



2016

Coping with Trauma: Reflections from Angolan Refugee Returnees

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

COPING WITH TRAUMA: REFLECTIONS FROM ANGOLAN
REFUGEE RETURNEES

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WORK

BY

MICHAEL ROBERT MILCO

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the words of the Ovimbundu people, “Twapandula celwa.” Thank you very much! I am thankful for my Angolan translator/aide Aznet Munga who went the extra mile in helping me complete my IRB requirements once I arrived in Angola and for introducing me to people from the Osire refugee camp. For my wife Karen who has been alongside of me working with Angolans since 2000. Her passion for the Angolan people made it so much easier for me to do my research. For my teaching assistant Rachel Stalker who spent hours transcribing the interviews making sure they were correct. I am thankful to the many Angolans who helped along the way, the Silva Solunga family, the Faustino Severino family, and many others who have helped us with travel, visas and logistics over the years. Of course this research would not have been possible without the participation of Angolans who shared their stories of pain, suffering, hope and displacement. Special thanks to refugee returnees who introduced me to other refugee returnees making it possible for the interviews to be completed during my time in Angola.

I am also thankful for my committee members Dr. Terri Kilbane, my committee chair, Dr. Dan Amick, Dr. Holly Becker-Nelson and Dr. Marta Lundy whose insight; support, critical analysis and patience have helped me shape my thoughts into words. Throughout this process each has contributed to my research project. Their supervision and guidance have inspired me to become more aware of the complex issues inherent in understanding the Angolan

refugee returnee's experience as well as what good research looks like.

To my wife, Karen who has supported me through so many years of education as well as my children Ashley and Elliot who encouraged me to keep going.

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ABSTRACT

Millions of refugee families experienced multiple migrations resulting in various degrees of trauma and stress. Each reacted to these challenges and hardships in unique ways. This dissertation research was designed to investigate the various coping strategies Angolan refugee returnees used in dealing with the traumas they experienced as a result of their various migrations. Through the lens of an ecosystem theory, the author developed research questions designed to learn “How Angolan Refugee Returnees Cope with Trauma?” Sixteen Angolan refugee returnees were interviewed for this qualitative phenomenological study. The results of the study narrowed down the most specific themes refugees used to cope with trauma. The findings of this study revealed those refugees who engaged in religious activity and were surrounded by family members had the most effective outcomes when coping with trauma. Many social workers will work with displaced populations and need to continually understand the cultural meanings displaced people give to the events in their lives. The results of this research will shed light on how to best understand the culture that gives meaning to their life events in order to adapt new practices for the delivery of social services.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

During *{sic}* war, the first thing you should destroy is the radio post. I was in the radio post with some soldier who dealt with the radios. There were very few and we were alone. When they discovered where the center was they started to bombard the area. The SU-27 was very difficult. I was there and the bombs were falling. The houses started to burn and there was no bunker where I could hide. I just waited for a bomb to kill me. I was praying. I actually got down, and I saw bombs coming. The whole area was destroyed. I checked to see if I was still alive. I discovered that I was indeed alive. When I went back, I was totally dusty – everywhere you could find dust. I went to the commander and he said, “Are you alive?” I said, “I think that should have been my last day, but God protected me.” So to me, God plays a central part of my life. Without God, I don’t think I would still be alive. He has been very merciful to me. (Cambondi)

The above is a description of one day in the life and struggle for survival by an Angolan during the Angolan civil war conflict. His testimony is one of the many who could speak to the myriad of painful memories refugees live with outside of the realm of normal human experiences (Gabarino & Kostelny, 1996). These are the unseen landmines in their minds. The Angolan civil war lasted 27 years. Mass destruction of roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, homes, religious buildings, wild animals, fields and crops, as well as torture, and rape became commonplace. According to the United Nations Development Program (2012), over 80,000 Angolans have been maimed by landmines since war broke out in 1975, and thousands more were killed.

This type of warfare not only destroys life but also the elements that give meaning to one’s culture and community. The fabric that gives meaning to their

way of life was ripped, burned and discarded. As acknowledged by Summerfield (1998) widespread political violence creates states of terror that “penetrate the entire fabric of economic, sociocultural and political relations as means of social control” (Summerfield, 1998, p.10). As a result, the refugee experience exists in a multi-complex framework of culture, family, language, and religion but is often misunderstood or re-interpreted by outsiders from a narrow psychological perspective. When we neglect to understand the cultural implications interwoven in the lives of refugees, we do them a disservice and in a sense a betrayal of the core values of the social work profession (Sprecht & Courtney, 1994).

The number of people forcibly uprooted by conflict and persecution worldwide was estimated at 51.2 million at the end of 2013 with 50% of them under the age of 18. If these refugees were a country they would be the 26th largest in the world. This includes 16.7 million refugees, 1.1 million asylum seekers and 33.3 million internally displaced people uprooted within their own countries. Only 414,600 returned to their country of origin, according to United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) annual *Global Trends* report (www.UNHCR.org, 2014). After having fled their home country many difficulties await them, such as harsh conditions in refugee camps and the uncertainty of the future. The majority of these refugees have lost their homes and families, many have been raped or tortured, and end up living in refugee camps that barely provide basic services such as food, shelter, medical facilities and clothing. For Angolan refugee returnees numerous challenges await them once they have repatriated back to Angola. The resiliency of these refugee

returnees reveals a strength that enables them to cope with many difficulties and navigate new challenges that lie ahead (Tempany, 2009). Social workers need to gain insight from the refugee returnees' narratives regarding the various coping strategies used when overcoming the traumatic events of their lives (Cole, et al, 1992).

Background of the Problem

Since May 2000 I have made seventeen trips to refugee camps in Namibia and Zambia and worked with Angolan refugee returnees in Angola Africa. Overtime, I have developed deep relationships with many of them. I have witnessed some who have taken their refugee experience and remade their life in the refugee camp as best as possible. Other refugees became depressed, remained in their tents for extended periods of time, and eventually died. There were also refugees who did not have the physical, spiritual, social or psychological supports to cope with the traumas they experienced. Eventually, some developed paranoid-schizoid features. They separated from others, wandered throughout the camp, and lived in delusional worlds. Finally, there were those who acted out in physically and sexually inappropriate ways as a result of their inability to cope well or to express their pain in appropriate ways.

As a result of my observations and relationships with Angolan refugees and Angolan refugee returnees, I have been inspired to ask the following questions:

- How do Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma?
- Why does one refugee rebuild his/her life while another refugee loses hope?

- What makes one refugee more resilient than another?
- What lasting impact does trauma have in the lives of these refugee returnees as they move forward?

Through my research I hope to understand the refugee experience in all of its complexity. From their narratives and multiple meanings of life, I hope to discover key life themes in order to learn from them about the meaning of their experiences and coping mechanisms used during their survival.

I remember like it was yesterday that early morning in April 1971. Two United States Army officers rang the doorbell of our house at 6am waking my family up by informing us that my oldest brother had been killed in action in Vietnam. The indirect effects of that trauma impacted our family in ways I would never have imagined. It is like having your arm or leg amputated without the hope of ever having a prosthetic limb. It was horrible! The feelings of disbelief, anger, and denial permeated our family and impacted each of us in different ways. Even 45 years later it is rare that I meet someone who has the same experience, even though there are over 58,000 other families like mine where this same trauma occurred. It is the searing experience of a life irrevocably altered that informs my research and propels me forward.

The research question is historically not new (Khawaja, 2008; Goodman, 2004; Frankl, 1946) but my research is unique in that the focus is on a specific refugee returnee population from a specific region in Angola Africa who settled in the Osire refugee camp in Namibia Africa during a time in their specific history when people were being displaced due to war and conflict. In some ways it is similar to Frankl's (1946) quest to understand concentration camp

prisoners will to live or die. His observation and study of prisoners gave him understanding into their lives and into the tenacity of human beings.

Like Frankl's (1946) experience, the meaning refugees found through the different ways they coped gave their lives hope and influenced how they were able to persevere while facing multiple adversities. Their positive attitude was informed with an incomprehensible belief that transcended space and time through their faith in God. During my time in the Osire Refugee Camp it was common to hear the refugees say, " Hope is the last thing to die." Their internal and external supports became a type of coping mechanism that carried them through the most difficult life events.

Rationale for the Study

The majority of the research that has examined the experiences of refugees has been based on a Western diagnostic model of trauma specifically focused on the treatment of PTSD after they were resettled in different countries around the world. While the research on refugees has demonstrated a relationship between trauma and the psychological criteria in the DSM-5, the medical model has also created controversy and a limited understanding of cultural contextualization (Drozdek & Wilson, 2007).

The importance of the study will contribute to social workers understanding and the delivery of services to refugees settling in America and those who work with them overseas. The effects of trauma carry over into their family relationships, influence their behavior and weaken their psychological stability (Miller & Rasco, 2004; Cole, et al, 1992; George, 2010; Paardekooper, et al, 1999). Further contribution in the areas of coping and trauma from the

refugee experience will not only expand the current literature but also reinforce the need for cultural understanding when working with those from other countries. This study will enhance and eventually produce more effective outcomes when working with refugees.

Contributions to the Field

The importance of this study will also contribute to how social work programs engage students in the learning process regarding refugee and migration studies in America. With over 1600 social work programs worldwide (Johnson, 2004) and the increased awareness of global issues, changes in social work delivery have forced programs to re-evaluate how they prepare students for the international issues that are knocking on our front door (Boyle, Nackerud, & Kilpatrick, 1999; Lough, 2009). Woven into the research the author also attempts to bring to light the question, what educational pedagogy needs to be embedded for social work schools to internationalize its educational programs? (Wehbi, 2009; Razack, 2009; Johnson, 2004).

Historically social work had its roots in charity work and settlement housing in the late 19th century. The dominant ideology was one of Western power and imperialism. The early days of social work were associated with colonial practices in order to control the minds of the early immigrants (Simon, 1994; Razack, 2009). This knowledge has been exported to different cultures with the mindset that these practices are superior but yet in their fabric colonialism is entrenched long after it has formally ended. The current literature is beginning to challenge these theories (Razack, 2009; Carrilio & Mathiesen, 2006). As more and more students seek an immersion experience their experience abroad

generates complex dilemmas. “When we do not include a historical analysis of colonization and imperialism, the pedagogical and practice components of international social work are deeply compromised” (Razack, 2009, p.13).

The classroom needs to be a postcolonial space where teaching and learning happens for the colonizer and the colonized. Social work students need to gain a global understanding as it relates to social justice, equity and anti-oppression. Postcolonial theory needs to recognize Western dominant thinking and not assume everyone has the same life experience. The narratives of immigrants, refugees, minorities, etc., need to be highlighted and examined in light of the privilege of the dominant culture (Johnson, 2004; Razack, 2009). Social work education is attracting more and more international students. As a result, pedagogical issues arise when teaching students from countries that historically were colonized and oppressed. This can create a type of colonial pedagogy especially when teaching classes in the areas of ethnicity, diversity or theory. How social work educators introduce these topics is of utmost importance. They need to handle them in ways that do not recreate a classroom that has the odor of colonialism reenactment (Razack, 2009).

The research for this dissertation will continue to build on the body of literature in the area of refugee understanding. Coping is a universal aspect of the human predicament but there is no one universal way people cope with the stresses of life. The research generated from this study will expand our understanding of how refugees, refugee returnees and people from other countries cope with trauma. There is very little research on the coping strategies of refugees returning to their country of origin. This is the preferred outcome as

indicated by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Yet, as stated earlier, in 2013 only 414,600 of the 51.2 million refugees returned to their country of origin. The majority of refugees leaving refugee camps get resettled into other countries (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2009). The literature on the coping strategies of refugees returning to their country of origin is limited and the literature related to Angolan refugee returnees is almost non-existent. The majority of the literature on the coping mechanisms of refugees as it relates to trauma is particular to the countries where the UNHCR resettles them. For example, studies have been done with refugees who have been resettled in Australia, Canada, Sweden, USA and the United Kingdom (Paadekooper et al., 1999; Goodman, 2004; Renner & Salem, 2009).

The research also hopes to contribute to a greater awareness and the importance of policy development and social work practice as it relates to our work with refugees. In countries like Angola where the war lasted for almost 30 years many refugees established their lives in resettlement camps in Zambia, Namibia, South Africa and the Congo. The process of repatriation became difficult since policies intended for short-term refugee living were implemented with the Angolan predicament. The refugee camps became long-term settlement camps and as a result after the war many Angolan refugees were given temporary and permanent residency in the country where the refugee camp was located.

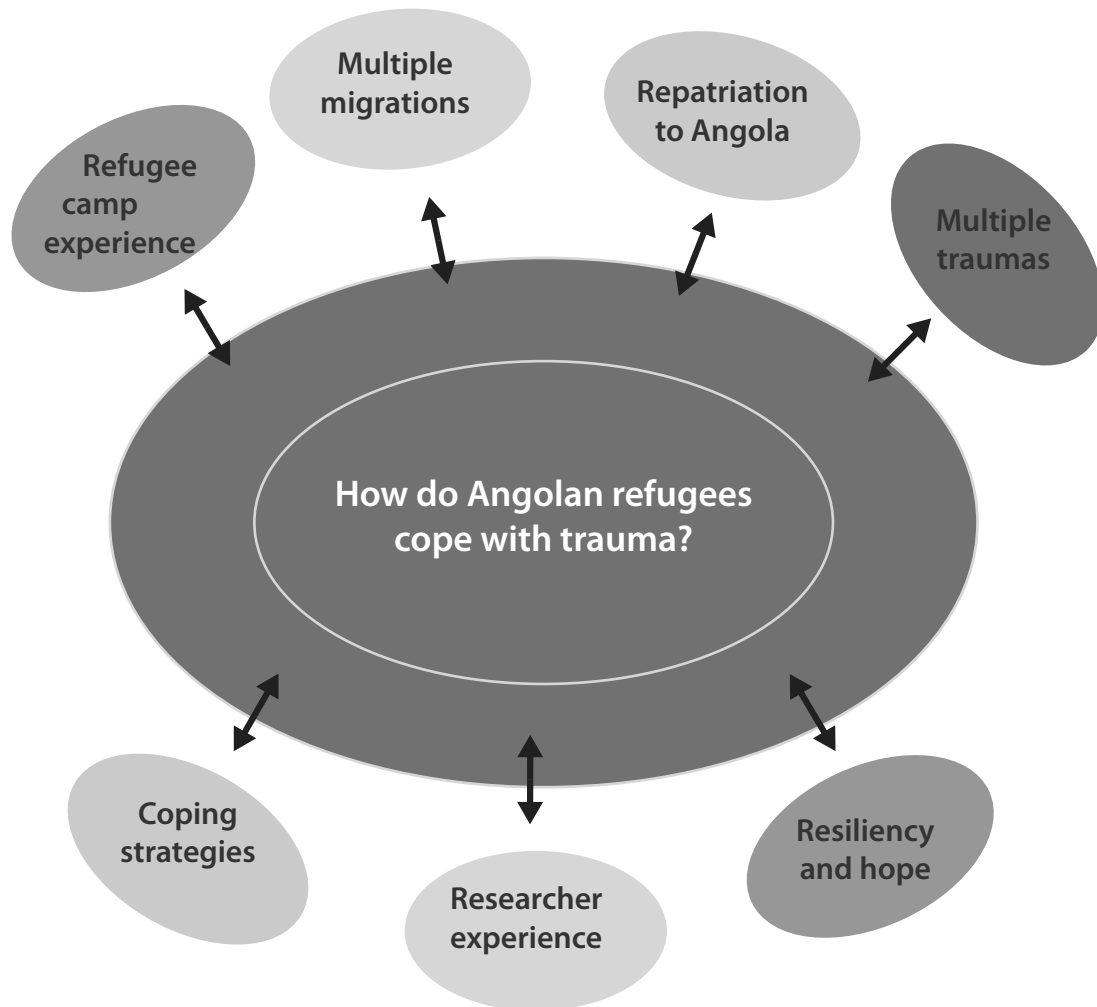
Conceptual Model

A conceptual model is a description of the topic to be studied. The author chose to include a conceptual model because it helped guide his research by integrating the different themes into a theory for answering the research question. The conceptual model lead the author to narrow his focus on the literature distinguishing the more important concepts from less important concepts (Maxwell, 2004). The model developed by the author integrates the internal and external themes identified as a result of the open coding established in the N'vivo software. The use of a conceptual model moved the research from being purely descriptive to becoming critical of the gaps in the present literature. This cohesive approach captures the essence of the research while keeping it narrow in the approach. The conceptual model the researcher used gave him the capacity to not just describe events, but let the narratives become something that gave them a life of their own (Maxwell, 2004). The author began his research by asking the question how do Angolan refugees cope with trauma? The conceptual model is the guide the author used to try to understand the relationships between the refugees' experiences of trauma, migration, coping and resiliency in order to show the importance of this research.

Using a phenomenological qualitative theoretical approach, this study explored the factors and processes that contributed to how Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma. There are many reasons to expand our understanding of trauma since a majority of adults experience trauma (Boss, 2006; Herman, 1992; Figley, 1986). The definition of trauma needs to be expanded to not only include the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* 5th

edition (DSM-5) (2013) criteria but also the understanding of complex trauma (Herman, 1992) that includes, culture, religion, language and family related context. There is a qualitative gap in the literature on refugee coping mechanisms related to additional trauma following the return to their country of origin. There have been other studies related to refugees originating from different camps around the world (DeVries & Heck, 1994; Vinson, 2012) as well as studies done about refugees resettled to other countries (Goodman, 2004; Renner & Salem, 2009). However, there are no known qualitative studies that specifically explore the coping mechanisms of refugees who have returned back to their country of origin. Some of these refugee returnees lives have spanned over 20 years of migrations. The conceptual model will help guide the researcher by providing a visual representation of the theoretical constructs used to guide the discovery.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



Statement of the Problem

This study will explore the central research question: *How do Angolan Refugee Returnees cope with trauma?* Some refugees manage to live while others died because they did not have external supports or the internal coping mechanisms to process the trauma they experienced. How did many survive while others were less fortunate? What methods of coping did they utilize to

help sustain their lives and give them the hope to continue? How did some cope better than others? What coping strategies are used that enhance resiliency? *The purpose of this research is to explore the coping strategies Angolan refugee returnees used to survive multiple migrations, war, loss, rape and many other types of traumas.*

This is a significant study because millions of refugees around the globe face multiple traumas as a result of forced migrations just like this study population. Their coping strategies are integrated in their lives in different ways.

Understanding how refugee returnees cope with trauma will more effectively inform social workers as to how they can advocate and support them whether here or overseas.

This study should be done in order to enhance understanding of best practices for social work delivery of services to refugees around the globe. Many of these refugees are being relocated in the USA and many social work students and social workers engage them in some type of intervention. Within social work education there is increased interest in cross-cultural competencies with an emphasis on transnational placements (Johnson, 2004). Curriculum emphasizing the study of migration has the potential to help social workers become more aware of issues refugees face and gain more cultural competencies in the delivery of services both here and abroad (Drozdek, 2007; Prilleltensky, & Nelson, 2002).

CHAPTER TWO

ANGOLAN REFUGEE RETURNEES

Introduction

In 2002, the 27-year civil war in Angola came to an end. The primary warring groups were the ruling party, Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the opposition party, the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). During the 27-year civil war it is estimated over 1.5 million Angolans died due to fighting, malnutrition, diseases and deliberate political executions. The fighting was fueled by conflict over the desired acquisition of specific resources, with UNITA controlling the lucrative diamond mines and the MPLA controlling the rich oil supplies. Over 4.5 million Angolans were displaced internally or into refugee camps in neighboring countries of Namibia, Zambia, Botswana, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Frushone, 2006). It has been said the Angolan civil war was like two elephants fighting where only the grass loses.

Religious History of the Angolan People

The first Catholic mission arrived in Angola in 1491 and was established in northern Angola's São Salvador. The initial group consisted of Franciscans, Dominicans, Canons of St. John the Evangelist, and secular priests. A widespread church was formed during the next century under the remarkable Christian King, Afonso I. His son Henrique, became the first black African

bishop in Catholic history. After a promising beginning, the ravages of the slave trade caused the disintegration of both kingdom and church. The Portuguese remained in power in Angola for almost 500 years until they abruptly left in 1975 sparking a long civil war. The first Protestant mission began to arrive in northern Angola in 1878. They established mission stations throughout the country working with the different tribes. Several missions have been active among the Ovimbundu over the past 100 years. The Catholic and Protestant evangelization of the Angolans introduced them to the Trinitarian God of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit ("SIM" n.d.).

The Ovimbundu people who make up the largest tribal group in Angola mostly populate the central highlands of Angola. The missionary influence over the last 100 years has developed deeply religious people who worship the triune God (Sampson, 2015). This is the people group the researcher has chosen to study. In 2000 he first became acquainted with them while doing social work in the Osire refugee camp. Since then he has learned much about their history, culture, war and political tensions. The 27-year civil war they experienced changed their lives forever. This study is not only a reflection of their trials but represents the millions of refugees who are displaced around the world as well.

History of the Angolan War

The Angolan war occurred in several stages. The first stage from 1961 to 1975 was a struggle within Angola for their independence from the colonial power of Portugal (Frushone, 2006). In 1974, during an uprising in Portugal, the colonialists felt it was time to withdraw from Angola leaving the country wide open to whoever could grab the mantle of power. The former Soviet Union and

Cuba established the MPLA party supporting the newly formed government with thousands of troops, tanks, and guns. The following timeline traces Angola's history.

- 1961: Angolans begin fighting the war for independence from Portugal.
- 1968: Oil production begins in Cabinda, a slither of land separated from the rest of Angola by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). A subdued secession struggle persists in Cabinda which has some of the world's richest oilfields offshore making Angola Africa's second largest oil producer after Nigeria.
- 1974: Portugal agrees to give Angola independence, handing over power to a coalition of three armed movements (Welt Online, 2008).

The second phase began in 1974 with a coup in the government of Portugal that established independence. This Angolan freedom was a reaction to the cold war and almost 500 years of colonial rule. History repeated itself. The civil war was a struggle for wealth, power and the domination of one group of Angolans over another. The following timeline traces Angola's history during the second phase.

- 1975: Civil war erupts with leftist party now led by President Eduardo dos Santos gaining control of the capital city of Luanda.
- 1975: Dos Santos' MPLA party declares independence with the backing from thousands of Cuban troops and the former Soviet aid.
- 1980s: Angola becomes a proxy battleground of the cold war, with the United States and white-ruled South Africa backing UNITA rebels led by Jonas Savimbi. The fighting becomes more and more intense with

thousands losing their lives and being displaced.

- 1988: Angola, Cuba and South Africa sign a peace agreement negotiated by the United States (Welt Online, 2008). The peace accord is short-lived and the fighting intensifies.
- 1992: MPLA wins U.N.-supervised elections; Savimbi rejects the results and returns to war with a greater vengeance to overthrow the MPLA.
- 1994: A second peace agreement is signed but fighting soon resumes. The fighting continues through the end of the millennium causing intense destruction in major provinces of Benguela, Huambo and Bie in the central highlands of Angola.
- 2002: War ends after the MPLA army kills Savimbi and the Lusaka protocol peace agreement is signed. It is estimated over 1.5 million Angolans were killed in the quarter-century of fighting. Over five million people, over 30% of the population, were made homeless (Welt Online, 2008).

The 27-year Angolan civil war displaced over 500,000 people into refugee camps in the surrounding countries of Namibia, Botswana, DRC, South Africa and Zambia. The humanitarian crisis was overwhelming to those host countries (Welt Online, 2008). One of those refugee camps receiving displaced Angolans was the Osire refugee camp located in Namibia.

Osire Refugee Camp in Namibia, Africa

The UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees), aided by dozens of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), worked to create an environment that met the most basic needs of food, shelter, and medical

resources. In several of these camps where the researcher did short term social work, there were only two or three social workers servicing over 24,000 refugees.

The Osire refugee camp located 200 kilometers northeast of Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia, was opened in 1992 by the UNHCR. At its peak it has been home to over 30,000 refugees from 16 different African countries with the majority from Angola. NGOs such as the Namibian Red Cross, Africare, African Humanitarian Action (AHA), Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) and religious organizations have made their presence known in the camp since its inception.

Angola was just one country impacted by war forcing many of its people to flee. As indicated at the beginning of this paper, worldwide the number of refugees continues to climb. Because many of these refugees will likely seek health and mental health treatment outside their cultures of origin, more understanding and respect for specific cultural meanings and religious practices must be learned and understood (Keyes, 2000). The trauma these refugees experienced is similar to the experiences of refugees in Turkey, Jordan, or Lebanon other parts of world whose culture, religion, and values are interwoven into their lives making the implications of this research important for intervention.

History of Angolan Refugee Repatriation

Since 2002 when the civil war ended, over four million Angolans have returned to the towns and villages they fled. The vast majority of the rural population lost valuable assets when they were forced to flee the fighting and are now struggling to find adequate water sources, sustainable food supplies and shelter for their families. Most of this is a result of the over 10 million landmines

still buried throughout the countryside. Angola is among the top 33 least developed countries (UNHCR Global Trends, 2014) even though it had one of the fastest growing economies in Africa. People all over Angola are suffering from chronic hunger, inadequate medical facilities, and a broken down infrastructure.

According to the 2013 USAID statistics, 40.5 percent of the Angolan population lives below the poverty line. In addition, the country has one of the highest infant mortality statistics in children under five. The World Bank's 2007 country study on Angola, entitled *Angola, Oil Broad-based Growth and Equity* reported an estimated 60 percent of Angola's population reside in rural area and more than 70% depend on agriculture and rural activities as their principle source of income and food. Yet, less than 10% of an estimated 14 million acres of Angola's well-endowed agricultural resource is being cultivated due to a lack of technology, financing and landmines.

Beginning in 2003 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) began repatriating refugees from the surrounding countries back to Angola (Frushone, 2006). In their eyes the UNHCR repatriation policy would be successful when the refugees returned to Angola and left the camps. The program was intended to deliver the refugees back to Angola regardless of whether there were social service programs in place, job opportunities, functioning hospitals, and educational facilities. During this process the issues related to the UNHCR repatriation policy encountered serious obstacles. The policy that framed the Angolan refugee repatriation was flawed from a social constructivist policy perspective.

First, the policies implemented in the field of refugee repatriation assistance was complex and fragmented, and failed to protect those forced to flee by war or political oppression (Vayrynen, 2001). Refugees repatriating back to Angola by the UNHCR faced the following major obstacles.

- (1) The presence of landmines and other unexploded ordinances or bombs,
- (2) A lack of basic public health services such as clean water, adequate shelter, food, and medical facilities in areas where refugees were returning,
- (3) Poor infrastructure related to bridges, roads, and other related transportation issues, made travel extremely difficult and frustrating for many refugee returnees (Frushone, 2006),
- (4) The funding sources failed to take into consideration the vocational experiences of the refugees and focus on reintegration and repatriation mandates from a number of converging trends (Crisp, 2008).

Governments and international agencies made plans for repatriation exercises with little consultation with the refugees regarding educational or vocational interventions that would lead to a sustainable life once repatriated (Collins, 1996),

- (5) There were many political actors such as oil companies, diamond investors, other foreign investors, host countries, non-governmental organizations involved in the humanitarian assistance of refugees with various political and financial interests.

- (6) And last but assuredly not least, there were no services that provided resources for managing the mental health needs of families returning to a devastated home and countryside, no services for individual and/or

familial trauma integration and resolution, and no social services for managing grief and loss undoubtedly experienced by people returning without loved ones, to a homeland that had been forever changed (Vayrynen, 2001).

This repatriation resulted in Angolan refugee returnees, some of whom having lived in refugee camps upwards of 30 years, being involuntarily displaced once again causing unnecessary trauma and fear of the unknown. The obstacles as previously mentioned would make living conditions back in Angola worse than the living conditions offered them in the refugee camps.

Even the UNHCR, admitted the Angolan repatriation process was not given much thought (Crisp, Riera & Freitas, 2008). When refugees return to their countries of origin, it is assumed they will reintegrate and resume life as it once was before their displacement. However, in the case of Angola many refugees spent decades outside the country and repatriation became like another traumatic displacement (Crisp, Riera & Freitas, 2008). These became the key factors related to the repatriation policies implemented by the UNHCR. Throughout the repatriation process, those who suffered the most, the refugees, were not consulted but herded like cattle back to a country they had never seen before since many were born in the camp and others remember an Angola that was very different from the one they left. These issues created deep scars in the country of Angola and in the minds of the Angolan people. From one country to another and back again, they bore the multiple traumas of displacement like tattoos inscribed in their memories.

This is only one narrative of how important social policies are in caring for

the less fortunate, under served or oppressed people. As social workers our influence spans in the creation, transformation and implementation of social policies. From this aspect of the Angolan refugee experience one can see how empowerment is evident on multiple levels. The refugee returnees not only suffered internal traumas but also involuntarily suffered external trauma as pawns in the national and international wrangling of political powers. The wider lens for understanding the refugee predicament highlights the need for implementing an ecosystem in the broader context.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL WORK

Introduction

This chapter serves as a practical backdrop to the research undertaken concerning Angolan refugee returnees as it relates to the field of social work. The influence of social work values and history has established the foundation of the research being done with Angolan refugee returnees. The core values of human dignity, worth and social justice have been central to social work throughout its history (Dewes, 2006; Johnson & Yanca, 2010; Mwansa, 2010). Since the beginning of social work the philosophical tenets guiding the early reformers were steeped in empowering the oppressed, understanding common human needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, shaping policy, and giving a voice to those without a voice (Johnson & Yanca, 2010; Simon, 1994).

History and Values of American Social Work

Ever since the early works of Jane Addams, social workers have been involved in helping individuals and families navigate the complex issues of life. Their concern for social change and social justice was focused on the most vulnerable populations (Simon, 1994). Addams was a pioneer in social reform, founding the first settlement house in the United States to serve the immigrant families who came to Chicago at the beginning of the industrial revolution (Simon, 1994). For nearly fifty years Addams worked relentlessly for improved living and working conditions for America's urban poor and for Women's

suffrage. The settlement house movement laid the foundation and demonstrated the commitment of social workers to improve the quality of life to those less fortunate. They demonstrated how to best help immigrants by teaching them to read and speak in English. She lobbied for the legislature to create social policies on behalf of children's rights. The different ways she advanced the cause for justice is evident in her legacy. She sought to help the individual as well as understand the new environment they found themselves in. She made societal changes by speaking on behalf of those who could not speak (Simon, 1994). Her tenets for empowerment ring true even for the thousands of refugees being resettled to America each year.

Her passion for justice and desire to help those in need forged the original mission of social work. The core values of social work are built on the regard for individual worth and dignity. The social work profession was founded on the premise that suffering is an emotion that should be attended to by those who truly care for the poor, oppressed and less fortunate. It encapsulates advocacy, education, and empowerment so we can make our society a better place (Sprecht & Courtney, 1994). These are the values that should inspire social workers at all levels. The unplanned world events that make someone a refugee shift their world from one of normality to one of survival. They are displaced to a neighboring country with little or no resources. Similar to Addams, the language they speak is one social workers need to understand and interpret. For some, learning a new language can be frustrating and unfamiliar territory. As social workers, we are advocates, brokers, activists, and facilitators for those who lack adequate resources and have been displaced by society. We participate in this

relationship in that we might help the disenfranchised improve the quality of their lives (George, 2010; Miley, et al, 2011; Watters, 2010). As our world grows smaller due to globalization, integrated economies, and advances in technology, social work intervention needs to have a clear sense of the culture and context in which it practices (Hare, 2004; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). The collaborative efforts of international social workers from around the world continues to inform and transform the delivery of social services as well as improve the quality of life for many. As Cox & Pawar so clearly state,

Finally whatever the specific roles that the global context is playing within specific situations, what is important is that the worker is always able to visualize the prevailing general global context, analyze a presenting situation with that context as an element in the analysis, and develop an intervention strategy that holds together and integrates the local, national, and international levels of context. (Cox & Pawar, 2006, p. 49)

This is critical for understanding the way social workers interface with refugees. Traditional psychotherapy and psychopharmacology as we know it reflects European and Western individualistic methods for responding to emotional stress and trauma (Eisenbruch, 1991). Over the past 20 years many mental health professionals have realized the need for a broader approach for addressing the needs of refugees and displaced people (Miller & Rasco, 2004; Drozdek, 2007). After all, social work emerged as a response to displaced families arriving in America from many parts of Europe. The early emphasis was on social policy, poverty, oppression and discrimination (Sprecht & Courtney, 1994). The importance of understanding the refugee culture has its roots in the core teachings and principles of Addams and others (Simon, 1994).

