EXPLORING THE TRANSNATIONAL MEANING OF HOME
AMID INSECURE, HAZARDOUS HOUSING

Deborah Fessenden

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS
August 2020

APPROVED:

Donna Barnes, Committee Chair and Chair of
the Department of Sociology
Katherine Sobering, Committee Member
George Yancey, Committee Member
Tamara L. Brown, Executive Dean of the
College of Liberal Arts and Social
Sciences
Victor Prybutok, Dean of the Toulouse
Graduate School

This project examines refugees’ experiences of insecure housing and perceptions of home in the U.S. Many scholars of migration have focused on the resettlement experiences of refugees, including access to housing, yet refugees’ experiences with housing in the U.S. remain largely undocumented. The following analyzes a case study of an apartment fire that displaced 16 refugee families in Dallas, Texas. Based on 18 in-depth interviews with tenants and members of refugee support organizations and non-profits who responded to the fire, this study reconstructs the events surrounding the fire to explore refugees’ perceptions of housing conditions in a low-income neighborhood. This case study contributes to research on housing in two important ways. First, insecure housing conditions preceded the fire at Oakland Place and overall perceptions of housing quality varied among respondents. I find that case managers and members of refugee support organizations identify refugees’ housing conditions as insecure, yet refugees express positive feelings about their homes, emphasizing community relations over building quality. Additionally, members of refugee support organizations and non-profits blamed the property manager of Oakland Place for insecure conditions experienced by refugees and perceived the manager as a barrier in refugees’ lives. Second, I find that understandings of housing insecurity are shaped by meanings of home, which focus on familial and community-based relationships, and a place for survival. These ideas of home are not mutually exclusive, as refugees often defined home in more than one way.
Copyright 2020

By

Deborah Fessenden
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Donna Barnes, for her guidance and encouragement throughout the research process. I appreciate the time she put into advising my project, and for setting a high standard of academic excellence. I will always look forward to our conversations, as I have enjoyed discussing my research ideas with her.

Thank you, Dr. Katherine Sobering, for her steadfast support throughout this process, and for repeatedly challenging me to perform my best. She has taught me that continued practice makes progress, and I appreciate the enthusiasm she expresses while discussing sociological research.

I appreciate Dr. George Yancey for his thoughtful feedback, and I am grateful that he remained on my committee though he is no longer active at the University of North Texas. Dr. Yancey is dearly missed, and I wish him all the best in future pursuits.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPLORING THE TRANSNATIONAL MEANING OF HOME AMID INSECURE, HAZARDOUS HOUSING</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Insecurity among Refugees in the U.S.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees’ Perceptions of Home</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Day of the Fire</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Housing Conditions</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who’s to Blame?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meanings of Home</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Descriptive Information of Refugees ................................................................. 31
Table 2: Descriptive Information of Members of Refugee Support Organizations and Non-Profits ........................................................................................................... 31
EXPLORING THE TRANSNATIONAL MEANING OF HOME AMID INSECURE, HAZARDOUS HOUSING

Introduction

The U.S. has seen a rise in “hazardous” or insecure housing since the 1970s (Desmond and Gershenson 2016; Stephens 2017). “Housing insecurity” is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of housing conditions, ranging from moderate insecurities (affordability) to severe insecurities (homelessness) (Kim 2018). Defined as the limited or inadequate access to housing that is safe, stable or affordable (Cox et al. 2017), housing insecurity is a complex, time-based process which manifests in multiple ways (Kim 2018). Insecure housing is primarily associated with decreased affordability (Pattillo 2013), overcrowding (Bashir 2002; Crawford 2004), evictions (Desmond 2017; Sullivan 2018) and substandard physical conditions of housing (Hall and Greenman 2013; Murdie 2004).

Research on housing insecurity in the U.S. has primarily focused on the experiences of low-income residents, with a focus on economic affordability (Desmond 2017; Pattillo 2013; Sullivan 2018). Housing insecurity is especially common among low-income residents (Kushel et al. 2006), where they are faced with limited choices in housing selection and often rely on affordable housing (Desmond and Gershenson 2016; Sullivan 2018). Yet other vulnerable populations, such as refugees, may face greater risks of housing insecurity after resettlement in the U.S. Research shows that refugees experience higher levels of stress and adaptation difficulties and are more socio-economically disadvantaged than immigrants (Hein 1993; Murdie 2004; Poppe 2013; Schweitzer et al. 2006). Refugees encounter linguistic and cultural barriers upon resettlement, and these barriers further complicate the search for suitable housing (Murdie...
How do refugees experience housing insecurity in the U.S., and what are their perceptions of home amid hazardous conditions?

