretical model I constructed was an authentic representation of the realities of my participants, I showed Daniel the model and discussed the general findings with him. Daniel verified that the model was indeed an accurate representation of the experiences and processes he and the nine other participants encountered and demonstrated as children, youths, and adults, giving me reason to conclude that these findings are valid and reliable.

Summary of Results

Using Strauss' (1987) guidelines for grounded theory analysis and the constant comparison of data from interviews and quantitative measures, I developed a model to explain the resilience mechanisms operating in the lives of Sudanese refugees in Virginia relating to their persistence toward educational goals. Three specific formative periods in the lives of the participants emerged from the data: (a) childhood in Sudan: "traditional ways," (b) youth in refugee camps: formal education, and (c) young adulthood in the United States: elective education. Through each of these periods, the participants acquired and assimilated various cultural and contextual values and supports that served

as powerful resilience mechanisms in their lives. Since arriving in the United States, the participants all continued to demonstrate resilience, but it began to be manifested in two different forms, personal resilience and altruistic resilience.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Chapter

In this final chapter, I begin by restating the purpose and reviewing the methodology employed in this study. Next, I discuss the findings in relation to the research questions, followed by a description of the theoretical model this study generated. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to relating the findings to the literature on resilience as well as discussing limitations, implications, and future research directions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of resilience in the lives of Sudanese refugees living in Virginia as it pertained to their achievement of or persistence toward educational goals. This study aimed to fill a lacuna in the resilience research literature as it focused on young adults rather than children or youth; the population consisted of non-White, non-Western participants; participants were examined during the third stage of recovery from trauma (i.e., restoring the connection between survivors and their community); and, finally, unlike other studies with Sudanese refugees, resilience mechanisms contributing to educational persistence were specifically examined.

Methodology

Ten Southern Sudanese refugees (9 male, 1 female) living in Virginia were selected to participate in this study through purposeful and snowball sampling procedures. Data were gathered through quantitative (i.e., two questionnaires) and qualitative methods (i.e., interviews) and were analyzed according to Strauss' (1987) guidelines for grounded theory. Quantitative data were gathered primarily for the purpose of generating descriptive information about the participants that interviews did not lend

themselves to either as a consequence of time constraints or sensitivity of the information being requested. The *CTI-104* (Hollifield et al., 2006) and the *IES-R* (Weiss & Marmar, 1997) were used to measure the number of traumatic events experienced and the impact of these events on the participants, respectively.

Following Strauss' (1987) grounded theory guidelines, data from one interview at a time were analyzed through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Throughout this process, I made theoretical memos of my thoughts and ideas concerning the data. As I analyzed additional interviews, I compared the codes and categories that were being generated with those from previous interviews, thereby engaging in the process of constant comparison, leading to the identification of core categories and, finally, the generation of theory. Throughout this process, qualitative data was triangulated with the theoretical memos and descriptive data collected through quantitative measures.

Research Questions

In this section, I discuss the findings in relation to the four research questions guiding this study:

1. What is the value and significance placed on education in Southern Sudanese culture according to Sudanese refugees in Virginia?
2. What is the role of learner persistence in Sudanese refugees in Virginia prior to migration to the United States?
3. What resilience mechanisms help or hinder the attainment of, or persistence toward, Sudanese refugees' educational goals in the United States?

4. What role does education play in Virginia Sudanese refugees' hope for the future?

Research Question 1

The first question was developed to account for the influence of the participants' Sudanese culture on the development of their resilience mechanisms by asking: What is the value and significance placed on education in Southern Sudanese culture according to Sudanese refugees in Virginia? As the participants revealed, though there was little emphasis or understanding of the value of a formal education when they were growing up in Southern Sudan in the early 1980s, the participants did learn values that enabled them to be successful not only in the face of academic challenges, but also in some of the most trying circumstances imaginable. The Southern Sudanese values of working hard, refusing to give up, living in community, and believing you were created for a purpose served as powerful resilience mechanisms that not only helped the participants achieve their educational goals, but enabled them to cope with the challenges imposed on them including separation from family, starvation, and multiple migrations.

Research Question 2

The second research question accounted for the resilience mechanisms utilized in the participants' quest for an education by asking: What is the role of learner persistence in Sudanese refugees in Virginia prior to migration to the United States? Each participant demonstrated a high level of learner persistence as children and youths growing up in refugee camps. As they did not have an earthly mother to care, nurture, or provide for them, they focused their attention on succeeding academically, a goal they believed would help them escape the hopelessness of life in the refugee camp and give them the

opportunity to provide for themselves and others. Thus, rather than succumbing to the hunger, depression, and hopelessness that overtook so many others, the youth adopted the saying "education will be our mother" and used this mantra as the motivation to succeed.

Research Question 3

The third research question addressed resilience mechanisms after immigration to the United States by asking: What resilience mechanisms help or hinder the attainment of, or persistence toward, Sudanese refugees' educational goals in the United States? Findings from the data revealed that the participants continued to rely on mechanisms they acquired as children in Sudan and youths in refugee camps, however, they adjusted to their new culture and context by recognizing that the United States is "the land of opportunity." For the first time in their lives, they were able to determine their own future. Several participants used this freedom to further their education, a feat they accomplished by taking loans, limiting their social life, living in community to share expenses, as well as depending on the encouragement and support of spouses and family in Sudan.

Research Question 4

The final question guiding this study asked: What role does education play in Virginia Sudanese refugees' hope for the future? All of the participants wanted to "bring up" their people and rebuild their country, and they believed that education was the vehicle to do this. Participants demonstrating personal resilience were actively working toward their educational goals, fueled by a motivation to personally contribute to Sudan by using their professional skills in sectors like business, education, government, and medicine. Participants demonstrating altruistic resilience were not necessarily

progressing in their own education, but believed hope for the future was in the children of Sudan. These participants were using the resilience mechanisms they acquired as children in Sudan and youth in refugee camps to overcome challenges in the United States in order to support themselves and their family members back home.

Description of the Model

I constructed a theoretical model (see Figure 5) of the conceptual relationships surrounding the phenomenon of resilience by integrating the quantitative and qualitative findings generated from this study. As depicted in the model, the participants experienced three formative periods in their lives with very distinct educational processes: (a) childhood in Sudan: "traditional ways," (b) youth in refugee camps: formal education, and (c) young adulthood in the United States: elective education. In these periods, the participants were exposed to a significantly high number of traumatic events ($M = 61$, $SD = 13.88$), even when compared with other refugee populations. However, in each period and the transitions from period to period (i.e., turning points) the participants were also exposed to strong cultural values and norms that once internalized served as powerful protective mechanisms that allowed the participants to develop high levels of personal resilience in the face of ongoing adversity.

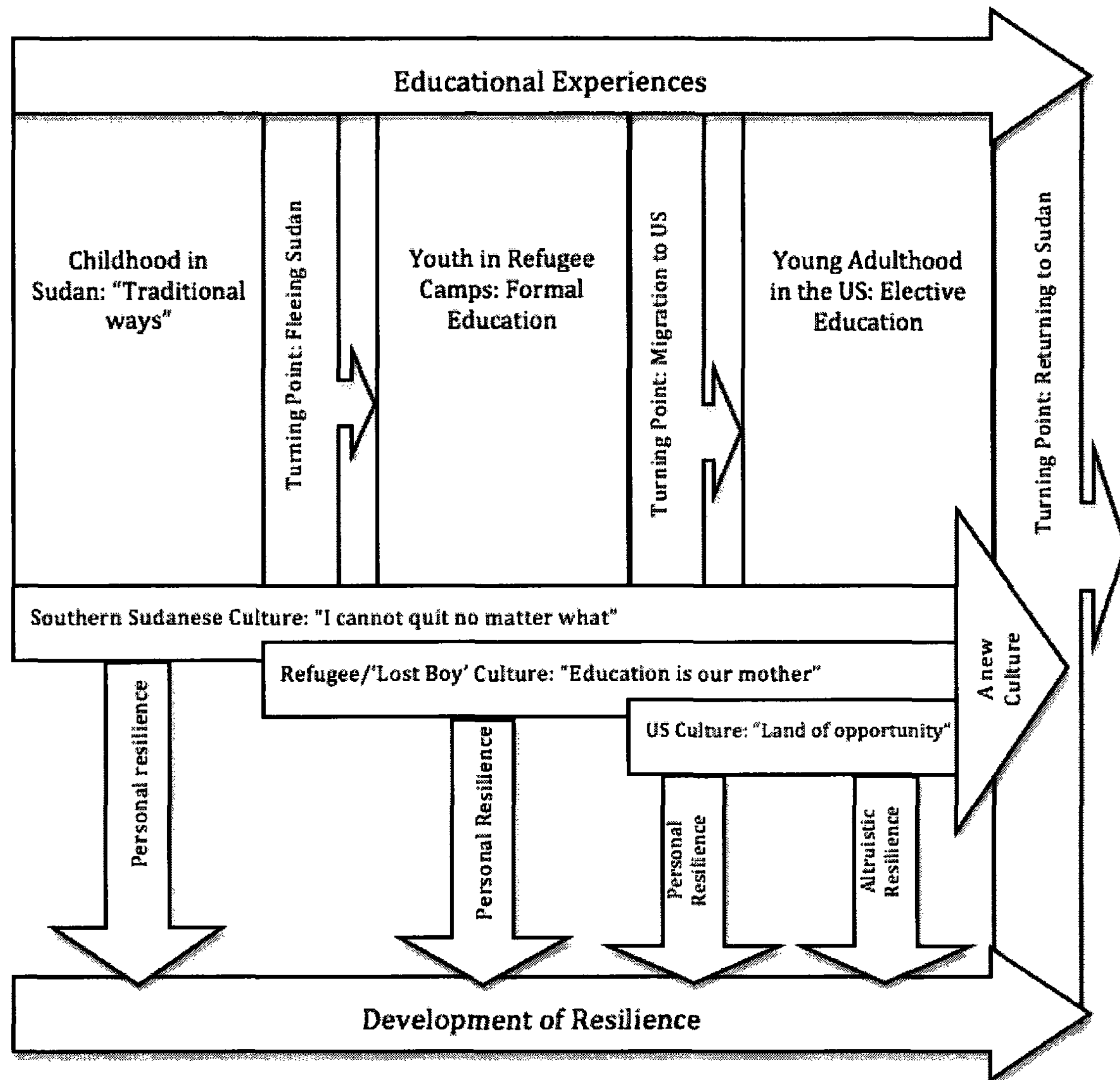

Figure 5. Theoretical model of the development of resilience in Sudanese refugees.

Although they continue to face adversity in their daily lives and their personal formation is still ongoing (i.e., there are many turning points still ahead, namely, returning to Sudan), the various events and processes initiated by the context of these events caused the participants to form a unique "mixed culture" of their own, an amalgamation of their experiences as children in Southern Sudan, as unaccompanied minors in refugee camps, and as immigrants to the United States. This new culture is

characterized by a profound sense of pride in their Southern Sudanese culture, a strong compassion for those less fortunate than themselves, and a work ethic that has enabled them to either achieve their own goals in the face of significant adversity (i.e., personal resilience) or to make great personal sacrifice for the direct well-being and advancement of others (i.e., altruistic resilience).