Theory and Model

One of the core strengths of social work practice is its theoretical integration of an ecological system for intervention. The ecological systems approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1981; Germain, 1991) of intervention considers the circumstance of the client from multiple perspectives and therefore fits well with the complex situations of refugees. Therefore, in researching how refugees cope with trauma, new ways of understanding the complexities of trauma and their narratives will broaden our understanding as researchers. Since social work often takes place with those who have concerns in multiple areas of their lives, the person-in-environment or Ecological Systems theory is useful in providing a balanced perspective (Germain, 1996). The needs we have as humans are embedded in multiple systems. These include family, community, church, groups, social institutions, work sites, political forces and agencies (Johnson & Yanca, 2010). When a person has unmet needs in his/her life an imbalance occurs in the ecosystem of their life (Germain & Gitterman, 1996). In recent years the influence of the ecosystem lies in how well it serves social work in multiple settings including cross-cultural contextualization. It has expanded our understanding of people rather than pigeonholing them in terms of pathology and disempowering labels that provoke feelings of powerlessness (Gray, 2009; Johnson & Yanca, 2010). The ecosystem theory has rekindled some of our deepest values that focus on the human potential rather than problems and deficits (Meyer, 1983). A major advantage of the person-in-environment or ecosystem is its broad approach. This theme has its roots in the core values of social work. The first step in the process of helping someone is to understand

them in their entirety (Dewes, 2006). This means listening to life stories for the purpose of gathering evidence in order to best approach each situation (Sprecht & Courtney, 1994).

Systems theory offers a way of conceptualizing the relationship between people and environments and encourages a balanced approach to both domains of practice. Emphasis is on the 'goodness of fit' between the client and their environment. Workers can focus on how family, community, social, economic and political factors affect the client's situation. (Hoffman and Sallee, 1994)

History of Ecosystems Theory

The metaphor of an ecological system can be traced back to Von Bertalanffy while exploring a particular concept of biology in order to gain a better understanding of the prevailing view that organisms existed in isolation in a "closed system." He believed in the concept of an "open system" where there was mutual exchange between an organism and its environment (Meyer, 1983). Ecological systems theory evolved as an outgrowth and synthesis of trends that include ego psychology, systems theory, family therapy, and ethnocultural factors. For the ecological theory, (Bronfenbrenner, 1981) each system is unique and people are not mere reactors to environmental forces; they act on their environment and make choices. From this perspective, satisfaction of human needs and mastery of developmental tasks requires adequate resources in the environment and positive transactions between people and their environments (Compton & Galaway, 2005).

The ecological systems approach states that the individual is engaged in constant transition with other people and with other systems in the environment, which reciprocally influence each other (Meyer, 1983; Germain, 1991). In the ecosystems view persons and environments exist simultaneously in ongoing

transactions with each other. The ecosystems model considers the ways people affect their environments and the way the environments affect people. When people begin adapting to their environment they grow and become more confident and in turn contribute to their environment making life an ongoing interaction (Miley, et al, 2011).

Ecological Framework for Understanding Refugees

Historically, the foundation of social work practice is centered on an ecological system of intervention (Cornell, 2006) educating social workers with the skills for a contextually based culturally informed practice. The ecological system of intervention is considered from multiple levels. For the sake of clarity and conciseness this researcher has chosen to interpret the refugee experience from only the microsystem, mesosystem and macrosystem levels of understanding. Therefore, in researching how refugee returnees cope with trauma, the researcher hopes to explore old and new ways of understanding the complexities of trauma and the narratives that might give new meaning to our understanding as social workers who regularly work with diverse, displaced and oppressed populations.

The ecological lens provides a more complete framework for interpreting the synthesis between people and the way they interact or adapt to their environment (Germain, 1991). Ecosystem theory is above all a relational perspective pressing social workers to integrate and understand the multiple facets of a person's life. Properly employed, an ecosystem focuses on the mutual contribution and response of each social worker and client to an unending transactional process in which both are altogether dependent (Coady &

Lehmann, 2008). By examining the person and environment from various frames a social worker can make a more comprehensive assessment for social work interventions. For example, when working with refugees who have experienced violent death, injury, rape, displacement from their homes and towns, how do we understand those who adapt to the stressors of life with resiliency while others act out, become depressed, cause injury to others or develop severe psychological life disruptions? These dysfunctions occur when the person in environment is frustrated and ultimately hinder the potential for healthy human and environmental outcomes (Turner, 1996; Germain, 1991). Ecosystem theory is a theoretical approach that offers social workers a way of thinking about and assessing the relationships between people and the environments they find themselves in (Meyer, 1983).

Figure 2 shows how the development of the ecosystem model has expanded to include the following approaches, (PIE) person-in-environment and the Life Model approach of Germain and Gitterman (1996). Each of these has their own unique way of interpreting the person as they fit into their environment in order to assess and give the best intervention possible. When working with Angolan refugee returnees the strength of an ecosystem model lies in its capacity to understand the multiple subsystems of the individual. The Ecosystem model has five environmental states. The author chose to use the following three states, micro, meso, and macro since they are most applicable to his research.

The microsystem's setting considers the direct environment of the Angolan refugee returnees lives. This can include his family, friends, teachers,

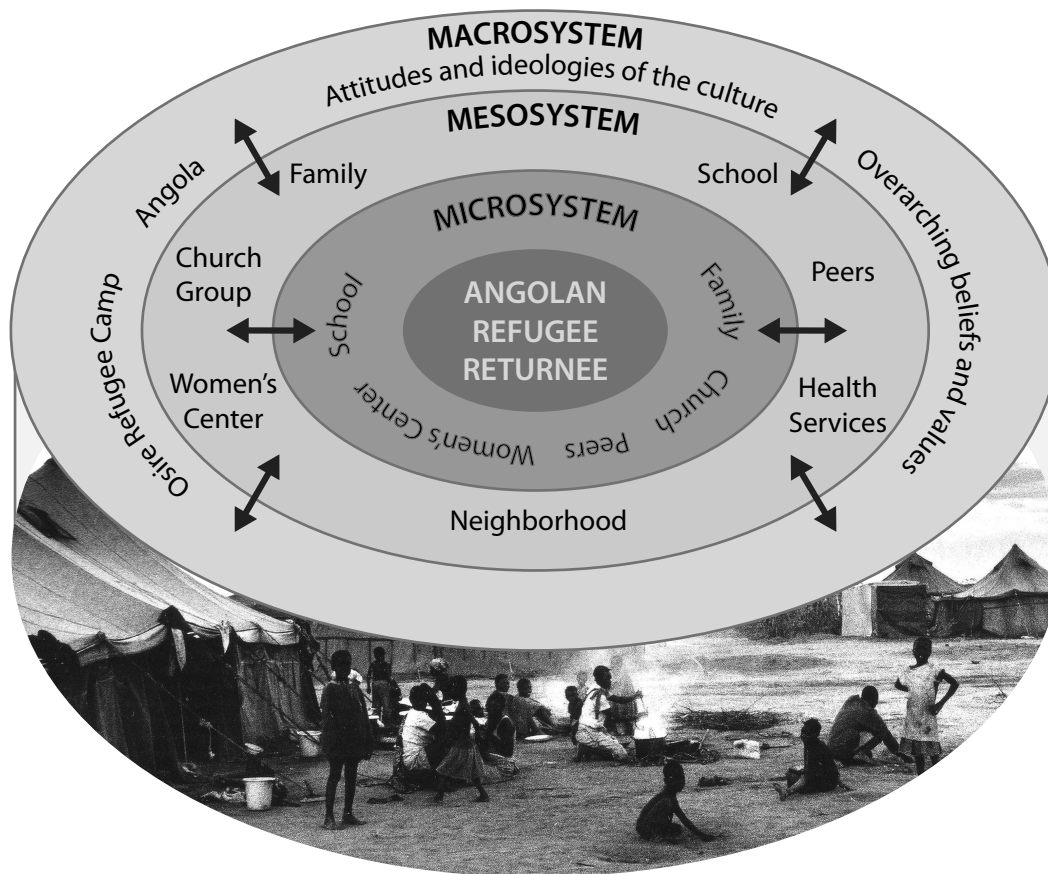
classmates and other people who had direct influence into their lives. The micro system is the state where the Angolan refugee returnee has direct social interactions. This environmental state gave the researcher insight into how the Angolan refugee returnees contributed to the construction of their lives through their transaction with others.

The mesosystem involves the transaction between the Angolans' micro system relationships. This gave the researcher understanding into how the Angolans' family interacted with other families in the refugee camp. How the Angolans' coped with daily trials before their migration to the refugee camp will be evident in how they coped in the refugee camp. Understanding the mesosystem also gave the researcher the ability to understand how important community functions were to the Angolans.

The macrosystem state represents the Angolan culture. The cultural context involves the status of the family. This would include the city or town they came from before arriving in the camp as well as their socioeconomic status. Once a person became a refugee their previous status became history and everyone had to begin the long process of reconstruction their lives.

The environmental states of exosystem and chronosystem did not give the researcher any further insight so he chose not to use them in the study. Understanding the Angolan experience through the ecosystem theory is an important foundation in this study since it has the capacity to let the cultural values and meanings of people from another country and culture stand on their own.

Figure 2. Ecosystem Model



(Bronfenbrenner, 1981).

This researcher who has witnessed the traumas Angolan refugee returnees faced believes the ecosystem model is an effective tool for gaining insight into the refugee experience. Refugees not only face complex hardships as individuals but also in the social context of a family and community. This same foundation is the motivation for this research. The culture of Angola is different from the majority culture of the United States. For example, the Angolan people are very hospitable and family centered. Relationships are very important to them. They are very cautious of outsiders because of the divisiveness created by the civil

war. This was evident during my interviews. The trials and traumas of a refugee returnee are different from those who live in the United States.

As a result, social work is uniquely positioned to address the challenges refugee returnees face. In a similar fashion, the work of Addams is replayed over and over again by responding to the needs of refugee returnees by advocating a holistic view of the situation. The ecosystem emphasizes the relationships between the person and their environment focusing on external stressors rather than on personal pathology. The ecological systems perspective is a lens that adds to our understanding of an ever-changing world where people cope, survive and compete for the resources that sustain life (Drumm, 2004).

CHAPTER FOUR

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

When given the freedom to choose no one wants to be a refugee. As an alien in a foreign land, the refugee experience is marked by stress, loss, ambiguity regarding the future, isolation and trauma. In addition to the trauma refugee returnees experience, their ways of coping are important in understanding how they survive and maintain physical and emotional stability throughout their journey (Farwell, 2004; George, 2010). The ability to cope begins way before the refugee experience. The multiple displacements bring to light the framework they used during their lives leading up to their multiple displacements. The need for a belief in something outside of themselves may give researchers insight into the intensity of their experience as well as offer the potential for healing (Drumm, 2004; Miller & Rasco, 2004).

The primary purpose of this research is to provide insight into how Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma. In order to lay the foundation for the desired outcomes, the researcher will give the reader a limited historical background of trauma theory beginning from Freud, as well as how the literature describes different types of coping theories (Miller & Rasco, 2004). Finally the researcher will highlight the importance of cultural contextualization in order to enhance the goodness of fit relevant to our understanding of Angolan refugee returnees.

Psychological Trauma since Freud

The study of psychological trauma has a curious history (Herman, 1992). If one has lived any amount of time on this earth he/she has come face to face with his/her vulnerability to psychological trauma. In the past few decades, social workers have devoted themselves to addressing one incident of trauma after another. These include terrorist attacks, natural disasters, school shootings, sex trafficking, intimate partner violence, church shootings, and movie theater massacres. More than ever social workers need new ways for understanding the traumatic events people are experiencing as well as new lenses for intervention (Mollica, 2006; Miller & Rasco, 2004; Bolton & Tang, 2002).

Over the past century the study of psychological trauma has surfaced through different historical themes. The origin of psychological trauma has its roots in Freud's study of hysteria, the psychological disorder of women (Herman, 1992). The works of Freud and Ferenczi limited psychological trauma to intrapsychic wounds that resulted in ego defense mechanisms such as splitting, sublimation, transference, distorted sexual development and other psychosomatic symptoms (Frankel, 1998). This is made clear in Freud's famous analysis of Dora (1997).

The second historical development in the study of psychological trauma research came as a result of post war trauma. After World War I the psychological trauma of soldiers was forced upon families and society by returning veterans. This was evidenced by the high numbers of war veterans who sought help in hospitals for symptoms similar to Freud's study of hysterical women yet very different. They experienced emotional breakdowns,

uncontrollable crying spells, catatonic states, and more. At first these symptoms were attributed to what the Army named 'malingers': that is, the pleas of the men were disregarded, and they were labeled men who did not want to return to battle and so were making up symptoms. Later, the physical causes became better understood. A British psychologist, Charles Myers, who examined some of these soldiers, was the first to label this disorder "shell shock" (Myers, 1940). Myers opened the thinking for other psychiatrists who treated soldiers to come to the conclusion that "shell shock" symptoms occurred in soldiers who experienced direct and indirect exposure to trauma. The emotional stress of prolonged exposure to violent death was sufficient to produce a neurotic syndrome resembling hysteria in men that Freud interpreted in his female clients (Herman, 1992). In 1980 the American Psychiatric Association included in its diagnostic manual the diagnosis of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder a century after Freud began listening to the stories of women suffering from hysteria and the experiences of soldiers coming back from war.

Definition of Trauma

Trauma is a condition that simultaneously can affect our emotional and physical responses to life (Boss, 2006). There are different types of trauma that people experience. These include single and repeat event traumas. Something such as a burglary, mugging, rape or some type of personal loss is an example of a single event trauma. The ongoing effects of poverty and war that Angolan refugee returnees faced are examples of repeat event traumas (Allen, 2005). The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edition (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013) specifically defines Post-

Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) a

direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate (Criterion A1). The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behavior) (Criterion A2). (DSM-5, 2013, p. 463)

Other difficulties researchers encounter are variables and cultural differences that complicate accurate measurement and interpretation (DeVries, 1994; Tang, 2007). Have you ever noticed when traveling in other countries how English speaking tourists commonly ask, "do you speak English?" As researchers we are forced to confront our own inability to understand the language of life others use to interpret traumatic distress. This might suggest those from other cultures who experienced traumatic events construct meaning in their lives differently from our Western way of dealing with trauma. In other words, those who seek to help others only speak one language and expect people from other cultures that speak a different language to understand their way of helping. These are some of the issues that begin to reveal the limitations of Western-oriented trauma interventions such as talk therapy, group therapy, and medication (Lacroix & Sabbah, 2011). Our understanding of trauma not only needs to be re-defined but put into context as well, especially when studying those from non-Western cultures (Drozdek, 2007; Tankink & Richters, 2007; Wilson & Drozdek, 2007).

Even though trauma affects many people around the world, how it is interpreted and processed can be uniquely different from the Western model of

treatment. The impact of colonization around the world has tried to reshape and influence cultural norms and belief systems even as they relate to trauma.

Colonization was the taking of another's land for the sake of its resources, people, and power. As researcher's we should learn from colonial history so as not to repeat our material colonization in the form of social work colonization.

Colonial Influences

Over the past decade researchers have been more intentional at studying and identifying factors that characterize resiliency among children in order to gain insight into healthy adults and families (Turner, 1996). The frequency of trauma among children and adults has helped social workers develop assessment tools in order to better serve at-risk populations and those who have experienced direct and indirect traumatic events. Over the past two decades social workers working in cross-cultural settings have expressed concern about the ethnocentrism (Visser, 2011) of imposing the biomedical western model of the DSM-5 as it relates those they work with in different settings. Some believe this postcolonial western model should not become the template used in understanding those suffering from traumatic events (Visser, 2011).

The literature clearly emphasizes trauma from a PTSD DSM-5 criteria based on a Western perspective (Hinton & Lewis-Fernandez, 2011). The focus of this research is to understand how Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma, therefore, the researcher will not enter into the present controversy related to the cross-cultural validity of the PTSD diagnosis in situations of ongoing violence. The focus from a DSM-5 perspective centers on victims of war, natural disaster, and sexual trauma but in comparison the diagnosis should not apply to African

refugees using a western lens that doesn't take into account the narrative of the refugee experience and events over which people have little or no control (Miller & Rasco, 2004). This does not mean the PTSD diagnosis doesn't reveal portions of the refugee experience but culturally bears little resemblance to the three-cluster model categorized in the DSM-5 (APA, 2013).

Given all the articles surrounding trauma, there seems to be the assumption that the world has the same definition of trauma and framework for understanding it (Wong & Wong, 2006; Watters, 2010). As researchers and social workers we need to expand our understanding of trauma in a more comprehensive way. When we trivialize trauma to a single event without understanding it from divergent cultural perspectives, we minimize the person as well as the narrative that guides his/her life.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

The most recent 2014 survey from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) reveals there are over 51 million refugees worldwide (www.UNHCR.org/4a2fd52412d.html, 2014). They have been traumatized as a result of war, political unrest, natural disaster, economic insecurity and turmoil, interpersonal violence including physical and sexual assault, and famine. Western approaches to the study of trauma historically begin with defining particular criteria arranged around categorical options as defined in the DSM-5. The effects of trauma have common themes in the lives of people around the world, but in order to fully comprehend the impact of trauma upon refugees and how they cope, it is essential to consider that historical, social, religious and cultural specificity are essential (Stocks, 2007; Bracken, 1998). The themes

surrounding the Angolan refugee returnee experience included loss, death, poverty, sexual violence, displacement, landmines, and separation from parents.

In a review of 183 published studies on the mental health of refugees, 80% of the studies incorporated diagnostic measures developed with Western measures and categories as their means of identifying trauma but few had measurements for understanding coping skills used (Summerfield, 2008). The implication reveals distrust and questions the validity of measures from other cultures or culture-based interpretations (Drozdek & Wilson, 2007). Quick diagnosis and labeling overlook the coping strategies refugees integrate to maintain stability in their lives. In a similar fashion this becomes psychological imperialism, similar to the marginalization of indigenous knowledge systems in the colonial era, and is generally to the disadvantage of our understanding the local populations (Said, 1993). An emphasis on qualitative work would promote a greater understanding and enable a more robust up-to-date knowledge base (Summerfield, 2008).

The strength and influence of Western research and methodology spans the globe including psychological diagnosis. The template for understanding cross-cultural trauma is beginning to sound like a new language. Some of the events are similar to those in other parts of the world while others are unique. One particular article titled, *The Cross-Cultural Validity of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: Implications for DSM-5* highlights the debate about the applicability of PTSD across various cultures as it related to various criteria thresholds (Hinton & Lewis-Fernandez, 2011). Studies have indicated many people exposed to catastrophic events fail to develop PTSD as defined by the DSM-5, so there has

been a shift from focusing on the event to trying to understand coping skills of the person from the various currents that stream into their lives (Lacroix, 2011; Drozdek, 2007; Wilson & Drozdek, 2007).

Cultural Bias

When refugees are given a PTSD diagnosis it minimizes their experience, and it reduces the impact of political or religious violence to an individual experience exempt from their context (Wilson & Drozdek, 2007; Tang, 2007; Wilson, 2007). The impact of war and political struggles, that create trauma, impact genders, families, communities and societies as a whole and cannot be reduced to individual diagnosis (Miller & Rasco, 2004). In so doing the diagnosis minimizes societal events to a set of abnormal social conditions (Summerfield, 2008). For researchers doing cross-cultural research the most pressing component for good results is defining the culture. This can be done by understanding the history and culture of the people you are studying in order to interpret the data through the lens of the cultural, religious and familiar perspectives (Shalev, Yehuda, & McFarlene, 2000).

There are many studies on refugees who were resettled by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to countries like the USA, Canada, Sweden, Australia, the United Kingdom and others. Many of these studies are on Cambodian, Bosnian, Vietnamese, Sudanese, Iraqi or Bhutanese people. This study will focus on refugees who experienced trauma over multiple migrations. The Angolan people were displaced by war, lived in refugee camps for over two decades and then were abruptly repatriated back to Angola. As the DSM-5 continues to review each category there has been debate over the effectiveness of

the PTSD diagnosis cross-culturally. The revision leading up to DSM-5 has paid little special attention to the cross-cultural validity of diagnostic criteria. The cross-cultural applicability of the PTSD category as currently specified has generated considerable debate, both in terms of its validity and its clinical utility. Some researchers have argued that certain PTSD criteria—such as flashbacks—are a Western cultural construction (Hinton & Lewis-Fernandez, 2011).

How can a researcher develop a definitive theory without scientific research and not considering the in-depth stories of multiple clients? In this study the use of the researcher's conceptual model became the basis for establishing understanding in this qualitative study. Thematic constructs build on prior knowledge or seek to fill in the gaps in the present literature. These are the basic questions researchers are asking. Today one might ask, what is our knowledge base for understanding trauma? Is there a qualitative theory that gives credibility to our understanding of trauma? How is it acquired? Are there different ways of knowing how to study trauma victims other than making them statistics to be deciphered and interpreted? How come people with the same traumatic experiences cope in different ways? How can we transfer these stories into credible sources for research? There have been researchers who have argued that a DSM-5 diagnosis such as PTSD should never be applied in a cross-cultural context (Shalev, Yehuda, & McFarlane, 2000; Miller & Rasco, 2004; Mollica, 2006).

Many who study trauma across cultures are skeptical about the validity of diagnosing someone with PTSD. They consider the diagnosis a malicious agenda to silence the stories of trauma survivors by giving the horrific

experience they endured a pathological label (Rosen, 2004). This approach became more apparent as waves of refugees from war torn countries began resettling in America through social service resettlement agencies. This Western paradigm of a biomedical model rejects objectivity and suggests a stance that includes responsible participation in the creation of knowledge (Bolea, Grant, Burgess & Plasa, 2003; Drozdek, 2007; Wilson & Drozdek, 2007; Miller & Rasco, 2004; Wong & Wong, 2006; Folkman, 2011). Theoretical frameworks help social workers and researchers analyze social systems and explain outcome in order to inform practice (George, 2010).

This is not to say that PTSD can never be a legitimate diagnosis in non-Western populations. There are researchers who are cautious in stating that those in other cultures experience PTSD symptoms but express the symptoms in ways that are unique to the culture. These can include religious and spiritual expressions as one of the many avenues for recovery (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Vazquez, et al. (2014) also express this tension as well.

Values underlying the idea of human growth are likely not the same across cultures. Whereas some societies value change, others value constancy. There are societies that encourage self-examination, self-criticism, and self-correction in the pursuit of an ideal (i.e., a fulfilled person) while others encourage inhibition or absence of conflict for the sake of personal or social harmony. Some societies value struggle and active coping, but others (usually labeled as fatalistic) have historically shown resistance through mechanisms of acceptance and continuity. In cultural environments where change is generally perceived to be distant, and fatalism and silence are forms of resistance, asking people if they can emerge strengthened by an experience is likely not understood because suffering is part of the processes and natural cycles of life. (Vazquez, et al, 2014, p. 69-70)

The physical and psychological trauma the refugee returnees experienced may meet the DSM criteria and result in PTSD but the assumption of such diagnosis

should not be the first marker a social worker who is working with a different culture suggests. More and more research is looking into the concept of posttraumatic growth or PTG in non-Western cultures. For this reason social workers need to continually be educated in cross-cultural competencies (Calhoun, et al, 2010).

Theories of Coping

Introduction

The literature on coping goes as far back as *Man's Search for Meaning* when Frankl (1946) began wondering how Nazi concentration victims survived years of torture. Over the years, the amount of research written on coping styles has grown significantly (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the 1980s Lazarus and Folkman, leading researchers in understanding coping styles gave the field a foundation to build on (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). Lazarus presents coping as the third step in which people react to stress. Coping refers to the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce both external and internal demands that are usurping one's resources (Lazarus, & Folkman, 1984; Snyder, 1999). Given this definition, coping mechanisms are grouped not by outcomes, but by the characteristics they hold in relation to the process of coping. Coping mechanisms strive to change either the external stimuli of the person-environment relationship or the internal state of being. This research study was undertaken to discover the coping mechanisms Angolan refugee returnees incorporate after multiple migrations and now back in their country of origin. Since every refugee experience is unique, there is not one widely accepted theory that describes their experience in its entirety but there is a growing body of

literature that highlights some key components in the coping process (Stamm & Friedmann, 2000; Vazquez, et al, 2014; Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). The following components emerge from the literature as the more commonly used coping mechanisms.

There are two general ways of coping, problem-focused coping and emotion-focused coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping seeks to eliminate the emotional distress that is causing the stress, while emotion-focused coping seeks to eliminate the emotional distress that occurs due to the situation (Folkman, 1986). When problem-focused coping is used a person will feel they have control of the situation and the capacity to manage the triggering problem.

Possible strategies include: 1) defining the problem; 2) evaluating alternative solutions; 3) learning new skills to manage the stressor; or 4) reappraising the situation by reducing personal feelings about the stressor by looking at it objectively (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When emotional-based coping is used the person will employ strategies for gaining emotional stability. These include 1) Avoiding, where the individual refuses to think about things that remind them of the stressor; 2) Distancing one from the emotion is another coping mechanism one might use to pretend the stressor does not affect them; 3) Acceptance is a healthier strategy used that acknowledges the stressor, but accepts there are other opportunities to not be stressed; and 4) Seeking emotional support from friends, family or partner is another strategy one will use to reduce stress. Finally, religion or spirituality for some is a very important support as well as a means for growth for the person experiencing stress (Carver, 1989).

Upon encountering stress one makes a primary appraisal. This appraisal considers whether the person has a personal stake in the encounter, assessing whether their goals or the values that make up their well-being are being threatened. The encounter can be seen as having no significance to them, being benign-positive, that is, a desirable encounter, or being harmful, threatening, or challenging. If the situation is considered stressful, a person's response may be that of withdrawal or despair (injury, illness, disappointment), threats of future harm (anxiety, fear), or challenges that can be learned from (anticipation, excitement) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Discussing the process of coping in response to stressful events, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) present the transactional model, which shows the interaction, or transaction, between a person and their environment. Stress occurs when there is an imbalance between the demands placed on a person and their coping resources. Thus, when demands, or pressure from environment, exceed one's resources, or ability to cope and mediate stress, they feel stressed (Park & Folkman, 1997). Therefore, the interpretation of a stressful event is more important than the event itself.

Thus, if an individual does consider they have a stake in the encounter, they make a secondary appraisal. This appraisal works out how they can best deal with the situation and change the undesirable condition. Here, they evaluate internal and external coping options as well as more specific resources to create a more positive environment. Internal coping options are that of will power and inner strength. External options include peers and professional help (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). Once the situation is appraised, the individual could respond with problem-based coping. A person responds with this form of

copied when they feel like they can control the situation and manage the source of the problem. Problem-based coping is when one aims to change cognitive and behavioral methods in order to manage the internal or external demands placed on us which are taxing or exceeding our resources to cope. This includes being able to define the problem, forming alternative solutions, learning new skills, reducing our ego involvement or finding new standards of behavior (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000).

The other mode of responding to stressors, however, is emotional-based coping. Those who respond in this manner, feel like they have no control over the situation and thus, have difficulty managing the source of the problem. Therefore, emotional-based coping is trying to reduce one's negative emotional state or appraisal of demands from one's environment. Strategies for regulating this emotional distress include avoiding the situation, distancing self from emotions, acceptance, seeking emotional support, selective attention, or alcohol and drugs. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) describe these modes of coping in response to life's stressors. When one feels like they have the ability to overcome and work through the stressful event, it leads to positive stress and healthy coping. When one feels like, in the face of their stressors, they do not have the ability to overcome; it leads to negative stress and unhealthy coping methods. These two general ways of coping apply to how people generally process life stressors. The following coping strategies are specific strategies refugees have used to cope with life stressors.

Religion and Spirituality

In times of hardship and trials many people turn to religion or some type of spirituality in order to find hope or assurance. Researchers have tried to link ways of coping with religion in order find some kind of outcome to interpret (Folkman, 2011). Folkman & Moskowitz (2004) and Pargament (1997) have researched and given us a large domain of literature in the area of religious and spiritual coping. Pargament (1997) has researched the origins of coping and spirituality in the larger context of culture and the transaction it gives to the person. His research reveals the role of religion needs to be understood in the larger context of problem solving, cognitive/behavioral and interpersonal ways of managing stress (Ano, & Vasconcelles, 2005; Wong & Wong, 2006).

Among refugees (Mayer, 2007) many have shown religious beliefs helped them in coping with stress. Research among Bosnian refugees resettled in Chicago discovered religion was one of the mechanisms used to cope with stress (Weine, et al, 2004). Refugees also use their religious beliefs to make meaning out of their traumatic events (Farwell, 2004; Goodman, 2004). As Farwell (2004) points out, the use of religious coping to understand life's challenges also have young refugees questioning God's role in their lives or how God sees them.

The use of religion or spirituality helps refugees put into perspective many other areas of life. As Lazarus and Folkman (1984) highlight in their research, some people improve their ability to cope with stress through the use of religious beliefs. The research also indicates a strong belief system has been known to hinder a refugees capacity to cope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The use of religious beliefs becomes the foundation refugees use to make meaning out of

their traumas and life events (Goodman, 2004; Bolea, 2003; Halcon, 2004). The literature suggests the role religion has in the life of refugees and how they cope continually needs to be explored and developed so that social workers have a greater understanding of those with the mental health issues they serve (Wong & Wong, 2006).

Resiliency and Self-Determination

The work of Folkman, et al (2011) continues to influence the positive outcomes of coping especially in the area of resiliency. The concept of resiliency for understanding coping is one of the most important strengths (Zautra & Reich, 2011). Research in the field of resiliency has helped shift the focus from a disease biomedical model for understanding traumas to a resiliency model for well-being focusing on the positive (Folkman, 2011). The paradigm shift of moving from a disease model to an integrative model for stress and coping had its roots in the work of Kuhn (1962). The Kuhnian model (1962) encouraged researchers to consider positive influences as fundamental when interpreting how people adapt to the challenges in their environment. This new focus also opened new avenues for integrating the goodness-of-fit model by identifying social problems, cultural nuances, and other environmental risk factors (Zautra & Reich, 2011). This paradigm shift highlights the necessity to contextualize resiliency and coping (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000). The study of Vietnam refugee children (Caplan, 1991) revealed academic success after their arrival after overcoming socioeconomic and language barriers. The concept of resiliency focuses on the positive aspects of stressful conditions and their outcomes (Agaibi & Wilson, 2005). The literature on resiliency has led researchers to pay closer attention to

stressors, outcomes and the way meaning is made to provide hope (Tankink & Richters, 2007; Masten, 2001; Agaibi & Wilson, 2005). Masten (2001) has labeled this type of meaning making “ordinary magic.” This is the capacity for a person who has experienced loss to find some positive meaning from their trauma and continue to function so they are paralyzed by their loss (Masten, 2001). The focus on meaning making among refugees was researched by Goodman (2004) in her study of refugee youths from Sudan. The participants in her study interpreted their experiences by attributing their circumstances to the will of God. The focus on resiliency affirms social works core values for understanding traumatic transactions and has implications that should continue to guide research and understanding.

Family and Social Supports

The use of an ecological systems model gives social workers insight when understanding the family and social supports used by refugees to cope with trauma. The meso-ring of Bronfenbrenner’s chart (1981) reveals the need the human condition has in times of survival. In a study of Sudanese refugees, half the participants ranked social supports as very high on their list of coping mechanisms (Khawaja, 2008). Family and social supports are resources individuals use to cope with the challenges of life (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In many cultures the role of family is critical to how they function and move forward in life. This area of coping is significant because often times when families are uprooted by conflict they get separated and end up in different refugee camps.

Goodman (2004) points out in his study of Sudanese youth, how important their support to one another was during their struggle for survival. Each participant in the study considered their shared experience and collective coping as a means of survival. Through the telling of their stories the study revealed a family identity even though the refugees were miles apart (Goodman, 2004). Studies revealed when refugees resettle to another country they have difficulty navigating language, the Internet and informational support. This inability to navigate new terrain encouraged refugees to turn to family and other social supports for their informational needs (Pahud, 2009).