The case study draws on 18 qualitative interviews among refugees in a low-income neighborhood in Dallas, Texas known for its large population of refugees and immigrants. Like other major U.S. cities, Dallas is unique in terms of housing due to current issues with housing affordability. Research by the National Low-Income Housing Coalition found that Dallas-Fort Worth is considered the fifth worst U.S. metroplex to find affordable housing (Collins 2017; Schutze 2018). Refugees, like other groups of low-income status, are confronted with issues of housing affordability. Although refugees receive assistance from resettlement organizations, voluntary organizations, and nonprofits, I find that some refugees experience insecure housing after resettlement in the U.S.

In this thesis, I investigate refugees housing experiences and perceptions of home in a low-income neighborhood. This project contributes to the literature on housing and migration research by reconstructing the events of an apartment fire, which displaced 16 refugee families in a low-income neighborhood. First, it builds on housing studies to include refugees’ experiences of housing in the U.S. Second, it extends the literature on migration to consider refugees’ perceptions of home within a low-income neighborhood. The fire provides an extreme case to analyze refugees’ experiences with insecure housing conditions in the U.S. Through the lens of this event, the apartment fire sheds light on the experiences of housing insecurity among renters in low-income neighborhoods.

With limited research on the experiences of refugees and their housing post-resettlement, these encounters with insecure housing are increasingly important to understand. How one perceives the home is highly influenced by outside forces and environmental factors (Desmond 2008).
The lack of housing provisions may place refugees at a greater disadvantage following resettlement. For example, living amid hazardous conditions may affect their long-term health, well-being, and ontological security (Murdie and Teixeira 2003; Ziersch and Due 2018). Disruptions of home due to hazards linked to placement in substandard housing may significantly impact the well-being of refugees resettled in the U.S. Secure housing is a vital component of integration. Refugees should be permitted access to neighborhoods and households which are “adequate, suitable and affordable” (Murdie and Teixeira 2003:138). Research shows that quality housing is vital to refugees’ resettlement, especially at the outset. Refugees’ experiences with housing insecurity are vital to understand, not merely the objective data on the prevalence of housing insecurity, but also because refugees’ early housing experiences shape their perceptions of home in a U.S. context.

Housing Insecurity among Refugees in the U.S.

Insecure housing is a pressing issue in the U.S. (Desmond 2016; Huang and King 2018), which disproportionately impacts those of low-income status (Desmond 2015; Kim 2018; Sullivan 2018). In the U.S, studies of housing insecurity have primarily documented the experiences of the working poor (Desmond 2017; Crawford 2004; Tester and Wingfield 2013). In low-income areas, housing is often unmaintained and structurally unsound (Crawford 2004). Though insecure housing has been studied among immigrants (Hernandez et al. 2016; Huang and King 2018; Pendall 2012; Sherrell, D’Addario and Hiebert 2007), and undocumented immigrants (Hall and Greenman 2013), much less is known about the housing experiences of refugees (Darrow 2015; Gilhooly and Lee 2017). Refugees’ housing experiences may differ from the experiences of other migrant groups due to the institutional processes involved in refugee relocation and placement in the U.S.
By definition, a refugee is any person who forcibly fled their home country due to persecution, war, or violence, and cannot return home because of well-founded fear associated with race, religion, nationality, politics, or group membership (UNHCR 2020). Scholars consider housing to be a vital component of refugee integration within the countries to which they migrate (Carter and Osborne 2009; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen 2011; Murdie 2004; Sherrell, D’Addario and Hiebert 2007; Ziersch and Due 2018). Yet substantial evidence suggests that refugees experience housing insecurity within receiving countries (Campion 2018; Carter and Osborne 2009; Shier et al. 2014; Ziersch and Due 2018). Scholars of international migration have explored the housing conditions of migrants and refugees in Canada (Carter and Osborne 2009; Hiebert 2011; Murdie 2004, 2008, 2010; Sylvestre et al. 2018; Walsh et al. 2016), the UK (Phillips 2006), and Australia (Beer and Foley 2005; Fozdar and Hartley 2014). Yet few have investigated housing insecurity among refugees in the U.S. (For exceptions, see Gilhooly and Lee 2017; Poppe 2013).