Relating Results to the Literature

Elaborating on Existing Theory

Strauss and Corbin (1994) noted that grounded theory is used to either generate new theories or elaborate and modify existing theories. This study served both purposes. Findings from this study reinforce and confirm previous research related to the phenomenon of resilience. Specifically, this study (a) confirms prior research findings with Sudanese refugees (Clipper, 2008; Goodman, 2004; Luster et al., 2008; Schweitzer et al., 2007); (b) supports Rutter's (1985, 1987, 1990) emphasis on examining resilience mechanisms as opposed to risk and protective factors; (c) affirms Doll and Lyon's (1998) theory of turning points; (d) builds on the expanding literature base demonstrating that culture and context play a significant role in the development of resilience mechanisms (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004; Clauss-Ehlers, 2003, 2008; Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2003; Keogh & Weisner, 1993; Kumpfer, 1999; Machel, 1996), and, finally, (e) reinforces the concept of steeling effects (Grotberg, 2003a, 2003b; Rutter, 1985; Slone & Shoshani, 2008).

Confirmation of Prior Findings With Sudanese Refugee Samples

Several findings from this study support prior results generated from studies with Sudanese refugees. Goodman's (2004) study with Sudanese refugees who were

unaccompanied minors revealed that education served as a resilience mechanism in the refugee camps, motivating the youth to remain in the camp despite hardship. This study's theoretical model supports Goodman's assertion. Exemplified through the mantra "education will be our mother," the participants in this study also recognized the powerful role education could play in their lives. Despite hunger, limited school materials, and lack of parental support, the saying "education will be our mother" served as a powerful resilience mechanism motivating the young people in this study to remain in the camp at Kakuma and persevere toward their goals.

Goodman (2004) also reported that none of the participants in her study "displayed a sense of victimhood at the time of the interviews" (p. 1182). Responses generated from interview Question 18 demonstrate the same finding. When asked whether they felt that life controls them or they control their own life, 8 of the 10 participants in this study felt that they were in control of their own life. Despite sacrificing their own goals for the advancement of others, none of the participants demonstrating altruistic resilience harbored any visible bitterness or resentment about their decision, but rather, were thankful they were in the position to provide for their loved ones as a result of being selected to immigrate to the United States.

Schweitzer et al. (2007) reported that religious beliefs, social support, personal qualities, and comparison with others served as resilience mechanisms in the lives of their participants. Although personal qualities (i.e., intelligence, social competence, problem-solving skills) serving as a resilience mechanism did not emerge as a salient theme in this study, the participants all noted the strength they drew from their Christian faith, the strong support of living in community with other Lost Boys and Girls, and the sense of

purpose they felt as a result of being one of the fortunate ones to be selected to immigrate to the United States. The participants were aware that others less fortunate were all in some form or another supporting friends and family in Africa. As demonstrated in the theoretical model, the participants acquired these values as a direct result of their exposure to Southern Sudanese culture as children, their collective experiences as unaccompanied minors in refugee camps, and from overcoming the challenges they faced as young adults in the United States.

Clipper's (2008) research demonstrated that the Sudanese refugees in her study were strongly biased toward higher education, and acquiring an education for themselves and their children was a priority and number one need. Findings from this study are consonant with Clipper's work; as the theoretical model demonstrates, at the time that the interviews took place, participants in this study were either actively working toward acquiring their own education (i.e., personal resilience) or financing the education of someone else (i.e., altruistic resilience). Moreover, participants with children were keenly aware that life in the United States provided great opportunity and were less likely than those without children to indicate willingness to move back to Sudan permanently. These participants cited the threat of war as the main reason they would not be willing to return permanently to Sudan. Clipper's participants also cited aggression and political instability as reasons for why they had little hope of returning to their homeland.

The study Luster et al. (2008) conducted examining ambiguous loss revealed that obtaining U.S. citizenship, finishing degrees, and returning to Sudan to reunite with family and help rebuild the country were prominent themes. Findings from this study reveal similar results. First, 9 of the 10 participants had all obtained U.S. citizenship at

the time of this study. The only participant who had not yet obtained U.S. citizenship immigrated in 2004 and was not yet eligible to apply, though he had plans to do so. Though some were actively working toward their degrees and others were delaying their plans, like the participants in Luster et al. (2008), every participant reported earning a degree as a significant goal. Furthermore, at the time this study was conducted, 7 of the 10 participants had found a way to return to Sudan for a visit to be reunited with relatives. The remaining 3 were still hoping to find a way to return to Sudan. Moreover, while some planned to return temporarily and others to live there permanently, every participant wanted to contribute in some way to the restructuring and rebuilding of Southern Sudan. This hope for the future of Sudan and desire to contribute to its development was also a significant resilience mechanism in the participants' quests for an education and is illustrated in the theoretical model as a future turning point.

As discussed, these prior findings from the resilience research literature are reflected in the theoretical model generated from this study. As other studies demonstrated (e.g., Clipper, 2008; Goodman, 2004; Luster et al., 2008), a desire to be educated served as a significant resilience mechanism in the participants' lives in Kakuma, and becoming personally educated or facilitating the education of others was also a high priority once arriving in the United States.

Resilience Mechanisms Versus Risk and Protective Factors

Rutter (1987) argued that it was illogical to categorically label any one variable as inherently a risk or protective factor because it is the "mechanism, not the variable, that determines the function" (p. 317). Findings from this study support Rutter's (1987) argument and demonstrate this concept. For example, separation from parents has

traditionally been found to be a risk factor in resilience research (Geltman et al., 2005; Kinzie et al., 1986; Macksoud & Aber, 1996; Masten et al., 1990). However, for the participants in this study, although separation from their parents was extremely difficult, it served as a significant resilience mechanism relating to their educational persistence as youth in refugee camps. Rather than being immobilized by their separation and ambiguous loss, the participants responded to this very unfortunate circumstance by using it as a motivating factor in their educational endeavors. This was evidenced through the fact that "education will be our mother" was a resounding theme in the participants' responses and a significant element of this study's theoretical model. As such, the participants were motivated to excel in school specifically because they did not have parents to rely on to provide for them, and they knew through gaining an education they could then perhaps find a way out of the refugee camp and be able to provide for themselves and their loved ones. This finding reinforces Rutter's (1987) conclusion that it is premature to categorize variables as risk or protective factors because responses to adversity vary depending on the individual and the context.

Turning Points

Early and contemporary studies of resilience demonstrate the importance of turning points, experiences that break the cycle of adverse conditions and open new opportunities by providing discontinuity with past experiences (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Werner & Smith, 2001). Doll and Lyon found that positive school experiences such as success in an extracurricular activity or having a caring teacher could shift a student's life trajectory away from problem outcomes. Similarly, Werner and Smith found that

opportunities encountered in adulthood such as acceptance into the military or marriage to a good partner opened chances for shifts from negative to positive life trajectories.

Consonant with these findings, the participants in this study easily identified several turning points in their lives. While some recognized arriving in Ethiopia and Kenya as turning points, in general, participants identified immigration to the United States as being the most influential. Although Kakuma Refugee camp in Kenya provided a certain degree of security and the opportunity to begin a formal education, participants were still plagued by the confines and constraints of life in a refugee camp, most significantly the psychological effects of living in such an environment, termed by one participant as the "refugee mind." However, though it was not without its own set of challenges and difficulties, immigration to the United States was a pivotal turning point in that it allowed the participants one of the first opportunities to determine their own future and their own direction in life. Further, it opened communication networks that allowed participants to begin to learn about and reconnect with surviving family members.

The Role of Culture and Context in the Development of Resilience Mechanisms

This study reinforces recent findings in the resilience literature demonstrating the vital role of cultural and contextual variables in the lives of individuals. Clauss-Ehlers (2008) defined cultural resilience as "the way the individual's cultural background, supports, value, and environmental experiences help facilitate the process of overcoming adversity" (p. 28). In their study with two college students from minority backgrounds, Cabrera and Padilla (2004) found that ethnic identity contributed to greater educational resilience. For example, by serving as cultural and linguistic brokers for their non-

English-speaking family and community members, Cabrera and Padilla's participants reported learning to become more self-sufficient and developing an enhanced sense of self-efficacy.

As illustrated in the theoretical model, as the participants progressed through the three formative periods of their lives they acquired strong cultural values, norms, and supports that served as significant resilience mechanisms in their lives. As a result of their brief exposure to Southern Sudanese culture during childhood, the participants were aware that their life had purpose and learned the importance of living in community, not quitting, and working hard. Through the distinct contextual circumstances of living in refugee camps as unaccompanied minors, the participants became part of the Lost Boys and Girls culture that added to its Southern Sudanese culture new values and norms that were distinctly different than those already acquired. The resilience mechanism embodied through the saying "education will be our mother" could not have developed while the participants were living at home with their parents, but rather, evolved in the context of being unaccompanied minors in refugee camps. This powerful mechanism played a significant role in the participants' motivation not only to attend school, but also to excel.

As the model demonstrates, once in the United States the participants were again immersed in a new context and exposed to a third culture with new norms and values. The cultural values and supports the participants acquired in their Sudanese childhood and as youth in refugee camps continued to serve as resilience mechanisms, but as they soon discovered, although the United States was "the land of opportunity," what they gained depended largely on their own self-determination and willingness to make sacrifices. Unlike in the refugee camp, the participants were responsible for their own

food, housing, and living expenses, and access to education was not free. Consequently, in the new context of life in the United States, the participants quickly needed to shed the "refugee mind" and make individual choices and sacrifices (i.e., give up a social life, take a loan, join the group) in order to achieve their goals. Hence, culture and context largely formed and shaped the participants' responses to adversity.

Steeling Effects

Findings from this study also reinforce the concept of steeling effects, the idea that overcoming adversity serves to strengthen an individual's resistance to later adversity (Grotberg, 2003a, 2003b; Rutter, 1985; Slone & Shoshani, 2008). Prior findings demonstrate that exposure to risk or adversity can cause an individual to develop a strengthened resistance to later adversity and thereby be able to withstand future exposure to stress. Findings from this study indicate that the challenges these participants experienced caused them to become stronger individuals. The fact that there was not a significant correlation between the number of traumatic events experienced (measured on the *CTI-104*) and level of PTSD symptomology (measured on the *IES-R*) points to the idea that these participants became stronger rather than weaker from their exposure to adversity. This finding from the quantitative data is supported by the qualitative findings; every single participant shared that in general their life experiences made them stronger. For example, one participant shared that if he were to experience war again, perhaps even in the United States, he would not be alarmed and knew he could survive based on what he had survived in his childhood.

This phenomenon of growing stronger in the face of adversity is illustrated through the arrow at the bottom of the model demonstrating the ongoing development of

resilience (personal and altruistic) in spite of intensely challenging life experiences. Despite a traumatic separation from their parents as young children, living as unaccompanied minors in the harsh conditions of refugee camps, and dealing with the challenges of resettlement in the United States, the participants acquired powerful resilience mechanisms that enabled them to persevere. Moreover, not only are the participants stronger as a result of the adversity in their lives, but they have hope for the future and are motivated to excel by their desire to play a significant role in the rebuilding and restructuring of their homeland.