The work of Folkman (1984) continues to highlight the ongoing movement from a biomedical disease model toward a more comprehensive ecosystem model that factors in cultural contextual well-being (Farwell, 2004). Further studies of the complex refugee experience should continue to focus on the various researched coping strategies in order to continue to inform social workers who work with them in America and abroad. The literature on coping strategies among refugees continues to be a resource for expanding our understanding in order to address ways of coping and barriers to effective services.

Cultural Contextualization of Trauma

Over the past several decades more attention has been given to transcultural approaches (Summerfield, 2008; Drozdek, 2007; Miller & Rasco, 2004; Folkman, et al, 2011; Wong & Wong, 2006) to the refugee experience from a culturally contextual perspective. The predominance of the literature (Wong & Wong, 2006) tends to underestimate the numerous cultural influences many

refugees use as powerful contributors that enable them to face challenging mental difficulties. As our world grows smaller due to globalization and advances in technology, international social workers need to have a clear sense of the culture and context in which they practice (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002). Whatever the specific trauma- the global context of several issues need to be understood, which can be found in the next paragraph.

Trauma is not a microsystem that only takes place in the brain. Humans are social beings who are continually adapting to environmental and social factors (Germain, 1991). Therefore, it is irresponsible to reduce traumatic events solely to the location of the brain (Rubenfield, 2005). Understanding the effects of trauma should be a multifaceted intervention. The impact of culture and the various coping mechanisms employed should be a starting point in the healing and recovery process (Drozdek, 2007). The present literature is beginning to expand our understanding on how intercultural treatment can expand its borders and influence beyond Western intervention (Drozdek & Wilson, 2007). Cross-cultural competencies are educating social workers regarding cultural differences and the meanings different people groups give to the various events in their lives

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into how Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma from an ecosystem approach with an intercultural lens using a qualitative methodology. The researcher interviewed 16 Angolan refugee returnees in order to gain insight regarding the coping strategies they used during multiple migrations. Specifically, this qualitative study will capture the diverse human experiences associated with coping and resiliency in

relationship to the trauma refugees faced. Studying the lives of Angolan refugees and how they cope with trauma will help future social workers gain greater insight into the refugee experience both here and abroad. Every year thousands of refugees from various countries make the USA their new home. These refugees come through agencies such as Catholic Charities, World Relief, Heartland Alliance, Refugee One and others. Many social workers advocate, educate, and provide therapeutic intervention and other services for these resettled refugees.

The trauma created by extraordinary stressful experiences is like the ripples created by a stone cast into a pond. The ripples radiate across the surface of the pond from the point of contact, and eventually they impact the shore of the pond (Figley, 1986). The integration of refugees into the American culture may be less threatening even with the language barrier if social workers have a better understanding of the coping strategies used by refugees to cope with their trauma (Pahud, 2009). The effects of trauma carry over into their family relationships, influence behavior and weaken psychological well-being. Over the past decade researchers have been intent at studying and identifying factors that characterize resiliency in order to gain insight into healthy adults and families (Turner, 1996; Kaplan, 2009; Khawaja, 2008; Goodman, 2004; Halcon, 2004; Drumm, 2004).

Research Questions and Hypothesis

This study will explore the central research question, “How to Angolan Refugee Returnees cope with trauma?” Some refugees manage to live while others die because they do not have external supports or the internal coping

mechanisms to process the trauma they have experienced (Zwingmann & Pfister-Ammende, 1973; Hansen, 1981). How come some cope better than others? What coping strategies are used that enhance resiliency? The purpose of this research is to explore the coping strategies Angolan refugee returnees used to survive multiple migrations, war, loss, rape and many other types of traumas (Drumm, 2004). Many die or see loved ones die along the journey. They face unimaginable trials. This is a significant study because millions of refugees around the globe face multiple traumas as a result of forced migrations. Their coping strategies are integrated in their lives in different ways (Khawaja, 2008). The importance of the study will contribute to social workers understanding and delivery of services to refugees settling in America and for social workers who work in other countries.

The research identifies the psychological stressors and coping strategies of Angolan refugee returnees through the lens of the ecological systems theory. This multilayered approach embedded in the ecological systems theory more clearly substantiates and delineates the research questions being addressed. Thus this study is satisfying the questions the researcher is asking and addressing the knowledge gap in the literature related to refugee returnees.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGY

Context for the Research Design

In May 2000 the researcher and his wife had the opportunity to be members of a team of 19 people who were traveling to Namibia to work in the Osire refugee camp. The leader of the team was a therapist who grew up in Angola and 30 years later wanted to help the people he grew up with, especially the women who took care of him when he was a child. The war in Angola had become more intense and many more Angolans were fleeing to neighboring countries as refugees. The researcher spent 19 days empowering different groups of refugees with educational and practical skills in order to help them improve the quality of their lives. Upon returning to the USA the researcher and his wife felt compelled to continue to support the Angolan refugees in the Osire refugee camp. The one thing that struck the researcher the most was how similar the lives of these refugees were to the people he knew living in America. Their lives and future were derailed by a long-standing civil war.

Over the past 16 years, working with his wife, the researcher continued to support the Angolan refugees by raising money to send eight shipping containers filled with medical supplies, food, clothing, agricultural tools, etc. They also raised funds to build a women's center, a library and ship 10,000 blankets from South Africa to help keep the refugees warm during the winter. The researcher and his wife developed deep relationships with the United

Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) staff in Namibia, as well as partnerships with Africare, Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) and Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS). When the war ended and the Angolans began repatriating, the researcher transitioned his energy to the area in Angola where many of the refugees once lived. The investment in the lives of the Angolans over 16 years led the researcher to highlight their journey and understand the resiliency that inspired them during multiple migrations. The result of those trips provided valuable information in establishing rapport and understanding the Angolan culture during the research process (Gilgun, 2006; Maxwell, 2005).

Qualitative Design

In general, research is a distinct methodology used to explore social and human predicaments. The researcher paints a picture by analyzing stories of detailed interviews set in the context of Angola and in the Osire refugee camp (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative study allows the researcher to plumb for rich, in-depth data, which is appropriate for addressing the research question in order to explore how Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma. This approach will give Angolan refugee returnees a voice for telling the story of their journey from Angola to living in the Osire refugee camp and back to Angola. The literature review will help guide the research by identifying the areas needed to explore in order to answer the research question. The interviews will further develop and provide us themes through the description of the refugee experience.

The values of social work uniquely position this study to address the challenges refugees face. The literature suggests social work has a history of working with refugees (Drumm et al, 2004; George, 2010; Khawaja, et al, 2008).

This specific qualitative research will be an inductive phenomenological approach. The purpose of a phenomenological approach is to describe rather than explain the life events of the refugee returnee participants. Husserl (1970) believed pure phenomenological research placed the researcher in a position to describe the phenomenon while being free from any preconceived assumptions or bias (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Phenomenological methodology has the capacity to make the researcher engage in the experience as a subjective actor rather than a detached good or bad observer. The researcher using phenomenological methodology is interested in the lived experiences of the people being studied (Kvale, 1996).

This phenomenological study is intended to illuminate the experiences of the refugees through interviews, participant involvement, and the personal perspective of the researcher. The researcher brought to the study his own background, the reason for the study and his identity, which became an instrument in the process (Maxwell, 2004). The familiarity the researcher has with the culture of Angola and the people of Angola can be intertwined in the construction of the theory he is developing. This has the potential to create research bias and can be understood or acknowledged through different research checks. This research sought to discover how Angolan refugee returnees coped with trauma over several life displacements. It attempted to center on the coping strategies used to give meaning and helped sustain their lives in the various situations they found themselves in as refugee returnees. The researcher heard stories of refugees making the best of life while living under a tree for several months, running to safety while bombs were falling, finding solace in a church

family, discovering a brother or sister arrived in the refugee camp, and developing micro businesses in order to make a living.

Definition of Terms

Refugee. According to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR, 1951) by the United Nations Higher Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR), a refugee is defined as:

any person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (UNHCR, 1951)

Refugee returnees. According to UNHCR *Global Trends* 2014 report, a returnee is a refugee who has returned to his or her home country after a certain amount of time as a result of a natural disaster, political unrest or internal conflict. The majority of refugees prefer to return home as soon as it is safe to do so (www.UNHCR.org).

Trauma. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition, Text Revision (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013) specifically defines a trauma as

direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate (Criterion A1). The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behavior) (Criterion A2). (DSM-5, 2013, p. 463)

Coping. This refers to the cognitive and behavioral efforts made to master, tolerate, or reduce both external and internal demands that are usurping one's resources that give meaning to life with a sense of normalcy (Folkman & Lazarus 1984).

This qualitative phenomenological study recruited 16 Angolans who were refugees in the Osire refugee camp located in Namibia and who had returned to Angola. The research study interviewed Angolan refugee returnees that were selected from a snowball sample and fit the criteria and who had repatriated any time since the UNHCR repatriation began in 2003. In a phenomenological study, the sampling size can be as few as 6-10 participants (Porter, 1999; Dowling, 2007). The researcher used 16 participants in order to achieve a richer sample across a demographic range of gender, marital status, and age was sought. The researcher reached the saturation level after interviewing 10 Angolans. Except for specific details the major themes of each interviewee began to repeat themselves.

Inclusion Criteria

During the 27-year civil war over 500,000 Angolans became refugees in neighboring countries (Welt, 2008). These were refugees from almost every region of Angola. For the purpose of this study the researcher focused on Angolan refugee returnees who spent time in the Osire refugee camp during any period of time from 1992 to 2012 and were from the Oviumbundu tribe. Focusing on Angolans living in the same camp insured each refugee returnee had access to the same public and social services available. The researcher had visited two other refugee camps in Zambia. The services and conditions, as well

as the Zambian cultural influence in those camps were much different than in Namibia. In order to compensate for this variable the researcher chose to only interview refugees from the Osire camp.

The Oviumbundu refugee returnees interviewed were Angolans who grew up in the provinces of Huila, Benguela, Huambo, Moxico, Cuando Cubango and Bie in Angola. These were chosen because this was where fighting during the war was the most intense. By focusing on this specific region the researcher will have a greater probability of hearing narratives filled with themes of psychological distress, resiliency, religious beliefs, family supports and the use of social supports as coping strategies or the lack thereof. The participants interviewed were at least 18 years old when they fled Angola and have since returned to Angola. This minimum age assured the researcher the Angolan refugee returnee had an extensive history of his/her life prior to arriving in the refugee camp.

Exclusion Criteria

The researcher excluded refugees who were Angolans of the Oviumbundu tribe but lived in refugee camps other than the Osire camp in Namibia (Heywood, 1998). Thousands of Angolan refugees lived in the countries of Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana and South Africa. Oviumbundu Angolans who grew up in provinces other than those designated were not included. Some of these provinces experienced little if any fighting and many of those people never left Angola during the civil war.

Procedures

The research began after the Loyola University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects approved the research project in February 2014. After three months of clarifying the details of the study and satisfying the IRB's questions, the approval was given. Before the researcher arrived in Angola, he contacted the Angolan translator/recruiter (from now known as the assistant) in order to present the research project to her. During the researcher's first visit to the Osire camp in 2000 he met his assistant who at that time of the initial meeting was a teenager. Over the years and multiple visits the assistant continued helping the researcher and maintained correspondence with the researcher and his wife. The Angolan assistant received her college education upon returning to Angola where she presently teaches English to secondary school Angolan students. She is presently working on a graduate degree in order to advance her career. Her ability to fluently speak English, Portuguese and Umbundu was a great asset to the research project. She was born in Kalukembe and is from the Oviumbundu tribe that gave her added insight into the culture and customs of the participants. Her insights added to the research project insuring the translation was accurate and comprehensive.

Upon arrival, the researcher spent time with the assistant going over the purpose of the study, consent form, inclusion and exclusion criteria, interview timetable, transportation, and other questions. The researcher and his assistant developed a plan for seeking prospective participants. The researcher and the assistant confirmed her availability for the study. The researcher and the assistant then met in order for the assistant to complete the Collaborative

Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certification required by the Loyola University IRB. The assistant was responsible for finding potential participants, setting up the interview schedule with the researcher and performing the Portuguese to English translation during the interviews. The researcher was aware that although the interviews might take over an hour, the time spent with each subject extended beyond that time frame because Angolans are very engaging and hospitable people. The time spent with the participants, including the interviews ranged from 1.5 to 3 hours. The researcher knew this because of his history working with the Angolan people. The researcher intentionally planned to be in Angola for an extended period of time in order to gather the necessary number of interviews for the study.

The research was done in the country of Angola over a two-month period. All the interviews were done in English when possible, or through the Angolan assistant for those non-English speakers. Ten interviews were translated from Portuguese to English while the remaining six interviews were done in English. These voluntary interviews were digitally recorded. The digital recordings, transcripts and other interview material that could potentially identify the participants is not accessible to anyone and is locked in a filing cabinet in the researcher's home. The researcher used a semi-structured guided Interview Protocol that he had developed with input from his dissertation committee members. The Interview Protocol was also translated into Portuguese for those being interviewed. Each interview was done in a private location. This allowed for greater freedom of response since the interviews contained very personal and emotional reflections. The interviews were carried out in conversational style.

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher thanked each of the participants and reminded them at any time during the interview they had the freedom to stop the interview or not answer any questions if they evoked strong emotions. During the interviews the researcher took detailed field notes watching for any unique facial or body language that accompanied any questions during the interview process. The researcher was also aware that these interviews might trigger painful emotions. The researcher heard stories that included loss, death, illness, various troubles, different emotional states, disillusionment, apathy and resignation. Each story revealed successful and unsuccessful coping strategies relevant to the various traumas in the participant's journey. The goal of the researcher was not to diagnose any psychological issues but to stay focused on the research study. The researcher's educational background with a Master of Social Work and many years as a licensed clinical social worker also gave him the skills necessary to intercede only if he deemed necessary during any interviews. Fortunately this was not necessary in any of the participant interviews. Angola has a very weak mental health sector. As a result, social workers are none existent. Getting around the city where the research was done was very difficult for the researcher and his assistant. Sometimes the researcher and assistant waited up to three hours after the designated time until the participant showed up. There were also times when the researcher and assistant waited and no one showed up or the participant had to reschedule because of transportation or other issues. As a result, it would have been very difficult for the researcher to have follow-up interviews with the participants. The researcher strongly encouraged the

participants to talk with someone like their pastor, if they attended a church regularly, or someone else they respected in their community, if there were any residual memories that made them continue to feel uncomfortable in any way.

Participants recruited for this study were a rich mix of adults who were at least 18 years old when they fled Angola during the war and were living in Angola. The researcher observed the appropriate protocol for obtaining informed consent. Prior to the commencement of the interviews, all selected participants were informed of the goals of the study, given a consent form to sign and assured of the confidentiality of their interviews. A certified translator translated the consent form and the interview protocol from English to Portuguese and stamped it with a certificate of accuracy for use during the study (Appendix E & F). Portuguese is the national language of Angola. For those participants who were illiterate, the consent form was read to them in Portuguese through the Angolan assistant. The researcher's volunteer social work experience for 16 years with Angolan refugees enabled him to be trusted by the participants in order to achieve his recruitment goal (Porter, 1999). The research began once the Angolan assistant received the CITI certification required by the Loyola University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher relied on multiple referral sources using a snowball sampling for finding the participants. The selection process began with the assistant finding two willing participants who met the criteria for the study. At the end of the interviews the Angolan assistant asked the participants if they knew any other Angolan refugee returnees who fit the research criteria. The assistant then gave her cell number to them and asked them to pass her contact information to any

potential recruits. Once the Angolan assistant received any new potential participants information she conferred with the researcher and they agreed on an interview date that was convenient for all parties. The process of interviewing the participants was slow during the first several weeks of the research. After having interviewed five participants and feeling like the study was stalled, two women who were interviewed recruited a total of six more participants. These new participants led the assistant to find the remainder of the participants for the study. The researcher was only familiar with five of the participants as a result of his work in the Osire camp. All the other participants in the study met the researcher for the first time as a result of their participation in the study. None of the participants were related to each other.

A total of 18 Angolan refugee returnees responded to the snowball sampling. Sixteen participants consented to the interview and were digitally recorded. The two who chose not to consent or get involved in the research cited political and family concerns as their reasons for not participating. During the early interviews the researcher felt a little uncomfortable doing the interviews. The researcher was unsure how the participants would respond to some of the questions. The researcher was hesitant with how deep to probe for more in-depth and fuller answers to some of the questions. This resulted in the early interviews to being a little shorter. After the first couple interviews the researcher felt more relaxed working with his assistant as well as getting a feel for the story each participant was sharing. Over time, the researcher became more aware of when to probe deeper into certain questions and when to just leave them. There were some interviews where the researcher skipped over

some questions because they were answered through other questions. By the time the researcher had reached the sixth or seventh interview the researcher and assistant felt very comfortable with the flow of the interview protocol as well as the ability to probe when needed. The interviews were conducted in the apartment of the researcher, the home of the participant or in a private place of their choosing. The interviews lasted from 45 minutes to 2.5 hours. At the end of each interview the researcher asked his assistant if there was anything the participant said that the researcher needed to understand that was difficult to translate into English. The researcher and the assistant talked after each interview in order to make sure the content, emotion and narrative was accurate. During his stay in Angola the researcher began transcribing the interviews while they were fresh and the remaining transcription was completed once the researcher returned to the USA. While every participant described their faith in God and importance of church as a coping mechanism all of them did not attend church prior to living in the refugee camp. The participants were from Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, Nazarene, Congregational, Union, and Seventh Day Adventist churches.

Participants

The following table gives a brief description the refugee returnee participants. These descriptions are presented in Table 1. The researcher chose to give the participants Portuguese names in order for them to remain anonymous and protect their identity. The total length of time as refugees in the Osire camp before repatriation ranged from 3.5 to 21 years (mean = 8.72). The

number of children ranged from 0 to 10 (mean = 3.56). The length of time as refugee returnees ranges from 1 to 10 years (mean = 4.19).

Table 1. Demographics of Interview Participants

Gender	Age	Family Structure	Number of Children	Length of time as a refugee	Length of time as a refugee returnee
Segunda	39	Single	None	11 years	8 years
Jimmy	34	Single	None	10 years	4 years
Ester	56	Widow	Eight children	13 years	2 years
Ameliana	42	Married, husband living in Namibia	Five children Two in Angola Three in Namibia	12 years	2 years
Rebecca	56	Married, husband living in Namibia	Ten children One deceased	21 years	2 years
Sarafina	40	Single mother Divorced	Four children	12 years	2 years
Mathias	30	Single	None	6 years	3 years
Afredo	36	Married	One	14 years	2 years
Theodora	34	Married	One	6 years	8 years
Daralinda	35	Married	Three children	8 years	4 years
Tiberia	33	Married	Two children	10 years	2 years
Pricilla	30	Married	Three children	7 years	2 years
Paulo	40	Married	Three with first wife, one with second wife	10 years	10 years
Kamil	52	Married	Eight children	9 years	9 years
Philipi	40	Married	Two children	12 years	6 years
Cambondi	47	Married	Five children, one adopted child	14 years	1 year and returned back to Namibia

Measures and Instrumentation

A qualitative Interview Protocol (see Appendix A) based on the review of the literature with semi-structured questions was designed by the researcher for use in this study to examine how Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma. The Interview Protocol developed for this study asked the participants to share feedback on their experiences living in Angola, living in the Osire refugee camp and finally returning to Angola. These included such questions as: How did you cope with all the difficulties you faced? How did you think you survived? Did you have any religious beliefs that guided your journey?

The Interview Protocol followed a logical progress beginning with specific questions relating to age, marital status, gender and leads to more open-ended questions related to the refugee returnees experience. The main portion of the interview was divided into three time frames. The first time frame directed the participants to reflect on what life was like living in Angola before they had to flee to the refugee camp. This section was meant for the participant to reflect on good memories of how they lived life, what they were involved in and what was important in their lives. The second section focused on the participant's time in the Osire refugee camp. In this section the questions focused on the reason they came to the camp, what life was like in the camp, if they experienced any physical or emotional difficulties and how they observed others coping in the refugee camp. The final section focused on the participant's life back in Angola. They reflected on their supports, new challenges and the coping skills they used in handling another displacement. With so many interviews it was highly unlikely for each interview to go exactly the same. Seidman (1998) explains there

are no absolutes when it comes to interviewing. The most important thing was to let each participant describe their story in the way they wanted while following the interview protocol. The researcher quickly learned it is better to gain an interview even in less than ideal situations rather than not getting one at all. This researcher learned to make adjustments for time, location and other delays (Seidman, 1998).

Data Collection and Analysis

Once the Interview Protocol was developed, the researcher went to Angola in March 2012 to pretest it with six Angolan refugee returnees, similar to the potential subjects for this study. These refugee returnees had the opportunity to provide feedback to the researcher regarding the flow, cohesiveness and other cultural issues related to the Interview Protocol. Using their feedback allowed the researcher to develop a more cohesive Interview Protocol for the research project. The data for this research was collected through interviews with refugee returnees in the country of Angola Africa. The pilot testing helped the researcher work through questions that had some translation and interpretation issues. Some of the changes made were in relationship to the order of the questions and the types of probes.

Data Coding

The researcher used the Checklist of Criteria for Good Thematic Analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006). Qualitative approaches because of their flexibility in defining themes can be interpreted as an “anything goes” evaluation of the data. Therefore, it was important for the researcher to establish clear and concise guidelines in order to begin doing analysis that is theoretically and

methodologically sound. The various themes not only captured the voice of each participant but also enabled the researcher to notice patterns of meaning across participant interviews that might highlight important themes of interest (Tuckett, 2005). The following five-point outline by Braun and Clark provide an overview of how the researcher gathered his findings.

1. Transcription

The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for “accuracy”.

2. Coding

Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process. Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive. All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated. Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set. Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.

3. Analysis

Data have been analyzed – interpreted, made sense of - rather than just paraphrased or described. Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims. Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized story about the data and topic. A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.

4. Overall

Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once over lightly.

5. Written Report

The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated. There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – i.e., described method and reported analysis are consistent. The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis. The researcher is positioned as active in the research process; themes do not just “emerge.” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p.36)

The following guides were put into place for the best possible results.

Confidentiality was maintained during the research process. Each interview was

done in a private place at a location chosen by the participant. All but two interviews took place in the apartment of the researcher or the home of the participant. Two interviews were done in a secluded location outside. The researcher wrote field notes in conjunction with the interviews and made field note observations in order to enhance the data collection process. The researcher and the assistant discussed each interview after it was completed. During that time any comments that needed clarification were identified for complete understanding.

When all the interviews were completed the researcher returned to the United States and the interview tapes were transcribed. Each participant was coded in the following way, Angolan01, Angolan02, etc. When the researcher had all the interviews transcribed he input the transcribed documents into the N'vivo version 10 software program. Prior to loading the data into the N'vivo software the researcher read and re-read the transcripts in order to pre-develop coding themes based on the literature review that led to the formulation of the research interview protocol. The researcher then established themes he heard after reading the interviews (Bazeley, 2007). The themes that emerged focused on words like, coping, trauma, culture, God, religion, people, resiliency, spirituality, suffering, support, and hope. During the analysis process the researcher formulated a coding table in order to keep track and list the coding themes. In so doing the researcher began to identify themes so as to how to interpret the data and answer his research question. Each stage of the interview protocol was coded looking for key phrases and emerging themes. These themes and phrases were clustered into corresponding subthemes and eventually tabled

and interpreted. Next the researcher generated initial nodes, which were representative of the research question (How do Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma?) The researcher also performed a word scramble (see Figure 3) highlighting the most frequently used words that strengthened his initial node themes.

Researcher Notes

During the extended time the researcher spent in Angola, he and his assistant found it difficult to find willful participants. The war left many psychological and physical scars most people don't want to relive. The city where the research was done is spread out and getting around is difficult and dangerous in some places. The snowball sample was slow at first. The assistant knew a couple refugee returnees who agreed to be interviewed and the study began. The researcher and the assistant went to different places in the city and waited many hours only to have the potential recruit show up several hours later or cancel. Some of the interviews flowed very easily while others required multiple promptings in order for the participant to reflect on his/her life journey. The snowball sampling began to gain traction after about four weeks in Angola. There were several participants who each knew three or four other people that eventually participated in the study. The researcher intentionally chose not to give a gift in return for participating for fear that the Angolans would answer the questions any way they wanted since they did not know the researcher or assistant. The Angolans lives are very difficult and the idea of gift might have led some to say anything in order to participate. The researcher did compensate some of the participants with bus fare if they came from far distances. Almost

every interview was done in the privacy of a house or somewhere in the city where others would not see the participant speaking with an American. Jealousy runs ramped among Angolans and there are very few Americans in the area where the research was done. Most Angolans believe many Americans are wealthy and the idea of putting an Angolan at physical risk was taken into consideration when selecting a meeting place.

Ethical Considerations

A good research project consists of a description of the basic ethical principles and guidelines involving human subjects, selection of subjects, right to privacy, honesty with professional colleagues, ethics, and Internal Review Board approval. In thinking through research options, the researcher took into consideration best practices when researching trauma victims. Each trauma victim recalls his or her own story with different physical and psychological implications. The trauma they experienced is played out in their lives over and over again. The researcher kept these factors in the forefront of the research project in order to keep the risk of harm to a minimum and have the best possible outcome. Ethical issues vary from culture to culture. With this in mind, the researcher needed to become familiar with various perspectives that pose particular challenges in respect to ethical considerations (Trimble & Fisher, 2006). The researcher also needed to take into consideration best practices for researching trauma victims. As a result of much reading, the researcher became more familiar with trauma theory and its usefulness in working with trauma victims (Brewin & Holmes, 2003; Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Allen, 1995; Cloitre, et al, 2011; George, 2010; Kaplan, 2009; Nicholl, & Thompson, 2004; Rasmussen &

Heller, 2007). These included being attuned to the physical signs of distress any participants might be experiencing, making sure the participants clearly understand their freedom to withdraw at any time without any consequences and having good follow-up options in case of distress as a result of the interview.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) process for the research was complicated since the research was an international study in a country that recently gained its independence (1975). The Loyola University IRB required the researcher to satisfy the following requirements before approving the research project. The researcher had to get the interview protocol translated in Portuguese by a certified translator since this is the primary language of the majority of his participants. The translation was authenticated and guaranteed 100% accurate (See Appendix H). The researcher had to contact the United States department for worldwide institutional review in order to learn if Angola has its own IRB so the research would be compliant there. The researcher learned Angola does not have IRB regulations in place for human subject research. Therefore, the Loyola University IRB was sufficient for the research. The researcher was required to have the consent form translated into Portuguese. The translation was authenticated by a certified translator and guaranteed 100% accurate by the interpreting agency (See Appendix H). The researcher wrote and had the assistant sign a translator confidentiality agreement form (See Appendix G). The researcher had to satisfy the IRB concerns regarding emotional safeguards for the participants since there are no social workers in the area of Angola where the research was done. The researcher also had the translator sign a statement of confidentiality as a result of participation in the research.

The participants were read the informed consent to participate for the research project and asked to agree or disagree with the study. In order to safeguard against the possible risk of harm to all participants the researcher directed the participant to his/her local pastor, if the participant was a member of a local church or an elder they could talk with. In the city in Angola where the research was done there are no agencies that are available for participants to seek out help. The researcher can say after all the interviews he did not become aware of any emotional distress from any participants. The researcher was unable to do any follow-up of any kind because some of the locations the participants came from long distances and certain locations were very dangerous.

Rigor of Study

Several methods were incorporated in order to increase the reliability and trustworthiness of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2009). Padgett (1998) describes six strategies for increasing the rigor of research. These are prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer debriefing and support, member checking, and auditing. In order to increase credibility and trustworthiness the researcher engaged the assistant in participant interview follow-ups.

Debriefing

This is the process for corroborating in order to insure the most accurate interpretation of the data because this is the most critical part of data collection for increasing the credibility of an inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Shortly after the interview was completed and the participant left, the researcher and the assistant discussed each interview in order to gain the most accurate understanding of the interview. If there were any questions the researcher had

regarding how a participant answered a question these were explained by the assistant. This was done so the researcher knew if the assistant correctly gathered all the information from the interview and interpreted the question to the participant with accuracy. We would talk about the interview and clarify any questionable statements that could be misinterpreted when translated into English.

This occurred during some interviews when certain words did not translate well into English. As a result, the researcher and the assistant did their best to capture the meaning behind the participants' responses (Maxwell, 2005; Gilgun, 2006). The researcher has spent 16 years working with the Angolan people which gave him insight into the history of the country, the effects of the war and his knowledge of the people through multiple trips to Angola. It was important for the researcher to understand reflexivity knowing that his actions and decisions might inevitably impact the meaning and context of the experience under investigation. This process assured that the researcher was deconstructing his own worldview in order to keep his bias out of the interview process. The experiences and knowledge of the culture the researcher has in Angola had the potential to intersect with the participants and jade the research outcomes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Denzin, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Prolonged Engagement

Since 2000 the researcher has been a teacher and a social worker to Angolan refugees in refugee camps in Zambia and Namibia as well as refugee returnees in Angola. The researcher has made 16 trips of varying lengths, listening to their stories, learning their language, eating their food, and living

among them. This history of 16 years has helped him earn their trust and respect (Denzin, 1994). The researcher's familiarity with the country and people made it easier for the assistant to represent the researcher and gain the trust of the participants. During this study the researcher was able to stay in Angola for two months. This extended length of time gave him more flexibility of time in finding his participants.

The Role of the Researcher

This researcher became immersed in understanding the traumas refugees face in various parts of Africa from their cultural context. The greatest difficulty for the researcher was seeing the world through the hopelessness of the participants after hearing their stories. As a participant researcher, after hearing multiple stories of trauma the researcher may also experience a sense of hopelessness and skew how the data is received, collected, and interpreted (Seinfeld, 1996).

As a researcher from the USA I need to guard against using the research strictly for my own benefit. The question remains, how are refugees benefiting from this research? So it was my responsibility to find areas to disseminate the results for the benefits of my subjects. Often times there is a tendency on the part of researchers to interpret people's behavior so that it makes sense from the researcher's point of view (Anastas, 1999). As a researcher who has been working with the Angolan people my research also has the tendency to "go native." This is the tendency a researcher has to over-identify with the culture or group being observed. In so doing the researcher can lose his/her own sense of identity and analytic stance. When a researcher "goes native" and over-identifies

with the study group he/she may not be able to help at all (Anastas, 1999). This is evidenced if the researcher reacts emotionally to the interview observations making the interviewee feel misunderstood. This was kept in check through the use of snowball sampling. The assistant found subjects the researcher had never met or known before. If the researcher only interviewed participants he had a previous relationship with their answers to the questions might have been different. Meeting someone for the first time distances the emotional involvement somewhat even though the stories were difficult to hear.

The researcher with a Western lens may experience times when he may have feelings of anger or injustice or wanting to fix the situation, that are buried deep within. The academics of studying, writing, and reading sometimes kept the researcher insulated from his/her own issues without being aware of these until they surface through countertransference. "It is, in effect, to become acquainted with ourselves. To the extent, therefore, that our research helps us to conceptualize content in our unconscious thought processes they help us, as we are trying to help them" (Saari, 1986, p. 49).

When interviewing and considering research with trauma victims, it was necessary for the researcher to read extensively about their situation as well as get to know the specific population if possible. If a researcher can establish these kinds of relationships then it will be easier for his subject to begin to share their stories. Reflecting on this study, the researcher also wore a particular mask; it might not be the mask of how to cope with trauma or survival or resiliency. The question that keeps reverberating in the mind of the researcher is--what does my mask look like? The researcher realized the necessity of maintaining the role of a

researcher and not a social worker in order to keep the interviews as clean as possible.

The losses and uncertainty the refugee returnees experienced forced the researcher to think about how to interpret the experiences and not diagnose their conditions. The language and meanings are ever changing. The issues became more and more complex and ambiguous at the same time. As the researcher observed, when the participant knows someone cares, listens to their stories, this gives them a sense of dignity and human worth. My goal was to keep listening, learning and interpreting. The stories were ever changing. The meanings the researcher will make could be life giving and hope-filled for social workers that find themselves listening to similar narratives. The effects of trauma are common not only among the Angolan people but refugees worldwide (Trimble & Fisher, 2006).

CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS

Introduction

The participant interviews gave the researcher plenty of data to begin working with. Now the researcher needed to dig into the interviews looking for themes that answered the research question in order to make interpretations from those themes. After having input the written manuscripts into the N'vivo software program, the researcher did a word scramble in order to get an idea of the most commonly used words during the interviews. This word scramble helped maintain accuracy during the research process as well as gave the researcher direction for his coding. The word scramble was an effective tool that gave the researcher a quick overview of what the participants believed were important to them. These words continued to confirm the findings the researcher learned from his literature review. The scramble is the 100 most commonly used words as told by the participants told through their stories.

Narrative Description of the Participants

Segunda is a 39 year-old engaged male. He lives with his sister, brother-in-law and their three children in Angola. He was about 20 years old when he had to flee from Angola to the refugee camp. During his time in the refugee camp he was able to finish high school and get technical training in construction. He is the oldest of nine children. He lived as a refugee for about 11 years before returning to Angola. Presently he is working two jobs and trying to build his house. He hopes to get married and have children.

Jimmy is a 34 year-old single male that lives alone. He arrived in the refugee camp alone at the age of 20. Before arriving at the refugee camp he was injured as a soldier. The bullet is still in his leg, as a result, he walks with a limp. While he was in the refugee camp he finished high school. He lived as a refugee for 10 years and has been back in Angola for 4 years. He has two brothers and two sisters that he has not seen in many years. Life was very difficult for him in the refugee camp until a family took him in to live with them. The church became his family. He hopes to gain more education in the field of agriculture. God is very important to him.

Ester is a 56 year-old female. Her husband died as a result of the war. She lives with her daughter and two of her grandchildren. She has eight children in all. She never received education past the sixth grade and as a result it is very difficult for her to find employment. She lives near her one brother and sister. She takes care of her grandson who has one leg. She said, once her husband was killed it was like all her memories died as well. The church is very important to her. She lived in the refugee camp for 13 years and has been back in Angola

since 2012. Helping her grandson who only has one leg gives her purpose in life even though it is very difficult because he doesn't have crutches or a wheelchair.

Ameliana is a 42 year-old married female. She lives with her two children in Angola but her husband is still in Namibia with three other children. She arrived in the refugee camp in 2000. It was very difficult for her family because they were not used to living in the bush. She participated in the Women's center where she volunteered and found meaning in life. God is very important to her. She lived as a refugee for 12 years and returned to Angola in 2012. The war interfered with her education so she never finished eighth grade. Life in Angola is very difficult because she cannot find a job so she sells in the market. One day she hopes to be reunited with her husband and other children.

Rebecca is a 56 year-old married woman. She has been married for 40 years. Presently she is living with her granddaughter in Angola. She had 10 children but one died during the war. Her husband is still living in Namibia with their two youngest children. Her life has been filled with many difficulties. She lives with HIV / AIDS and as a result her health is very poor. She lived with her family for 21 years in the refugee camp. She remembers living in Angola before the war like living on a beach. It was peaceful and beautiful until the war came and destroyed it. When she first arrived at the refugee camp her family slept under trees because there were not enough tents. Her highest education was grade 10 because of the war. She survived the refugee camp because she says she was born with a drive. She was leader in the women's ministry in her church while she was in the camp. Her suffering has helped her to understand others who suffer. She has a dream to have a little store to sell chocolate!

Sarafina is a 40 year-old divorced woman with four children. Two live with her in Angola and the other two are still living in Namibia with her mom. Presently she is working at a large grocery store in her city. She is trying to graduate high school and attended school in the morning but had to quit because it interfered with her work. She has 11 brothers and 11 sisters from different fathers. Her family is very important to her. During the war her husband worked for the government and he continually physically abuse her. After her fourth child was born her friends helped her escape from her husband and find shelter in the refugee camp. She lived as a refugee for 12 years and returned to Angola in 2012. She has always wanted to be a social worker. She believes God is always with her and has helped her a lot.

Mathias is a 30 year-old single male. He lives with his parents and his Aunt. He lacks education and cannot find a job that will support him. He completed 12th grade and is trying to learn English. His grandfather took him to Osire because his family was afraid the soldiers would break into their house at night and kidnap him. He remembers many nights the bombs falling and everyone fearing one of the bombs would hit them. Many nights he slept in the straw roof of his house. While he was in Osire his grandfather died in a bus accident. During his time in Osire his grandfather took him to church. After his grandfather died the church became his family. He lived as a refugee for six years. He describes life in the refugee camp as very difficult.

Alfredo is a 36 year-old married male with one child. He lives with his brother-in-law and two other people. He was a refugee for 14 years. He has six sisters and two brothers but was the only one from his family who went to the

refugee camp. His father is a pastor and he remembers always being in church. While he was in Osire he thought he would never have a future. He returned to Angola in 2012. Upon arriving back to Angola he was very afraid. The country was destroyed, disease was everywhere and nothing worked. He says his positive attitude helped him survive.

Theodora is a 34 year-old married female with one daughter. She lived as a refugee for six years and has been in Angola for eight years. She grew up in rural Angola and left as a result of the war. She remembers the planes flying over her village every night and dropping bombs. As a child she moved around a lot because of the war. She describes sleeping and waiting for the soldiers to come at the same time. One day her older sister sent her a message saying she needed to leave Angola and go to the refugee camp and live with her family. The journey to the refugee camp was very scary because they were afraid of being hit by bombs, taken advantage of by soldiers and passing through many check points. During her time in the refugee camp the only thing that motivated her was going to church. Many people lost hope because they had no vision for the future. Many people suffered because of spiritual and physical problems. Life in Angola is difficult because you have start from the beginning.

Daralinda is a 35 year-old married female with three children. She lived as a refugee for eight years and has been back in Angola for four years. They live with her mother-in-law. She works at the local grocery store. Her two brothers are still living in Namibia. The last year she lived in the refugee camp her father died. She remembers life was very difficult. Her father was a soldier before he lived in the refugee camp. He was only forty-something when he died. Church

plays a big role in her life because it teaches her how to deal with life and how to cope with life. When she returned to Angola it was very hard and she used to cry everyday because she wanted to go back to the refugee camp. In the refugee camp everything is organized but in Angola everything is chaotic. She only finished grade twelve. Many Angolans asked her why she left Angola during the war. Some treat her badly because they don't understand why she wanted to leave all the bad during the war.

Tiberia is a 33 year-old married female with two children. She lived as a refugee for 10 years and has been back in Angola for two years. Her education was interrupted at grade eight because of the war. She has siblings presently living in Namibia. She is the only one who has returned to Angola. It was difficult living in the refugee camp. What helped her survive was going to church. When she lived in the refugee camp her husband used to care about things. Now he has a difficult time being in Angola and drinks a lot because he cannot find a job. She feels sad because her husband wanted them to return to Angola because he said they suffered too much in the refugee camp but now he is suffering more. She wants her life to move on. When her father-in-law died in the refugee camp in 2002, it was the beginning of really difficult times. Her husband never talks about how he escaped to the refugee camp. When they met in the camp he never talked about his life before.

Pricilla is a 30 year-old married female with three children. She lived as a refugee for seven years and has been in Angola for two years. Her brother-in-law lives with them. She completed grade twelve in the refugee camp. She was living in Angola and one day a lady came to her father told him he should send

her to live in the refugee camp in Namibia because it was safer for women. Her father paid money to the lady and she arranged their transport. When she arrived to Osire she cried because she was in the bush. She was crying to go back. She was sad because there was no house. She said being loved is the most important thing she remembered when she was suffering. Her family was the most important thing to her. She would never know what her life would be like if her father didn't listen to that lady. One of her dreams is to have her own bakery.

Paulo is a married 40 year-old male. He has three children with his first wife and one with another woman. He lived as a refugee for 10 years and has been in Angola for 10 years. He was fortunate to receive a scholarship and receive a bachelor degree. He works as a social development consultant. His father smuggled him out of Angola to the Osire refugee camp under dangerous and difficult conditions. It took them five days to get there. He was filled with feelings of sadness and happiness. Sadness because he knew he was leaving his friends and family and might not see some of them again. Happiness because he knew he was going to a place where there was not war and it was a sense of freedom. He was already prepared for the living conditions in the refugee camp because his parents told him what to expect. It was difficult living there at first because he could not go anywhere unless he received approval from the police. Church played an important role in his life because it deeply shaped his life. He suffered a lot because there was no way to make money in order to buy his basic needs. Many people got sick and developed diseases. Being a refugee changed him in a sense because he has learned to appreciate and cherish life.

Kamil is a 52 year-old married male with eight children. He lived as a refugee for nine years and has been in Angola for nine years. He completed grade twelve. The war was very hard on his family. He has eight siblings and all but one died as a result of the war or illness. He attended primary school until grade four. During the war a group of soldiers attacked his house and set it on fire. They took everything that belonged to his father. After their house burned they escaped to another city in Angola. He kept running from the war and it was hard for him to find a safe place to live. Soon he became a soldier and during that time he was injured in an accident. The only doctors that would help him were in Namibia. In 1996 he went to the Osire refugee camp in order to receive medical attention. They let him stay there and soon his family arrived. Osire was a place where many Angolans went in order to escape the war. Most of the people in Osire were suffering. Many left everything in Angola running with only their clothes. Everyday in the camp there was a funeral. There was nothing to do in the refugee camp. He was planning for a future, but he can't see the future without God and without a spiritual life.

Philipi is a 40 year-old married male with two children. He lived as a refugee for 12 years and has been back in Angola for six years. He was blessed to receive a scholarship and earn a bachelor degree in architecture. He and his wife have good paying jobs and live in the capital city Luanda. One of his favorite memories in Angola was spent working with children at the local church. He played the guitar and led the children in singing. In the refugee camp he participated in the church and found life meaningful working with the young children. His family left Angola because there was a big battle that destroyed his

town. He saw many people die including friends and family who died from bullets, bombs and starvation. That experience will forever be part of his life. He doesn't know how long it will take for the scars to heal. When the jets would fly over he would hide in the open trenches they dug in our backyard. The war got so bad his parents decided it was time to leave Angola and flee to the refugee camp. Life in Osire was difficult because it was in the bush. The camp was hard and his parents suffered with many physical problems. His faith played an important role in his life. He doesn't think he would have been able to make it without trusting in God. The time in the refugee camp was good and bad. He had time to reflect on his life and see the things that were good and bad.

Cambondi is a 47 year-old married male with five biological children and one adopted child. He lived as a refugee for 14 years. He returned to Angola for one year and decided it was too difficult and returned to Namibia as a refugee. He has a college degree and works as a Portuguese language teacher at a private school in Namibia. His family received temporary resident status from the government. He has 16 brothers and sisters. His father was killed during the war because of his political affiliation. It was difficult living in Angola. The bombs were dropping and many people were killed or maimed. When he was 16 years old he was rounded up with other youth and flown to Cuba in order to be taught and indoctrinated in the MPLA party as a future soldier. He lived in Cuba for seven years. He saw many of his friends die during war. During the war he became the radio voice for the UNITA party and had a bounty for his life. He eventually fled Angola with his family to Osire because it was getting too dangerous for him in Angola. God has always been central in his life. He saw

repatriation as a good thing but he never considered it because it caused many more problems for Angolans. The refugees are considered outcasts and they would suffer even more if they go back. The most important thing in his life is the love he gets from my wife-it has kept me going. He believes he would not have survived without his wife in his life.

Coping Themes

This chapter reflects the major themes and subthemes that emerged as a result of the researcher's interpretation of the participant interviews. After multiple readings of the participant interviews, the researcher noticed two important person and environment themes emerging. The themes reflect this study's research question and their relationship to the ecosystem theory. How Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma? The researcher has conceptualized these and categorized the data into two major areas as they relate to the research question, 1) effects of war and displacement, and 2) resiliency and coping. These themes relate to the external and internal traumas the participants continued to refer to in the interviews. There are also sub-themes within each major theme. Woven into each theme are selected quotes from the participants' narratives. These narratives provide detailed description that support the various questions asked in the interview protocol as well as seek to answer the researcher's question. The descriptive quotes from the personal narratives of the Angolans' experiences also support what the researcher discovered as the major coping mechanisms supported in the literature review.

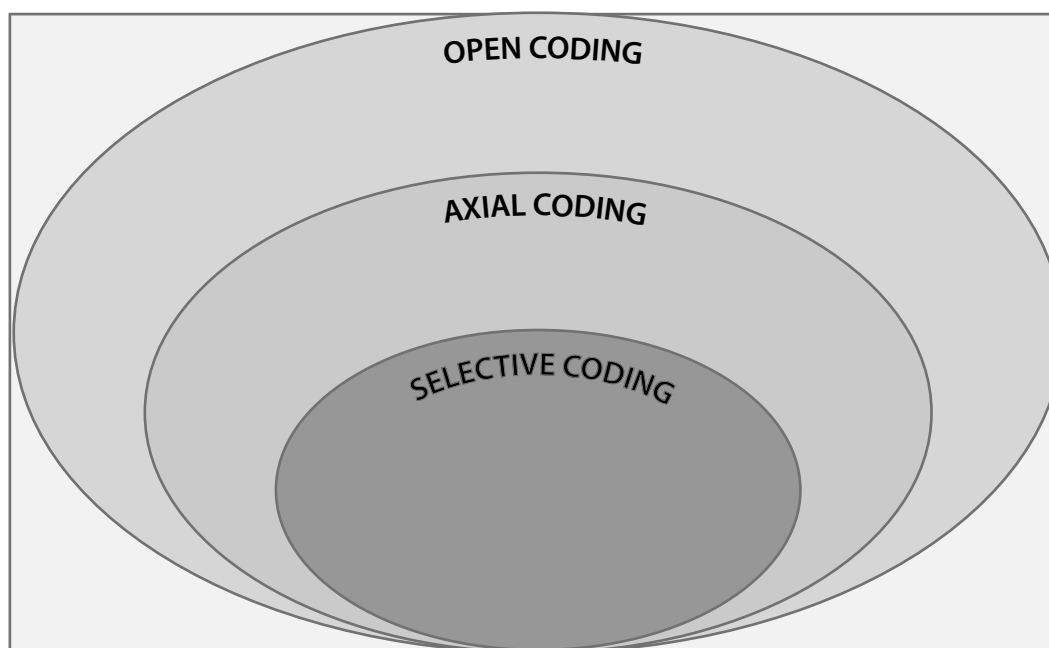
The task of the researcher in this phenomenological qualitative study was to gain understanding of the Angolan refugee returnee experience. The human

emotions of anger, love, hope, and despair were present and depicted in their human predicament. In order to get at the meaning of the experience, the method for interpreting the data collected was of utmost importance. Once the data was collected, the researcher needed to have a systematic way for mining the data in order to answer the question that began his journey. A thoughtful and systematic analysis approach should make the reader come away with a better understanding of what it is like to be an Angolan refugee returnee (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009).

There are no specific coding methods when doing a qualitative phenomenological study. After the researcher input all the interview data into the N'vivo 10 software, he read the transcripts over multiple times listening for the major themes that emerged. The researcher began by using the coding schemes developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990) that include open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The open coding themes were created based on research taken from the literature review as well as the most commonly used words found throughout the interviews. Open coding is the process the researcher used in the N'vivo software program where he began labeling themes and developed categories based on the data from his transcribed interviews. Once the researcher felt he sufficiently mined the data for the most obvious themes he moved to axial coding. Axial coding began when the researcher began the disaggregation of his core themes as they related to one another. Once the axial coding was complete, the researcher began the process of selective coding. Selective coding is the final stage in qualitative research. During selective coding, the researcher identified and refined the core concepts that supported his

initial research question in order to bring more meaning to the participant interviews. The following diagram illustrates the coding process the researcher used for his findings.

Figure 4. The Coding Process Overview



The method of coding gave the researcher a wide-angle lens for understanding the major themes that developed as a result of what he heard. These general themes gave him an open ended set of ideas for the deeper work he would do in order to answer the research question. The coding process gathered the most common themes from the interviews and began to establish a structural basis for understanding how those themes were interconnected (Corbin & Strauss, 2007).

Thematic Analysis

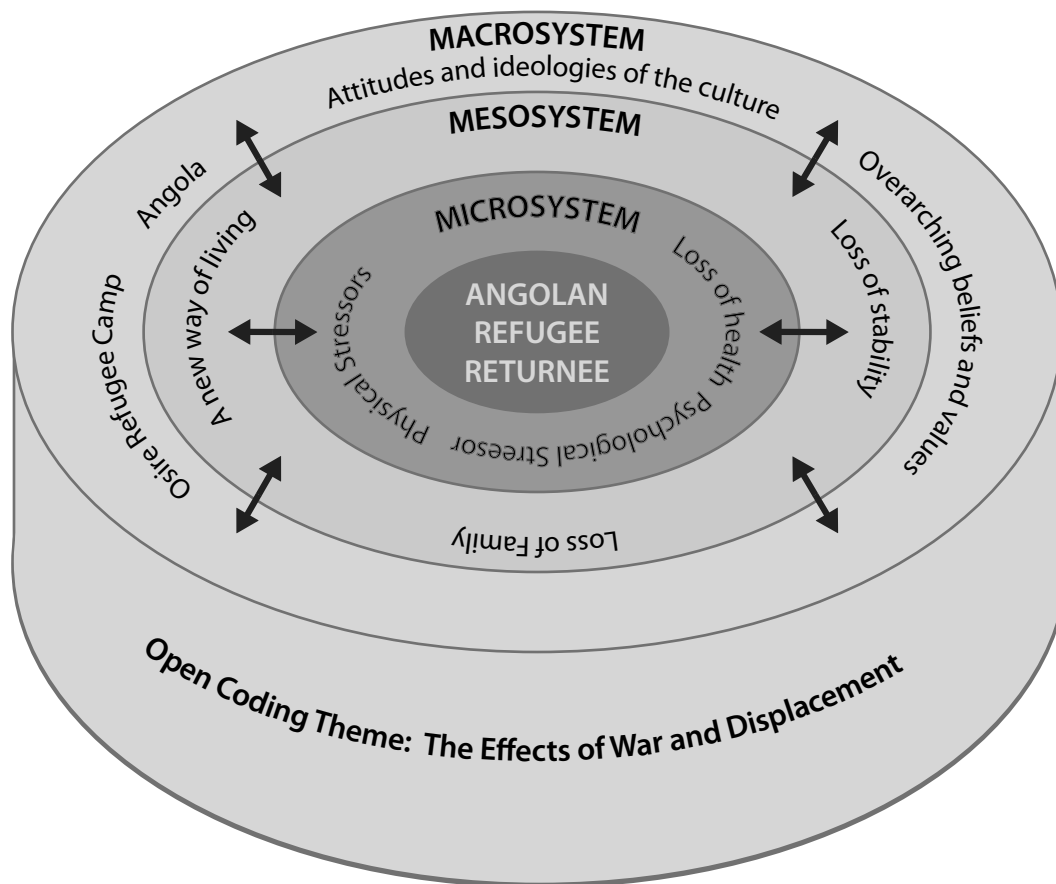
Open coding themes became the first steps to answering the research question. How do Angolan refugees cope with trauma? The two open coding

themes the researcher discovered in answering the research question were, 1) the factors influencing the effects of war and displacement and 2) the factors influencing coping and resiliency. Some of the major coding nodes represented during the open coding phase are illustrated in Figure 5. The researcher continued to listen and pull out interrelated themes moving the research investigation to the axial coding level. As the axial coding themes became clearer the research investigation progressed. The two axial coding themes the researcher discovered were 1) external commonalities and 2) internal strengths. After more open and axial coding readings the researcher was eventually able to perform selective coding. During this phase of investigation the researcher noticed two core themes emerging as a result of his thorough coding process. The two selective coding themes that emerged were 1) capacity to establish relationships and 2) the ability to adapt to new environments. The researcher will illustrate the coding process through different figures and support his findings with selective commentary from the participants. The following figure displays the major open coding themes as they relate to developing a theory for understanding the research question

Open Coding Themes

During the initial coding the researcher began to see two major themes emerge. The first theme revolved around the way war and displacement disrupted their lives. The displacements were guided by the following themes that emerged as a result of the interviews. These themes include the following: loss of stability, loss of health, a new way of living, and psychological and physical stressors.

Figure 5. Open Coding Themes for the Effects of War and Displacement



The following selections from the participant interviews reveal the most obvious themes from the interviews. Their stories give emotion and life to the Figure 5. Their words give understanding and clarity to the research model. The words of the participants take what might appear to be lifeless and give them life. Rather than providing specific details that helped the researcher get to his conclusions, he will now provide quotes and examples that support his findings in the following sections. The following quotes support the research process that moved from open coding to selective coding which helped the researcher construct a theory for answering the research question.

Effects of War and Displacement

One of the main goals of the research was to give meaning to the participant interviews. The interviews revealed the various ways the participants coped during the different displacements they experienced as a result of the 27-year Angolan civil war. These displacements impacted their lives through the different types of traumas they experienced. The Angolans were forced to leave Angola when the war threatened their lives. Many moved to other parts of the country becoming Internally Displaced People (IDP) before being displaced in refugee camps. Their journey to avoid the war made them the witnesses of destruction and death. Once they fled and landed in the refugee camp life would never be the same again. They were survivors of a civil war, of multiple losses and the images in their minds. Upon returning to Angola they encountered a country that had endured the total destruction of its infrastructure and the presence of over 10 million active landmines. These landmines continue to injure and kill people today. The participants described their lives while they were living in Angola before the war forced them to flee. They described lives filled with meaning, relationships, vocations and contentment. The participants described the many reasons they had to flee to the refugee camp. They told of bombs falling on their cities, near their homes, seeing their family members killed, or fear their young sons would be taken as soldiers. Once in the refugee camp they had to adjust to a new way of living in a country that looked much different from their own. The Angolans lived in the camp for over 20 years. They continued to experience physical problems, loss of loved ones and the

monotony of life. Once the war ended they were told they had to return to a country destroyed by war.

During the interviews it was evident these refugees experienced different types of losses, trauma, and suffering. Each of the participants interviewed left Angola during the war under unique circumstances. The trials they suffered are highlighted in the following excerpts taken from the research interviews. Their narratives served as the background for understanding the various coping mechanisms they used to survive in the best way possible.

The following memories are excerpts from the participant interviews. In order to begin to understand how these Angolans became refugees, the researcher wanted the participants to describe the events that displaced them from Angola. The effects of war and displacement revealed particular themes. The following themes support the war and displacement theme in the open coding node. These themes introduce the reader to the issues surrounding war and displacement. The first displacement of leaving their homeland created much instability for many Angolans. The following section highlighted the trials the refugees faced that related to the theme of war and displacement.

Loss of Stability

The refugees left a country that was safe and familiar only to flee to a place of unknown. Those who first arrived in the camp had to sleep under a tree until a tent was available to them. They displayed resiliency under the most difficult circumstances. The country they once knew was now replaced with the temporary permanence of living in a refugee camp. How long would they be displaced? What would give their lives meaning? What happened to their

homes and businesses? Their displacement as a result of the war reshaped how they interpreted life. The material possessions they once used to organize their lives around quickly changed. For some their belief in God became more important. Others clung to family members or people they met from the town or cities they fled. They were forced to transfer how they made life in Angola into the refugee camp with very little resources. The refugees became creative with the little they had to live on. This loss of stability was replaced with a deeper belief system and relational bonds.

Life was really good for us. My father was the president of a bank and my mother was a teacher. We came to Osire in 1996. It was very difficult. We lived under a tree for six months before we were given a tent to live in. When we first came to the camp my father had some issues that almost gave him a stroke. It was difficult for him to try to face {sic} the new life he never had. The things you had, the people you knew, the places you remember – once you were in Osire it would make you think, “Oh I wish I had those things, but I don’t because I am in Osire.” (Segunda)

Segunda saw his father lose his socioeconomic privilege. His life in the refugee camp was unlike anything he ever experienced. He was used to riding his bicycle, planting a garden and enjoying having people over to his house. He wondered how his father would give him the opportunities he once had.

The war was getting worse and I needed to leave Angola and go live in the refugee camp. It was hard for me because I came alone. I did not know anyone or what would happen to me but I knew it would be better than staying in Angola. My uncle told me to go because Namibia was safer. You may give up your family but you will keep your life. My life totally changed when I went to Osire. I suffered a lot when I came to the refugee camp. Many people came to Osire to escape the war but they did not know they would encounter a war in their head. After living in Osire for a while many people thought they were lost in life and wondered if life would ever be normal again. There was no way to go back to the way life used to be. (Jimmy)

Jimmy found his loss to be what saved his life and gave him peace. Even though he found physical peace he and others experienced psychological unrest. The instability created by the war invaded their whole being.

It really was wonderful in Angola until the war came and my husband was killed. After that I had to move to Lubango or fear all of us being killed. After my husband was killed it was like many of my memories died too. We would still be there but the war became so bad. Many people were killed or died. It was terrible. After they killed my husband, my brother who had already left our town, called me and told me I had to take my children and move to Lubango to be near him. When my husband was killed I began to wonder if God doesn't look at me. The biggest loss I suffered was losing my husband. (Ester)

Ester lost her soulmate who she thought she would grow old with. The war caused great upheaval in her life and the lives of her children. She left Angola grieving and disillusioned as a result of her losses. This was a great source of psychological distress for her.

The war came to Lubango and the soldiers attacked many people. They told me that I must go to the Osire refugee camp. They came with guns and attacked the city. Once the soldiers came it was not safe to live here anymore. It was scary because you did not know what would happen. (Ameliana)

We were nine, (brothers and sisters) now there are only four. None of my brothers and sisters went with me. It was a big issue leaving Huambo and coming here. Here in Lubango, it was a big issue. It was period of war, and people were suffering there. Always attacking the town. And my husband decided to come here. And by that time Lubango was hit, but we decided to come here. But it was difficult to move there, out here, because by the road it was somehow also difficult. They were attacking the cars, but thanks to God we passed, but they would hit you. I saw the time has arrived to go. I talked with my family, my father, and my children. And we say that the time has come to go. Even though we don't go all of us at the same time. We said to ourselves some must go. Maybe it is the will of God. Maybe God will help us. Let us go. It was scary, scary to death. When we arrived in Osire we lived under trees until they brought us tents. Because there was peace in Namibia we slept under trees without a problem. (Rebecca)

Rebecca felt unsettled leaving the country that she loved. Her town was being destroyed and everything she held to that gave her life meaning was gone. Housing is one of our most basic and important needs for safety and security. Living without permanent housing created psychological and physical trauma. Over time this type of stress tends to deteriorate the capacity to cope with life.

When I saw that my life was complicated I tried to talk to my father. How can I not leave? My life was so complicated because my husband used to beat me with his gun, it was so difficult living with him in Angola. That's why I had to take my children and go to the refugee camp. I used to hear stories about a husband that killed his wife or a husband did this to his wife and then I started to think that is was not good, and it was not a good way for me to live. (Sarafina)

I remember when the war started to get really bad. The bombs were falling and the rebels were going from house to house looking for young men to become soldiers. My grandfather was already living in Osire so he came back to Angola and took me to Osire. We took a car from Huambo to as close to the border as we could. It took a long time because we had to drive at night with our car lights off. At that time there was a lot of people, because even when we reached that side of Santa Clara we found a bus. The soldiers burned the bus, and many people were killed, even pregnant women. They were waiting. My grandfather went in with my photograph to see if he can get two men to allow us to cross the border. We arrived in Osire and the only person I knew was my grandfather, after about six months living in Osire with my grandfather, one day he told me he had to go back to Angola. On the way back to Angola the bus he was riding in was struck head on by a semi-truck. The bus burst into flames and everyone on the bus died including my grandfather. (Mathias)

Mathias witnessed killing and lost his youth. He went to Osire and wondered about his future. His country and his hopes for the future were being destroyed by war. He, like so many other refugees was displaced into a refugee camp with no future in sight. During the displacement many Angolans suffered psychologically as a result of the instability of their country and their lives.

The circumstances were really hard when I had to go because rebel soldiers were looking for young men to take as soldiers. I remember that sometimes I had to sleep on the roof because soldiers would break

into houses and take young men as soldiers. When I got to Osire it was a complete surprise because the information we got was completely different. I got there late in the evening and just laid down somewhere and slept. When I woke up I saw people and tents. What a memory! Actually I would say it was horrible. (Alfredo)

I left Kalukembe because of the war. The war was very bad. The planes would fly over every night and drop bombs. Many people died and many houses were destroyed. We left with no direction, and without any idea of where to go, but we had to leave. Our time there was very stressful. During the night you only think and wait for something to happen. (Theodora)

Theodora lived life fearfully and saw destruction. She fled with no direction or idea of what life would become. Her uncertainty fueled her physically and psychologically instability. The losses incurred by the refugees lived beyond their displacement.

At the age of 18 it was inevitable to realize how difficult and complex life had become due to the government and military pressure for all young men to join the army and be sent to war. Any opportunities for education, work and freedom of movement were banned. We were cut off from our dreams and future as a result of new laws and restrictions. Since we did not conform to such living conditions my father had only one option and that was to smuggle me out of the country under dangerous and difficult conditions. (Paulo)

Where would Paulo find himself once his father smuggled him out of Angola. His future had abruptly stopped. The loss of his family and home created a psychological uncertainty.

When I was running from the war it was hard to find a safe place. So that is when I found it was good to go to church for safety. Our war took a long time. (Kamil)

We arrived in the refugee camp in 1996. Moving to Osire was a whole new experience. It looked like a remote village. It was a refugee camp in the middle of a desert. Life was very difficult. There was no variety of food. We were given rations each month, the same food. We had to sleep in tents during cold nights, and had to go to the bushes to get wood so we could cook our food and it was dangerous. The words I would use to describe Osire are dark, dead, frightening and on the

other hand I would describe it as warm, surprising and revealing.
(Philipi)

Philipi lost the comfort of his Angolan home. He lost his ability to eat the food he liked and a way of life that he was accustomed to. His capacity to look at Osire from a different perspective gave him the ability to be resilient and find life in a new way. This was the only way to cope for many Angolans. They fought psychologically and physically to create a life that fit them as best they could.

When I was 16 years old was taken to Cuba. It was difficult there because we didn't know what would happen to us. While I was in Cuba my father was killed in the war. Later on we tried to get the killers. (Cambondi)

The refugee returnees were uprooted from their homes, jobs and family life causing instability and in some cases hopelessness for the future. Many Angolans experienced personal health issues or observed others who were experiencing various issues related to suffering and health as a result of the war and displacement. As a researcher, understanding the external commonalities the refugees experienced, the mechanisms used to cope with trauma become clearer.

Loss of Health

The type of sickness they experienced was exacerbated by the lack of hospitals and doctors in Osire and upon their return to Angola. Living in tents in close proximity to one another with hand dug latrines outside almost every tent made them more susceptible to cholera and other diseases. No one gets used to death and loss but this was an everyday occurrence for many in the refugee camp. Their illnesses moved them to find support from others and pray to God

for healing and hope because there was no other place to turn. The following quotes are representative of the types of issues they experienced.

I think the kind of sickness people were getting there was because of the kids, the children, and the youth. They suffered a lot from diseases like malnutrition because of the kind of food there. Diarrhea, malnutrition, and malaria are not as common as they were in Angola. Malaria might be from those people that came from Angola. Many children suffered because of malnutrition. (Segunda)

Many people died in the camp especially the elderly and babies because of the conditions they were subjected to. The health system was not good. (Philipi)

Before I came to Osire, a bullet injured my leg because the war was bad in our town. I limp today because of it. I suffered a lot when I came to Osire. No water, lots of sun because it was in the desert and very little food. The suffering in the camp was physical, psychological and there was much stress. (Jimmy)

I had a problem with my vision and when my last child was born I had an operation to deliver the baby and they said I was supposed to die. (Ameliana)

I suffer a lot today with medical issues. I got malaria and they sent me to the hospital. I also was infected with HIV from my husband. Many people died in Osire. People were suffering a lot. (Rebecca)

Health related issues took a psychological and physical toll on the refugees. The fear of whether or not their child would die if he/she got sick was an ever-present unknown. They suffered deep psychological pain from seeing so many people die around them. Death became a daily event. Their only way to release their pain was to wail, cry, pray, sing, dance and hold each other.

The suffering was really hard. Spiritually, physically and emotionally, it was very hard. (Mathias)

The refugees were exposed to a new level of discomfort and pain. Some of us were there but had in our minds a better future. Other people were there and they had in their minds a completely destroyed life. Many people got lost in the camp, mostly young girls because many began getting pregnant when they arrived. The girls that got

pregnant stopped going to school and they suffered a lot. Some of them have more than two kids. (Alfredo)

With no end in sight for the civil war, one of the ways the Angolans sought relief was to believe in the future. This didn't take away the physical or psychological suffering but these dreams gave them something to look forward to in the future.