Refugees share a different relation to their initial housing situations in the U.S. as compared to other migrant groups due to the resettlement process. Resettlement is “the permanent settlement of a refugee in a third country when neither voluntary repatriation nor local integration in the country of first asylum is possible; therefore, the third country provides refugees with permanent residence status” (Poppe 2013:223). The process of resettlement functions as a measure of protection for the majority of refugees, offering safety and security in a new country (Craig et al. 2008). In conjunction with the Department of State and National Resettlement Agencies, refugees are resettled through the Reception and Placement Program, and subcontract with local Refugee Resettlement Organizations to accommodate the needs of refugees. Refugee Resettlement Organizations locate housing for refugees and prepare a
dwelling with basic furnishings, clothing, and food prior to their arrival (National Immigration Forum 2019).

The location of resettlement greatly determines the quality of housing and the availability of services refugees receive post-resettlement (Darrow 2015; Poppe 2013). The U.S. Department of State requires that housing be economically viable and free of pests. Yet, no standard exists to protect refugees against insecure housing issues within low-income neighborhoods or the increased likelihood of hazardous events proliferated by these conditions. Due to the associated factors of insecure housing, refugees may be at greater risk of experiencing hazards like fires due in part to the risks associated with structurally unsound, low-income housing units. According to Crawford (2004), low-income families are at higher risk of fire due to poverty as compared to other socio-economic groups in the U.S. Factors like overcrowding, structural and wiring issues, and low property maintenance contribute towards the risk of fire.

Experiencing a house fire is considered a significant, traumatic event. The loss of home may have severe impacts on mental health (Laugharne et al. 2011), due to increased feelings of grief and helplessness (Stern and Kerry 1996). Scholars of migration have primarily focused on refugees’ mental health in relation to traumatic events they experienced in their home countries before and after resettlement (Carswell, Blackburn, Barker 2009; Craig et al. 2008; Marshall et al. 2005; Schweitzer et al. 2006). A number of studies have examined the post-migration difficulties among refugees, yet these difficulties are primarily associated with internally based stressors, such as post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms, or process like the loss of culture or adaptation issues (Carswell, Blackburn, Barker 2009; Simich, Este and Hamilton 2010).

Limited research investigates refugees’ experiences with fires post-resettlement, yet studies have documented the frequency of fires in refugee camps, and refugees’ increased risk
for experiencing fire within informal settlements (Atiyeh and Gunn 2017; Greeff and Lawrence 2012; Kazerooni et al. 2015; Twigg et al. 2017). Since the early 1990s, camp fires have destroyed over 50,000 shelters, resulting in the second displacement of over 380,000 refugees (Kazerooni et al. 2015). Although some literature explores refugees’ experience with re-displacement due to camp fires, refugees’ experiences with traumatic events post-resettlement are largely unexplored in the U.S. Experiencing a house fire is dangerous and damaging to everyone, yet some populations like refugees may be more resilient to hazardous events due to their prior experience of losing their original home among other unfortunate situations. More research is needed to investigate refugees’ experience with hazardous events after resettlement in the U.S.

Refugees’ Perceptions of Home

“Home” is often conceptualized in terms of place (Casey 2001; Easthope 2014; Lewika 2011; Massey 1994; Tuan 1979) and as a space of symbolic meaning (Barbieri, Zani and Sonn 2014; Easthope 2004; Simich, Este and Hamilton 2010), carrying great emotional and social significance (Easthope 2004; Easthope 2014; Fozdar and Hartley 2014; Sylvestre et al. 2018). As the “center of life” (Desmond 2016:293), the home is more than a physical space but rather a multidimensional process whereby social relations are reproduced beyond the physical dwelling (Tester and Wingfield 2013) and are continuously evolving (Dayaratne and Kellett 2007; Poppe 2013; Ralph and Staeheli 2011; Vanzella-Yang 2019).

Current research on home conjures multiple interpretations associated with positive feelings of belonging and safety (Annison 2000) and perceptions of “home” as a place of sanctuary among white, middle-class individuals (Easthope 2004). A number of researchers have explored home in an idealistic sense, largely overlooking conditions or events which may impact
the way home is perceived among others in diverse contexts (Mallett 2004; Tester and Wingfield 2013). It is thus critical to study the meanings of home within multiple contexts (Easthope 2014; Mallett 2004). For example, research demonstrates that low-income families have different perceptions of home in comparison families of higher socio-economic status. In this context, Tester and Wingfield (2013) found that low-income families perceive their homes in terms of survival and poverty prevention while constructing meanings of home around interactions with family members and community members.