Ironically, this finding related to steeling effects contradicts research findings relating to the concept of *accumulating effects*. The concept of accumulating effects developed as studies of resilience revealed a “dose-response” relationship, indicating that effects of exposure to risk tended to accumulate over time (Doll & Lyon, 1998; Fraser et al., 1999; Gewitz et al., 2008; Luthar & Goldstein, 2004; Morrison & Gosden, 1997; Pollard et al., 1999; Schweitzer et al., 2007). Given these findings, I anticipated a significant positive correlation between the participants’ responses on the *CTI-104* and the *IES-R*. In other words, as the number of traumatic events increased (measured on the *CTI-104*), the level of PTSD symptomology would also increase (measured on the *IES-R*). However, as discussed above, this was not found. While it is possible that this nonsignificant finding is the result of some instrumentation or methodological error in the administration or completion of the measures, it is also possible that this is a significant finding that should be examined in greater depth. While many of the studies promoting the concept of accumulating effects were conducted with Western samples, as some PTSD experts are beginning to note, the effects of trauma in different cultures and

contexts may differ (Altman, 2008; Schweitzer et al., 2007). Why adversity in some individuals' lives produces steeling effects (i.e., positive outcomes) and in others produces accumulating effects (i.e., deleterious outcomes) is an aspect of resilience that must be examined in greater detail.

Generating a New Model of Resilience

In addition to confirming and reinforcing prior research findings, this study also generated a new interactional model to add to the literature base on resilience. Martin and Marsh (2006) defined educational resilience as "the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishment despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences" (p. 267). While all the participants in this study were exposed to similar conditions and experiences (see discussion of *CTI-104* findings in Chapter 4), once in the United States their responses to challenges diverged. Approximately half of the participants could be classified as educationally resilient according to Martin and Marsh, as they were experiencing success in school and actively working toward achieving their goals despite adversity in their lives. However, the remaining participants could not be classified as educationally resilient according to Martin and Marsh, as they had not achieved nor were they actively working toward their educational goals at the time of the study. However, to classify these participants as nonresilient would be highly inaccurate. Rather than pursuing their own educational goals, these participants were making monumental sacrifices for the welfare and educational progress of others. As they were able to support family members and fund the education of multiple children in Africa, these participants were clearly successful in "the land of opportunity."

In my extensive review of the literature on resilience, I did not come across any term or label to describe the kind of success these participants were demonstrating. While Grotberg (2003b) posited that the greatest result of resilience "involves having more empathy and compassion—not pity—for others" (p. 201), and Slone and Shoshani (2008) found evidence that exposure to war and political violence can result in advanced development in abstract reasoning, moral development, and awareness of ethical values, both Grotberg (2003b) and Slone and Shosani seemed to be identifying *byproducts* of personal resilience, but not specifically identifying another *form* of resilience. Moreover, the literature is replete with studies where resilience is generally defined as *personal* success in the face of adversity and resilience has been operationalized in various ways—such as educational success (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004; Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski, 2003), social-emotional well-being (Goodman, 2004), the absence of psychological problems (Bates et al., 2005; Geltman et al., 2005; Kinzie et al., 1986), healthy adjustment after resettlement (Bolea et al., 2003; Clipper, 2008; Itto, 2008; Pardekooper et al., 1999; Schweitzer et al., 2007), and so on, but there are no studies that have identified or operationalized the unique phenomenon uncovered in this study. As noted above, Grotberg (2003b) and Slone and Shoshani touched on aspects of what I found, but they did not capture the full essence of the kind of resilience my participants were demonstrating.

While all of the participants in this study demonstrated advanced moral development and empathy (i.e., the ability to understand and share the feelings of another), a subset of the participants demonstrated more than just empathy. In addition to understanding and sharing the feelings of those they left behind, by subordinating their

own hopes and dreams to the hopes and dreams of loved ones in less fortunate circumstances, the participants demonstrating altruistic resilience were demonstrating something qualitatively different than just empathy. As such, Grotberg and Slone and Shoshani's findings fall short of identifying the construct of being resilient for someone other than oneself. Given this gap in the literature, I developed the term altruistic resilience to describe this specific phenomenon.

Altruistic resilience is overcoming personal adversity for the selfless advancement of others who lack the means, resources, or opportunity to do so for themselves. Altruistic resilience is being resilient for the consideration and welfare of someone other than oneself. It is not simply words of empathy or isolated demonstrations of kindness or charity; rather, it is reflected in an individual's decision to thoughtfully and intentionally place the well-being of another ahead of his or her own. Thus, altruistic resilience is operating when individuals subjugate their own needs and desires to those of another person. In a figurative sense, it is akin to a member of a mountain-climbing party who has through sheer luck, skill, or good fortune been able to navigate a treacherous and seemingly impossible route. This person has a choice; this person can use his or her remaining and limited energy to press onward to summit the mountain or use that same energy to assist fellow climbers to overcome the chasm they themselves could not conquer on their own.

Participants in this study who demonstrated altruistic resilience were not only feeling empathy toward others or showing random acts of kindness, but were sacrificing or postponing their own educational goals in order to devote themselves to ensuring the education and well-being of relatives living in less fortunate circumstances. Rather than

investing valuable time and resources in their own education, the participants demonstrating altruistic resilience were investing in the education and advancement of others. As such, they were sowing seeds that will likely have exponential returns in the future of Southern Sudan as the children whose education they financed grow up to be educated citizens. In sum, these participants were still educationally resilient, but in a vicarious way as the gains may not ever be realized in their own lives, but in the lives of those less fortunate or their children.

There are several possible reasons this phenomenon that I have defined as altruistic resilience has not yet emerged in the resilience research literature. First, researchers have only recently begun to examine the role of resilience in children and youth from non-Western countries, and the effects of war on children and youth from the continent of Africa in particular remains an underresearched area (Dyregrov et al., 2000; Grigorenko et al., 2007). Further, studies examining resilience in Sudanese refugees in general and Lost Boys and Girls in particular are few; most have involved participants who were minors still in high school, and none have focused specifically on educational resilience. However, recent studies with children and youth from Native American (Kumpfer, 1999), Cambodian (see Sack et al., 1997), Lebanese (Macksoud & Aber, 1996) and Mexican (Cabrera & Padilla, 2004) backgrounds demonstrate that cultural and contextual influences play a significant role in the development of resilience mechanisms. The results from this study support this finding, as the resilience mechanisms this study's participants acquired were highly dependent upon the cultural values and norms they developed as a consequence of their experiences in varying contexts. Hence, it is possible that the altruistic resilience demonstrated by a subset of this study's participants is

directly linked to the specific experiences they endured as Lost Boys and Girls and shaped by the specific cultural and contextual influences in their lives as a result of their unique journey. More research with other refugee and at-risk populations is needed to confirm or disprove whether the construct of altruistic resilience is unique to Sudanese refugees.

It is also possible that the research designs generally employed by resilience researchers have not been conducive to identifying this altruistic resilience in both Western and non-Western samples. As discussed in the review of the literature in Chapter 2, the study of resilience has evolved considerably over the last four decades, and researchers have been eager to operationalize definitions in order to use published instruments or to develop new measures for identifying resilient children and youth. While researchers have more recently been accounting for culture and context and have begun to develop culturally sensitive measures of resilience (Clauss-Ehlers, 2008), these measures often fail to uncover ways that resilience manifests in participants coming from underresearched cultures. My discovery of a form of resilience that has not yet been identified or described in the literature supports the argument researchers are beginning to make—that qualitative research designs are more suitable methods of inquiry for understanding the way resilience develops in non-Western cultures (Rousseau & Gagne, 1998; Schweitzer et al., 2007). I could not have uncovered this new phenomenon in my exploration of the development of resilience in Sudanese refugees as it related to their persistence toward educational goals if I had relied only on quantitative measures or selected a research design that tested a priori assumptions using previously identified variables.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provides several directions for future research. First, although the two quantitative measures utilized in this study provided valuable descriptive data, they could not be relied upon to produce valid and reliable diagnoses of PTSD in the participants. Although both instruments have been used with diverse populations, they have not been adapted specifically for use with Sudanese refugees. While I made some vocabulary modifications to each measure after piloting the instruments, I did not add or delete any items, nor did I have the sample size necessary to conduct a factor analysis on the items or to determine validity or reliability. Hence, it would be of great value to follow up this predominantly qualitative study by using these findings to revise these quantitative measures to reflect culture-specific trauma-related events and symptoms. For example, although the *CTI-104* appears to be the most comprehensive measure currently published for assessing the number of traumatic events experienced, there were no items that addressed the issue of being an unaccompanied minor. While Question 93 addressed "raising your children by yourself," there was not an item that asked if children grew up without their parents or had to raise themselves. Additionally, Question 75 assessed whether or not participants had to live in poor conditions such as "fleeing, in mountains, poor shelter and hygiene," however, for a measure specifically assessing the trauma Sudanese refugees experienced, "mountains" should be replaced with "bush" or "deserts."

It would also be of great interest to conduct this study with a larger sample of Sudanese refugee participants from different geographical regions of the country. It is possible that the resilience mechanisms operating in the lives of these participants from

Virginia differ from those living in other regions of the country. Additionally, although this study had an appropriate representation of female participants (10%) when compared to the national percentage of Lost Girls of 3% (Adeyemi, 2006), as only one female participated in this research, it is impossible to make generalizations to other Lost Girls in the United States or to accurately compare and contrast the experiences and resilience mechanisms used by Lost Boys compared with Lost Girls. It would be valuable to repeat this study with a larger sample of Lost Girls to have a better understanding of their experiences and how they developed resilience mechanisms as a result of Southern Sudanese cultural expectations for women and in the context of perhaps the gender-specific adversity they faced.

Furthermore, the seemingly inverse concepts of accumulating effects and steeling effects need to be examined in greater depth. Further research is necessary to understand why some individuals become stronger in the face of ongoing adversity (i.e., steeling effects) while others are debilitated (i.e., accumulating effects). Perhaps a larger sample size would yield patterns in responses that may reveal insight into how these effects develop in individuals from different cultures and in different contexts. Increasing the sample size may also increase the statistical power of the analysis, and results of the correlational analysis between the *CTI-104* and the *IES-R* may be significant.

In addition to repeating this study with a larger sample of Lost Boys and Girls, it would also be of interest to examine the role of resilience as it relates to persistence toward educational goals with refugees in the United States from other countries. More specifically, as the concept of altruistic resilience has not yet appeared in the literature, it

would be interesting to study samples of other refugees or at-risk American populations to determine if the same phenomenon is occurring.

Finally, while this study primarily examined resilience mechanisms as a result of the participants' cultural and contextual experiences, there are internal factors contributing to resilience that were not directly measured in this study. While the issue of finding validated instruments with Sudanese refugees continues to present a challenge, it would be interesting to measure internal variables (i.e., intelligence or level of self-efficacy) to determine if such variables mediate or moderate the deleterious effects of trauma and adversity.

Implications

Findings from this study have several significant policy implications relating to refugees in general and Sudanese refugees in particular. First, the issue of being too old to enroll in high school after immigrating despite not completing high school in the refugee camp was a challenge for multiple participants. Participants arrived in the United States expecting to resume their education where they left it in Kakuma, for some as early as seventh grade; however, due to their age, they were forced to either begin high school at the grade level consonant with their chronological age (i.e., 10th grade for a 15-year-old), or were denied the opportunity to enroll at all. Instead, participants needed to navigate the adult system of higher education and determine a way to earn their GED in order to be eligible to apply to community college. According to this study's participants, this policy information was not shared with the refugees prior to immigration, and multiple participants felt misinformed and misguided. A more seamless adjustment to the United States could be facilitated through a more comprehensive cultural orientation for

refugees prior to migration, in addition to an examination of immigration and education policies and how they can be integrated to ensure refugees do not "fall through the cracks" by being too old to enroll in high school but not yet having the necessary prerequisites to begin college.