When I had a medical problems I would go to the clinic. We were so doubtful because it was a camp with only refugee people and we wondered how we would be treated. I would go to the hospital because of headaches. Many people went to the clinic because they were passing out tablets. I think many people lost hope and their vision for living. They didn't have a vision and they also stopped living. (Theodora)

We suffered in one-way or another because many of us in Angola were used to a certain kind of living. The food that was distributed did not have much nutritional value and we always received the same kind of food every month. Many of started getting sick and getting diseases. Limited by conditions that were out of their control many people started developing high blood pressure, depression and heart diseases. (Paulo)

I went to Namibia because I was involved in an accident when I was a soldier. I went to find a doctor to help me because I had no money. Someone said the place I needed to go would be a refugee camp. (Kamil)

Before the war, we lived in the Huambo province, which is in the southern part of Angola, and it was badly affected by the war. The Government and rebel forces were constantly battling one another. That experience will forever be part of us; it will take time for the scars to heal. I still remember that whenever a jet flew over my later father would get scared because it would remind him of the bombings. We had to hide in the open trenches in our backyards in order not to be seen when the fight jets came. The camp was hard. My mother always suffered from back pains and her eyes were always sore, perhaps because of the paraffin stoves we used at the time. In our last years in the camp, my father fell ill and eventually passed away after he returned to Angola. Those were trying times but we also learned a lot from our suffering. Many people endured difficult situations. Some young people were into drugs because they were so hopeless. (Philipi)

In 2002 the United States built a hospital in the Osire refugee camp and a grade school. This helped bring some relief from the physical suffering they experienced on a daily basis. These buildings the United States gave the people some hope that life might take on some kind of normality again.

A New Way of Living

For many refugees life in Osire was a difficult adjustment. They were forced to figure out a new way to live that was completely different from anything they had ever experienced. They reverted to what they knew or mimicked what they saw others doing that seemed to work.

There was a man; I think he survived well because when he came from Angola he came to Osire with a lot of money. He had a lot of money and he lived that kind of life. And I think he never had problems because he had money. Although he was in the camp, he was there because he said, "Okay I'm here because I think this is a good place for me to be. Because it is a calm place, you see, my children, my kids can go to school and I am okay." There was another man; I think he didn't want to be there. He was always complaining about the life. "No, I can't be here. I can't, I can't." But the guy had a little bit of money, because he was a businessman. And he tried to go back to Angola to continue doing his business, but when he went it was a disaster for him. It was a very real disaster for him. So the guy took his family back to Angola, with his cars, and when he went back the man lost everything, his cars, and even the house. He was there in Osire where it was very bad for him but when he went back to Angola it was worse. (Segunda)

The psychological and physical distress could not be solved with money. There were some Angolans who lived in denial and left the camp to go back to Angola only to find more emotional trauma. In order to survive they had to find a new way to live.

Osire was a difficult place. When I think of the place it is like a prison. Many people were depressed. When I was in Osire the only activity I could participate in was church. I belonged to the church choir. (Jimmy)

When I was in Osire I began attending church and participated in the choir with my new friends and family. Church was very important to many people in the camp. I can remember one person who survived because he believed in God and because of his faith. (Ester)

For Ester going to church gave her a new sense of hope and community. She felt like she was not alone in the camp and that God through others were by her side. Once they arrived in Osire the refugees came to the psychological realization that this might be a long stay and for some it lasted over 20 years. They continued to suffer but in time created communities that were organized around church, choirs and women's groups. This new way of life gave them a renewed hope despite the horrible living conditions they endured.

Osire was a good place even with the difficulties, but they served us well. Osire was a good place because people were nice to each other and we helped each other. (Ameliana)

When some of the parents who were teachers in Angola saw their kids were just sitting or playing and not doing anything they decided to entertain them under the trees and give them an education without any materials. The other thing I did was to teach the people. There were people from different countries who did not know Portuguese or English and it became a big issue. In church activities I was a women's leader. You must understand yourself, whatever circumstances you find and you must accept. Some people are suffering because they do not accept it. If you accept life it will become easier. (Rebecca)

I first got a workshop together to talk about HIV. Later on, to be like a social worker I started a workshop to teach on HIV. In Osire I helped the mental people survive. I would go with the mental people to the hospital when I was a social worker. I went there to give them the medicine they said they would not take. When I said they should take the medicine they would take it. I was also surprised people were struggling with domestic violence. When I went to those homes I talked with the people. They were waiting for me saying call the police. I listened and talked to them. This is what I remember the most. (Sarafina)

Some took it upon themselves to begin teaching students who would otherwise just sit around. They initiated structure into their routine. Others

sought to aid those who were psychologically and physically suffering. There were refugees who didn't cope well. The upheaval and prolonged stress due to the environmental factors created a cycle of worry and despair. These were a few of the ways they created order to find a new path for living.

In church we had many activities, like one was the singing festival. I played guitar for the choir. (Mathias)

There were times we saw things as boring with no way out. We were just sitting all day long. We were hungry. But when we were at church things were different. We used to go to church early in the morning and sing. It was nice. I was involved in the choir and enjoyed it a lot. We would go and sing in the mornings and afternoon, during the church service and at other activities. (Theodora)

I remember one man who was a troublemaker. There was no reason to be a troublemaker, but I remember they were making trouble so that they could leave Osire to go to other countries. It was not good. (Kamil)

I normally participated in church activities. Many people endured difficult situations. Some young people were into drugs because they were so hopeless. In Osire I was the pastor of a church for two years. (Philipi)

Physical and Psychological Stressors

The absence of what was familiar created psychological and physical stressors. Many refugees suffered from bad dreams and physical ailments. These types of stressors were a shock to their system. They were unprepared for what was to come and these unknowns took a toll on their lives. The following quotes represent these stressors.

First the rebels took over the town, and then the government forces took it over again and after that there was another big battle looming, so my mother thought we had enough and that it was time to leave. We had seen many people die including friends and close relatives who had faced hunger, and we thought it was time to move on. (Philipi)

I remember one girl who came to Osire. She was struggling and crying a lot. She said there was a devil. What? I said. When she came it was very difficult to understand because the person who is in front of you is talking about something difficult you can't see. (Sarafina)

Spiritual, psychological and physical trauma became the norm. What once was uncommon now became commonplace. The struggle to survive challenged many refugees in every facet of their lives.

I suffered too much as a refugee because I was with my stepmother. She didn't treat me kindly, like her own daughters. One day I wanted to kill myself because my father didn't want to help me any more. (Tiberia)

The shared life experiences of the Angolan refugee returnees describe the physical and emotional suffering they endured. As one refugee recalled many refugees were equipped to engage in the battle that soon was raging in their heads. The country they left had no structures in place for the trauma they experienced. Now the trauma was multiplied and visible on a daily basis. The psychological and physical stressors ravaged many people. Coping skills and resiliency of different types were used to survive. The following quotes describe the challenges they faced that forced them to cope on multiple psychological and physical levels.

Some of them even tried to smoke pot. Sometimes we used to talk to them and say, "No, life is not over now." (Segunda)

When I was in Osire most of the people were full of stress. Others were physically and mentally struggling because life was very hard in Osire. Many people struggled a lot because they left their homes and families and were wondering how long they would be in Osire and what was happening to the place they left. The first thing I can think of that I lost was my family. The suffering in the camp was physical, psychological and there was much stress. Many people came to Osire to escape the war but they did not know they would encounter a war in their head. After living in Osire for a while many people thought they were lost in life and wondered if life would ever be normal again. There was no way to go back to the way life used to be. (Jimmy)

Self-medication, hopelessness, and despair were among the many ways people displayed the plight of their situation.

They told me that I must go to the refugee camp named Osire. They came here with guns and attacked. Lubango was not a dangerous city but once the soldiers came it was not safe to live here anymore. It was scary because you did not know what would happen. Some people lived there well. But other people who are living have many difficulties because they are in a country with no employment. You don't have a house. You don't have a place to call your own. My life was very difficult. (Ameliana)

Leaving Huambo and coming here was a big issue. Here in Lubango, it was a big issue. It was period of war, and people were suffering there. They were always attacking the town. My husband decided to come here. By that time Lubango was hit, but we decided to come here. It was difficult to move there because by the road it was difficult. They were attacking the cars, but thanks to God we passed. Sometimes they would hit you. It was scary, scary to death. By that time, I spent 3 or 4 days traveling because you can't move. (Rebecca)

My life being a refugee wasn't easy at times. When it rained we would get wet because we didn't have enough money to finish our house. We were supposed to cook with fire. It wasn't good at all. (Mathias)

I remember that sometimes I even had to sleep on the roof because the soldiers would come and break into houses and search for men to take as soldiers. When I think back, we lived in a tent. I was lost. There was no school – nothing! I just had to think about the next meal. I had no future at all. I didn't know what was next. I got there and didn't know anyone. I needed a place to stay so they took me to a hut that was so small and there were six of us in there. (Alfredo)

The Angolans did whatever they could to survive the conditions brought on by war, the conditions in the refugee camps and the conditions that developed in their minds. They suffered in a multitude of ways. This is the plight of the refugee. Strangers in a foreign land, displaced with few supports to maintain life for a prolonged period of time. The distress was evident in the lives of many.

Many people in the camp suffered from spiritual and physical problems. (Theodora)

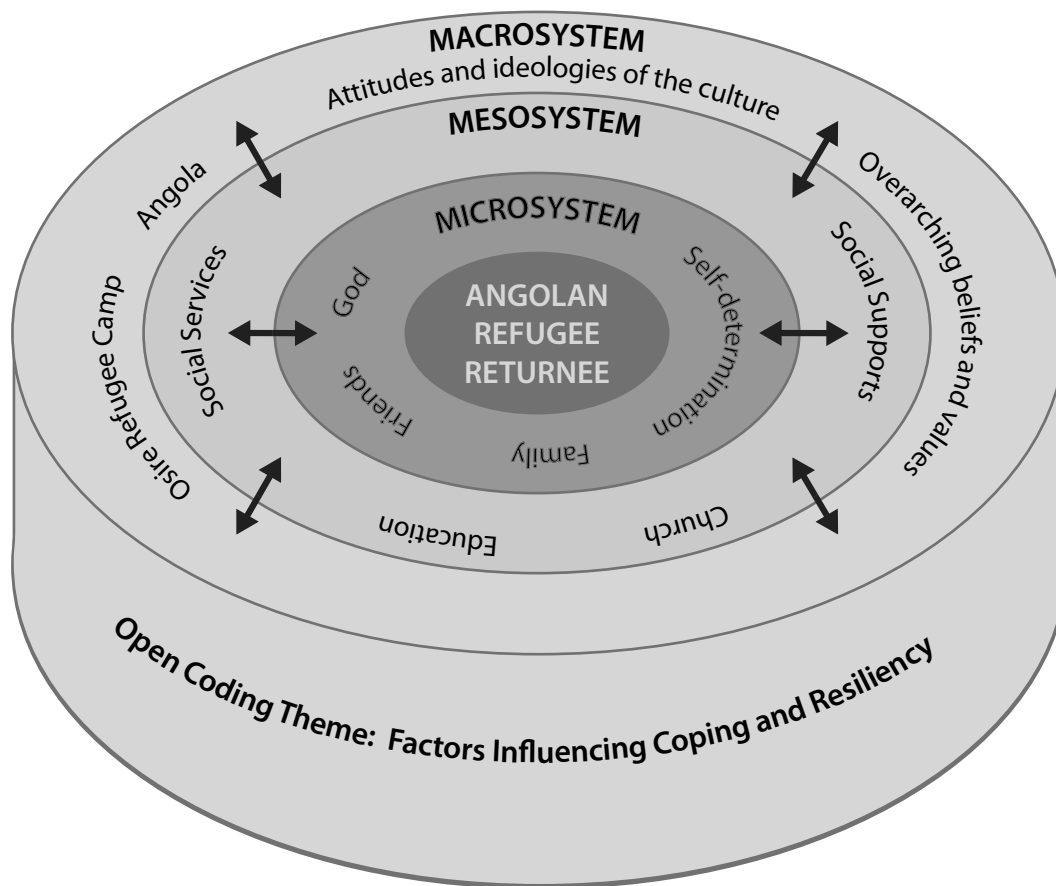
One day I wanted to kill myself because my father didn't want to help me anymore. My husband was in Osire 15 years. We found each other in 1998. He ran away because of the war because they were going to take him as a soldier. He doesn't think that is why he drinks. The problem is he never works. (Tiberia)

At the beginning, life in Osire was difficult to adapt to. Living under the control of the police and not be able to travel out of Osire with a permit was not easy. (Paulo)

The next major theme that emerged as a result of the researcher's open coding related to the factors influencing coping and resiliency. These major coding nodes are represented in Figure 6. The following figure shows the major themes of open coding related to coping and resiliency as interpreted by the researcher through the participant interviews.

As a result of open coding the researcher also uncovered the theme of coping and resiliency as they were manifested in the stories told to him. This theme of coping and resiliency was supported by the subthemes of religion and family and supports, and education and self-determination.

Figure 6. Open Coding Themes Factors Influencing Coping and Resiliency



Resiliency and Coping

The effects of war and displacement forced many refugees to adapt to new and stressful living conditions. The issues they faced defined what their future would look like for an unspecified number of years. For some it was only several years but for others it was more than two decades. The following quotes reveal the different ways the refugees manifested resiliency and the most common coping strategies the participants used in order to survive some of life's most trying circumstances. During the analysis process different themes of resiliency and coping emerged. The internal strengths of family relationships, religion and

belief in the future emerged as the most common coping mechanisms used by the refugee returnees. The following examples support these findings.

The Angolan refugee returnees the researcher interviewed kept mentioning the meaning that religion gave to their lives. Their involvement in church and belief in God helped them see the future and helped them cope with the suffering and loss they experienced. For every participant interviewed their belief system gave meaning to their suffering and deflected some of their pain and disillusionment. This is not to say there were probably many who used some other type of coping to feel a sense of hope and belonging. Religious expression was one of the most important coping mechanisms practiced by all the participants. Their religious beliefs gave them hope and a main source for organizing the internal and external functions of their lives. Their belief in God or church involvement helped them survive and gave them the capacity to live through very difficult trials. Many of the participants explained how they engaged in prayer regularly and participated in various church activities throughout their lives but most importantly during their time in the Osire refugee camp.

Religion and Spirituality

Church life played a very important role in the lives of the refugees. It gave them the capacity to express their emotions during the church service, feel like they connected with God and experienced the fellowship of others. This sense of connection made life more manageable. The connection they had with God transcended space and time giving them something no one could take away especially since they had seen everything else in their life being taken away or

destroyed by war. The community they felt at church increased their sense of hopefulness and gave them a sense of belonging. The following quotes support this.

When I lived in the refugee camp I talked a lot to God. I always talked to God because there was nothing else to do. I was reading the Bible a lot and prayed so God would help us to get out of Osire. God has kept me going for many years. God is very important in my life. From church, I knew how to face the ups and downs of life. I learned from many stories, like Job. When I heard the story of Job, it was really, very good for me. They say that sometimes God allows your life to be very bad. I really used to doubt myself. If I am God's child and He is the one who put me in this land, He knows what he is doing. I am here in Osire, but it is a good thing. (Segunda)

Segunda's belief that God's hand was on his life was something no one could deny. The capacity to identify with a Biblical character made his life situation more comforting. His capacity to experience God's love helped him see his life in a different light. His belief in God helped give him meaning to understand that the difficulties in his life as bigger than himself.

But I was thinking if God put me here, then God will take care of me. The people came together for church and relied on one another. I had to trust God because God is very important to me because God has helped me in my life. God has changed me through my experiences and through the people He has brought into my life. I prayed a lot and this has made my life stronger. It was a very important experience for me to live in Osire because I saw God totally with me. During this time many people were praying and this gave them strength because it gave them hope. The people came together and relied on each other. (Jimmy)

When refugees connect with God they experience a relationship that is personal and comforting. This theme was mentioned by every participant interviewed in the research study. With so much suffering and pain around them, God became a source of comfort. Their faith in God brought them to find others and establish churches in the camp. For some, church community was

foreign but soon became a part of their weekly routine. God comforted them through one another. He comforted them through the encouraging sermons they heard on Sunday and the reading of their Bibles during the week. The church family came to the aide of those who needed food, or other types of support. This community was a place where belonging was being known and cared for while living in a dark place.

Church was very important to many people in the camp. I can remember one person who survived because he believed in God and because of faith. God is very important to me because God has helped me in my life. My faith in God is my biggest support. Through everything that has happened to me, my faith has not changed. I just believe in God and follow Him. (Ester)

God is very important in my life. If you don't follow God, life does not go well. Religion is very important to me because it is a place where I go and concentrate, and learn about God. I had to trust in just God, because during that time many people were dying. The first person I go to is God because He will help me. (Ameliana)

I can tell that God is so wonderful. The most difficult thing is that we cannot see God physically. Otherwise I would say to God take my hand. Whatever the circumstances, God is there. I am not afraid because we are in a world where bad things take place. I figured God changed my life because I am strong. He made me stronger. Whenever things go bad I am ready. Being a refugee has changed my life. It has made me stronger. (Rebecca)

The Angolans belief in God not only gave them a sense of security but He became very personal to many. Like a child longing for a father, God became a father figure to many who needed to feel secure, comforted and safe regardless of the events of the day.

I know God is with me and helps me a lot when I have a problem in my life. Like my husband who wanted to kill me with a gun, but when I said thank you, he passed to another site. I remember that God is with me. And when I travel and I don't know where to go God is the one. I don't even have a passport, because my husband got my old document, so I went to the border and I talked with someone. When I reached the border I said, " oh, oh I forgot my bag, where are all my documents." I

didn't say that my husband took it. Okay let me pass you some paper, so that you can go. That's why I say to you, God is with me and helps me a lot. (Sarafina)

When we were at the border we did not have the right papers. God must have sent angels because after he talked to them they gave us the necessary papers. I was really afraid because I did not know the place we are going and then I'm not familiar with the place. I was just afraid and scared. (Mathias)

I think that God gave me the hope to think of a better tomorrow having someone I could take my worries to at every point when I felt down, and having someone to express myself to, and be filled with peace and hope, you know. I think that everything I am today I owe to God. Even the work I am doing, the meetings with heads of states, it is God's favor on me. (Alfredo)

Religious coping was an important function used in dealing with emotional and physical distress. Many of the Angolans felt overwhelmed with the daily tasks of life and found their belief in God as resource for comfort.

God is very important to me especially if I needed something. You ask and you have hope. With hope I wait and dream and see God is answering my prayer. God was especially important to me during those times when I was missing my family who were still in Angola. I would go to my room and read my Bible. Those were times when I felt that someone was close to me say, "Don't worry." It's like the person who was speaking to me was God. (Theodora)

With nowhere else to turn, many turned to God for their support. They believed God heard them and answered their cries for help. He became someone who was always there and a source of great comfort. The common bond they had with others extended to a community that gave them love and hope.

I think church plays a very good role in a person's life because it teaches you how to deal with life and how to have faith and how to cope in life. In those days if you didn't have a church or someone to go to you could pray and not be lonely. (Daralinda)

What helped me survive was going to church. (Tiberia)

Religion was important to me when I was in Osire, because when we suffer God is there. (Pricilla)

For Pricilla and other refugees God was in their suffering. Her faith became the one thing no one could take away. He transcended space and time and was a source of comfort.

Spirituality played an important part in my life because it deeply shaped my life. I remember that since our childhood we were taught God's ways and to trust him always. I survived in the refugee camp because I was rooted in the Christian faith. I always trusted in God for something better and it was clear to me that God allowed me to be in the refugee camp for my good. Spirituality was the epicenter of my attitude and involvement in the life of other people. (Paulo)

One of the things I remember the most was running away from that place after they burned down our house and coming here to Lubango. In 1978, someone invited me to go to an evangelical church for the first time. I didn't attend church before that. I was sixteen years old at the time. I remember how good it was that God protected me from the war there, and how I then came here to find Him. It is a blessing from God to be alive and to be back in my country. Religion improved my life, because now I can see I was wrong before but I know God forgave me. He really changed my life in good ways. (Kamil)

They learned about life by the teachings from church through the Bible that God loved them in spite of their situation. The researcher never heard anyone say that God was punishing them by placing them in the refugee camp. Instead some interpreted it as what God had chosen for their lives. Despite their trials they viewed every event as something ordained by God. This spiritual component gave them the capacity to interpret life events from a spiritual perspective.

I would regularly pray to God. My needs at the camp revolved around food, clothes, a scholarship, and inner peace. Thankfully, God provided for all of those needs for me through friends and family whose hearts were touched by God. I think the most important thing in my life is my faith. I am a very strong person spiritually and I am the kind of person that never gives up. I need to work on my Bible reading, as I have been so busy. That's no excuse, but I still need to find more time for Bible reading. My faith played a very important role in my life. I don't think I would be able to make it through if it

was not for my faith. I always trust that God will be able to do something special in my life. (Philipi)

I personally believe that we should have faith and that faith comes from God. With faith even if you are suffering you know God will provide for you. As for the role that God played in my life, God was always central. Even when I was a journalist and a war reporter, I always saw the hand of God on my life. During all the bombardments from airplanes I could see the presence of God everyday. (Cambondi)

After hearing the narratives of each participant the researcher gained a better understanding for the importance of personal and corporate religious activities in the survival of the refugee life. Every participant interviewed stated that their belief in God, church or spirituality was one of the most important influences in rising above the traumatic events of their lives. Most of the participants interviewed (10 out of 16) stressed the importance of family or social supports that they turned to as a means to coping with trauma such as families who took in unaccompanied minors and others who found their sisters or brothers, or other relatives when they arrived in the camp.

Family and Social Supports

The researcher found the next most important theme the Angolan refugee returnees used to cope with trauma was their relationships with others. Many refugees in Osire were thankful to have their family and friends in the same camp. The familiarity and trust family and friends gave them made many feel like they were not alone. Many expressed how their family and friends helped them during their daily lives.

When I think about my life, the one thing that has kept me going is my family. We would go to our parents and maybe close friends. One of the good things in the camp that I didn't mention was when friends, like you, started coming. When this happened we said, "okay, at least we are not alone in the world." We could see that we were not forgotten in the world. I think my biggest support has been a

combination of the church, family and even friends. I think the biggest type of support I received was encouragement not money. The encouragement that we used to get from the elders of the church was the biggest support. (Segunda)

Family and friends were the physical security that gave protection and safety to the Angolans. They desired friends who they could talk with, pray with, share food with and look after. Neighborhood communities developed in the camp. Many saw children be born and grow up in the refugee camp. They were witnessing the narratives of their families and friends with all the joys and trials of life.

There was a family that I didn't even know, but they took me in. I was considered an unaccompanied minor. I could not get a ration card for food and it was very difficult living. Life was dangerous. This family took me in and I became like one of their children. They accepted me and encouraged me and took me to their church. There was another family at the church that also encouraged me and I am close to them to this day. Since I returned to Angola people support me emotionally by letting me ask questions, encouraging me and giving me advice. Sometimes they give me food and money if I need it. (Jimmy)

The empathy to care for others was not forgotten or taken away as a result of the war. Families who had the space took in unaccompanied minors in order to provide for them, protect them and raise them.

My faith in God is my biggest support. I also receive emotional support from my family. I am thankful that I have my brother and sister living nearby who can help me if I need something. (Ester)

When I needed help I went to the UNHCR and my neighbors. When I have a problem I go to my family to get help, but the only good support I have is from my spiritual family, like in the church. The first person I go to is God because I know He will help me. (Ameliana)

When I have a problem I go to my family to get help, but the only good support I have is from my spiritual family, like in church. In the camp I would go to the doctors at the hospital or the UNHCR. There were many people who were helping us there. (Rebecca)

My family is very important, really. I remember that when I was alone, or I had a problem, they would come close to me and listen and talk with an idea or help. They are the ones who are very important. Seven of us live in Lubango. My sister is closest to me. I remember that of all the children, my sisters went to me. Even the baby wanted to run to me. When I came, my brother was the one who helped me by letting me stay with him at his house and later on he decided to help me look for a job because I could not stay there without helping. It was so difficult. He talked with his wife and she was the one who helped me find my job. (Sarafina)

The church really supported me a lot. Especially the pastor, every time I went to him I received encouragement. (Alfredo)

My brothers help me mostly financially, but spiritually I had a friend who is a pastor and when I lived closed to him, he helped me. When I had problems and I thought I was okay I would talk with my brother. We prayed and he helped me a lot. (Theodora)

The stories of help, hope, love and encouragement from families and friends were heard throughout the interviews. Deep down in our humanity we need the touch, love and care that others give to us. This could not be more apparent than during times of great stress and upheaval. These relationships were forged as a result of adversity. They touched the core fabric of our very being. The stories highlighted and confirmed our deep longing for physical and emotional attachments.

If I had a problem I would go first to my friend and then my pastor. I think my mother-in-law is a big support. My mother-in-law was born in Lubango. She is like a mother to me. Here in Angola it is a very difficult life. I think my family is my biggest support. (Daralinda)

My husband's mother has supported me the most since I have returned to Angola. She is like my mother now. The church is also supportive. (Tiberia)

Since I have returned to Angola in 2010, my family has supported me the most. Love is the most important thing when you are together. We are always together, when somebody was sick we were in a hurry to help. If they didn't have anything and if I have it, I divided it. (Pricilla)

It depends on what kind of help you needed. If it was a spiritual issue you go to the church. If it is about food you go to the logistics person in the camp. The people who have supported me the most since returning to Angola have been the church and the family. The church provided us with a home to stay in and they provided us with our initial basic needs. The family provided us initially with money and helped us to find job for my wife. (Paulo)

Now that I am back my biggest support systems are my family, church and friends. Once we arrived back in Angola, we stayed at my sister's house for about a month, and she provided food for us. We were lucky to have jobs already so after a month we rented a small house. We also received emotional and material support from our friends in America, South Africa and Namibia. (Philipi)

Through the various migrations the Angolans experienced, the need for a connection to a family member or friend was a constant reminder of how much they valued relationships. The Angolan culture places a high value on the importance of family and others. After being displaced in the Osire camp it was not surprising for this value to emerge as one of high importance.

Education and Self-Determination

Despite the challenges the refugees faced some of them kept their lives going by dreaming of future education or vocational possibilities. These hopes and dreams probably gave them the capacity to keep looking for a day that would be different despite the pains of life they experienced. As a result of prolonged engagement with the refugees, the researcher soon learned the importance refugee placed on education. As a result of the war, many people saw their life investments and work get taken away, burned or destroyed. The value of education is something no one can take away no matter what happens unless a person dies. The importance of academic education or vocational training was the hope for a better life and something that can be exercised no matter what type of displacement.

When I think of the future I hope to get married, and have a family with just two children. I hope I live in Luanda where my fiancé is from. I also have brothers and sisters in Luanda so I would be closer to them as well. (Segunda)

Presently I want to continue in my education and advance in my job, working for the ministry of agriculture. Since I have returned life has been good to me. I have a job, I am saving to build a little house, and maybe one day I will be married and have a family. (Jimmy)

One day it is my dream to build a little store so I can sell chocolate. (Rebecca)

I am continuing with my education. (Mathias)

Right now I am basically working on many things. I have great potential within me that I can do more with to mend people's lives. I want to further my education. I want to give more time to people. So many times it is all about relationships. It is what made me grow. (Theodora)

Like Frankl, (1946) the dreams these Angolans had kept them believing for tomorrow. Many hoped for more education that would offer them opportunity of a better life. Many had dreams of starting a business or doing some other kind of work they envisioned in the future. These dreams reshaped their attitudes in the camp and kept them longing for tomorrow.

One of my dreams at the moment is to have my own baking store. When I was in Namibia I started baking and I still bake now. My favorite thing to bake is chocolate cake. I like sweet things. (Pricilla)

Since I returned to Angola I've had a good experience. I was reunited with my parents, brothers and other relatives. I worked with Rise International for six years as the country representative. I also had the privilege to be ordained as a pastor and to be a senior pastor of a church. (Paulo)

I want to do my best and do something positive for my church, society and community. (Philipi)

After working through my interview protocol and making sure the chronology was right and the questions open ended as much as possible I

wondered if there was something I might be missing. So I could not help asking if there was something else they wanted to tell me that we had not talked about?

This became the last question of my interview. The following responses emerged.

I am especially grateful every time I look at my grandson. I don't think he is ever going to walk. He is 11 years old and I am thankful he is going to school. He was born in Osire. I am hoping that one day I am able to get him a wheelchair. Everything is so expensive here. Sometimes it is very hard for me to lift him and I am afraid I will drop him and hurt him. It would also make going to school much easier for him. (Ester)

God changed my life because I thought I was strong. He made me stronger and stronger. Whenever things go bad, I am ready. My life changed being a refugee. It made me strong. Life made me, because now I know how to help people who are suffering. Before, I did not know exactly like the way I know now. Now I know how to feel with somebody who is suffering, I feel the suffering. I am the one, to help. Sometime when I am in the town, a blind person asks me for something. I feel bad if I don't have anything in my hand to give them. For someone to give me something would make me feel good. But life as a refugee has made people stronger. When you know how to suffer, you know also how to deal with suffering. You know how to understand, and you know how to help those who are suffering. (Rebecca)

I think as a human being you need to be able to adapt. Ever since I left Osire I had to take it out of my mind. I just had to live on the positive side of it. I have to know I live in Angola now. Even though my country is not well, it is okay. (Alfredo)

So I went to Angola and returned because life was too difficult for my family there. I would have problems educating my children there. Here we are back in Namibia with my children in a good school. The worst school here is like the best school in Angola. I had several houses in Angola but I left them. The house will leave me nothing. Here I can educate my children and afford to give them ice cream. I can also afford to send my children to the doctor here. That is the reality of Angola. (Cambondi)

Axial Coding Themes

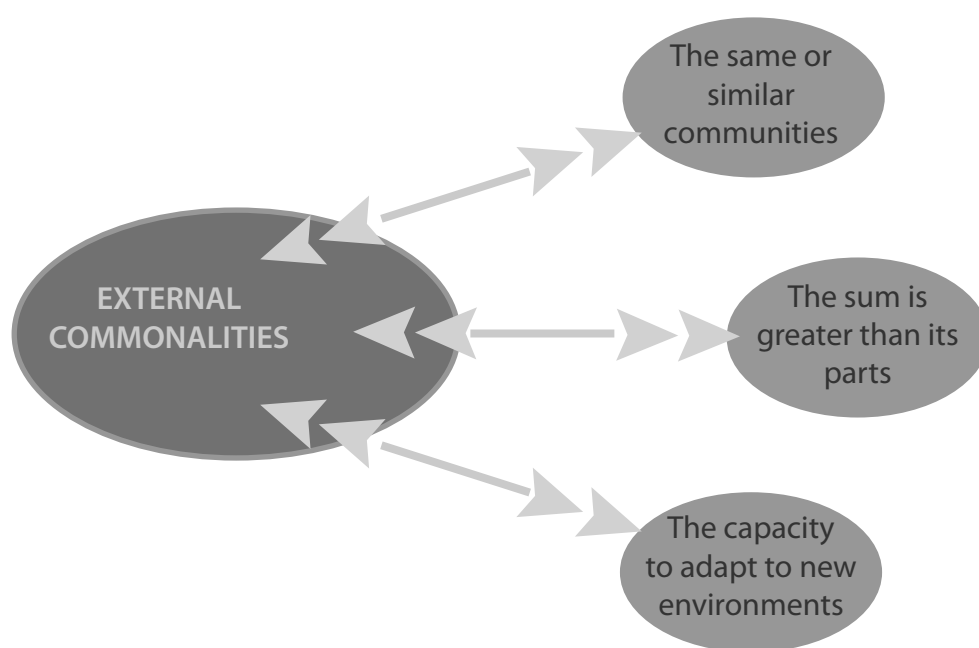
After axial coding the nodes for war / displacement and coping and resiliency, the researcher began to explore the embedded concepts influencing these areas. Once the open coding was completed and the researcher felt satisfied with his findings, he began to explore the underlying or more abstract concepts that were embedded in the narratives in order to answer his research question. After multiple axial coding trials in the N'vivo software, the researcher began seeing more abstract themes emerge. The axial coding revealed underlying themes embedded into interviews. Axial coding is the disaggregation of core themes as they relate to each other. This is done through a combination of inductive and deduction thinking by the researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Those refugee returnees who were able to cope better found their capacity using internal strengths and external commonalities imparted to them somewhere along their life journey. These internal strengths were found in their use of familiar relationships, their capacity to trust others and their belief in the future. The refugees also had the following external commonalities that seemed to give them a greater capacity to be resilient and cope as well. The researcher discovered the refugees had the following external commonalities. The external commonalities were found in their ability to find similar community connections, understanding the sum is greater than its parts and the capacity to adapt to new environments (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Kaplan, 2009; Khawaja et al, 2008; Miller & Rasco, 2004, Drozdek, 2007).