Similarly, the context of home is also different among migrants because the circumstances under which people leave their homelands—either willfully or forcefully— influence how migrants reconstruct their idea of home post-resettlement (Mallett 2004). Scholars of international migration suggest that meanings of home among refugees are strongly tied to ontological security (Fozdar and Hartley 2014; Ziersch and Due 2018), cultural connections to country of origin (Ehrkamp 2005), emotional attachments to place (Boğaç 2009; Gram-Hanssen and Bech-Danielsen 2012) and familial and social relations (Simich, Este and Hamilton 2010).

While housing scholars have explored the meaning of housing among low-income individuals (Pattilo 2013; Sullivan 2018; Tester and Wingfield 2013), the literature remains unclear in regards to the home-making experiences of refugees in the U.S. and how refugees perceive their homes post-resettlement. Poppe (2013) conducted a rare, mixed-methods study on refugees’ patterns of homeownership and meanings associated with housing in the U.S. According to Poppe (2013), refugees perceive their homes in terms of their socio-economic status, housing market conditions, and pre-migration experiences. Poppe (2013) calls for more research concerning the meanings that refugees attach to their homes post-resettlement. In conclusion, the experience of losing home is a prevailing experience among refugees. It is
important to understand how refugees conceptualize home, as the recreation of home after the turmoil of displacement promotes resiliency and overall well-being of refugees (Simich, Este and Hamilton 2010).

In this project, I explore refugees’ experience with insecure housing and how this may shape their perspectives on home. Through reconstructing the event of an apartment fire, I document refugees’ housing conditions and evaluate the factors which impact how refugees to feel at home in the U.S. How do refugees perceive their housing in the U.S.? And how does this shape their meanings of home in a new country. This study adds to migration and housing literature through examining insecure housing and perspectives of home among refugees in a U.S. context.

Methods

To develop this case study of an apartment fire, I draw on 18 in-depth interviews and participant observation conducted in a low-income neighborhood in Dallas, Texas where 14.1% of the population resides below the poverty level (American Community Survey 2018). Case studies are useful for delineating the social phenomena for which information is being collected, such as an event, concept, or process (VanWynden and Khan 2007). This combination of qualitative methods explores the interactions between social actors (Desmond 2016) and is appropriate for the evaluation of complex phenomena (Esterberg 2002). Though few studies have explored the dynamics between refugees and their dwellings in the U.S. (Gilhooly and Lee 2017), the combination of interviews and participant observation offers in-depth analysis and observation through the lens of a hazardous event.

---

1 It is important to note that the current U.S. Census does not collect information on immigrants or refugees, nor does it differentiate between those of Asian or Middle-East dissent.
First, I conducted 18 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with refugees and members of refugee support organizations and non-profits between July and October 2019 to understand respondents’ experiences with the fire, housing, and perceptions of home in the neighborhood. I interviewed nearly half (seven of 16 families) of those impacted by the fire. Second, I conducted participant observation with Empowering Refuge, a local non-profit in the neighborhood. For 10 months from February through November 2019, I volunteered on a weekly basis to assist with the English as a Second Language program and related organizational tasks, totaling approximately 155 volunteer hours. My volunteer position with Empowering Refuge allowed me to build a rapport with refugees in the community, gain access to members of refugee support organizations and non-profits and resources, and coincidentally provided the opportunity to research a hazardous event in the lives of 2.

Throughout my project, I recognized my reflexivity in the field as a white woman. I took precautions to ensure that my affiliation with Empowering Refuge was not viewed as coercive by members in the organization or among members of other organizations in Terrace Hills. Interviews were audio recorded verbatim, conducted in English, and lasted between 30 minutes and three hours. Three of the 18 interviews required the assistance of translators. The translators in the study were either family members or friends of the respondent. One-third of the interviews took place in a collective family environment. Interviews with refugees were held exclusively in their homes, while interviews with members of refugee support organizations and non-profits were typically conducted at the office or place of choice. Respondents completed questionnaires following each interview to collect demographic data (see Tables 1 and 2).