Second, many participants lacked the necessary documentation to demonstrate the level of education that they had achieved in Kakuma, which presented a significant challenge for them when applying to college in the United States. Despite completing high school in Kenya, several participants were still required to attend classes and earn their GED in order to demonstrate their level of proficiency. The time and expense involved forced participants to delay postsecondary studies even longer. It is evident that the participants received an education in Kakuma provided by the UN, and multiple participants felt that it was a very good education and reported being well prepared for college in the United States. However, refugees would be greatly helped by receiving the necessary documents to demonstrate their achievement.

Another significant challenge raised by multiple participants related to financial aid eligibility. In general, when participants first enrolled in college they qualified for financial aid and began to study on a full- or part-time basis. However, as they settled in the United States and began to reconnect with family in Sudan, they began to work additional hours or pick up second or third jobs in order to earn enough money to support their relatives. However, as they earned more money, they lost their financial aid eligibility. The difficulty was that although their income increased, after paying for living expenses in the United States and sending a large portion of their income overseas, they still depended heavily on financial aid for tuition. This challenge forced participants to

choose between very difficult scenarios: to reduce their working hours to qualify for financial aid and continue studying, resulting in less money to contribute to the needs of relatives overseas, or to stop studying in order to work enough hours to cover living expenses and maintain their level of support for family.

This problem with financial aid eligibility does not have a simple solution. On one hand, it would be to the participants' advantage to be able to send funds overseas through a charitable organization and have the funds deducted from their income for tax purposes and thus continue to qualify for financial aid. However, in addition to the administrative challenges this would pose for an organization, as the funds are going to individuals, rather than a registered receiving organization, it is difficult to determine that funds are not being laundered. Additionally, there is the question of the purpose of financial aid. If participants are earning enough money to cover their living and tuition expenses, but are electing to send a significant portion of their income overseas, should the government still be financing their education?

One nonprofit organization in Southeastern Virginia attempts to circumvent this problem through the development of a sponsorship program that finds donors to sponsor the relatives of local Lost Boys and Girls. Outreach Africa: Lost Boys Foundation (2009) has developed an African Boarding School Program that finds local sponsors to provide tuition for the young relatives of local Lost Boys and Girls to attend boarding schools in Kenya and Uganda. When the Lost Boys and Girls do not have to worry about financing the education of their relatives, they can decrease their working hours and devote more time and energy toward their education. The problem, however, is that it is perennially difficult to find sponsors, and the current global economic crisis is only exacerbating the

problem. It is hopeful that as the American public becomes more aware of the challenges refugees faced before and after immigration that they would be moved with the same compassion these participants experience for those in far less fortunate circumstances.

Limitations and Delimitations

Ten Southern Sudanese refugees (9 male, 1 female) living in Virginia were selected to participate in this study through purposeful and snowball sampling procedures. If time and resources permitted, it would have been preferable to include a larger purposeful sample of participants from multiple geographical regions of the country in order to gain greater insight and understanding into the resilience mechanisms operating in the lives of Sudanese refugees throughout the United States. Additionally, employing a convenience sample and snowball sampling technique relying on volunteers meant that generally those who were willing to share their personal experiences were interviewed, and therefore the sample may not be an accurate representation of the larger group of Sudanese Lost Boys and Girls in Virginia or the United States. As a result, in addition to the fact that participants were not randomly selected, these findings cannot be generalized to Southern Sudanese refugee populations in other regions of the country.

Moreover, interviews took place across gender and cultural lines (Canadian female interviewing mostly African males) and data (through interview and self-report measures) were gathered at one point in life, rather than looking at resilience across the lifespan. The research was also primarily retrospective rather than prospective. This study was delimited to adult refugees from Sudan and only among young men and women who were part of the group considered Lost Boys and Girls.

Conclusion

This study examined the resilience mechanisms operating in the lives of Sudanese refugees in Virginia as it related to their persistence toward achieving educational goals. Findings from this study reinforce prior resilience research findings that demonstrate the integral role of culture and context in the development of resilience mechanisms. Furthermore, this study generated the concept of altruistic resilience, defined as overcoming personal adversity for the selfless advancement of others who lack the means, resources, or opportunity to do so for themselves.

There are many potential research directions that could follow this study, most notably, using the findings to revise quantitative measures to be culturally relevant for diagnosing PTSD in Sudanese refugees. In addition, there is much more to be learned about the concept of altruistic resilience and how it develops and operates in the lives of refugees from Sudan and other countries, as well as individuals considered "at risk" for various other reasons.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: ______________________________ Date: ________________

Directions: Please put an X in front of the answer that best describes you, or provide the requested information following the question.

1. What is your present age? ____years

2. Gender: ____male ____female

3. Marital status

_____Single _____Married _____Divorced

_____Remarried _____Commitment Ceremony

4. What tribe are you from?

____

5. What region of Sudan are you from?

____

6. How old were you when you first left your home?

____

7. How many years have you been (or were you) separated from your family?

____

8. How old were you when you immigrated to the United States?

____

9. When did you immigrate to the United States? Month __________ Year ______

10. What is your citizenship status in the United States?

____U.S. Citizen ____Permanent Resident ____Have applied for citizenship

11. How many children do you have? ___0 ___1 ___2 ___3 ___4 ___5+

12. How many months before you gained employment in the U.S.? ____________

13. What is your current employment status? ___Full time (30 + hours weekly)

___Part time (less than 20 hours weekly) ___Unemployed

14. If working part time or unemployed, is this by choice?

15. How many languages do you speak? ___ Please list: ____________________

____

16. What is your religion? ____Christian ____Muslim ____Animist _____Other

17. Are you currently a member of a religious community? __________________

18. What is your living arrangement? ____alone ____with spouse/children

____host family _____ with Sudanese roommates/housemates ____ with American roommates/housemates

19. Are you in contact with any family members? ____no ____yes

If yes, what relation?____

20. Are any other family members living in the U.S.? ____no ____yes

Relationship to you: ____

21. Who is your closest friend? ____ Sudanese ____American ____Other

22. Who has been most influential in supporting you in the U.S.?

___fellow Sudanese ___teacher ___"Lost Boy" organizer ___church leader

___other

~Thank you!

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in this research study examining the role of resilience and educational persistence in Sudanese refugees in Virginia. You were chosen for the study because you are an adult member of the Sudanese refugee community living in Virginia. Please read this form and ask any questions you like before agreeing to participate in this study.

This research is being conducted by a researcher named Lucinda (Cindi) S. Spaulding. Cindi is a doctoral student and research assistant at Regent University's School of Education. Cindi is also an immigrant in the United States (from Canada) and a former elementary school teacher. This study is for academic purposes and for Cindi to fulfill her dissertation research requirements for her Ph.D. in Special Education and Educational Psychology. The researcher's faculty advisor is Dr. Mark Mostert, an African and a Special Education Professor at Regent University.

Resilience is defined as success despite adversity. The purpose of this study is to understand the cultural and contextual resilience mechanisms relating to the educational persistence of Sudanese refugees living in Virginia. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Sign and return this consent form
- Participate in the study by agreeing to meet with Cindi for a 1-2 hour interview that will be audio recorded
- Complete three questionnaires about your demographics, your experiences in Africa, as well as how you are functioning here in the United States
- Be available to respond to any follow up questions Cindi may have following the interview as she begins to analyze the data and write results
- Direct any questions or concerns to Cindi or her faculty advisor

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. This means that you have the right to choose to not participate in this research and your decision will be respected. If you decide to join this study now, you may change your mind and decide not to participate at any time in the future. You may also skip or refuse to answer any questions that you feel are too personal or private.

All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Cindi will not include your name or anything else that could identify you or your friends or family in any reports of this study. All recordings will be kept in a safe place and will not be shared with anyone. Cindi will not use the information you provide for any purposes outside of this research study.

You may ask any questions you have about this research now. If you have questions later, you may contact Cindi at 757.613.6236, cindispaulding@gmail.com or her advisor at 757.613.4495, markmos@regent.edu.

Cindi will provide you a copy of this form for you to keep.

☐ I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I am 18 years or older, and I consent to participate in this study.

Participant's name (printed): ____

Participant's Signature: ____________________________ Date:_______________

Researcher's name (printed): ____

Researcher's Signature: ____________________________ Date: ______________

APPENDIX C: COMPREHENSIVE TRAUMA INVENTORY-104

(Hollifield et al., 2006)

Instructions: The list of events below are things that happen to people *during war*. Please read each item carefully and check either "**NO**" if the event *did **not** happen to you* or circle "**YES**" if it *did happen to you.*

	NO did **NOT** happen to me	**YES** did happen to me
Psychological Injury		
1. Having your home, school, or workplace searched or looted	No	Yes
2. Having your home (or important place like school or workplace) severely damaged or destroyed	No	Yes
3. Fleeing or hiding from soldiers or enemies	No	Yes
4. Having to lie to protect yourself or others (includes signing official statement to protect yourself or others)	No	Yes
5. Living in the middle of war, and being forced into dual loyalties to survive	No	Yes
6. Being threatened with harm or feeling like you are in serious danger	No	Yes
7. Being in an area of active war combat, but you were not actively participating and were not injured	No	Yes
8. Actively participating in combat either as a soldier or civilian	No	Yes
9. Forced to join the military	No	Yes
10. Being near death because of illness or injury	No	Yes
11. Your pregnancy (for men; your wife's) was threatened, or a young baby died because of war conditions	No	Yes
12. Death of a family member besides a young baby due to war	No	Yes
13. Death of friends due to war	No	Yes
14. Having to abandon injured, dead or dying people	No	Yes
15. Death of your child	No	Yes
Physical Injury		
16. Directly exposed to chemical weapons	No	Yes
17. Being injured in active combat	No	Yes
18. Being shot or shelled with explosives	No	Yes
Detention and Intentional Abuse		
19. Forced to stand, kneel, or walk for a long time	No	Yes
20. Being forced to attend party activities or having ideas or beliefs forced on you "brainwashing"	No	Yes
21. Being intimidated or "blackmailed"	No	Yes
22. Being humiliated in front of others (stripped naked, insulted, screamed at, beaten)	No	Yes
23. Being beaten in front of family or friends	No	Yes
24. Being handcuffed or tied up	No	Yes
25. Being blindfolded	No	Yes
26. Being intentionally NOT told what was going to happen to you next or where you were going to be taken	No	Yes
27. Being taken and left in an unknown place	No	Yes
28. Being hit, slapped, beat or kicked by a person or with an object	No	Yes