Figure 7 revealed the concepts that emerged as a result of axial coding. The themes were distinguished by their internal and external values. Coping

and resiliency are internal strengths that emerged from the data. The effects of war and displacements are external commonalities found in Figure 7. The researcher's interpretation from his findings using axial coding related to the refugee returnees reveals the embedded themes of coping and resiliency. Through axial coding the external commonalities emerged relating to how the refugee returnees coped.

External Commonalities

Figure 7. Axial Coding for the Effects of War and Displacement



The Same or Similar Communities

When I was in Osire most of the people were full of stress. Others were physically and mentally struggling because life was very hard in Osire. Many people struggled a lot because they left their homes and families and were wondering how long they would be in Osire and what was happening to the place they left. The first thing I can think of that I lost was my family. I lost many things but I found God. I also felt good because God brought me to another family that accepted me. They took me to church and the church became a bigger family for me. We needed each other because what else is there? (Jimmy)

Many Angolans found comfort from the community of church that was familiar to them when they were living in Angola. Others found comfort when they met people who were from the same town or village even though they did not know them. This familiarity gave them a sense of security, understanding and hope.

I am living with my granddaughter in Lubango. I had ten children but now there are nine. One has passed away. Some are already grown up and have children. Two are still living in Namibia. Some are finishing their education. They are fighting for their lives. Most of them are here in the country, but we are not together. We live in different cities and countries. My husband is living in Namibia. I left him there because my youngest children were allowed to finish school in Namibia. Schools in Namibia are better than schools in Angola. (Rebecca)

Life in Osire had its disadvantages and it had its advantages. In Osire was tough really, but our life was saved. I felt accepted because most of the people were Angolans and it was easy for us to be familiar with each other. (Mathias)

Osire became a city for many that created a common bond. Even after the repatriation back to Angola. Those who were in Osire together moved to cities and lived near the people they learned to like and love while living in Osire. Many migrated to cities like Lubango, Onjiva or Luanda. The common life experiences were transferred into life after Osire.

I arrived in Osire in 2000. Oh. It's not what I expected it to be. They had told us, "oh you'll go to Namibia, okay"! When we were going out from Angola, we thought, "oh nice"! I was very surprised because we passed through Oshikati and we saw a beautiful town. My mind was carrying that picture from Oshikati when I went to Osire. It was very different from those towns, but it was a place to be because it was a place without the war. It wasn't so easy for us because the first thing we received was a tent and then I went to find Isabel because we were not from there. We had nothing and we were just there thinking when will we meet our sister? (Theodora)

My parents received letters from their relatives, who were already living in the refugee camp, and told them stories of life in the camp and opportunities available for education for young people of my age.

From this, my parents decided to smuggle me to Namibia to the refugee camp, since it is a country close that borders Angola. Whenever possible they could easily travel and visit me or easily send in help. I arrived alone in the Refugee Camp on 1 February 1999. When I arrived at Osire refugee camp, the living conditions were not a surprise to me because my parents already taught and prepared me for what I could expect living in the refugee camp to be like. As I already said above, I had mixed feeling of tears and joy at the same time.

(Paulo)

The Sum is Greater Than Its Parts

When I was out of the church and away at school, I would always complain a lot. I would think this kind of life is not okay. I couldn't accept this life and would think, "why me?" I think my biggest support has been a combination of the church, family, and even friends. (Segunda)

When a group of people from different places in Angola get thrown together as a result of war they learned how to find similar interests and new bonds. These coping mechanisms reduced their stress levels. It gave them the sense that they were not alone but were a community that relied on each other. Individuality was not practiced because the culture was not accustomed to it and it decreased the feelings of fear and abandonment.

When I have a problem I go to my family to get help, but the only good support I have is from my spiritual family, like in church. (Ameliana)

There are many people there. We have hands, hands that can do something. There are hands that are doing less, than those doing nothing. God gave them the spirit but they are doing nothing, their hands are not eager. They do not discover what they have in their lives. Those people take their hands and just do nothing. There are difficult people who live here. They are difficult people to live with because if they see you doing something, they try to say the wrong

thing. How? Why? Most of the people are good. But some of the people were full of evil. They were full of jealousy. They wanted only to get things for themselves. They wanted only to get more and more and did not want to let other people enter into and know. They wanted to know them and only them. There were many people who wanted to learn and they weren't bad because of their attitude. (Rebecca)

Amidst the need for survival, the Angolans were forced to work through their differences, address conflict and learn to see the bigger picture. They could not move away from their neighbors or put a privacy fence up like we do in America. They shared things in common and had to learn how to reconcile their difference without going to seminars or reading books or listening to webinars!!

When they called me to help with translating, I first got a workshop together to talk about HIV and how to protect ourselves. Later on, to be like a social worker I started a workshop to talk about HIV. Then we started talking and they said that I should be a social worker. I said, "How come?" He said that the way I talked and the way I talked to the people would make me a good social worker. (Sarafina)

There were times that we saw things as boring with no way to go and no other entertainment. We were just sitting. When you are hungry, you take your food and make the best of it. But when we were at church things were different. We used to go to church early in the morning when other people came at that time, like our brother called Jo. He liked to play guitar. He played everywhere, even early in the morning at 5:00am. When I was there I would hum a tune. You know it's time to wake up and it's time to go to church and we would go to church and sing. It was nice. I was involved in the choir. I enjoyed it a lot. We would go and sing and we'd sing also during the service and afternoons when they had other activities. (Theodora)

I think I was able to overcome these difficulties because I am mentally strong. I think another reason is that during those years in Osire my parents were always there for me, giving me advice when it mattered the most. The suffering was unbearable, however we were like a big family and people learned to share. If you needed help with something in the camp there were people who would share with you. (Philipi)

Capacity to adapt to new environments

I was a refugee for 10 years of my life. I never lived all of the years in the Osire camp. My parents, and my young brothers lived there for maybe 18 years, but I never lived all the years in the camp. I moved back to Angola because of the peace accord in 2002. The second reason is because I felt like I'm an Angolan, in my country. I'm not a foreigner anymore and I'll be an Angolan. (Daralinda)

The war was getting really bad. If I did not go to Namibia I would have been a soldier and gone to war and maybe would have died. I wanted to be free. My life totally changed when I went to Osire. I suffered a lot when I came to the refugee camp. No water, lots of sun because it was in the desert, and very little food. I lived very badly. Once I got to Osire everything was hard for me. The food was bad. There were many different kinds of people, some suffering, some friendly, and some not so friendly. It was very hard for me because I came alone. The location of Osire is in the bush. But I was already there in the middle of the desert, so there was no place to go and I had nothing to do. The suffering in the camp was physical, psychological and there was much stress. Many people came to Osire to escape the war but they did not know they would encounter a war in their head. After living in Osire for a while many people thought they were lost in life and wondered if life would ever be normal again. There was no way to go back to the way life used to be. (Jimmy)

There was no choice but to learn to adapt. They lived in cities with all the conveniences we have and quickly lost all of those luxuries. Adaptation was not only physical but psychological as well. The Angolans adjusted to no electricity, no running water, no more flush toilets, no ovens, no gardens and no freedom. The refugees were warehoused in the Khalari desert forced to adapt to a new way of living.

You see living in Osire is just like living in another country. You must adjust well and when you are going out or in of the camp you need permission. But everything was okay. I lived in Osire for 13 years. Once the war was over the UNHCR told everyone they had to return to Angola because of the peace. They brought many buses and took us back to Angola. (Ester)

When I left for Osire I went in a bus. I went from Lubango to Osire in a bus. I arrived in Osire in 2000. At first it was just very difficult. When I arrived there, I saw many poor people living in this big place.

I thought this place is like a bush. I just got scared. Osire was a good place even with the difficulties, but they served us well. Osire is a good place because people were nice to each other and there were hospitals and schools and we helped each other. I participated in women's centers, and when they gave food I helped distribute it. I was on the school board, chief of the block, and in the community of water. (Ameliana)

The structures were different, the government was different, the language was different. The resiliency they displaced gave them the capacity to forge a new life and cope with the difficulties that soon became everyday living.

The war was coming to Lubango as well. I arrived in Osire refugee camp in 1993. When we arrived in Osire it was small. It was a few houses. But that year there was only the police. There was no cleaning, there was no street, and there were only police houses (a big house and some more houses for them only). Then later when they got the government, they decided that those people who do not want to return to their country, then they decided to open the camp. And people started to come and they brought us tents. Before Osire brought us tents, we lived under the trees. Because of the peace that existed in that country, we were sleeping under the trees without a problem. Then the town brought the tents. Life in Osire is something that people should understand. I want them to understand circumstances. You must understand yourself, whatever circumstances you find, and you must accept it. Some people are suffering because they did not accept. You must accept why you are in that moment, in that context. You should accept. If you accept it will become easier for you, you won't carry those heavy things along. (Rebecca)

When I think back, we lived in a tent. I was lost. There was no school, nothing. I just had to think about the next meal. We had no future at all. We didn't know what was next. We got there and we did not know anyone, it was just the three of us. We had to make friends, and talk with them. We needed a place to stay, and sleep, so they took us to a hut and we slept there. It was so small but we slept. We layed down but our feet were outside. So small! It was so small but there were six of us there! (Alfredo)

We left Kalukembe because of the war. The war was very bad there. The planes would fly over every night and drop bombs. Many people died and many houses were destroyed. During this time we went to Huambo. That time, we just followed other people. We left with no direction, and without any idea of where to go, but we had to leave. Life was very scary. You live one life. It was difficult. There were people coming from the North and it was something scary. (Theodora)

I came to Osire in 2001, and when I discovered it was in the bush, I was crying to go back. I was sad, because when we went there, there were no houses. I was not so good. We found a lady's daughter by the police station and we went to her tent and we stayed there. Life was so sad at first, but then we adapted to this feeling. The first thing that helped us cope was the helpful people living with us. (Pricilla)

Since we were cut off from our dreams and future as result of the new laws and restrictions and we did not conform to such a life condition and circumstances my father had only one option, to leave the country. Such an experience is mixed with a sense of both tears and joy. Why tears? Because of the feeling of leaving your beloved ones, and leaving your comfort zone to move to a country where you haven't been before, and going to a refugee camp where living conditions are not the best. Why Joy? Feeling the sense of freedom, as well as the rebirth of your dream and future at last. I wished it had happen at home, but knew that God had something better for me beyond my comfort zone. I left Angola because of the Civil War in Angola. At the beginning, life in Osire was difficult to adapt to. To be honest, it made life a little bit difficult. Lack of communication or information from my parents while in Angola also made my life difficult initially. Regardless of all this, as time went by, Osire became a home for many of us. Life in Osire was rewarding indeed since it is from there that we regained our hope and my worldview about life was redefined. I learned to appreciate every moment of life. Most impressive was the unity and family-life that I experienced in the refugee camp. (Paulo)

After a while, they learned to appreciate what they were given. They had rations once a month, the United States built a hospital and an elementary school and the UNHCR employed Angolan teachers to educate the children. Former nurses were employed and the camp became a city of refugees.

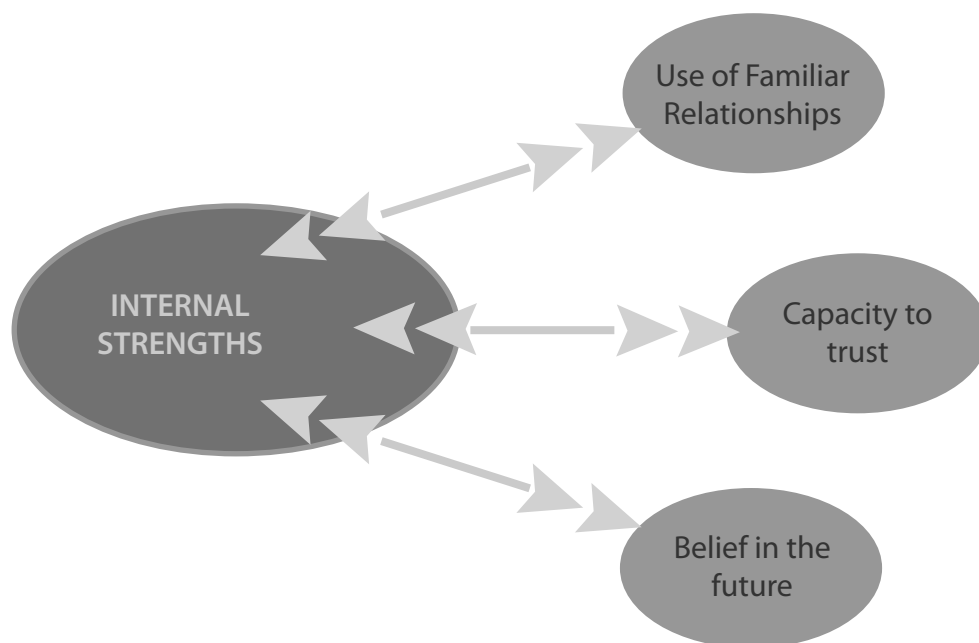
We arrived in the Osire refugee camp in November 1996. I came with my mom and younger sister. My older sister stayed in Angola. Moving to Osire was a whole new experience. It looked like a remote village. It was a camp in the middle of the desert in a country I had never been to before. Life was very difficult. There was no variety of food. We were given rations each month for the same food. We had to sleep in tents during cold nights, and had to go to the bushes to get wood so we could cook our food, and it was very risky. The words I would use to describe Osire are dark, dead, frightening, and on the other hand I would describe it as warm, surprising and revealing. (Philipi)

One situation that was quite difficult was that I had to go to the army at the time. I preferred school and the possibility of going to Cuba. I had to choose between going to the army and going to Cuba. I was the age of 16, and people would join the army at 16 so I preferred not go to the MPLA. I preferred to go to Cuba. It was quite difficult going there, because we didn't know what we could do there but we went. We knew that we would suffer but we would not die immediately. I was in Cuba for seven years. (Cambondi)

Through axial coding the theme of internal strengths emerged. The structures that gave this theme also emerged. These refugee returnees came from the same or nearby village or towns, they realized the sum is greater than the whole, and they had the capacity to adapt to a new environment. Figure 8 shows the results taken from the open codes as it relates to factors influencing coping and resiliency.

Internal Strengths

Figure 8. Axial Coding for Factors Influencing Coping and Resiliency



The researcher's ability to axial code the nodes he created when doing open coding gave him the insight to be more specific in answering his research

question. Once the axial coding was complete the answer to the research question became clearer. The researcher then performed selective coding on his findings. Selective coding is the final stage in qualitative data analysis. During selective coding previously identified open and axial coding themes are refined in order to give insight to the multiple narrative interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The results of his selective coding helped define the essential categories that gave the researcher the answer to his research question as a result of the participant interviews. Through selective coding the researcher discovered two concepts that answered the research question. How do Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma?

Use of Familiar Relationships

I am here in Osire, but good thing. My family is here and my brothers are studying. There are many people here in Osire that are worse off than me. They are not studying, they have no job, and they are just waiting for food from the UNHCR. I am here. My father has a car. I am working as a teacher. (Segunda)

I was born near Kalukembe, in a place close to Lubango. It's one city that I love. That village is called Calunangi. It's a place with a lot of animals, fruits, and trees. It was a nice time. That time we used to take fish from rivers and play with neighbors. We played a lot of games during that time. We had lots of fun. Yes, that place was only a family place. My grandfather had a place where he built five houses for his children and we grew up with our grandmother near by and a lot of cousins. We used to go to the church on Sunday, but not only on Sunday. We also went to church on Saturday to practice music because I sang in the choir. (Theodora)

Familiar relationships became an internal coping mechanism because it gave the Angolans a sense of safety that is a basic need of humanity. These relationships also provided support and encouragement. When people became sick others came to help in whatever way they could.

My husband's mother has supported me the most since I've come to Angola. She is like my mother now. (Tiberia)

Since I have returned to Angola in 2010, my family has supported me the most. Love is the most important thing when you are together. We are always together, when somebody is sick we are in a hurry to see them. If they don't have anything and if I have it, I share it. (Pricilla)

My favorite memory of that time is the family environment we had at home. Living together as a family made a huge difference. We had also had fellowship with Uncles, Aunts, nieces and grandparents. (Paulo)

The researcher saw the need the Angolans had to preserve their connection to others no matter where they found themselves. The Angolan culture that values relationships was used as a coping mechanism that was life sustaining. The conditions in the camp and back in Angola were some of the most trying situations people can endure. We see this in our world today with millions of refugees using similar coping mechanisms in order to survive around the world.

Capacity to Trust

I think the biggest type of support I received was encouragement –not money. The church was a very good place; it was a very good thing that I found. The encouragement that we use to get from elders of the church was the biggest support. (Segunda)

The biggest loss I suffered was losing my husband. As for material possessions I can always get new things. When we arrived in Osire we only had a suitcase. I had to trust God and rely on my friends and the people in the church. The UNHCR was also helpful. They provided us with food rations, cooking oil, sometimes soap, bread, blankets and other things. (Ester)

In any relationship trust is the foundation it is built on. For some Angolans trust was difficult but for others it was the language they were familiar with and lived it. Trust let them share their food with each other, believe in God,

hope that when they asked for something they needed it would be given to them. The trust they had was seen in their relationship with God and with those around them. Even when the UNHCR imposed strict rules the Angolans had to trust their decisions. The ability to trust enhanced their ability to survive.

We left Kalukembe because of the war. The war was very bad there. The planes would fly over every night and drop bombs. Many people died and many houses were destroyed. During this time we went to Huambo. That time, we just followed other people. We left with no direction, and without any idea of where to go, but we had to leave. God was very important. Especially when we needed something. You ask and you had hope. With hope we wait and we dream and we see that God is answering prayer. Especially the times when you are missing your family from Angola and your fathers and you go to your room and you read your Bible. That time I feel that someone else is close to me saying "Don't worry about other people." It's like that. I saw that the person who was always speaking to me was God. (Theodora)

I went to Namibia because I was involved in a car accident when I was a soldier in Lubango. I went to Namibia to find a doctor to help me but I had no money. Someone said that the place I needed to go would be at a refugee camp. Then I went there. It was October of 1996. (Kamil)

The capacity to trust became a healing balm for the traumas they experienced. These were physical traumas and psychological wounds. They trusted doctors, friends, pastors and their neighbors to care for them. These trusting relationships were reciprocal. If trust was not at the foundation of their existence I think many would have experienced much more physically and psychologically suffering.

Different people describe Osire differently because many people went to Osire with different motives. The reasons behind people going to Osire were different. There were people in Osire who were there just because they could be there. Even though it's a refugee camp, it was a good place for them, because their children could go to school. There were some who couldn't afford to have a free meal and free food. For people like me, however, Osire was a place of salvation. When I came to Osire I gained a sort of freedom. It was a difficult place, but for me it

was a good place. I don't how I can describe it, but to me it was the place where I regained freedom. (Cambondi)

Belief in the Future

I used to see many guys studying and their life was not okay. They were really studying though. They studied hard because they knew that is all they had and they couldn't just lose their life like that. I am here. I have an opportunity to study and I have to study hard. When I think about my life, living in Angola, going to Osire, and coming back, I think of how blessed I am. Life could have been much more difficult. I was able to get more education, make money, and learn English. When I think of the future I hope to get married, and have a family with just two children. (Segunda)

The camp is a place that is very bad and dark with lots of suffering. It is not a nice place. I lived in Osire refugee camp for four years. I was able to leave because I was able to study in Windhoek. The country of Namibia allowed good students to study outside the camp because the UNHCR paid for their education. So I left the camp to go to school. I was looking forward to returning to Angola because I finished my education. I learned English and felt like I had skills that could be used in Angola. I returned and got a job and was so happy because this is where I was born. I was very happy because there was no more war. Since I have returned life has been good to me. (Jimmy)

Life has changed me because I was a refugee but I will try to be happy in my country. Maybe there isn't any difference between being a refugee and being back in Angola. I will stay here until I die. (Ameliana)

One day it is my dream, to succeed to build a little store. Start a store to sell chocolate. I am struggling, I am fighting so one day I can finish. If I am doing less I think that is a bad thing. (Rebecca)

Twelve years I was in the refugee camp. First I decided I needed to help women who lived with domestic violence. That's why I decided to go and help my community in Angola. I wanted to go and build my house and protect my future, because I am already old. I also have to build my house, so I have it to rest there. The third reason is because my children are already grown up. They want to continue to study, and here my salary is slow. Let me go there and I think I will get more support to give to university. (Sarafina)

Most of these people in Osire did not succeed. Other people who were not involved with those activities who were all about their own life. Because people they were thinking maybe the war in Angola will not finish. And then our family members, beside those in the church were

giving us the motivation of education. They told us that one day the war might finish in your country and then what? (Mathias)

I didn't study and I was thinking about when I would start studying. During the time I was waiting to have an opportunity to study, I lost some time. I could lose hope. When I went back to school I found hope. I thought it would be very difficult to come back and to cope with new rules in Angola and it was very different from Namibia. Here in Angola it is difficult because we had to start from the beginning looking for a job. Life here is very difficult. I find myself lost because I didn't know how to start life. It just made part of life. (Theodora)

Well you see, someone said I'm planning my future, what to work, and to do this and that. But I can't see the future without God, and without a spiritual life. So now it is very important to remember that our life is part of our God. The one who guides us to receive a better future. This is really my desire. I've found that the problem is money. I have a small church and I want to put together a small school. If we don't have money, we can't do that. Our desire is to put a school on the side of the church. But who can help us? My life without God is nothing. So God helps me to work with people coming. For now the government gives me a place to build my house. The place is there, and now I need money to start to build my house. I am not able to yet. Now I think I have a place to help me to stay. (Kamil)

I knew how Angola was before we left because when we left the bombs and tanks destroyed so many building and bridges and other things. I knew nothing much had changed. However we did not expect things to be that bad, considering the country's resources. It was very difficult at first. No running water and no electricity (we use a generator most of the time). The people are always speaking loud and there is no clear street layout. Corruption is something we need to eradicate from our society. Things are changing, even though it's at a slow pace. We are hopeful that the future will be bright. (Philipi)

Hope for future endeavors kept giving Angolans the dreams they needed to have in order to cope with the reality of their situations. They left with the bombs falling and their cities destroyed. They hoped the pictures they carried in their memories would not be destroyed but in some small way something would remain. Education, future dreams, a new life were the coping mechanism that kept them saying one day at a time.

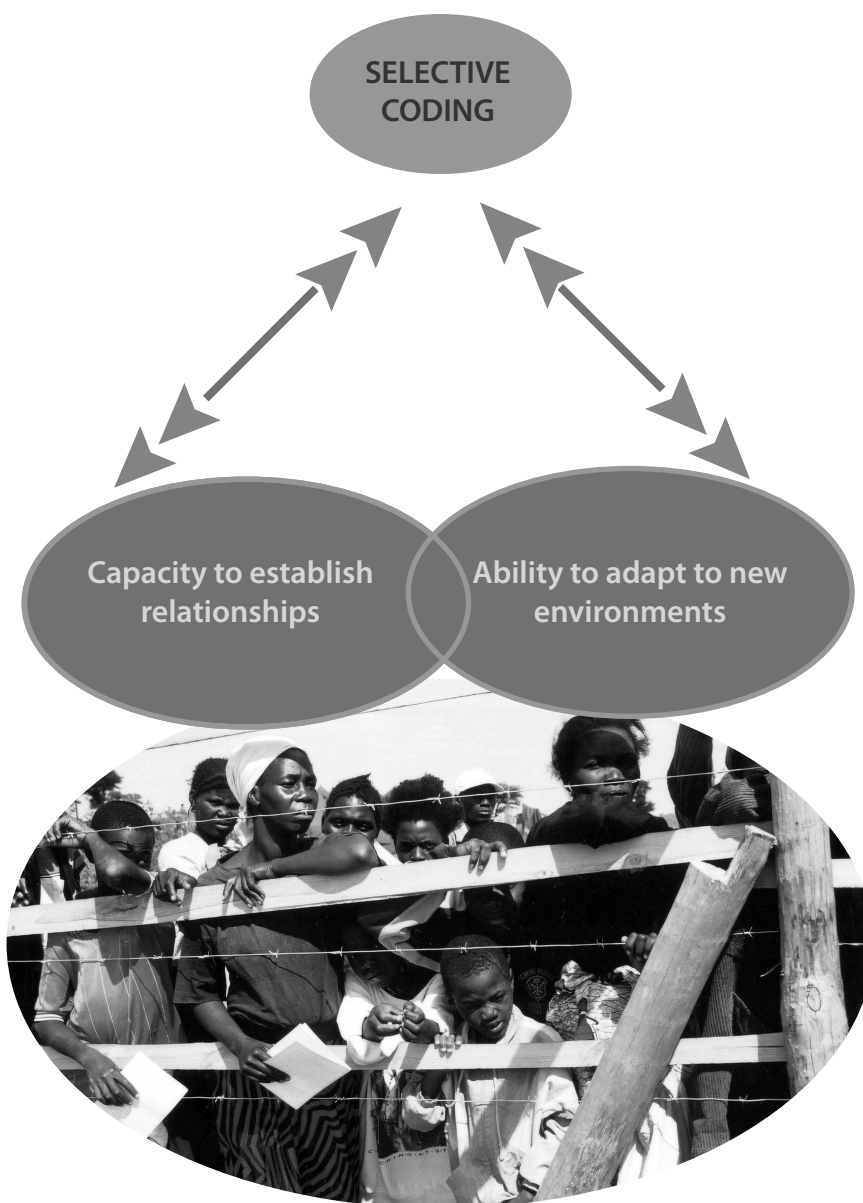
The researcher's ability to axial code the nodes he created when doing open coding gave him the insight to be more specific in answering his research question. Once the axial coding was complete the answer to the research question was becoming clearer. The researcher then performed selective coding on his findings. Selective coding is the final stage in qualitative data analysis. During selective coding previously identified open and axial coding themes are refined in order to give insight to the multiple narrative interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The results of his selective coding helped define the essential categories that gave the researcher the answer to his research question as a result of the participant interviews. Through selective coding the researcher discovered two structural themes that answered the research question and helped him develop a theory for answering the question, how do Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma?

Relationships and Adaptation

After multiple readings and continuous coding of the participant interviews the researcher undertook the delicate task of selective coding. Through his familiarity with the interviews and use of the N'vivo software program, the researcher discovered two embedded themes. The Angolan refugee returnees were able to cope with trauma by establishing relationships and being able to adapt to new environments. The word that encapsulates coping and resiliency is *Relationships*. The word that encapsulates trauma and displacement is *Adaptation*. Refugee returnees who established relationships with God and others were able to cope and maintain resiliency. Refugee returnees who had the capacity to adapt to new conditions found the hope to live

for the future. The following excerpts are taken from the memories of the refugee returnees supporting the selective coding themes established by the researcher.

Figure 9. Selective Coding Themes



Relationships

The meanings the Angolans gave to relationships were an important variable in answering the research question. The history of Angola, the value they place on people and their belief in God were key components in their

coping when faced with trauma. They displayed a deep relationship with God and others. The way they lived out their faith was evident by the love they displayed for one another. In the refugee camp there were many churches. Some churches had several thousand people while other churches had only a few dozen. These churches embraced hope, love, community and a sense of belonging. The relationships they had with each other can be viewed as a source of survival. After being displaced from Angola they needed to believe in someone and have the ability to touch others. The following statements from the participants affirmed the researchers beliefs.

God is very important in my life. From church, I knew how to face the ups and downs of life. I learned from many stories, like Job. When I heard the story of Job, it was really very good for me. They say sometimes God allows your life to really bad. I really used to doubt myself. I am God's child and He is the one who put me in this land, He knows what He is doing. I am here in Osire but it is a good thing. I think the biggest type of support I received was encouragement –not money. The church was a very good place; it was a very good thing that I found. The encouragement that we use to get from elders of the church was the biggest support. (Segunda)

I lived in Huambo until I was five years old, then we moved because the war came to Benguela and then to Lubango. Most of my early childhood centered around church. My life totally changed when I went to Osire. I suffered a lot when I came to the refugee camp. No water, lots of sun because it was in the desert, and very little food. I lived very badly. But I was thinking if God put me here, then God you will take care of me. Osire was a difficult place. When I think of the place it is like a prison. Many people were depressed. When I was in Osire the only activity I could participate in was the church. I belonged to the youth choir. (Jimmy)

Church was very important. I believe that God helps people who follow Him. My whole family lived near each other. We were a very close family. I am praying that, if God makes a way, I can go back to the city where I was born. We would still be there but the war became so bad. Many people were killed or died. It was terrible. My faith in God is my biggest support. I also receive emotional support from my family. Through everything that has happened to me, my faith has not changed. I just believe in God and follow God. It has made me

stronger. When my husband was killed I began to wonder if God doesn't look at me. Then I thought that it was just one experience in life. God is very important in my life. God is good. (Ester)

God is very important in my life. If you don't follow God, life does not go well. Church is very important to me because it is a place where people go and concentrate and learn about God. I had to trust in just God, because during that time many people were dying. When I have a problem I go to my family to get help, but the only good support I have is from my spiritual family, like in church. It takes a lot of faith. The first person I go to is God because He will help me. (Ameliana)

I can tell that, God is so wonderful. The most difficult thing is that we cannot see God, physically. Otherwise I could say to God, take my hand. Thank you very much. I'm ready, whatever circumstances, I'm finding God is there, I am not afraid. I am ready. Because we are in the world where bad things take place. We are not just waiting for good things; even bad things come to us. So it is not just a new thing. The church helped me in the spiritual area. But the rest of the things my daughter helps me with. We left our one daughter in Lubango. It was a Sunday and she was not with us, when it happened, she was not with us. There is no way to pack, only to go, the bombs were falling. You leave everything, you don't look back. We left Sarah behind. She was with her godmother. She was nine years old. It was very difficult. (Rebecca)

God I love. I know God is with me and helps me a lot when I have a problem in my life. I remember that God is with me. And when I travel and I don't know where to go, God is the one who guides me. (Sarafina)

I was thankful my grandfather took me to church with him because after he died the church became like my family. It was hard for me, but when I went there I saw that things were different from the things I saw in Angola. Even though people were suffering they had peace. (Mathias)

What gave me hope for a better tomorrow? I would say first God, because I had so much trust in God. No family, no other –it is God. Yes, after sometime they did. Up to today we are so close we treat each other like brothers and sisters, you know? With the people we met there. (Alfredo)

God was very important. Especially when we needed something. You ask and you had hope. With hope we wait and we dream and we see that God is answering prayer. Especially the times when you are missing your family from Angola and your fathers and you go to your room and you read your Bible. That time I feel that someone else is

close to me saying “Don’t worry about other people.” It’s like that. I saw that the person who was always speaking to me was God. (Theodora)

I think church plays a very good role in a person’s life because it teaches you how to deal with life and how to have faith, and how to cope in life. In these days, if you don’t have a church to go or somehow you can pray, maybe you will be lonely. You can be sad for nothing and it’s a good rule if you teach your child to go to church –it’s a good rule. There is a big difference between people who go to church and people that don’t go to church. If I don’t go to church, my life is upside-down, you see? You cannot organize the way a person goes to church, because in church a person learns many many things. (Daralinda)

Religion was important to me when I was in Osire, because when we suffer God is there. I am still in Church now. (Pricilla)

Spirituality played an important part in my life because it deeply shaped my life. I remember that since our childhood we were taught God’s ways and to trust him always. I survived in the refugee camp because I was rooted in the Christian faith. I always trusted in God for something better and it was clear to me that God allowed me to be in the refugee camp for my good. Spirituality was the epicenter of my attitude and involvement in the life of other people. (Paulo)

But I can’t see the future without God, and without a spiritual life. So now it is very important to remember that our life is part of our God. The one who guides us to receive a better future. (Kamil)

My faith played a very important role in my life. I don’t think I would be able to make it through if it was not for my faith. I always trust that God will be able to do something special in my life. Even now, I normally participate in church activities and all Christian festivities like Easter and Christmas. I think the most important thing in my life is my faith. I am a very strong person spiritually and I am the kind of person that never gives up. I need to work on my Bible reading, as I have been so busy. That’s no excuse, but I still need to find more time for Bible reading. (Philipi)

Actually it was quite difficult, but I personally believe that we should have faith and that it is faith that comes from God because we know that God will provide us with opportunity one day, even if we are suffering. (Cambondi)

Adaptation

The capacity the Angolans had to adapt to their new environment was a continuation of what how they previously lived. Adaptation is prevalent in many different areas of life. Plants adapt to new environments, people adapt to each other once they are married and we adapt to our surrounding because of seasonal changes. For some the ability to adapt pricked at the heart of their fears and psychological wounds. The participants interviewed for the most part adapted well but not all the Angolans experienced this. The research doesn't present anyone who was unable to adapt in order to cope well. This is not to say all coped well. The importance for adaptation to new environments is critical to the ecosystem model since it assumes that each environmental state flows into the others and creates healthy environmental states. The following statements by the Angolans reveal this experience.