2 The founder and President of Empowering Refuge helped connect me to potential respondents in the neighborhood.
I relied on snowball sampling to recruit participants in the neighborhood. This method was useful for identifying respondents within a limited, marginal population of interconnected members (Joop and Ommeren 2002). The relationships I fostered as a volunteer at Empowering Refuge also helped establish rapport with community members, and connected me to several refugees impacted by the fire. After each interview, I asked respondents to provide the contact information of potential respondents who either experienced displacement or damage due to the fire, or those who responded to the fire. I contacted potential respondents about the project via phone, email, and in-person and scheduled subsequent interviews with respondents who wished to participate.

Though snowball sampling allowed me to locate many refugees and members of refugee support organizations and non-profits involved in the fire, I was limited to the individuals within their personal networks. Some respondents lost contact with former neighbors and friends and did not know where they were relocated. Refugees displaced by the fire were kept confidential by members of refugee support organizations and non-profits, which made the many difficult to locate without organizational assistance. Language barriers limited me from reaching out to potential respondents independently. Therefore, I solely relied on the connections of others to connect to fire victims. Further, my position as a white, female, college-educated, U.S. Citizen, and a volunteer at Empowering Refuge, impacted my ability to develop a rapport with respondents in the community, particularly among the refugees I interviewed for my project. For example, refugees often associated me with refugee support organizations and non-profits that assisted in fire relief, although I had no direct role in these efforts. In addition, my perceptions of quality housing and ideas of home impacted how I perceived refugees’ housing conditions. Over the course of interviewing and socializing with refugee families, my perceptions of their living
situations gradually became more favorable as I spent time in their homes. While speaking with
refugees, I took exceptional care to adhere to the cultural norms and customs expressed by
respondents and negotiated my positionality as a white U.S. citizen during interviews.

Following data collection, I transcribed, analyzed and coded interview transcripts in the
online qualitative coding software, Atlas.ti Cloud. I began by applying general codes to the data
guided by theories of insecure housing and perceptions of home (Deterding and Waters 2018). I
began by coding pieces of data with major themes (i.e. fire, apartment conditions, meaning of
home) and created a preliminary list of codes and their definitions guided by theoretical interests.
Afterwards, I refined the coding by developing subthemes (i.e. responses to fire, insecure
housing conditions, community involvement), which I coded by hand. In what follows, I use
pseudonyms to protect the identities of my respondents. I also changed the name of the non-
profit organization and apartment complex to maintain confidentiality of the location. This study
was approved by the Institutional Review board at the University of North Texas (Study #19-
330).

Findings
The Day of the Fire

It was a bitter cold morning in North Dallas on March of 2019. A dilapidated complex
composed of weathered red brick and wood, Oakland Place was a dated, two-story apartment
building home to many refugees and other residents. The 16-unit complex housed one-and two-
bedroom units, which ran approximately $850 per two-bedroom apartment in the heart of the
neighborhood of Terrace Hills. Sandwchched between several more affluent residential areas,
Terrace Hills was a low-income, culturally diverse neighborhood that housed a robust refugee
and immigrant community. The small neighborhood was filled with services within walking
distance from many apartments in the area, including health care facilities, local transportation, and a community center.

In the early morning hours, Oakland Place suddenly caught fire for reasons still undetermined by firefighters. Around 4 a.m. as black smoke filled the sky, multiple fire sirens alerted the neighborhood to the escalating situation, stirring residents from their sleep and inciting confusion in the community. Many awoke to the intense commotion outside as the fire spread from unit to unit. Minutes before the fire truck arrived, residents hurried outside in a panic, waking family members from their beds, and rushing door to door to warn neighbors of the fire. Cahaya, a woman who lived at Oakland Place for two years with her husband, brother, and three children after arriving to the U.S. as a refugee, recounted her experience with the fire:

I am asleep, my son big one, he said mama it’s fire, our apartment is fire, fire! And we waked up from the sleep and out from my bedroom and I see the living room first and I see in kitchen is everything good. I say, where is the fire? My son say in the room, mama not here, it’s up in the roof. I open the door and I see it’s fire, I don’t know like I’m very scared how do I do? And I am come inside and I am like...everybody wake up, our apartment is fire and my husband and my children wake up and go out.