29. Having your ears, eyes, nose, or mouth injured with objects	No	Yes
30. Having any part of your body injured by burning, freezing or electrical shocks	No	Yes
31. Having your body injured by hanging, needles, or having hair or nails pulled	No	Yes
32. Being held under water or sprayed with high-powered water	No	Yes
33. Being cut or stabbed	No	Yes
34. Being nearly killed by hanging or suffocation, near drowning, or other intentional injury (like being dragged)	No	Yes
35. Being abused with urine or feces	No	Yes
36. Being abused with bright lights, loud noises, or bad smells	No	Yes
37. Being placed in solitary (isolated) confinement	No	Yes
38. Being denied food or water	No	Yes
39. Being awakened repeatedly and being deprived sleep	No	Yes
40. Having medical care withheld when you were very sick	No	Yes
41. Living in very poor conditions in prison (crowding, problems with sanitation or temperature)	No	Yes
42. Being forced to work hard or for a long time or under very bad conditions	No	Yes
43. Being questioned, physically searched, stopped for identification and questioned	No	Yes
44. Being falsely accused of things you did not do or being arrested	No	Yes
45. Forced to make a confession about yourself or others	No	Yes
46. Being threatened with severe injury or execution	No	Yes
47. Being made to watch while others were being tortured or executed, or hearing others being injured or tortured	No	Yes
48. Being held in a village, town or house by soldiers or police	No	Yes
49. Being jailed for less than three months	No	Yes
50. Being in jail, prison, or a re-education camp for more than three months	No	Yes
Sexual Trauma or Abuse		
51. Any unwanted sexual experience	No	Yes
52. Having your private parts touched when you do not want that	No	Yes
53. Being threatened to be sexually molested or raped (but it didn't actually happen)	No	Yes
54. Having your private parts harmed (cut, burned, cold or heat, electricity, etc.)	No	Yes
55. Having your private parts penetrated by objects or hands	No	Yes
56. Being "raped" (forced to have sexual intercourse [vaginal, anal, oral] against your will)	No	Yes
Witnessing Abuse, Injury, or Death		
57. Seeing your family or friends get seriously injured or ill because of war	No	Yes
58. Seeing other people get seriously injured or ill because of war	No	Yes
59. Seeing a family member or a friend being raped	No	Yes
60. Seeing another person being raped	No	Yes
61. Seeing your family or friends being killed	No	Yes
62. Seeing others being killed	No	Yes
63. Seeing someone's body parts being cut off or blown up	No	Yes

64. Watching other people die	No	Yes
65. Helping ill or wounded people (included refugees)	No	Yes
66. Seeing dead bodies or parts of human remains	No	Yes
67. Digging up, burying, or handling dead bodies or parts of human remains	No	Yes
68. Seeing organized violence, mass demonstrations, or horrible events on television	No	Yes
69. Seeing injury or death of many people at once, or witnessing mass graves	No	Yes
70. Seeing injured or dead animals	No	Yes
Hearing About Injury and Death		
71. Heard about people being abused by harsh methods	No	Yes
72. Heard that children or other innocent people were injured or killed	No	Yes
73. Heard about mass killings and people being put in mass graves	No	Yes
Deprivation and Discrimination		
74. Having very little food, water, or clothing because of poverty or discrimination	No	Yes
75. Having to live in poor conditions (fleeing, in mountains, poor shelter and hygiene)	No	Yes
76. Having your home, business or important personal property confiscated	No	Yes
77. Being forced to stop work or schooling	No	Yes
78. Being monitored (repeatedly investigated or watched and followed, or having to report to officials)	No	Yes
79. Being oppressed (can't gather publicly, meet friend, speak your opinion)	No	Yes
Betrayal		
80. Being lied to or being made to feel uncertain about family member's whereabouts	No	Yes
81. Being abandoned by your family while you were in prison	No	Yes
82. Feeling like you were abandoned by allies or friends during war	No	Yes
83. Feeling like you were deceived by your own leaders or high-ranking officials	No	Yes
84. Being embarrassed	No	Yes
85. Having bombs or gunfire go off in "safe" areas (like evacuation areas)	No	Yes
86. Being forced to watch, monitor or report on family or neighbors	No	Yes
87. You refused or escaped from imposed military duty	No	Yes
Domestic Discord and Violence		
88. Experiencing severe family conflict because of war	No	Yes
89. Experiencing violence from a family member because of war	No	Yes
Displacement		
90. Being moved to a government area or "new economic area"	No	Yes
91. Having to flee from your home or community because of danger	No	Yes
92. Having to flee from your home or community because there is no work or because of discrimination	No	Yes
Separation and Isolation		
93. Raising your children by yourself	No	Yes

94. Your children were often alone because of war circumstances	No	Yes
95. Being taken away by enemies, and separated from your family	No	Yes
96. Having a spouse or child be put in jail, prison, or camp	No	Yes
97. Being separated from your family because of war circumstances	No	Yes
98. NOT being able to take care of family members because of separation	No	Yes
99. NOT being able to see a family member who is dying, or can't witness burial	No	Yes
Difficulties During Migration		
100. Being beat up or poorly treated in a refugee camp	No	Yes
101. Thinking you would not ever be able to leave a refugee camp	No	Yes
102. You or family members were denied refugee or asylum status	No	Yes
103. Feeling afraid that you will be sent back to your country from a refugee camp	No	Yes
104. Separated from family members during fleeing or migration	No	Yes

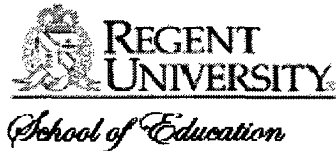
APPENDIX D: IMPACT OF EVENT SCALE-REVISED

Name: ______________________________ Date: ___________

Instructions: The following is a list of difficulties people sometimes have after stressful life events. Please read each item, and then indicate how distressing each difficulty has been for you *during the past 7 days* with respect to the disaster. How much were you distressed or bothered by these difficulties?

	Not at all	A little bit	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
1. Any reminder brought back feelings about it.	0	1	2	3	4
2. I had trouble staying asleep.	0	1	2	3	4
3. Other things kept making me think about it.	0	1	2	3	4
4. I felt irritable and angry.	0	1	2	3	4
5. I avoided letting myself get upset when I thought about it or was reminded of it.	0	1	2	3	4
6. I thought about it when I didn't mean to.	0	1	2	3	4
7. I felt as if it hadn't happened or wasn't real.	0	1	2	3	4
8. I stayed away from reminders about it.	0	1	2	3	4
9. Pictures about it popped into my mind.	0	1	2	3	4
10. I was jumpy and easily startled.	0	1	2	3	4
11. I tried not to think about it.	0	1	2	3	4
12. I was aware that I still had a lot of feelings about it, but I didn't deal with them.	0	1	2	3	4
13. I had no feelings about it.	0	1	2	3	4
14. I found myself acting or feeling like I was back at that time.	0	1	2	3	4
15. I had trouble falling asleep.	0	1	2	3	4
16. I had waves of strong feelings about it.	0	1	2	3	4
17. I tried to remove it from my memory.	0	1	2	3	4
18. I had trouble concentrating.	0	1	2	3	4
19. Reminders of it caused me to have physical reactions, such as sweating, trouble breathing, nausea, or a pounding heart.	0	1	2	3	4
20. I had dreams about it.	0	1	2	3	4
21. I felt watchful and on guard.	0	1	2	3	4
22. I tried not to talk about it.	0	1	2	3	4

APPENDIX E: HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER



School of Education

April 22, 2009

Lucinda S. Spaulding
1416 Carabao Circle
Virginia Beach, VA 23464

Dear Ms. Spaulding:

Your application for *An Exploration of Resilience Mechanisms Relating to the Educational Persistence of Sudanese Refugees* has been approved by the Regent University School of Education Human Subjects Review Board with ID# 200804221. Accordingly, you are welcome to proceed with data collection as specified in your application.

Please note that this approval is conditioned on the parameters outlined in your application. If your research substantively changes and you plan to conduct research outside of the approved scope, you will need to submit a revision to the HSR Board. Additionally, although not required under current procedures, you are strongly encouraged to complete the Office for Human Research Protections Human Subjects Assurance Training online at http://ohrp-ed.od.nih.gov/CBTs/Assurance/ prior to data collection since you're working with sensitive subjects.

Approval is good for one year. If you will be *collecting data* after the one-year anniversary of your approval, you will be required to submit a renewal application and status report to the board to secure an additional twelve-month extension.

You are expected to comply with the university policy as outlined in the Faculty & Academic Policy Handbook and the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46 to ensure that the rights and welfare of human participants in your research project are properly protected.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 757-352-4447 or jbaker@regent.edu.

Jason D. Baker, Ph.D.
HSR Board Chair

1000 Regent University Drive — Virginia Beach, VA 23464

APPENDIX F: SAMPLE THEORETICAL MEMO

5/22/09

I conducted my fourth interview yesterday with "Moses." So far, all interviews have taken place at the exact schedule and location planned. I am very thankful for that. This interview was very focused and on track.

As I drove home from the interview yesterday, it really began to hit me that I have begun this research with a considerable bias of viewing those who are actively pursuing an education and working toward their educational goals at this time as more resilient than others. However, something "Moses" said to me really struck a chord. He spoke about the fact that since locating his mother in 2003, and learning about the situation she is in a knowing she needs his help, he had to choose between supporting her (and other family members back home or in camps) or going to school. He said that while both are important, family must come first. Furthermore, someone can ignore their family's needs for 5 or 6 years earning a degree, but even with a degree, there is no guarantee of a good job upon graduation. Therefore, it is not worth setting family needs aside for so long.

I realized that I am very wrong to see someone with this outlook as less resilient. They are simply prioritizing, and it is clearly not wrong but rather altruistic to place family above one's own needs and desires.

Furthermore, the last three participants all communicated that they are unable to continue in school because they are supporting family. However, the last three also have not strongly indicated that they will return to Sudan someday. I feel it is far too early to generalize, but, it appears that the strong motivation to in the long-term return to Sudan to help family and country allows one to in the short term make sacrifices (i.e., not supporting family for a period of time), in order to reach the long term goal. On the other hand, the participants who do not have a long-range plan to return to Sudan (aside from visiting) feel it is more important to support family now, placing their educational goals on the side in order to complete later. They do not have the same urgency.

APPENDIX G: SUMMARY OF INTERIVEW DATA

Participant	Date of Interview	Location	Date Instruments Returned
"Daniel" (Pilot Interview)	5/17/09	Researcher's home	5/17/09
"Joseph"	5/19/09	Participant's home	5/21/09
"Timothy"	5/20/09	Participant's home	5/20/09
"Moses"	5/21/09	Participant's home	5/27/09
"Mark"	5/28/09	Participant's home	5/28/09
"Luke"	5/31/09	Participant's home	6/12/09
"Paul"	6/1/09	Local university library	6/1/09
"Abraham"	6/5/09	Participant's home	6/5/09
"Job"	6/5/09	Local university library	6/5/09
"Leah"	6/8/09	Participant's home	6/8/09

APPENDIX H: *CTI-104* RESULTS

Percent of Participants Responding "Yes" to Items on the *CTI-104*

Inventory Item	"Yes"
Psychological Injury	
1. Having your home, school, or workplace searched or looted	90%
2. Having your home (or important place like school or workplace) severely damaged or destroyed	100%
3. Fleeing or hiding from soldiers or enemies	100%
4. Having to lie to protect yourself or others (includes signing official statement to protect yourself or others)	30%
5. Living in the middle of war, and being forced into dual loyalties to survive	70%
6. Being threatened with harm or feeling or feeling like you are in serious danger	100%
7. Being in an area of active war combat, but you were not actively participating and were not injured	90%
8. Actively participating in combat either as a soldier or civilian	40%
9. Forced to join the military	40%
10. Being near death because of illness or injury	80%
11. Your pregnancy (for men; your wife's) was threatened, or a young baby died because of war conditions	20%
12. Death of a family member besides a young baby due to war	100%
13. Death of friends due to war	100%
14. Having to abandon injured, dead or dying people	80%
15. Death of your child	0%
Physical Injury	
16. Directly exposed to chemical weapons	10%
17. Being injured in active combat	10%
18. Being shot or shelled with explosives	10%
Detention and Intentional Abuse	
19. Forced to stand, kneel, or walk for a long time	90%
20. Being forced to attend party activities or having ideas or beliefs forced on you "brainwashing"	40%
21. Being intimidated or "blackmailed"	70%
22. Being humiliated in front of others (stripped naked, insulted, screamed at, beaten)	40%
23. Being beaten in front of family or friends	60%
24. Being handcuffed or tied up	30%
25. Being blindfolded	30%
26. Being intentionally NOT told what was going to happen to you next or where you were going to be taken	50%