There are many people here in Osire that are worse off than me. They are not studying, they have no job, and they are just waiting for food from the UNHCR. I am here. My father has a car. I am working as a teacher. I can't be so selfish. When I think about my life, living in Angola, going to Osire, and coming back, I think of how blessed I am. Life could have been much more difficult. I was able to get more education, make money, and learn English. (Segunda)

It was in the church where there were good people who helped us. The biggest loss I suffered was losing my husband. As for material possessions I can always get new things. When we arrived in Osire we only had a suitcase. I had to trust God and rely on my friends and the people in the church. You see living in Osire is just like living in another country. You must adjust well and when you are going out or in of the camp you need permission. But everything was okay. I lived in Osire for 13 years. (Ester)

When I left for Osire I went in a bus. I arrived in Osire in 2000. At first it was just very difficult. When I arrived there, I saw many poor people living in this big place. I thought this place is like a bush. I just got scared. Osire was a good place even with the difficulties, but they served us well. Osire is a good place because people were nice to each

other and there were hospitals and schools and we helped each other. I participated in women's centers, and when they gave food I helped distribute it. I was on the school board, chief of the block, and in the community of water. (Ameliana)

Some people are suffering because they did not accept. You must accept why you are in that moment, in that context. You should accept. If you accept it will become easier for you, you won't carry those heavy things along. God will be with you. I figured out God changed my life because I am strong. He made me strong, stronger. He made me stronger. Whatever things go bad, I am ready. Life has changed, being a refugee changed me. It made me strong. Life made me, because now I know how to help a person who is suffering. Before, I did not know exactly like the way I know now. Now I how to feel with somebody who is suffering, I feel the suffering. I am the one, to help. (Rebecca)

My family is very important, really. I remember that when I was alone, or I had a problem, they would come close to me and listen and give me an idea or help. They are the ones, it was very important. (Sarafina)

For 14 years I've been away from Angola because I went to Namibia to escape the war and became a refugee. From living the way that I lived there, I've realized that in life, there are certain things that are really important, like helping people. I've made it because someone has helped me. I was blessed to have been able to get a university education while living in Namibia. I think some people don't want to talk about it because they have very bad memories and they don't want to remember it. But I don't mind remembering them because I think I'm apart of my past, my present and my future. Some they don't want to adapt. I think as a human being you need to be adaptable. (Alfredo)

I thought it would be very difficult to come back and to cope with new rules in Angola and it was very different from Namibia. Here in Angola it is difficult because we had to start from the beginning looking for a job. Life here is very difficult. I find myself lost because I didn't know how to start life. It was just part of life. My brothers helped me a lot. (Theodora)

I came to Osire I discovered it was in the bush, I was crying to go back. I was sad, because when we went there, there was no house I was not so good. The first thing that gave us the capacity to adapt was the helpful people living with us. I really wanted to study English and we went to church. Church is important to me. (Pricilla)

At the beginning, life in Osire was difficult to adapt to. To be honest, it made life a little bit difficult. Lack of communication or information from my parents while in Angola also made my life difficult initially. Regardless of all this, as time went by, Osire became a home for many of us. Life in Osire was rewarding indeed since it is from there that we regained our hope and my worldview about life was redefined. I learned to appreciate every moment of life. Most impressive was the unity and family-life that I experienced in the refugee camp. It was really replacing the absence we felt of our parents who were left in Angola. (Paulo)

I can see that they were suffering most spiritually especially those from Angola. The way they were treated complicated the life of the people there. There was nothing to do, but to be there. No professional life, no money, no nothing. That really creates a problem. Now I think it's needed to rehabilitate those people. Many people helped me in the refugee camp. Some people can talk about Osire like it's a bad place, but for my sake, I can't do that. I can thank God for putting me in that place. (Kamil)

Moving to Osire was a whole new experience. It looked like a remote village. It was a camp in the middle of the desert in a country I had never been to before. Life was very difficult. There was no variety of food. We were given rations each month for the same food. We had to sleep in tents during cold nights, and had to go to the bushes to get wood so we could cook our food, and it was very risky. On a normal day, I would wake up and just thank God that I was still alive. I would join other guys in going to the bushes and getting wood, washing and reading books. Those were trying times but we also learned a lot from our suffering. We had to have faith that someday things would be better. The church really helped us to stay focused and hopeful. (Philipi)

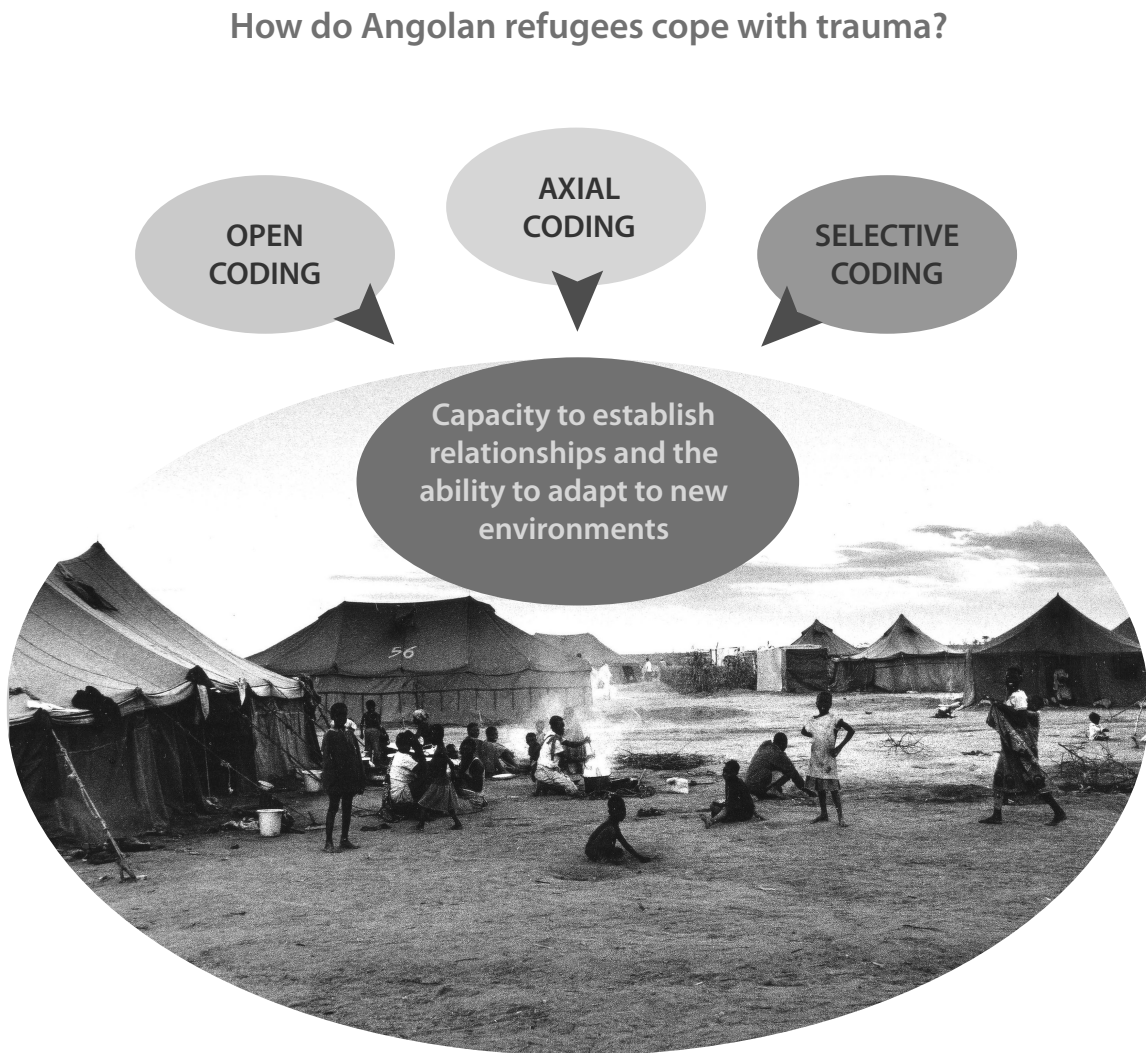
When we arrived to Osire, it was a difficult situation. For me it, it was difficult mainly because of freedom. We came from a situation that was very frightening. When we were in Luanda, we had quite an important place in society. We had a good car, power, and secretaries but then you find yourself sitting in a refugee camp without even a house. We had a small tent. We actually went to stay with Uncle Baptist George. We used to read some poems. There is a poem that he used to read called, "The Impossible Renounce". "The Impossible Renounce says": *I was never somebody. I never was somebody. I renounce myself. I attain zero degrees. I am a zero. I never did anything. I sleep like a stone that was thrown deep into the bore hole.* The idea now was that we should learn to be no one, to be a very, very ordinary person. Just to be a human being that is enough. At least we could be human beings at Osire Camp. We could not be, but at least we could be human

beings. We knew that for the first time in our lives, we were not in danger. (Cambondi)

Coping Outcomes

As a result of interviewing participants, performing open coding, axial coding and finally selective coding, the researcher discovered two embedded themes that helped him understand how Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma. They were able to cope with trauma in the following ways, 1) by developing relationships and 2) being able to adapt to new environments. The word that encapsulates coping and resiliency is *Relationships*. The word that encapsulates trauma and displacement is *Adaptation*. Those refugee returnees who were able to establish connections with God and others were able to cope and maintain resiliency. Those refugee returnees who had the ability to adapt to new conditions found the hope to live for the future. Figure 10 illustrates the coding process and findings of this qualitative research in order to answer the research question.

Figure 10. Coding Process Results



CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Much discussion has been given to the need for culturally competent social workers and multi-cultural collaborative projects (Wehbi, 2009; Gilin & Young, 2009; Wood & Atkins, 2006; Lough, 2009). This emphasis neglects to highlight the distinctions between the contextual factors that could potentially reinforce existing power relations. From this study, it is the hope of the researcher that social workers will gain knowledge in the areas of coping, resiliency, survival and trauma from not only the refugee experience, but also from a different cultural context, which will provide valuable insights, enhancing social work practice.

As the need for international social work grows so with it comes growing pains. Universities are exploring international experiences for their students in placements where the “field” has yet to be developed. The tension between ill-prepared placements and ill-prepared students can lead to negative experiences on both sides. Therefore, students need to be prepared before entering into a new culture. Issues regarding economics, history, politics, war, culture, and religion all need to be understood and addressed (Carrilio & Mathiesen, 2006).

As the literature review showed, trauma cannot be conceptualized and understood from the narrow perspective of a Western biomedical model. If one does this, it becomes a form of Western colonialism with a psychological twist.

For example, if the themes identified by the clients document the need for family, support groups, spiritual guidance or further education, then systems should be established that would enable social workers to have a greater understanding as they meet the needs of this population

This study purported to gain insight into the question, How do Angolan refugee returnees cope with trauma? The author established his understanding of this question embedded in the ecosystem theory. The constructs developed through the interviews supported the comprehensive literature review established by the author. The refugee returnee experience filled the knowledge gap that has been less known regarding refugees who returned to their country of origin after living many years in a refugee camp.

In this chapter the author demonstrates how the emerging themes were highlighted by the voices of the Angolans that emerged during the research process. The following section summarizes the findings of each major theme. Then the author suggests the limitations of the study and recommendations for social work practice and finally his concluding remarks.

Discussion

The participants described a variety of traumatic events they experienced as refugee returnees. Some of these events occurred only once, such as fleeing the country of Angola to the Osire refugee camp. Other events occurred over and over while living in the refugee camp, dodging the bombs that were falling from airplanes or living in fear of soldiers breaking into their homes. The majority of the participants described pain and suffering, both physically and emotionally. Many recalled the difficulties living in the refugee camp with little

food, inadequate shelter and the hopelessness of their future. Many described sitting helplessly mourning the loss of loved ones with their friends, watching many people die from disease or illness. Although each participant uniquely described very different traumatic events while fleeing Angola, living in the refugee camp and returning to a country destroyed by war, they all shared things in common. Forced migration not only caused the stressful loss of resources but also forced them to find new meaning in their lives as a result of internal stressors. The stressors the refugee returnees experienced challenged every sector described in ecosystem theory. Their world and culture (macrosystem) as they knew it was being destroyed before their eyes. Their family, church and societal norms (mesosystem) that gave meaning to their lives were disrupted forcing them to make shifts in what gave meaning to life. Their lives (microsystem) were in physical and psychological transition. These unique stressors exposed the refugee returnees to rearrange the way they coped with life events. The multiple migrations located the refugee returnees in new and totally different environments. These types of migrations can impede their coping capacities. The events surrounding these migrations have been documented as a major source of distress among displaced populations. As a result of these stressors associated with the external losses this study identified how the refugee returnees adjusted their lives in order to establish new coping themes. When refugee returnees incorporated the following themes in their lives the outcome lessened the severity of their external and internal stressors.

Multiple stressors emerged in each migration transition: escaping Angola, establishing life in the Osire refugee camp and returning to Angola. Each

migration manifested unique challenges for the participants. The common themes of loss were organized around war and displacement. These losses were stability, health, psychological well-being, family, vocation and safety. The most commonly used themes organized around coping and resiliency were church, God, family, education, social supports and self-determination. The patterns of loss identified in this study are representative of many refugees who are displaced as a result of war. The findings of the study confirmed the importance for understanding how different cultures give meaning to life while experiencing traumatic events. The author discovered general patterns for coping were identified in the majority of the participants. In order of the most often used coping mechanisms described by the participants were the following: 1) spirituality and religion, faith in God, family, 2) supportive relationships, and 3) self-determination and education. For the sake of clarity and understanding the author chose to illustrate these general areas. The following table shows the distribution of coping mechanisms used by each participant. The author believes since these themes are consistent with the findings of his literature review and were used by Angolans, it would be likely that other refugees throughout the world would incorporate them as well. This research revealed specific events the Angolans faced but overall it might be said these three coping themes can be manifested in the lives of the many refugees.

Table 2. Themes in Coping with Trauma

Participant	Gender	God Religion Church	Family Support	Education Self- Determination
Segunda	Male	X	X	X
Jimmy	Male	X	X	X
Ester	Female	X		
Ameliana	Female	X	X	
Rebecca	Female	X		
Sarafina	Female	X	X	
Mathias	Male	X	X	X
Alfredo	Male	X		X
Theodora	Female	X	X	
Daralinda	Female	X	X	
Tiberia	Female	X	X	X
Pricilla	Female	X		
Paulo	Male	X		
Kamil	Male	X		
Philipi	Male	X	X	X
Cambondi	Male	X	X	X

When faced with multiple stressors the present study revealed the refugees relied heavily on an emotion focused coping method of using religion as a secure coping skill. This is consistent with the research of Lazarus & Folkman (1984) who discovered people used emotional-focused coping in order to gain

emotional stability in situations were out of their control. The refugee returnees adopted a deeper faith, stronger family and social bonds in order to alleviate the stressors they were experiencing. This encounter with God and others diminished the harmful or threatening situation that gave them a sense of well-being. The researcher heard a consistent theme between the refugee returnees and the literature in relationship to problem solving coping as well. The different migrations the refugees experienced forced them to adapt to their environment and create new ways of coping. These included living in tents, learning to create basic tools from what was available and developing new standards of behavior (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000).

As noted every participant felt their faith in God, church attendance, prayer life or religious beliefs were the most important coping mechanisms used in overcoming their trauma. The study revealed religious beliefs provided the most powerful tool for reducing stress and keeping hope alive. The participants incorporated the meanings of their religious beliefs to manage the different migrations they experienced. When working with refugees at home or overseas this study highlights the importance of understanding the meanings refugees give to their lives in order to survive. The emotion based coping skill of religious belief is at the core of their lives. When the world around them is being taken away and chaotically out of control, their religious beliefs became a stabilizing force of connectedness and hope.

The second most frequently identified coping theme was the role that family and social supports played. Ten of the sixteen participants revealed the importance of their family and social supports as a means to coping with stress.

The use of family or social supports was evenly distributed as a means of coping with trauma. Five of the eight female participants and five of the eight male participants used family or social supports as a means of coping. The capacity to trust others gave a positive outcome for those refugee returnees who had others they could rely on. Those participants who had family members living in the same camp were able to recreate elements of their previous life through the safety of familiar relationships. The capacity to trust someone they knew reduced the threat of harm and increased a sense of belonging. The one participant interviewed who was adopted by a family in the camp gave him the capacity to experience love, care and hope.

The final theme that emerged is related to self-determination or education. It is interesting to note that the eight participants who relied on education or self-determination were males and only one was a female. This might reflect the lack of availability and cultural context for not educating females. In many refugee camps it is common for the majority of the population to be women and children. The study revealed the least number of participants identified education as a coping strategy they employed when coping with trauma. The overall interpretation the author made as a result of the study was that when refugees are able to adapt to their new environment and find a connection with God or others they seem to cope with life in a much better way.

The sign inside the Chicago Transit Authority train car reads, "Education is the global currency." This statement is one of those internal resources refugees use to cope with the challenges they continually face. The refugees in the Osire refugee camp placed a high value on education as the hope that would give their

children a brighter future. Not knowing how long they would be in the camp, they made sure their children took advantage of the education provided to them by the UNHCR. The message these parents gave their children was a message of hope for a brighter future (Farwell, 2004).

The literature reveals the investment refugee parents made for the future education of their children not only gave them hope for the future but also helped them cope with the stress of their own future. Refugees in war torn countries have witnessed their homes being destroyed and their lives turned upside down. The idea of something never being taken away from them like education (Farwell, 2004) empowered young refugees. The prospect of one day returning to their country of origin with an education made some refugee youth even more determined for a hope filled future (Bolea, et al, 2003). The study of how education is used as a coping mechanism should continually be researched and understood. Empowerment through education is a strong coping mechanism that can strengthen a person, a family and a community. These are some of the more prominent coping strategies refugees and those in other cultures have used to make sense of life, keep them hoping for tomorrow and giving their children the chance of a better life.

Limitations of Research Design

The research methodology was limited in several ways. The length of time the researcher spent in Angola limited the number of interviews he was able to secure. If the researcher had more time in country, the research could have been expanded to other cities where refugee returnees live. For example, there are many Angolan refugee returnees living in the cities of Luanda, Huambo and

Onjiva that fit the research criteria. Focusing on one city for potential participants gave the researcher the necessary data but if the participants were from different parts of the country the resources available to them in Angola might have been different adding to the narrative themes. This may have further supported the most common themes or rearranged their order of priority.

The prolonged engagement the researcher had with the refugees was a double-edged sword. The researcher's history with the Angolan people gave him the advantage of quickly finding a qualified and trustworthy assistant. Her familiarity with the people helped the researcher gain his initial participants. On the other hand, the participants who met the researcher for the first time were reluctant to expand their stories because of fear of what would be done with the information. Even though they were distantly known by someone connected to the research and agreed to informed consent. Even with the researcher's history in the country the fear instilled in the people created barriers for doing research. The relationship the researcher has with the assistant gave her more credibility when seeking potential subjects and could have limited the pool of potential participants.

The researcher also acknowledges finding more elderly Angolan refugee returnees was difficult. Having more elderly participants who would have agreed to the study would have revealed more of the contrast between the pre-war Angola and the postwar Angola experience. There were two potential older Angolan refugee returnees who refused to consent to be interviewed. They were more fearful of political or government backlash as a result of their stories.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Application

The current study revealed how critical it is for those who engage in the delivery of social services to understand the different meanings refugees attach to the traumatic events in their lives in order to cope. From a Western perspective, if we are not careful, we may be quick to assign a label or make an interpretation that might be a misinterpretation of the language they give to their capacity to cope. A lack of cultural understanding and orientation can lead to a failure in assisting refugees with their migration experience.

In 2013, the United States welcomed a record number 69,930 refugees to its shores (UNHCR *Global Trends*, 2014). As a result, many social workers are in positions to advocate, guide, and help refugees overcome the challenges they might face. Many social workers want to quickly engage refugees in therapeutic interventions but instead, first need to be educated on issues such as how culture and diversity impact the social worker and refugee relationship. As a result this leads to social services that can be less effective in nature (Fong, 2007).

The refugee crisis is overflowing onto our shores and many countries in Europe. The clash of religious beliefs, culture stereotyping, language differences and other variables continue to create new opportunities for growth on all agency levels of intervention necessary to make for healthy refugee transitions. Few research studies focus on the refugees returning to their country of origin but instead on where they get resettled (Khawaja et al., 2008; Miller & Rasco, 2004). This study not only highlights the coping mechanisms Angolan refugee returnees used, but can also become transferrable concepts in how we engage in social services of refugee and immigrant populations in America. The notion

that one size fits all does not hold to the values of human dignity and worth as ascribed in social work values. Our understanding of the cultures refugee find themselves in and the meanings they give to the events in their lives need to be considered and adapted. In so doing we can employ a transactional model so the integration of the person and their environment can be the most effective in terms of service delivery. The researcher believes that there should be a practical component to his research in order for greater awareness and further discussion surrounding the issues of coping, trauma and resiliency. Some day somewhere social workers will find their way working with refugees. When working with refugee populations the visible component becomes their language, religion, worldview and the cultural context of the refugee. The Angolans experienced traumatic events but found ways to cope by connecting with God, others and adapting to the changing environment they found themselves in. This is not unusual for refugees many social workers will come in contact with. When they are resettled in a different country they loose what they are accustomed to and the way they cope is often misunderstood (Greetz, 1973; Wilson & Drozdek, 2007; Haans, Lansen, & Brummelhuis, 2007). In order to learn this cultural language by demonstrating respect and human dignity, like any second language acquisition, social workers needs to listen, study and practice. The researcher realized from his study that when refugees live for long periods of time in refugee camps and return to their country of origin, in some ways returning is like being resettled in a foreign land. Language becomes one of the few obstacles they don't have to overcome. Though they are back in their country of origin, they live with memories, the task of finding jobs and

rebuilding their lives.

This new component shifts the centerpiece from one of interpretation to that of understanding the historically transmitted meanings the refugee brings to his/her present situation and how these symbols are interpreted and lived out (Greetz, 1973). In so doing our capacity should be guided by an ecosystem intervention model (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). In this model there is a transaction between the person and their environment. For example, if a refugee is struggling to cope, one might say the refugee is the problem or the environment is the problem. The best solution is to understand what is creating the tension between the two and address it accordingly. This shifts the blame from one or the other and can give the social worker a different alternative or way of addressing the situation. The Angolan refugees were transplanted several times into "new soil." They made adjustments internally by deepening their relationships and externally by adapting to new environments as described earlier. In applying this model it might keep us from defaulting into a psychodynamic medical model response to one of understanding the needs of refugees from each ring of the ecosystem model of intervention (Miller & Rasco, 2004). Embedded into this ecosystem model is the cultural context that informs each ring. Like trees in nature, the rings tell its age but the bark, leaves, and branches tell us its unique type! If we continue to disregard this new shift for interpreting the refugee condition, we have the potential to be less effective in our capacity for understanding.

When we use more than one lens in seeing the picture in front of us we have the capacity to promote healthy transitions and personal growth. The

participants in the current study constructed for the researcher important themes used to cope with life. When the context is understood, the language of the refugee will be interpreted with all of its meaning. This can be learned from their religious beliefs, traditional practices, strength of family or other coping mechanisms used for survival. The participants in this study lived in places where they had no access to mental health services as we know in America. The resources of their lives were limited in many ways. Overtime, this style of intervention can create misunderstanding, frustration and ineffectiveness in our work with refugees.

This concept for understanding different cultures influences the integrative process creating a shift in the focus of how interventions is carried out (Tsui, 2005, Wilson & Drozdek, 2007). Otherwise the whole process of our work with refugees becomes “lost in translation.”

It is without question this is a fundamental aspect of social work. Many well-intentioned social workers might go to work in countries where refugees have returned or are resettled. Studies have shown working with refugee populations as well as people whose culture is different from our own requires social workers to make adjustments in their service delivery model in to become emic rather etic in their understanding of cultures (Munson, 2002; Taibbi, 2013; Wonnacott, 2012). One inescapable fact is our world is becoming more diverse in areas of gender, culture, ethnicity, race and social inequality. These issues continue to challenge and have the potential to reshape how we engage in various populations, particularly refugees. This is evident in how social work

academic programs are preparing future social workers for the challenges of a constantly changing world.

Social workers are continually engaging in the task of continually being educating on issues of culture, diversity and ethnicity so they can eventually train refugees who want to become social workers to oversee and interact with other refugees in the best ways possible. Many of these refugees come to our shores with skills, education and experience only to be dismissed because they don't meet the criteria of American standards in those fields. The potential for capacity building with refugees can strength the social workers role in the refugee community and increase the practical and theoretical framework of social workers in the engagement process.

Therefore, we must learn to adopt a holistic view of the interaction between the refugee and their environment as they integrate into their new life whether it is returning to their country of origin or in America. At times this might create tension given agency policies and time constraints. Many refugees resettling in America have a worldview that looks, sounds, and smells different from their country of origin. The social work tenants of empowerment and capacity building can decrease the overwhelming feelings of hopelessness and provide opportunities to give meaning to the physical, emotional or spiritual environment of refugees (Hare, 2004). People are continually shaped by the cultural context they find themselves in. In this study the participant interviews revealed healthy coping mechanisms that were created when they had the capacity to establish relationships and the ability to adapt to new environments. Even though the participants in this study returned back to Angola because the

war lasted 27 years, it was a country many never knew and severely damaged.

As a result of multiple migrations the study revealed refugees are forced to be resilient, learn new languages and find creative ways in order to survive. For many refugees resettling to other countries is like going to the land flowing with milk and honey. Freedom, opportunities, financial security and many unknowns are supposed to be right in front of them for their taking. Resettlement is filled with many challenges such as language barriers, work conflicts, family dynamics, health issues and other unknowns.

Once the refugee is resettled, the refugee life becomes a whirlwind of meetings, interviews, appointments, and English language classes that can seem chaotic and discouraging. During this micro or dyad relationship the refugee shares his/her story of trauma, upheaval, migration, resettlement and fear. In this context hopefully, a trusting relationship is being forged from the fearful perspective of the refugee. With every meeting the refugee might wonder how much do I tell the social worker? Will I get in trouble if I speak about political or religious issues? Will my social worker understand what I am saying or make me feel more misunderstood and more afraid?

“Therefore, a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to mass displacement is not acceptable. Even professionals dealing with disaster situations need an approach to intervention that can be adapted for varying context”(Drumm, et al 2004, p.70). Over the past several decades more attention has been given to transcultural approaches (Summerfield, 2008; Drozdek, 2007; Miller & Rasco; 2004; Folkman, et al, 2011; Wong & Wong, 2006) to the refugee experience from a culturally contextual perspective. The predominance of the literature (Wong &

Wong, 2006) tends to underestimate the many cultural influences refugees use as powerful contributors that enable them to face challenging mental difficulties.

As cultural diversity continues to increase in Western societies, social work educators feel more responsibility to better prepare their students to engage with their clients. With this in mind, it is only natural to see international understanding contributing to student preparation by offering them the opportunity to broaden their horizons. As more and more students take advantage of these opportunities it is necessary to consider the motivation behind their choice of international study. In order not to replicate colonialism or current day imperialist practices it is important to critically examine students motivations for international placement. In so doing students and educators will become more aware of their motivation and hopefully counter oppressive practices. A review of the literature reveals an emphasis in three areas of focus: “descriptions of international placement programs, the links between cultural competence and placements, and students’ experiences upon their return from placement” (Wehbi, 2009, p.50).

The needs we have as humans are embedded in multiple systems. These include family, church, groups, social institutions and agencies (Johnson & Yanca, 2006). When a person has unmet needs in his/her life, an imbalance occurs in the ecosystem of their life (Germain & Gitterman, 1996). The importance of continuing education in the areas of cultural diversity is paramount when working with this population. The influence of the ecosystem theory lies in how well it serves social work in multiple settings including cross-cultural contextualization. The author’s knowledge of this theory gave him an

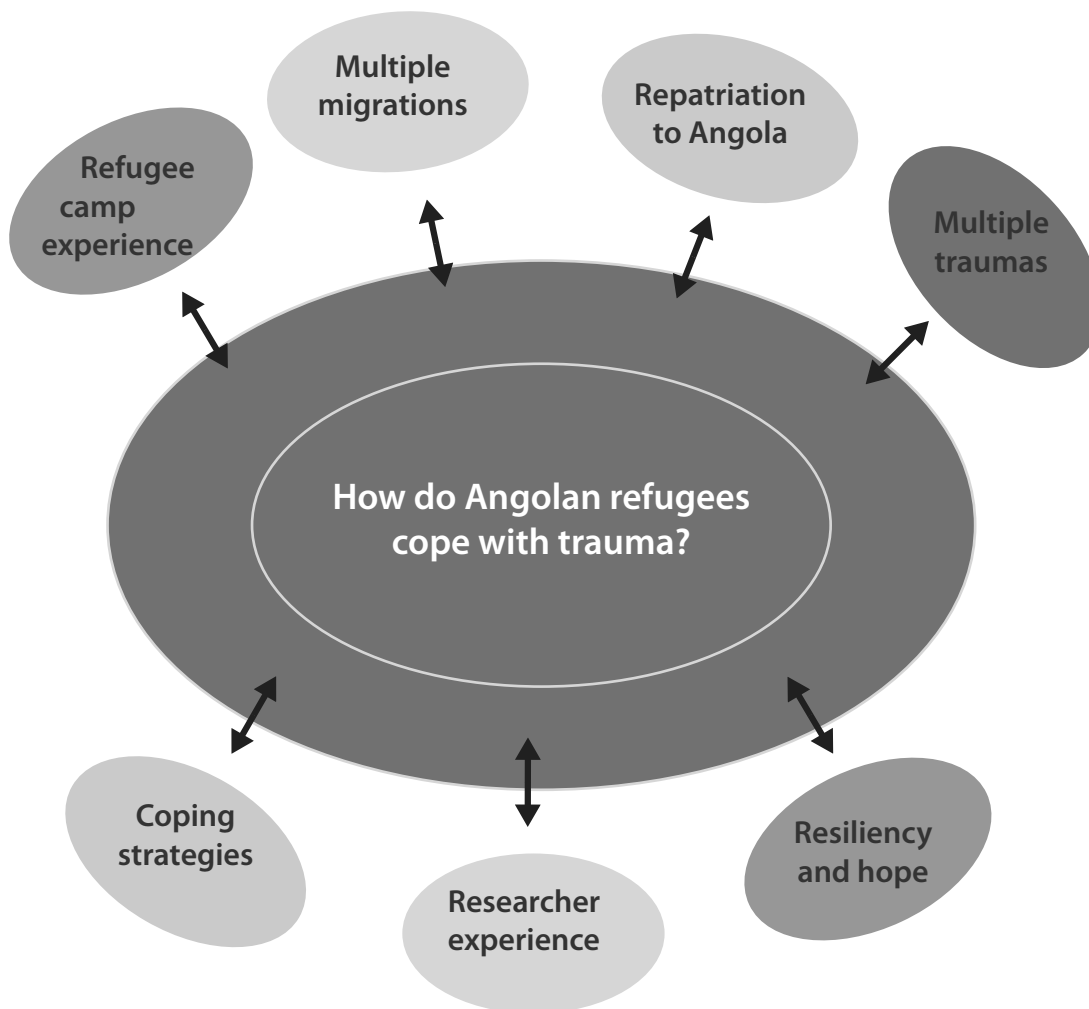
advantage when doing his research. It has expands our understanding of people rather than pigeonholing them in terms of pathology and disempowering labels that provoke feelings of powerlessness (Gray & Webb, 2009; Johnson & Yanca, 2006). The ecosystem model has rekindled some of our deepest values that focus on the human potential rather than problems and deficits (Meyer, 1983). A major advantage of the person-in-environment or ecosystem is its broad approach. This theme has its roots in the core values of social work. The first step in the process of helping someone is to understand them in their entirety (Dewes, 2006). Rather than quickly wanting to diagnose and perform therapeutic skills the social worker has the opportunity to be a learner. This means listening to life stories for the purpose of gathering evidence in order to better understand each situation (Sprecht & Courtney, 1994). Ecosystem theory offers a way of conceptualizing the relationship between people and environments and encourages a balanced approach to both domains of practice. Emphasis is on the 'goodness of fit' between the client and their environment. Social workers can focus on how family, culture, poverty and political factors affect the refugee's situation (Hoffman and Sallee, 1994).