As Cahaya described, her family soon became aware of the situation and briskly exited their apartment. All refugees I interviewed shared similar experiences of being alerted about the fire through family members, neighbors, and firefighters. Upon arrival, firefighters stormed out of the truck and charged into the burning complex, banging on the doors of each apartment to wake sleeping residents. Anuar, a gregarious refugee from Burma and Imam in the local Muslim community, was also affected by the fire. Months later, he welcomed me into his home, and we spoke at length about the connections he shared with families at Oakland Place Hills over the past three years. As I sat on the floor in his family’s new apartment, sharing tea with his wife, Sanjida, and their children over an intricately laced rug, Anuar relayed his experience that morning:
[It was] 4 o’ clock…we sleeping…the fire come outside, one person coming…” He paused to make a knocking noise with his hands. “…saying hey! When I wake up, my house upset in fire. Fire!” He clapped his hands loudly. “I said, no anything! You only [get] your kids! No anything. Out! Out. I take Arif and Siti and no anything, no anything. God give me, no problem. Go outside.” As Anuar described in English (his third language), the firefighters had told him to get his children but leave everything else inside (“no anything”) as Anuar remembered.

Anuar quickly reacted to the firefighters’ warnings and rushed his family outside to safety, taking with him only the clothes on his back. Firefighters continued to fight the burgeoning fire, blasting high-powered water on the complex to extinguish the flames. Despite these efforts, the flames overtook one free standing building of the complex, destroying eight out of 16 units, and leaving another three units impacted by water damage from firefighters’ efforts. Thankfully, no deaths or injuries resulted from the fire yet homes were reduced to ashes and remnants of burned material littered the ground around the complex. Soon after the fire was extinguished, relatives, friends and neighbors living in nearby apartment complexes welcomed the displaced into their homes, providing shelter and hospitality to those impacted by the fire.

Before employees of refugee service organizations became aware of the crisis, families had already returned to the site of the fire to recover belongings left unscorched by the flames. Junada, a refugee from Burma, lived at Oakland Place for seven years with family to care for his blind father and to work as a social worker in Terrace Hills. He explained that he received help from neighbors after the fire and witnessed people arrive to assist the families salvage items from their homes: “...people have the time, like complex people coming to help us, not me, everybody. Maybe it’s 12 families. It’s Nepali, Africans, uh, Burmese people also outside people come to help them, taking out some items, some clothings like that.” Junada described how neighbors from surrounding buildings came together as a community, offering their time and resources to the displaced families and began clearing out their former homes of burned items and debris.
Disseminating quickly through the grapevine, the news of the fire spread among agencies in Terrace Hills as organizations learned of the event through neighbors of the fire victims. Shortly after, community leaders alerted various agencies in the neighborhood, and requested immediate assistance. By 9am, Oakland Place was soon bustling with commotion from governmental organizations, non-profits, and volunteers who responded to assist with the aftermath of the hazardous event. Hamia, a member of a refugee support organization in Terrace Hills for over eight years and former immigrant from Lebanon, had extensive connections with residents and members of organizations throughout the neighborhood before the fire. She described the aftermath of the fire at Oakland Place and the reactions of a shocked resident as they expressed their grief:

I was like walking over these burned clothes and furniture and toys and you see oh my god...like you put yourself in their shoes but like, yesterday you were sleeping in your bed, in your apartment. You have all your belongings and now you are walking over the ashes of your belongings. It’s so sad. Even there’s a lady, I was so broken...she was saying, I have some money. All the money that was saved it was under my mattress. And she lost that money. And she was crying, and she said I lost my money! I mean, when you see these people now they’re standing in the street...having nothing, not even shoes or like clothes and standing outside. It was really, really sad.

Arriving at the scene, members of refugee support organizations, non-profits and governmental organizations witnessed the surreal damage caused by the fire. As exemplified by Hamia’s experience in the scene above, many refugees experienced extreme losses in the fire, losing all their material possessions they had obtained so far in the U.S. Six of the seven refugee families I interviewed reported losing everything they owned in the fire, including clothing, food, valuables, and other basic necessities. Some refugees, like Sanjida, who worked at Empowering Refuge where I volunteered, lost irreplaceable valuables and other sentimental possessions from Burma in the fire. Translating for Sanjida, Anuar states, “she said ‘my everything is lost. My jewelry is lost.’” The loss of her gold jewelry was devastating to Sanjida. Refugees typically
leave all possessions behind in pursuit of safety, yet Sanjida was able to transport a priceless collection of gold jewelry from Burma before resettling in the U.S.