27. Being taken and left in an unknown place	50%
28. Being hit, slapped, beat or kicked by a person or with an object	80%
29. Having your ears, eyes, nose, or mouth injured with objects	30%
30. Having any part of your body injured by burning, freezing or electrical shocks	30%
31. Having your body injured by hanging, needles, or having hair or nails pulled	30%
32. Being held under water or sprayed with high-powered water	10%
33. Being cut or stabbed	20%
34. Being nearly killed by hanging or suffocation, near drowning, or other intentional injury (like being dragged)	20%
35. Being abused with urine or feces	20%
36. Being abused with bright lights, loud noises, or bad smells	30%
37. Being placed in solitary (isolated) confinement	30%
38. Being denied food or water	50%
39. Being awaked repeatedly and being deprived sleep	60%
40. Having medical care withheld when you were very sick	30%
41. Living in very poor conditions in prison (crowding, problems with sanitation or temperature)	40%
42. Being forced to work hard or for a long time or under very bad conditions	80%
43. Being questioned, physically searched, stopped for identification and questioned	60%
44. Being falsely accused of things you did not do or being arrested	10%
45. Forced to make a confession about yourself or others	50%
46. Being threatened with severe injury or execution	40%
47. Being made to watch while others were being tortured or executed, or hearing others being	70%
48. Being confined in a village, town or house by soldiers or police	80%
49. Being jailed for less than three months	0%
50. Being in jail, prison, or a re-education camp for more than three months	0%
Sexual Trauma or Abuse	
51. Any unwanted sexual experience	10%
52. Having your private parts touched when you do not want that	10%
53. Being threatened to be sexually molested or raped (but it didn't actually happen)	0%
54. Having your private parts harmed (cut, burned, cold or heat, electricity, etc.)	10%
55. Having your private parts penetrated by objects or hands	10%
56. Being "raped" (forced to have sexual intercourse [vaginal, anal, oral] against your will)	0%
Witnessing Abuse, Injury, or Death	
57. Seeing your family or friends get seriously injured or ill because of war	100%
58. Seeing other people get seriously injured or ill because of war	100%
59. Seeing a family member or a friend being raped	70%
60. Seeing another person being raped	60%
61. Seeing your family or friends being killed	90%

62. Seeing other being killed	90%
63. Seeing someone's body parts being cut off or blown up	100%
64. Watching other people die	100%
65. Helping ill or wounded people (included refugees)	100%
66. Seeing dead bodies or parts of human remains	100%
67. Digging up, burying, or handling dead bodies or parts of human remains	80%
68. Seeing organized violence, mass demonstrations, or horrible events on television	70%
69. Seeing injury or death of many people at once, or witnessing mass graves	100%
70. Seeing injured or dead animals	100%
Hearing About Injury and Death	
71. Heard about people being abused by harsh methods	90%
72. Heard that children or other innocent people were injured or killed	100%
73. Heard about mass killings and people being put in mass graves	100%
Deprivation and Discrimination	
74. Having very little food, water, or clothing because of poverty or discrimination	100%
75. Having to live in poor conditions (fleeing, in mountains, poor shelter and hygiene)	100%
76. Having your home, business or important personal property confiscated	90%
77. Being forced to stop work or schooling	90%
78. Being monitored (repeatedly investigated or watched and followed, or having to report to officials)	30%
79. Being oppressed (can't gather publicly, meet friend, speak your opinion)	80%
Betrayal	
80. Being lied to or being made to feel uncertain about family member's whereabouts	60%
81. Being abandoned by your family while you were in prison	10%
82. Feeling like you were abandoned by allies or friends during war	60%
83. Feeling like you were deceived by your own leaders or high-ranking officials	60%
84. Being embarrassed	80%
85. Having bombs or gunfire go off in "safe" areas (like evacuation areas)	90%
86. Being forced to watch, monitor or report on family or neighbors	40%
87. You refused or escaped from imposed military duty	40%
Domestic Discord and Violence	
88. Experiencing severe family conflict because of war	80%
89. Experiencing violence from a family member because of war	50%
Displacement	
90. Being moved to a government area or "new economic area"	60%
91. Having to flee from your home or community because of danger	100%
92. Having to flee from your home or community because there is no work or because of discrimination	60%
Separation and Isolation	

93. Raising your children by yourself	20%
94. Your children were often alone because of war circumstances	40%
95. Being taken away by enemies, and separated from your family	80%
96. Having a spouse or child be put in jail, prison, or camp	30%
97. Being separated from your family because of war circumstances	90%
98. NOT being able to take care of family members because of separation	90%
99. NOT being able to see a family member who is dying, or can't witness burial	100%
Difficulties During Migration	
100. Being beat up or poorly treated in a refugee camp	70%
101. Thinking you would not ever be able to leave a refugee camp	100%
102. You or family members were denied refugee or asylum status	40%
103. Feeling afraid that you will be sent back to your country from a refugee camp	70%
104. Separated from family members during fleeing or migration	100%

Total Sample Descriptive Statistics from the *CTI-104*

	Range	Total possible	*M*	*SD*
Trauma Subscale				
Psychological Injury	8-14	15	10.4	1.713
Physical Injury	0-2	3	0.3	0.675
Detention & Intentional Abuse	2-27	32	13.3	7.04
Sexual Trauma or Abuse	0-4	6	0.4	1.265
Witnessing Abuse, Injury, or Death	10-14	14	12.6	1.506
Hearing About Injury & Death	2-3	3	2.9	0.316
Deprivation & Discrimination	3-6	6	4.9	0.994
Betrayal	1-8	8	4.4	2.413
Domestic Discord & Violence	0-2	2	1.3	0.823
Displacement	1-3	3	2.2	0.789
Separation & Isolation	3-6	7	4.5	1.179
Difficulties During Migration	3-5	5	3.8	0.919
Total	38-87	104	61	13.88

Summary Descriptive Statistics for Individual Participants on the *CTI-104*

	Daniel	Joseph	Timothy	Moses	Mark
Trauma Subscale					
Psychological Injury (*n* = 15)	10	11	12	9	9
Physical Injury (*n* = 3)	0	0	0	0	0
Detention & Intentional Abuse (*n* = 32)	20	27	12	7	2
Sexual Trauma or Abuse (*n* = 6)	0	4	0	0	0
Witnessing Abuse, Injury, or Death (*n* = 14)	14	13	14	14	10
Hearing About Injury and Death (*n* = 3)	3	3	3	2	3
Deprivation & Discrimination (*n* = 6)	5	6	4	5	6
Betrayal (*n* = 8)	5	8	4	3	1
Domestic Discord & Violence (*n* = 2)	2	2	2	2	0
Displacement (*n* = 3)	2	2	1	3	1
Separation & Isolation (*n* = 7)	4	6	4	6	3
Difficulties During Migration (*n* = 5)	5	5	3	4	3
Total (*N* = 104)	70	87	59	55	38

	Luke	Paul	Abraham	Job	Leah
Trauma Subscale					
Psychological Injury (n = 15)	10	8	11	14	10
Physical Injury (n = 3)	0	1	0	0	2
Detention & Intentional Abuse (n = 32)	10	10	13	18	14
Sexual Trauma or Abuse (n = 6)	0	0	0	0	0
Witnessing Abuse, Injury, or Death (n = 14)	13	11	11	14	12
Hearing About Injury and Death (n = 3)	3	3	3	3	3
Deprivation & Discrimination (n = 6)	5	4	6	5	3
Betrayal (n = 8)	6	1	3	7	6
Domestic Discord & Violence (n = 2)	2	1	0	1	1
Displacement (n = 3)	2	3	3	3	2
Separation & Isolation (n = 7)	4	3	5	6	4
Difficulties During Migration (n = 5)	4	3	3	5	3
Total (N = 104)	59	48	58	76	60

APPENDIX I: *IES-R* RESULTS

Total Sample Descriptive Statistics from the *IES-R*

	Range	Total possible	*M*	*SD*
Subscale				
Avoidance	1.50–3.75	4	2.41	0.63
Intrusions	1.50–4.00	4	2.78	0.89
Hyperarousal	0.83–4.00	4	2.18	1.00
Total score	1.46–3.88	4	2.46	0.73

Summary Descriptive Statistics for Individual Participants on the *IES-R*

Participant	Avoidance subscale	Intrusions subscale	Hyperarousal subscale	*IES-R* total scale
Daniel	2.50	3.00	0.83	2.11
Joseph	2.25	2.25	1.50*	2.00
Timothy	2.75	3.25	2.67*	2.89
Moses	2.63	1.63	2.17*	2.14
Mark	1.88	1.50	1.00	1.46
Luke	2.63	2.63	2.17*	2.47
Paul	1.50	2.13	1.50*	1.71
Abraham	1.75	3.50	2.83*	2.69
Job	3.75	3.88	4.00*	3.88
Leah	2.50	4.00	3.17*	3.22

Note: Total possible score for each of the subscales and the *IES-R* total scale is 4.
* Above the cut-off score of 1.50 for potential diagnosis of the presence of PTSD.

APPENDIX J: SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

Interview #4: "Moses"

C: Describe your life before immigrating the US starting with your childhood.

M: When you left your country while you young, when I left my home town was during the war. I don't know where I was going, I was too young, so I was following the people because that take them to our village and destroy and kill everybody and took some kids too as a slave, especially in our home town, even 5 or 10 years ago even now is still going on in our home state, Bhar-El Ghazel, taken to the north and they kill everybody ladies and woman, they kill them all. And they took the cattle because they like cattle too. So I just was following the people until the group of rebel leaders, when they see us young people like that they collect us (C: SPLA?) yes, and they give us some leaders of them to direct us until we reach Ethiopia. Because we don't know where we going and they know where they leading us to. You know that's where we get into Ethiopia. And then from there the UN just came and help, we were too young, no parent no body, so and we didn't enjoy our childhood, because 7 and 8 years old were like this, fighting each other, fighting over food, fighting over everything.

So I cannot imagine it even some times, even 3 to 2 days no food, nothing. Eat leaves whatever you get on the street, even bark, you can get a to kill a bird, you can eat it all those kind of stuff.

Sometimes when you think about it you don't—even you cannot talk about it sometime and just let it go and thank God you are still alive and you can pass through somebody who pass away over there.

C: Was your brother with you then?

M: Yeah-

C: So you were kind of taking care of him?

M: Yeah, but those SPLA members they helped the youngest and let them carry them.

C: Can you please describe all your education and training experiences in Sudan, Ethiopia or Kenya?

M: I start my education in Ethiopia. And when I came to Kenya I went to, I start class 3 in 1992 and then I finish my high school in Kenya. And I think 1997 I left school and try to look for the process coming to US, so I was out of school for almost 2 years and then when back over there and then finished my high school. For 1 year in 2000 I finish my high school.