The conceptual model the researcher developed in order to understand the relationships between the refugees' experience of trauma, coping and resiliency came to life as a result of his research. The literature review confirmed the coping mechanisms the Angolan refugee returnees used are consistent with other studies that have been done. The significant findings of this study are the following. Many of the Angolan refugee returnees have come back to a country that is lacking the most basic infrastructure necessities. Many carry the

memories of a life that was interrupted by war and have not stopped moving forward in life. Even now, from their perspective they are content in life. They have enough food for the day, they feel safe at night and they are connected to others. In Angola nothing is done alone. The research showed the people have a strong relationship with God in order to cope with the uncertainties of life because they live without social security, welfare, retirement and all the other luxuries we have available to us in the West. Their relationship with God is a living vibrant connection that fills the void of hopelessness and connects them to others. While we in the West value privacy, they value community and connectedness. Life is so full of risks for Angolans to tackle anything alone.

During the interviews the researcher realized for the Angolans there is a very practical dependence on each other. This interdependence on God, family and social supports became the primary source of community, safety, socializing and purpose. This interdependence promotes the very values of social work; respect, human worth and dignity without anyone having to teach them these values. These traits are needed because they need each other for help and survival. This is in stark contrast of the ruggedness of our Western individuality. The conceptual model was the framework used to answer the research question built around the literature review.

Figure 11. Conceptual Model



Conclusion

Reflecting on my interviews there were certain themes that emerged as I sought to answer my research question. Freud's work taught us that the most commonly used defense mechanism we appropriate in order to reduce anxiety is repression. Americans are masters at coping with the anxiety producing issues of life. In fact we cope too well! We live with migraine headaches, back pain, stomach issues, and many other diseases. We have made the pharmaceutical

companies billions of dollars and shaped the DSM-5 so diagnoses are readily dispensed satisfying the insurance companies. The world we live in thrives on power and control leaving little room for expression lest we get labeled and end up in the psychiatric ward of a hospital. We ask people how they feel but leave little room for emotional expression.

The positive coping themes that emerged from my research with the Angolans can be reduced to a connection with God, church or family and the ability to adapt to new environments. These are important because they become the context in which the refugee returnees express their emotions as an outlet for coping. Take for example the refugees' experience in church or their relationship with God. In Western cultures when one goes to church it a solemn event where the attendee is typically a silent reserved observer. During my time working in the refugee camp and in Angola, church was a three to five hour event where the people participated corporately. They sang, shared testimonies, prayed together and felt connected. During the church service they believed God met them there and they used their expression of emotions to reflect their connection with God. Their pent up anxiety is dispelled during the worship service as they raise their voices with others to God.

Another outward expression of their emotional connection to God and church is seen in the rituals they go through when someone dies. In America funerals are usually solemn, maybe a few humorous stories during the eulogy but for the most part they are taken seriously with little emotional expression, except for tears. My experience attending Angolan funerals is completely different. They usual last several days. Families and friends come together to

mourn with the family who is grieving by crying, singing, praying, wailing and moaning together. There is plenty of food and people stay for hours or even days to comfort the family. This sacred event produces a connection with God and others. Their outward expressions of emotions are a powerful and successful coping tool.

Finally, there are weddings. The wedding rite of passage usually lasts a few days. The bride and groom are seated in the front of the church because they know it will be a long event. The ceremony of marriage involves singing, testimonies, preaching, giving of gifts and other verbal expressions of praise for the couple. Following the ceremony there is a big celebration with food and dancing that lasts for hours. Dancing and singing are regularly used to express pain, suffering, and joy. Yet another outward expression of emotions that releases any pent up frustration or anxiety.

Whether they were in a camp or back in their country destroyed by war, their capacity to adapt to their environment was fueled by their desire to maintain meaningful experiences that was organized around God, church and family. Driven by self-determination and education the refugee returnees' capacity to cope well inspired the recreation of meaningful events. Their future revolved around various types of education and skill training that will secure a brighter future.

Considering the millions of refugees presently in the world, the importance of maintaining religious and family connections are critical for coping with the trauma many experience. The capacity to believe in God as a source of comfort and to continue religious traditions, give the refugees an outlet

for emotional expression. The outlet for emotional expression during times of crisis is not only a re-creation of what was normative but continues to give refugees meaning and memories in their displaced world.

I have visited dark places and have witnessed unimaginable pain and suffering in the faces of countless people, men, women, children. I saw it in the face of mother in Osire, where she sat on the ground outside her tent, held one child on her lap, with the other snuggled close to her side. The mother was ill. she looked frightened. Will she die? I saw her and many like her. How do they survive? Each one came from a town, a village or a city where they were part of a family, a community, a culture. They knew life before this suffering began, a life with stability. Each one hopes it possible to be free of suffering, but how. Their hands and feet are bound. So how do they cope? They lie, they sell their bodies for medicine for their children, they cry to God, go to church, they pray, they snuggle up to others, they use whatever means to find whatever they can to live for one more day. They are survivors!

The following was taken from my journal during my time doing research in Angola.

Angola is a country of great contrast, the rich, the poor, the chaos, the movement, no time and on time all blend together. There is no one to keep order so each person copes by ordering their lives around whatever is important to them. Sometimes I think I came for interviews but in the end I will probably find something unexpected. To find meaning in life is more than making money, it is all about relationships. Maybe that is the real lesson on coping. What really gives meaning to their lives when there is no order and structural poverty prevails? Everyone takes care of them self and their families and trusts very few people. To escape is like winning a prize. To think like that is like living in a fantasy world. If you have never lived somewhere with no electricity or running water or order then what do you know? I asked myself, what do I want people to learn from my dissertation? They cope by living with what has been given to them,

even when it is only physical or psychological scraps or else they die. There is a river of sewage that flows in front of the flat I am renting. A symbol of broken dreams, broken lives, it flows until it has nowhere to go and then puddles on the pavement. The stench lingers in the air. The people drive through it and step over it, another metaphor for coping with the trials of life. In spite of the trauma of war they live for something more. I have learned the people here don't care about stuff, just other people. They value their time together because they don't have many things of value so relationships become their source of strength. Time is relative because life is so uncertain. Anything that revolves around community becomes a priority. These were some of my thoughts along this journey.

This is what social workers must be able to visualize in order that they understand the cultural context of refugees. The role of culture and the rituals the refugees' practice are woven into every component of life. Culture influences the way religion, meaning making, and social constructs are transmitted through the given trauma (Drozdek, 2007). The predominant view that trauma is relegated solely to psychoanalytic intrapsychic conflict excludes the influence of cultural contextualization when determining how environmental factors affect the outcomes (Drozdek, 2007; Makhashvili & Tsiskarishvili, 2007).

This author believes in these values as a social worker that has witnessed firsthand the traumas Angolan refugees experienced living in refugee camps in Namibia and Zambia. Having worked in three different refugee camps in Zambia and Namibia learning first hand the reality of the trials and heartaches of refugee life. In several of these camps the author worked alongside the social workers employed by the UNHCR in order to empower refugees so they could aide the overwhelming work of the social work. In one refugee camp of 25,000 refugees there were only three social workers! These refugees faced complex life hardships in the social context of a family, faith and community. This same foundation is the motivation for why it is so important for social workers to gain

insight into their narratives without quickly pigeon holing them with Western diagnosis. The culture and language of Angola, Bhutan, Iraq, Liberia, Bosnia, Sudan, Syria or any other country is different from the culture of the United States.

As a result, social work with its rich tradition is uniquely positioned to address the challenges refugees face once they arrive on our shores. In a similar fashion the work of Addams is replayed over and over again by responding to the needs of refugee returnees by advocating a holistic view of the situation. Adjusting our lens helps us give clarity and understanding to an ever-changing world where people cope, survive and compete for the resources that sustain life (Drumm, 2004).

The social worker must be able to analyze a presenting situation within the cultural context (Bronfenbrenner, 1981) as a key element in the analysis, in order to develop an intervention strategy that holds together and integrates the local, national, and international levels of context. From a Western perspective, refugees experienced trauma on a daily basis that make them prime candidates for a PTSD diagnosis. The definition of a refugee is synonymous with conflict. Their culture is intertwined with trauma and coping as a part of their present lifecycle (Drozdek, 2007; Tankink & Richters, 2007; Tang, 2007). Understanding the effects of trauma needs to be a multifaceted intervention. The impact of culture and the various coping mechanisms employed should be a starting point in the healing and recovery process (Drozdek, 2007) for social workers and the supervisors involved in mental health approaches to refugees. The present literature is beginning to expand our understanding and how intercultural

treatment can expand its borders and influence Western intervention (Drozdek, 2007; Bond, 2007; Haans, Lansen & Brummelhuis, 2007).

Many times the narratives and relationships refugees have with social workers are developed through translators. The social worker listens and supports the refugee but is “hearing impaired” to the real story of the refugee because of the obvious language barrier, country crisis and the inability to listen beyond words. Unless the social worker shifts his/her focus to a cultural emphasis of understanding of the whole person, he/she might construct a Western diagnosis and treatment plan as taught in school, in order to satisfy agency and government required paperwork. How can we embrace, influence or help interpret the concept of culture as it relates to care for the refugee?

When given the freedom to choose no one wants to be a refugee. As an alien in a foreign land, the refugee experience is marked by stress, loss, ambiguity, isolation and trauma. In addition to the trauma refugees experience, their coping styles are important for social workers and supervisors in understanding how they survive and maintain physical and emotional stability throughout their journey (Farwell, 2004; George, 2010). The stories of refugees are unique and similar at the same time. They are bundles of courage, resiliency and fear with names and faces attached to each narrative. Social workers should consider their work with refugees a privilege and an educational course for understanding the ever-changing global society we find ourselves living in.

APPENDIX A
MAP OF AFRICA



APPENDIX B
MAP OF ANGOLA



APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH CORRESPONDING
COPING THEMES

Greetings. This interview I am doing with you today is about how you survived the war, living in a refugee camp, and your return back to your homeland. I am interested in how you survived: what was it about you (and possibly others) that helped you get through those times. How did you cope? I will ask you questions to try to learn about these strategies. Your responses to the questions I will ask are very valuable for all of us in the helping professions so we can learn and can better understand how you coped with events of your life through the different journeys you have made. Thank you again for your participation. Before we begin, could you please tell me about yourself?

SECTION 1

Corresponding coping

themes

1. What is your name?	Cultural context / family
2. How old were you on your last birthday?	Cultural context / family
3. Are you married; single, never married, divorced, widowed?	Cultural context / family
4. If married, is your spouse deceased (how did he/she die?)	family
5. Who do you live with?	family
6. How many children still live with you?	family
7. Are you presently working?	Social support / education
8. If so, what is/was your job?	Social support / education
9. What was the highest grade of education you received?	Social support / education
10. Do you have brothers, sisters, children or other relatives? If so, do they live with you or live in the neighboring area?	Family / cultural context

Thank you for sharing this information about yourself.

SECTION 2

Now I would like it if can you tell me a little bit more about yourself including your journey out of Angola by answering the following questions. In this section

I have questions about the circumstances that led to you being removed from your home. In the next section I will ask more questions about what it was like in the Osire refugee camp.

1. Where were you born?	Family / cultural
2. Can you describe the town you were born in?	Cultural context
3. Describe your life before you fled Angola. (Probes) Your community, church, work, family, so forth.	Emotion based / social support / religion / education / family
4. Describe one of your favorite memories from that time.	Emotion based / religion / education / family
5. What type of activities did you participate in while living in Angola?	Social support / emotion based / religion / education /
6. What were you involved in? Any interests, so forth?	Social support / emotion based / religion
7. Is there anything you want to tell me that we have not talked about your life in Angola?	Social support / family / emotion / resiliency
8. Can you describe for me, just briefly, what were the circumstances that led you to leave or be pushed from your home for the first time?	Resiliency / emotion based / cultural context / problem solving
9. How would you describe that experience?	Emotion based / resiliency / religion / problem solving
10. What do you think was the reason for that situation to occur?	Emotion based / cultural context / religion

SECTION 3

Thank you for sharing this information about yourself.

Now I would like it if can you tell me a little bit more about your life in the refugee camp by answering the following questions?

1. Tell me how it came about that you came to this refugee camp?	Cultural context / problem based
2. What year did your family arrive at the refugee camp?	Cultural context
3. What was it like when you arrived at Osire refugee camp?	Problem based / Emotion based / resiliency
4. Can you describe what life was like in Osire?	Emotion based / resiliency
5. Can you give me some words that describe the refugee camp?	Problem / Emotion based
6. Give me an example of a day in your life in the camp.	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support/ family / education religion
7. What activities did you participate in while living in refugee camp?	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support / family / education / religion
8. Were you or any family members experiencing any physical injuries or medical issues at the time of your arrival to the camp? Or later on?	Problem based / Family / Emotion based / social support
9. How did you address those difficulties?	Resiliency / Problem based / Family / Emotion based / social support / religion
10. Can you give me an example of someone you knew in the camp the survived GOOD and why do they think so? And can you think of someone who did not survive	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social

well and why do you think so?	support/ family / education
11. What role does religion/spirituality play in your life?	Religion / resiliency / social support
12. Do you practice religious observances or participate in religious activities?	Religion / resiliency / social support
13. What did you observe happening in the lives of people around you?	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support/ family / education / religion
14. Can you describe any type of losses you have experience in the camp (i.e. people, places, things).	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support/ family / education / religion
15. How have you worked to overcome these losses?	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support/ family / education / religion
16. Was there anyone around to rely on? If so, who and how?	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support/ family / religion
17. How would you describe the suffering in the camp?	Resiliency / emotion / problem based / cultural context
18. If you needed help with something in the camp, whom would you turn to?	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support/ family / religion / cultural context
19. Is there anything you want to tell me about life in the camp that we have not talked about?	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support/ family / religion / cultural context

20. How many years were in the camp before you left?	Cultural context
21. How was it that you were able to leave?	Resiliency / Emotion based / Problem based / social support / family / religion / cultural context

SECTION 4

Thank you for sharing this information about yourself.

Now I would like it if can you tell me a little bit more about your life back in Angola by answering the following questions?

1. When did you return to Angola?	Cultural context
2. How long have you been living here how?	Cultural context
3. What were your expectations about going back and living in Angola prior to your return? Any fears of worries?	Emotion based / problem based / social support / resiliency
4. What has been your experience since you returned to Angola? What has life been like for you?	Emotion based / problem based / social support / resiliency / family
5. Can you describe any memories that haunt you since returning to Angola? If any? Can you give me an example of someone you knew who survived the journey back well and why do they think so? And can you think of someone who did not survive well?	Emotion based / cultural context / resiliency / problem based / social support
6. What group of people has supported you most since you returned to Angola? (Probes) Your family, church, community, work? (Listen for: emotional help, did they provide food, money, advice or something else?)	Emotion based / cultural context / resiliency / problem based / social support / family
7. How would you describe the support you received from various people? (Listen for concrete, emotional, spiritual or other reactions)	Emotion based / cultural context / resiliency / problem based / social support / family / religion
8. If you needed help with something now,	Emotion based /

where/who/what would you turn to first?	cultural context / resiliency / problem solving based / social support / family
9. What role does religion/spirituality (use their term) have in your life, if any? (For example a test or blessing from God).	Religion / emotion based / problem solving
10. How have your religious beliefs changed over your life?	Religion / emotion based / problem solving
11. What is the most important thing that has kept you going during your life?	Emotion based / cultural context / resiliency / problem based / social support / family / religion
12. Are there any strengths you are working to develop?	Emotion based / cultural context / resiliency / problem based / social support / family / religion
13. Is there anything else you want to tell me that we have not talked about?	Emotion based / cultural context / resiliency / problem based / social support / family / religion

Thank you for taking the time to share your life story with me.

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL IN ENGLISH

Greetings. This interview I am doing with you today is about how you survived the war, living in a refugee camp, and your return back to your homeland. I am interested in how you survived: what was it about you (and possibly others) that helped you get through those times. How did you cope? I will ask you questions to try to learn about these strategies. Your responses to the questions I will ask are very valuable for all of us in the helping professions so we can learn and can better understand how you coped with events of your life through the different journeys you have made. Thank you again for your participation. Before we begin, could you please tell me about yourself?

SECTION 1

1. What is your name?
2. How old were you on your last birthday?
3. Are you married; single, never married, divorced, widowed?
4. If married, is your spouse deceased (how did he/she die?)
5. Who do you live with?
6. How many children still live with you?
7. Are you presently working?
8. If so, what is/was your job?
9. What was the highest grade of education you received?
10. Do you have brothers, sisters, children or other relatives? If so, do they live with you or live in the neighboring area?

Thank you for sharing this information about yourself.

SECTION 2

Now I would like it if can you tell me a little bit more about yourself including your journey out of Angola by answering the following questions. In this section I have questions about the circumstances that led to you being removed from your home. In the next section I will ask more questions about what it was like in the Osire refugee camp.

1. Where were you born?
2. Can you describe the town you were born in?
3. Describe your life before you fled Angola.
(Probes) Your community, church, work, family, so forth.
4. Describe one of your favorite memories from that time.
5. What type of activities did you participate in while living in Angola?
6. What were you involved in? Any interests, so forth?
7. Is there anything you want to tell me that we have not talked about your life in Angola?
8. Can you describe for me, just briefly, what were the circumstances that led you to leave or be pushed from your home for the first time?
9. How would you describe that experience?
10. What do you think was the reason for that situation to occur?

SECTION 3

Thank you for sharing this information about yourself.

Now I would like it if can you tell me a little bit more about your life in the refugee camp by answering the following questions?

1. Tell me how it came about that you came to this refugee camp?

2. What year did your family arrive at the refugee camp?
3. What was it like when you arrived at Osire refugee camp?
4. Can you describe what life was like in Osire?
5. Can you give me some words that describe the refugee camp?
6. Give me an example of a day in your life in the camp.
7. What activities did you participate in while living in refugee camp?
8. Were you or any family members experiencing any physical injuries or medical issues at the time of your arrival to the camp? Or later on?
9. How did you address those difficulties?
10. Can you give me an example of someone you knew in the camp the survived GOOD and why do they think so? And can you think of someone who did not survive well and why do you think so?
11. What role does religion/spirituality play in your life?
12. Do you practice religious observances or participate in religious activities?
13. What did you observe happening in the lives of people around you?
14. Can you describe any type of losses you have experience in the camp (i.e. people, places, things).
15. How have you worked to overcome these losses?
16. Was there anyone around to rely on? If so, who and how?
17. How would you describe the suffering in the camp?
18. If you needed help with something in the camp, whom would you turn to?
19. Is there anything you want to tell me about life in the camp that we have not talked about?
20. How many years were in the camp before you left?

21. How was it that you were able to leave?

SECTION 4

Thank you for sharing this information about yourself.

Now I would like it if can you tell me a little bit more about your life back in Angola by answering the following questions?

1. When did you return to Angola?
2. How long have you been living here how?
3. What were your expectations about going back and living in Angola prior to your return? Any fears of worries?
4. What has been your experience since you returned to Angola? What has life been like for you?
5. Can you describe any memories that haunt you since returning to Angola? If any?

Can you give me an example of someone you knew who survived the journey back well and why do they think so? And can you think of someone who did not survive well?

6. What group of people has supported you most since you returned to Angola?
(Probes) Your family, church, community, work?

(Listen for: emotional help, did they provide food, money, advice or something else?)

7. How would you describe the support you received from various people?

(Listen for concrete, emotional, spiritual or other)

8. If you needed help with something now, where/who/what would you turn to first?

9. What role does religion/spirituality (use their term) have in your life, if any?

(For example a test or blessing from God).

10. How have your religious beliefs changed over your life?

11. What is the most important thing that has kept you going during your life?

12. Are there any strengths you are working to develop?

13. How has your life as a refugee returnee changed you?

14. Is there anything else you want to tell me that we have not talked about?

Thank you for taking the time to share your life story with me.

APPENDIX E
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL IN PORTUGUESE

Protocolo de Entrevista para estudo repatriado refugiado Angolano

Saudações. Essa entrevista eu estou fazendo com vocês hoje é sobre como você sobreviveu à guerra , vivendo em um campo de refugiados , e seu retorno de volta para sua terra natal. Estou interessado em saber como você sobreviveu : o que era sobre você (e possivelmente outros) que o ajudou a atravessar esses tempos. Como você lidou ? Vou fazer-lhe perguntas para tentar aprender sobre essas estratégias . Suas respostas às perguntas que vai fazer são muito valioso para todos nós em profissões de ajuda , para que possamos aprender e pode entender melhor como você lidou com os acontecimentos de sua vida através das diferentes viagens que você fez. Obrigado mais uma vez pela sua participação. Antes de começar, você poderia me dizer sobre si mesmo.

SEÇÃO 1

- 1 . Qual é o seu nome?
- 2 . Quantos anos você tinha em seu último aniversário ?
- 3 . Você é casado , solteiro, nunca casados, divorciados , viúvos ?
- 4 . Se for casado , é o seu cônjuge falecido (como é que ele / ela morreu?)
- 5 . Quem você mora?
- 6 . Quantas crianças ainda vivem com você ?
- 7 . Você está actualmente a trabalhar ?
- 8 . Se assim for, o que é / era o seu trabalho ?
- 9 . Qual foi o mais alto grau de educação que você recebeu ?
- 10 . Você tem irmãos, irmãs, filhos ou outros parentes ? Se assim for, eles moram

com você ou mora na área vizinha ?

Obrigado por compartilhar esta informação sobre si mesmo.

SEÇÃO 2

Agora eu gostaria que você pode me dizer um pouco mais sobre si mesmo, incluindo a sua jornada de Angola , respondendo às seguintes perguntas. Nesta seção eu tiver dúvidas sobre as circunstâncias que levaram a você que está sendo removida de sua casa. Na próxima seção, eu vou fazer mais perguntas sobre como era no campo de refugiados de Osire .

- 1 . Onde você nasceu ?
- 2 . Você pode descrever a cidade que você nasceu?
- 3 . Descreva a sua vida antes de você fugiu Angola.
(Sondar) sua comunidade , igreja, trabalho, família, etc .
- 4 . Descreva uma das suas memórias favoritas da época.
- 5 . Que tipo de atividades que você participar , enquanto vivia em Angola?
- 6 . O que você estava envolvido ? Quaisquer interesses, assim por diante?
- 7 . Há algo que você quer me dizer que nós não falamos sobre sua vida em Angola
- 8 . Você pode descrever para mim, apenas brevemente , quais foram as circunstâncias que o levaram a sair ou ser empurrado de sua casa para ele pela primeira vez ?
- 9 . Como você descreveria essa experiência?
- 10 . O que você acha que foi a razão para que a situação ocorra?

SEÇÃO 3

Obrigado por compartilhar esta informação sobre si mesmo.

Agora eu gostaria que você pode me dizer um pouco mais sobre a sua vida no campo de refugiados , respondendo às seguintes perguntas?

- 1 . Diga-me como aconteceu que você veio a este campo de refugiados ?
- 2 . Em que ano a sua família chegou ao campo de refugiados ?
- 3 . Como foi quando você chegou ao campo de refugiados de Osire ?
- 4 . Pode descrever como era a vida em Osire ?
- 5 . Você pode me dar algumas palavras que descrevem o campo de refugiados ?
- 6 . Dê-me um exemplo de um dia em sua vida no campo .
- 7 . Quais atividades você participou , enquanto vivia no campo de refugiados ?
- 8 . Você ou qualquer membro da família estavam tendo qualquer tipo de lesões físicas ou problemas médicos
no momento da sua chegada ao acampamento ? Ou mais tarde?
- 9 . Como você lidar com essas dificuldades ?
- 10 . Você pode me dar um exemplo de alguém que você conheceu no acampamento do BOM sobreviveu e por que eles pensam assim ? E você pode pensar em alguém que não sobreviveram bem e por que você acha isso?
- 11 . Qual o papel que a religião / espiritualidade jogar em sua vida?
- 12 . Você pratica observâncias religiosas ou participar em actividades religiosas?
- 13 . O que você observou a acontecer na vida das pessoas ao seu redor?
- 14 . Você pode descrever qualquer tipo de perdas que você tem experiência no campo (ou seja, pessoas , lugares, coisas) .
- 15 . Como você tem trabalhado para superar essas perdas?
- 16 . Havia alguém por perto para contar? Se sim, quem e como?

- 17 . Como você descreveria o sofrimento no acampamento?
- 18 . Se você precisava de ajuda com alguma coisa no campo , a quem você se voltaria para
- 19 . Há algo que você queira me contar sobre a vida no campo que nós não falamos?
- 20 . Quantos anos estavam no acampamento antes de sair?
- 21 . Como foi que você fosse capaz de sair?

SECÇÃO 4

Obrigado por compartilhar esta informação sobre si mesmo.

Agora eu gostaria que você pode me dizer um pouco mais sobre sua vida em Angola , respondendo às seguintes perguntas?

- 1 . Quando você voltar para Angola?
- 2 . Há quanto tempo você mora aqui como?
- 3 . Quais eram suas expectativas em voltar e viver em Angola antes de seu retorno ? Quaisquer temores de preocupações?
- 4 . Qual tem sido a sua experiência desde que você voltou para Angola? Qual tem sido a vida para você?
- 5 . Você pode descrever quaisquer memórias que assombrá-lo desde que voltou para Angola. Se for o caso?

Você pode me dar um exemplo de alguém que você sabia quem sobreviveu à viagem de volta bem e por que eles pensam assim ? E você pode pensar em alguém que não sobreviveu bem ?
- 6 . O grupo de pessoas que você mais tem apoiado desde que você voltou para Angola?

(Sondas) Sua família , igreja, comunidade , funciona?

(Atente para : ajuda emocional , que eles fornecem alimentos , dinheiro, conselho ou algo mais?)

7 . Como você descreveria o apoio que recebeu de várias pessoas ?

(Atente para concreto , emocional, espiritual ou outro)

8 . Se você precisava de ajuda com alguma coisa agora , onde / quem / o que você ligar primeiro?

9 . Qual o papel que a religião / espiritualidade (usar seu termo) tem em sua vida , se houver?

(Por exemplo, um teste ou bênção de Deus) .

10 . Como ter suas crenças religiosas mudou a sua vida ?

11 . Qual é a coisa mais importante que tem mantido você vai durante a sua vida?

12 . Existem forças que você está trabalhando para desenvolver ?

13 . Como sua vida como um refugiado repatriado mudou?

14 . Existe alguma coisa que você quer me dizer que nós não falamos?

Obrigado por tomar o tempo para compartilhar sua história de vida como.

APPENDIX F
CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: *Coping with trauma: reflections from Angolan refugee returnees*

Researcher(s): Michael Milco

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Terri Kilbane

Introduction:

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Michael Milco for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Terri Kilbane in the School of Social Work at Loyola University of Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are an Angolan who has lived a portion of his/her life in a refugee camp.

Please LISTEN to this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before verbally deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to gain insight into how you coped with being a refugee in Angola. As a refugee you faced many difficulties living in a refugee camp and we would like to know what helped you get through these difficulties.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in an interview that addresses your life before you fled to the refugee camp, while you were in the camp and now back in Angola. You will be asked to describe the difficulties you faced. The interview will take approximately 1 to 2 hours and will be audio taped. The interview will take place in a location that makes you feel comfortable and is convenient for you.

Risks/Benefits:

This study asks you to tell your story about how you became a refugee and how you survived living in a refugee camp. These questions may stir up painful memories from these past events. You do not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. There are no direct benefits to you from your participation, but your experiences will aide future social workers that work with refugee populations in different countries.

Confidentiality:

Each interview will be coded to maintain strict confidentiality. Your name will not appear on the interview tape but will be given a code. The researcher will be the only person that has a list of the names and the codes, which will be kept secure so no one will be able to hear it.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Translator:

A native Angolan Portuguese speaking translator will be used during the interviews that will sign a confidentiality agreement.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact Michael Milco at mmilco@luc.edu or tkilbane@luc.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at 011 773 5082689.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

APPENDIX G
TRANSLATOR CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FORM

Translator Confidentiality Agreement Form

Project title – Coping with trauma: reflections from Angolan refugee returnees

I agree to the following confidentiality agreement as the translator for this research project.

1. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the *Researcher*.
2. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while if it is in my possession.
3. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the *Researcher* when I have completed the research tasks.

Researcher (Print Name)
(Date)

(Signature)

Translator (Print Name)
(Date)

(Signature)

APPENDIX H
TRANSLATOR CERTIFICATE OF ACCURACY



DayTranslations.com

Certificado de Autenticidade

Maria Rossana Samanamud de Lamas
Tradutor/Intérprete

Documento Traduzido: **Consentimento para Participar de Pesquisa, tema titulado: 'Lidar com trauma: reflexões de refugiados angolanos repatriados', elaborado pelo pesquisador Michael Milco.**

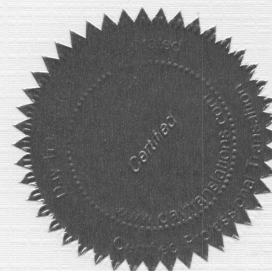
Como tradutor de Day Translations, Inc., Eu, Maria Rossana Samanamud de Lamas, certifico que sou um tradutor bilingue totalmente familiarizado com os idiomas Inglês e Português tendo traduzido o documento anexo e contribuído com o melhor do meu conhecimento de Inglês para o Português constatando que o texto anexo em Português é uma tradução exata e verdadeira do documento original apresentado salvo melhor crença e juízo.

8 de Janeiro 2013



Tradutor/Intérprete

Tradutor Profissional de Inglês ao Português da Day Translations, Inc.



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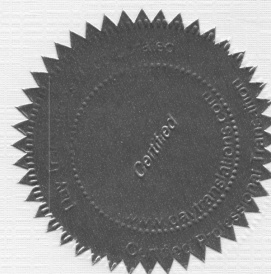
Translated document: **Consent to Participate in Research on the Project entitled 'Copying with trauma – reflections from Angolan refugee returnees' by Michael Milco, Researcher.**

As a translator for Day Translations, Inc., I, Maria Rossana Samanamud de Lamas, declare that I am a bilingual translator who is thoroughly familiar with the English and Portuguese languages. I have translated the attached document to the best of my knowledge from English into Portuguese and the Portuguese text is an accurate and true translation of the original document presented to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed on January 8th, 2013



Maria Rossana Samanamud de Lamas



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VITA

Michael R Milco received his Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Trinity College in 1978. He went on to earn a Master of Divinity from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, a Master of Arts from Wheaton College Graduate School and a Master of Social Work from Loyola University. In 2012 while at Loyola University, he received the Community Global Stewardship award. On two occasions he has been the doctoral student respondent for the Joan Greenstone lecture series. He is the author of *Ethical Dilemmas in Church Leadership* along with other publications.

Since 2000 he has worked with Angolan refugees in Namibia and Angola as well as in the country of Angola. His work in Namibia and Angola were the motivation for his study. For over 20 years he has been a licensed clinical social worker in downtown Chicago. Since 2005 he has been a professor at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, teaching counseling and social work classes. He has been married over 36 years and has two adult children.