I soon discovered that 16 families, including over 50 refugees, were displaced in the hazardous event. Two-thirds of the complex, or 11 apartment units, experienced varying degrees of fire, smoke and water damage. Out of the seven joint interviews I conducted with refugees and their families, five families lost their homes in the fire, while two families were negatively impacted by water damage but later able to move back in. Romaiya, former resident of Oakland Place for nearly two years, describes what happened to her home: “Everything was ruined by the water. So we cannot even stay. All of them was destroyed”. Though Romaiya wasn’t impacted directly by the fire, the high-powered water expressed from the fire hoses caused excessive water damage to her apartment and belongings. Romaiya and her family lost their home and possessions in one swift blow, forcing their family and many others to relocate.

While six of the seven refugee families I interviewed experienced major losses of property and lost their homes as a result of the fire, Milan’s family who lived at Oakland Place for five years lost about a quarter of their belongings due to water damage and were able to recover items spared from the flames. When I asked about the day of the fire, all my respondents described feelings of sorrow and loss. In addition to residents who were directly and indirectly affected, members of support organization also expressed enormous amounts of grief for the families that had lost all of their possessions and homes that day.

After surveying the damage caused by the fire, several community leaders initiated an impromptu meeting that morning to coordinate a plan of action moving forward. For approximately two hours, members and volunteers from over ten organizations formed a response team to serve families displaced by the fire. Members of refugee support organizations,
non-profits, and governmental organizations delegated tasks and roles among themselves, and assigned liaisons from each organization to advocate for a portion of the families. It took a number of days for this team to locate all the families who were displaced. After the fire occurred, many immediately sought shelter with people in nearby apartments. A few days following the event, all families were identified and guided towards resources through the assistance of their liaisons.

As a team, members from various organizations, including six refugee support and non-profit organizations I interviewed, collected financial donations and home goods, including food, clothing, furniture, and appliances to replace what refugees had lost in the fire. Organization leaders reached out to donors in the area, requesting financial donations, resources and volunteer assistance. Fire relief funds were later distributed as checks to refugee families, providing families with equal amounts of financial support. Although nine members within six organizations I interviewed worked together to respond to the fire, two of the 11 members stated they did not assist the team in fire relief efforts. Although some organizations did not contribute towards fire relief efforts, the majority were highly involved in the cause and worked together to aid the displaced families.

After the fire, members from refugee support organizations and non-profits helped refugee families relocate into neighboring complexes, which were owned and operated by the same property manager. The transition into new housing was a delayed process for many refugees. Of the refugee the individuals I interviewed, all temporarily stayed with family and friends in nearby complexes following the event. While the majority of families waited a few days or weeks to relocate into new apartments, one family waited over a month for an apartment. All families affected by the fire moved into new apartment units, with the exception of
Romaiya’s family, who continued to live in their original apartment after the water damage was fixed as half of the units remained standing after the fire.

Perceptions of Housing Conditions

As discussed during multiple interviews, I found that insecure apartment conditions were commonplace in Oakland Place and other apartments throughout Terrace Hills. The majority of respondents who were members of refugee support organizations and non-profits I interviewed reported previous incidents of insecure apartment conditions among the refugees they served, spanning years before the fire at Oakland Place. During the interviews, respondents of seven different organizations reported a variety of persistent insecure conditions including issues of pests, mold, broken appliances and fixtures, fluctuating A/C quality (serious when Texas heat breaks 100), low maintenance and upkeep, and reports of crime in the neighborhood. There were also reports of previous apartment fires in the neighborhood though the previous fires were much smaller in scale and did not displace as many residents as the fire described here.

Rachel, the founder of Empowering Refuge who had spent over three years working closely with other organizations in Terrace Hills, sat with me over lunch in the office one Monday afternoon after a busy morning. In a frustrated tone, she emphasized the hazardous aspects of housing in Terrace Hills and stated that refugees continued to live in unsafe and unhealthy apartment conditions, even after they had relocated into available units following the fire. Communicating vehemently through hand gestures and colorful words, she described the dire conditions in one apartment unit as she helped an employee move into their new apartment:

When we were moving our ladies to their new apartments, there was a gaping hole, probably about a square foot in the tile behind the fixtures in the shower. The tile was completely busted out and I was looking at the framing and the backside of the wall on the other side, like for the other apartment, and it had just been left there...we actually had to get the handles...and put them on the pipes to see if the tub worked. There were animal
droppings in the window sills, it was filthy. Rusted out sink. I mean, health hazards all over the place, and that’s just one [apartment].