So when I came over here I went to college because that guy, the person I told you, Bert, he helped me to go back to school, and then I went to community college to take placement test and I pass it, so I was in college for 2 years and things were getting harder because full time student and full time job and try to find my families because my mom she when I never hear about her, same with my dad, I never heard until I find one person in Uganda who is like close relative person and try to send him money until he find where my mom she is and send $ and go to communication like that. And I losing money through that communication and Bert was helping me too, also the church while I go to school and work at the same time. From there I find my mom.

C: What year did you find your mom?

M: 2003. So I have never seen her until 2003. I've been in Kenya and Ethiopia and then come to United States.

C: And then you saw her for the first time last month.

M: Yeah, so that was really...

C: Going back, did you finish HS in the refugee camp or outside?

M: In refugees camp.

C: I know you were little when you left home, but what were your mother and father's views toward education?

M: No, no they don't think about education because none of our village go to school.

C: So their views, were they the same as the elders and leaders in your village?

M: Yes.

C: So really no children went to school?

M: No children, even though they go to school already, someone even go in our village our community, there is no good job you can find and school also is Arabic, there is no English you know until when the SPLM get the power so that's where people get taught by English, but before that was Arabic. Cause they want all nation to Arabic speakers and Arabic influence or teaching you know.

C: So where did you learn Arabic?

M: In Sudan

C: But not in school?

M: Yeah, because people talk Arabic and when we left Sudan to come to Ethiopia and refugees camp in Kenya we have a lot of local language in Sudan, different tribe, so when people talk to each other you know it's Arabic.

C: So it's the common -

M: Yeah the common language you know- like national language. Even now Arabic is still national language.

C: Now, in terms of getting your high school education in the camp, was that easy or difficult?

M: Oh it's easy.

C: What made it easy for you; how did you get it?

M: I was here and there is nothing that I was relying to, there's no job, no other place for activities or playing or nothing, just only school you wake up early morning and go to school come get out 4:00 or 3:00 and the read it. There's not a lot of activities like play, football or anything. Just only school- so the focus is school, education.

C: Was there anything that made it difficult to get an education in the camp?

M: Yes, hunger sometimes because we were living under UN, you know, sometime don't bring food and you don't have enough food sometime that keep you away from school and that's the main reason, food sometimes close. You might go maybe a month or 2 month without UN bring any food ration.

C: How did you handle that when you were dealing with hunger?

M: Several ways. Some people they keep their food, whenever you got it one time you know how to manage it. If you manage well then you can wait until you might get another one. Or we help each other. So who ever food have at that time we share, we eat together.

C: So who helped you? Who did you eat with?

M: Basically we were young, the time that we came to Ethiopia we were young. So if you have food you call somebody and come and try to help him. We shared a lot. So you cannot rely on somebody and no body rely on you too.

C: So food was the major challenge. Were there any other challenges?

M: We don't have like clothes or shoes or those things or a pen we don't mind about those, but most of the food, those were the major things.

C: Were there some people that stopped going to high school?

M: Yeah. Because of hunger too. Because they try to find a way where they can eat good and feel good before you go to school.

C: Did you ever stop or did you go straight through?

M: I stopped. Because in Kenya, over here they call it semester quarter in America but over there call it I think seasoning. From January to May 30 and then from May to August and then summertime all it's like that. So every year I miss maybe for 3 years, I miss summer time.

C: Why did you miss those classes?

M: Because I might come to Nairobi for looking for scholarship. Or come and see embassies like American, Canadian, or Australia or Norwegian. Maybe I might get a scholarship or they might help me out with cash, anything like that or I can tell them I'm stuck over here in Nairobi and there is no way I can go back to refugees camp and I'm a refugee. Sometimes if you lucky they can help you with your transport and some will left over a couple of money and when you go back to refugees camp they might help you. For second time or maybe a year or less than a year if you know how to manage it. So but to get away from refugee to Nairobi it's hard.

C: Yeah, were you free to go or did you have to escape so to speak?

M: The document sometime. Because Kenyan government they restrict everybody. If you don't have the right travel document where you can travel from refugees to Nairobi if they catch you they put you in jail.

If you lucky and get into Nairobi, you might get a scholarship.

C: Were you ever caught?

M: No. But my brother been caught. And he been locked up for 6 month.

C: So you would go to Nairobi to apply for scholarships or immigration.

M: That's why I miss those for 3 years consecutive (semesters)

C: How would you describe your adjustment in 2001, how did you adjust to coming here. What helped you? What challenges did you face?

M: My first challenge wasn't the language because when I came I was not like other refugees they don't know how to speak or write and that's why I got a job 3 weeks and 1/2 . It's quick and some people might go at least 90 days before they get that job. So I know how to write and fill out my application and speak.

So my main challenge was the food. The thing were different to me over here. It was winter, snow in April and that was my first time to see snow over here so it was really challenge. 1 year later I get used to and my friend that went to the military (not Bert) he helped me out. He's young too. He was like my age mate too. He show me a lot of place where I can meet people.

C: How did you meet him?

M: I met him in school.

C: When did you start school?

M: 2002.

C: How come you waited a year?

M: Because to stabilize my finance and the situation over here too. Because you cannot come and go straight to the school and you have people back over there. Because all my friends that would survive I know them and the situation they were in camp. You no, so if you have a chance to come over here and make money you can send them $100 or 200 and help them out over there. So and that's a reason that I wait a year and go back to school.

C: So it didn't have to do with financial aid eligibility?

M: Yeah I get financial aid for 2 years.

C: Tell me about what education you got here. Tell me about your studies here in the US.

M: When Bert took me to the community college and I took the placement test I do pass it and start my college requirement classes and I've passed them. And now, and I've been taking my course, the one that I took my career, and I think I took almost 16 credit in my career and then the thing were getting high and my demand were getting high and when I find my family that's why I mess up my education too. Because I cannot get financial aid I am working full time job and I'm making more money so and I don't want to take out a loan.

C: So you're saying if you made more money you'd lose financial aid?

M: Yeah, you'd lose financial aid, and that's what the main thing. And it's affecting more of the Sudanese over here. So you try to help yourself but you cannot help your people back there. So but if you're somebody that try to bring your people up and you know where situation that they were in over there so you can say oh education maybe I will get it back later and then may help people in the situation that they are in now. So that's was the main thing I left the school.

And then when I help my mom and my 2 sisters I went back to school again in 2006 to TNCC and I took 8 credit and I pay at least 3k, 2K and some change, buying the book and $700 and something for the book and my credit was like $800 and something. All together it's almost 2K so.

C: What were you studying?

M: Business Administration.

C: Why Business?

M: Because there's a lot of chance for business in here and back home over there. There's a lot of opportunity in business, it might help me out my own or running somebody business too. So that's the reason that I chose business administration.

C: Did you finish at TNCC?

M: I nearly finish it.

C: Do you plan to continue?

M: I plan to continue it but now I just get married so I try to find a way that I can do my try to bring my wife in Sudan to, it's not like others the culture around the world where you can if you in love and she like you or you like her you cannot pay nothing but in Sudan we pay dowry (laughing) so...

C: How did you do that?

M: It's like Arab culture. You have to pay something to the family of your wife.

C: Did you use cattle?

M: Cattle yeah, if you don't have cattle like me you have money, you can go and buy cattle over there.

C: So you use your own money to buy the cattle

M: So I cannot go to school now

C: I'm sure you had to buy many, many cattle for your wife.

M: I know, I know.

C: But it's worth it.

M: Yeah.

C: Tell me more about your Sudanese culture- how does Sudanese culture view education?

M: In here or back there?

C: Either- there or in here.

M: Over there now they want everybody to be educated so if you are lucky and come, you are lucky to come to western culture to western countries like Canada, American, and Australia and some countries in Europe. They want whoever kid come to this country, like the time that I went over there, they always ask me about education which level of my education I was in.

C: When you went over there?

M: Yeah. And the government too, if you have a chance like this and come to this country, they encourage everybody to get education. To bring people up because the war affect everybody mind in Sudan before, but whoever had education a little bit and now to… to take care of the country or to help build the country up in some many way. Not in politic but in the way or bring some non-organization it help the country. Because we've been around the country, those kind of neighbor country like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda and some over there they don't have high education because they were in refugees camp and their mind for that time was a refugees mind.

C: What is a refugee's mind?

M: Because you are under somebody and feed you, dress you, tell you what to do, and you locked up over there, you cannot have access to travel to wherever you want to go, you can be there in 1 place for 5 years, 5-10 years. So you don't have access to free yourself. And the same food you eat everyday, the same thing, the same drink you doing every day. Because you are under somebody, you know feeding you every day. It's like if you live in shelter or jail you know what I try to say. If you've been locked up- whatever the food they bring to you don't have choice, you don't have choice.

C: So what does that do to the mind?

M: So your mind is just getting to that direction there is no other way that you know. You try to help yourself and bring yourself up but if you have a chance to come on this countries, the government encourage you and try to influence everybody. There is so many way that option if you get away, yourself away from that refugees now in Sudan we independent now. So there so many ways that you can bring yourself up. You can go back to school. There is free education now, government try to bring—

C: In Sudan?

M: In Sudan

C: Really?

M: You see- English too not Arabic. Because they don't want everybody to be taught that.

C: Everyone to be—

M: To be English speaker. So education is, I think is the main thing now. And everybody try to learn a lot.

C: What are your educational goals for the future? What would you like to accomplish?

M: Maybe bachelor degree. In business. But maybe two years coming maybe I will go back to school and if I go back to school I will finish it. Not get away from school again.

C: What will you do to make sure you finish it? What decisions or choices—

M: I am saving now my school money. And try to get a scholarship too. I always online. That's why you see my laptop over there. And I try to take some classes online.

C: Now you are or you will?

M: I will, but I just came last month and I don't have a job so the sooner I get a job I will take part time classes on line rather than going to community college or any school.

C: What sacrifices do you think you're going to have to make to reach your educational goals?

M: It's hard. It's really hard. It's hard because it's like saving 3 months to now, people over there like, I get married over there and my family and they always need something from me because they don't have nothing and myself over here, you see, I have to pay my room, where I live in, and what I am eating, and then maybe my school fees too. And everything now getting expensive due to the economy so it's really surprise you know. At least if you lucky to get a scholarship and now scholarship for scholar now from government or some agencies is not easy now due to the economy to is affecting everybody whoever try to go back to school and try get scholarship is not easy. At least you lucky. But most of us in our community mostly is Sudanese they want to go back to school but it's our people back there sometimes affecting our life but we try to—

C: Can you do both? Can you go to school and help people at home?

M: I don't think. Because you help yourself and your people and school too. So at least you leave your people over there but they just keep calling you and when somebody go over there and somebody see the situation that your one of your close person is over there

and come and tell you. When I come and tell everybody over here whoever cousin or friend I met over there I say look, one of your relative they way I met him he's not in good condition. And then describe maybe him might get school and try to work hard and send money back there and try to communicate because it been long you have never talked to your one of your relative and some people they whoever in over here lost one of their relative so if you lucky and find one of your relative you try to help them out. So that's the main thing sometime. You put your relative first and yourself first over here, then education.

C: So education is under

M: Under little bit so. That's a problem something that effecting us now over here, but we want education so much.

C: It's very difficult

M: It's hard.

C: What do you think can solve this problem of family and education and not being able to do both. How do you think the problem can be solved for Sudanese here?

M: I don't think that somebody can solve it. At least even though you get a scholarship and you still talking to your people you still have that feeling try to help them out even though you don't have nothing. So I don't think- and also if you got to school and your school might take two to 3, 4 years before you get degree or whatever your level of education you want to be and you might never know that you might get a good job or not (They don't seek education for education's sake.) so those things sometime in some people mind they say instead of going 3, 4, 6 years finish my degree or bachelor or whatever level you want to be and might not get a job and those 6 years you've been following your education you don't help your family and you don't talk to them and you don't go back to your country, and then later on your finish your career and then get a good job almost 10 years together. Try to make yourself a somebody and then you lost everything. You lost your family for those 6 years you've been following education and now you finish and it's not easy to get a good job to where you can try to find where your relative are, so and that's why some people now they share, they take school sometime, help your people, help yourself.

C: So kind of take times-

M: Take time- because you might never know and because even though you get the degree now, still you cannot find a good job. Even Americans too, not us, too.

C: In terms of your goals, school's a goal, but you recognize- what are your life goals, what would you like to do in life in terms of maybe even broader than school. What are your goals in life?

M: My goal in life now, I miss everything in my life since I was young, you know enjoyment, fun, and have good time and follow my education in the right way where maybe I might go 4 or 3 years or 10 years without stress out and get good education, I have missed those time. But now my focus now, I just get married. Try to bring my wife so if I bring her maybe next year, then I will go back to school. Over there I can see what would be my future life because I am not going to think about no body back there, because if I bring my wife I can let her work, whatever small income that she make might help family back over there and I will go back to school.

C: So you see a way possibly?

M: So if she come over here and work even though level job, minimum wage, she might help me and help herself and people back there. Even though after 1 month or 2 month she might help people over there and I will follow my education.

C: My husband and I have taken turns too (explained our situation).

M: So that's why now that's where I can see. I might achieve my goal like that way.

C: What do you think she might like to do here?

M: Um.... She just finish high school so she speak good English.

C: Did she finish in Sudan?

M: She finish in Sudan.

C: Has your level of education helped you or hindered/hurt you?

M: I think it help me in so many major, it help me a lot since I was here. Whatever position that I am applying to, it help me to, so whatever I decide to do it will help me.

C: What kind of jobs are you looking for?

M: Before I was working in fishing company, I was inspector. Inspector fish. So quality assurance. And I've been working with them for 5 years. And they do pay good so...

C: But you had to quit for going—

M: When I went to Sudan they just lay, it's like season job. So but now they want me back, maybe next month.

C: So you're waiting?

M: Yeah.

C: Do you plan to return to live in Sudan or do you plan to stay here?

M: I plan to stay here. That's why I want to bring my wife over here. Maybe later on, maybe years coming when I get retire or whatever if God will.

C: But overall you'd like your children to grow up-

M: To grow another way

C: Why?

M: Because there is still, still there is war in Sudan. You never know because we are under CPA and south and the north now they can't follow the CPA regulation, so you never know and you don't want your kid to be facing a lot of difficulty that I've been facing before so I want my kid, if I have a chance that I'm in this country, so I want them to get good life or good education later on in their future and that's the reason that I want to raise my kid over here in this country.

C: Looking back in your life, in resilience all the research identifies turning points. If you look back in your life are there any specific turning points in your life where new opportunities opened up or things really changed in your life for the better, just if you look back from now all the way to when you were little.

M: Yeah, there is a lot of opportunity where ever I have, because as I said earlier when I left my country when I was young was, is real horrible, I cannot say it's really bad, you know bad is something, but it's real horrible because I pass through people who been killed and I left my parent and I don't know where they gone and different people took me where I might not know. And I came to Ethiopia a lot of people dying the same age as I am you see the same war break out in Ethiopia again which pass through boarder to Kenya, we get into Kenya and try, but it's getting change, there is not a lot of dying in Kenya there is not a lot of bad things happen I can see, just only school and I was under refugees and there was a lot of opportunities that I can see and as I said earlier, sometimes I come to Nairobi and Nairobi look like Western sometimes, you see there is a better life. And I see opportunity and that's sometimes I got Nairobi and then go back to school until I have made it to US now. So every time there is a different and now I came to this country in 2001 and I get a chance going back to school and working and send my $ at the same time and get my citizen and went back and see my homeland too, so you know every time there is changes and now I went back to Sudan and I just came with different idea too, so it might help me in my life.

C: So you'd say you've had many like reaching Kenya, coming to America, going back to Sudan.

M: Yeah.

C: Did going to Sudan cause you to have different life goals- going back and seeing your country you hadn't seen in 20 years, how did that change your thinking about your future?

M: First, when I learn in Kenya and I stay for 2 weeks before I go to Sudan and after 2 weeks I flew to Sudan and see. I see a lot of changes. The ways people describe Sudan and from the videos before I was in Kenya and after I came to America, there is a lot of changes. There's opportunity over there, and opportunity that are there are some people who have been here before me and they went over there and change the country. And I say to myself why not if I go back to US after I get married and bring my wife over there I should do something for myself and then come and help my people.

C: So do you think you will go back or stay here?

M: I can go like changing people mind or talk to them who is here and tell them what to do, but not going and stay over there, no.

C: So you'll continue to visit—

M: Visit, yeah.

C: Do you see any turning points in your future? Like you talked about the things in your past what about your future, do you think, do you see your future changing or new opportunities coming up?

M: I don't see turning to the bad thing, I always think of something good and always God help me out even though I'm still now didn't have a good chance in life, having whatever you may need to have but due to the difficult of situation that in this country because if you are not working there is no opportunity, (C: Here?) yeah in this country too, and I don't have parent over here, I'm just parent to myself, I'm the one who helped myself I'm the one who helped people over there, but I see there is still now, as long as I'm living I can make my way out from whatever situation that I am in now.

C: That's interesting what you said reminds me of my next question, which is, in general do you feel that you are in control of your own life or does your own life control you?

M: I am controlling in my life. I am the one who control my life. I know which direction that I can take it to. I cannot, because since I was young I've been passed through bad life and I cannot turn into that life. So I always try to find a way, you know a better life. And that's why I always try everything and you can see now I get my citizen and there is a lot of citizen can do to yourself. There's a lot of opportunity that you can be American citizen and I'm refugee too. I can apply for any loan if I want go back to school. As American citizen I still have a chance to get it. And I can apply as a refugee if there is scholarships through refugees and a lot of people they try, a lot of non organization try to help the Sudanese people and I still can get that one.

C: So you have both?

M: I am both. So those are kind of way that you open your way to bring your opportunity or your life up.

C: How have your personal beliefs influenced your life? What you believe or your faith?

M: I believe in God and I believe in myself too. And I believe in history telling too.

C: Yeah, a big part of Sudanese culture. How have believing in God, believing in yourself, and believing in history telling, how have they helped you?

M: It helped me in so many way. Like when I went to Sudan it's story telling. It fill me, it fill my heart for the people that I went and get them and when they tell me their story and what they believe in you see it seem like it's something that's in them and they believe in it. And those people they don't know what is bible and they don't know what is God, they don't know what is Jesus like for example they don't know nothing but they believe in themself and story telling. But I cannot even know? Them because of what our grand, grand, grandparent been coming or passing through. Through bible I can read and understand it and what it's telling me. So those thing it keep me strong sometime and believe who I am and believe in some people too. Like now you just call me and you know I believe about what you try to take research, for it's something that you try to help people or help yourself and to be who you are. You have been going to school for many years to be studying that one too, so if you don't believe in somebody or you don't believe in yourself it's no way that you can let somebody you have never met and come and talk to you. So that's why I'm saying yeah, I believe in myself sometime. Trust first, you trust yourself and trust in someone.

C: Thank you for trusting me and allowing me to interview you. I have one more question: Overall you've shared a lot of life experiences with me, difficult experiences, good experiences- overall with all your life experiences, have they made you a weaker or a stronger person?

M: They make me strong. But sometimes they make me weak. (laughs) Because you know when I think over it when I see other people they have that kind of opportunity since they were studying they were young and think about it at certain times and the good time they had and I've been struggles since I was young. It make me weak sometime, but weak is not always come first in my mind because I have never have parent who were supporting me since I was young sometimes and I think about it and I see some people they have that chance of life and I say, oh if I was had a parent or if I was born in this certain area I could be a better person and sometimes I ignore it. I say there is a war. Maybe war God chose to come in my country and make that one but I cannot keep me down of thinking why somebody get that opportunity and I didn't have it. I just let it go and think about it, even this country before they have those kind of opportunity they had a war and young kids they been facing that kind of situation that I am facing now. (C: Even here?) even here, and sometimes when I see other peoples kid and they had parent,

they had opportunity and they don't have a chance of life sometime. But always I am keep me strong.

C: Well thank you. Do you have any questions for me?

M: Oh no- I wish you the best get your Ph.D.

APPENDIX K: AXIAL CODING CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES

Broad Categories	Subcategories
Dinka culture	"You can't quit"
	Hard work
	Welcoming/Community
	Purpose/Conservative Christian
	"Join the group"
	Integrating w/ American culture
	Multiple wives/women
Separation	"parent to myself"
	ambiguous loss
Personal beliefs	God's provision
	Putting God first
	"God is there"
	Avoiding temptations
	Hope
	Belief in self
	Story/history telling
	"Do good"
	Sense of purpose
War	"Interrupted life"
	Crossing the Gilo River
	Death
	Diaspora
	Lack of water
	Coping
	Injury
	Destruction of property
	Attacks
	Slavery
	SPLA
	Spreading from city to country
	Religious persecution
	Viewed as a child
	Civil war in Ethiopia

Education in Africa: Motivations	Positions of leadership Better job Helping others Sponsorship/scholarships Communication with family Rewards Personal motivations Relative's support Coping mechanisms Forced to attend "Education is our mother" Competition
Education in Africa: Challenges	Lack of funds Lack of materials Thinking about family Hunger No models or culture of education No lights Chores Sickness
Education in the US: Motivations	"Bring people up" Good jobs Encouragement from family in Sudan Coping mechanisms "Join the group" Wives supporting
Education in the US: Challenges	Losing financial aid Finances English level Computer experience Time/feeling behind Helping family in Africa Pressure from family in Africa to support Marriage The economy Poor guidance Not finishing high school in Kakuma Lack of records

Sudan: The past	Education
	Parents' views of education
	Elders' views of education
	"Traditional" education
	Education before war
	Arabic
Sudan: Today	Education
	Suffering
	Fighting
	Opportunity
	Peace
	Hope
Turning points	"Not yet"
	Civil War in Sudan
	Arriving in Ethiopia
	Arriving in Kenya
	Immigrating to the United States
	Gaining US citizenship
	Sponsorship/scholarships
	Returning to Sudan
	The future
	Getting a car in the US
	Changing majors
Adversity	Makes stronger
	Makes weaker
Significant individuals	In Africa
	In the United States
Locus of control	External
	Internal
	Mixed
	"God was in control"
Goals	Not yet met
	Future goals
Returning to Sudan	Permanently
	Temporarily

	Prior visit
Level of education	Hindering: "I feel behind"
	Helping
Adjustment to the United States	Initial excitement
	Shared resources
	Difficulty leaving others/homesick
	Car trouble
	Finances
	Food/culture
	Weather
	Host family
	Church people
Refugee camps	Ethiopia: Education
	Civil war in Ethiopia
	Difficulties in Ethiopia
	Kakuma: Environment
	Kakuma: School
	"Refugee mind"
	UN aid
	Attacks