Rachel described her perceptions of the housing situation of an employee, who was relocated into a ‘new’ unit which showed considerable damage left over from the previous tenant. She repeatedly stressed that the apartments were unlivable and was appalled to discover that refugees were allowed to live and rent in conditions such as these.

When asked to describe the quality of apartment complexes in the neighborhood, members of refugee support organizations and non-profits expressed varying perspectives on the severity of apartment conditions in Terrace Hills. Most perceived living conditions as mixed in quality, stating that insecure conditions vary from complex to complex, while others described correlated apartment quality with “absolute squalor”, stating that conditions in the area are terrible and in desperate need of reconstruction. Olivia, organization member in Terrace Hills for four years, shared many connections with the refugee community and other members of refugee support organizations, non-profits and governmental organizations in the area due to her former position as an organization leader at the community center and through her more recent role as a social worker for an after-school program. Maintaining strong relationships with refugee children, their parents, and other residents in the neighborhood, she described how members of the refugee community often invited her into their homes for dinner. Having seen apartment conditions first-hand in five different complexes, Olivia stated her perception on apartment conditions in Terrace Hills:

The quality, in what I’ve seen, it’s not...horrible. And I feel like a lot of this is opinion, and you know, I think if you talk to different people in the neighborhood, they might have a more positive or more negative opinion. It’s not terrible, but it’s not great. What do I think is great? I think clean carpets, paint that’s not peeling, no mold, HVAC that works, doors that work, plumbing that works, no pests of any kind. And I know that those are things that people continue to struggle with in housing in Terrace Hills.
Olivia’s described the differing perspective of housing in Terrace among many members of refugee support organizations and non-profits, describing the variable quality of complexes across the neighborhood and the differing perceptions of apartment quality in Terrace Hills. Accordingly, I found that respondents who shared extensive relations among residents in the community and developed a sense of community in Terrace Hills expressed more favorable attitudes towards housing conditions. Similarly, respondents who were less involved in the local community on a personal level perceived the housing conditions less favorably.

Before I inquired about issues relating to housing insecurity mentioned in previous interviews, I directly asked the families what they did not like about their apartments. Surprisingly, respondents replied with comments like, “there are no problems here”, and further assured me that “everything was fine” with their apartments. When I asked refugees about their housing conditions, all seven families expressed feelings of satisfaction towards their apartments and overall living situations in Terrace Hills. When pressed about apartment quality and potential issues within their apartments, refugees talked about the positive aspects of their homes, failing to mention any issues with their apartments.

Apart from Milan’s family who experienced several instances of water damage at Oakland Place prior to the fire, no one reported mold, pests, or related issues of insecure housing. In spite of the issues within their apartment, Milan and his family remained happy in their old unit at Oakland Place due to social connections with family, friends, and fellow refugees who shared Nepali culture. Nonetheless, it was noted through multiple interviews that insecure housing conditions preceded the apartment fire and are commonplace in the neighborhood. Therefore, the fire further revealed the issues stemming from low quality housing conditions at Oakland Place, and potentially many other complexes in Terrace Hills.
Who’s to Blame?

Along with insecure apartment conditions, multiple members of refugee support organizations and non-profits stated that the property manager at Oakland Place was perceived as a major issue in the lives of refugees and was especially hindersome amid efforts to assist refugees displaced by the fire. As stated by nine respondents, it was common knowledge that Oakland Place and neighboring apartment complexes in Terrace Hills was owned and operated by one particular property manager over the past decade. Due to the large number of refugees resettled in Terrace Hills, this property manager rents almost exclusively to refugees who are resettled in the neighborhood.

Despite continuous efforts by social service organizations to assist those displaced by the fire, many employees felt that the property manager of Oakland Place was indifferent to relief efforts and was actively unsupportive of organizational responses to the fire. Melanie, who had worked in for over three years in Terrace Hills as the volunteer coordinator at Empowering Refuge, described the tension between the leasing office and organizations providing aid to help families recover from the fire:

They were not happy about it [organizational involvement]. Because it all of a sudden opened the door for other people to see what was really happening in that complex and so, at least this specific complex where the fire happened, they did not like that everybody was in there, but they knew they had no choice so they responded a lot by trying to cover things up [...] So I think they definitely were not cooperative...they looked like they were visually cooperative, but when it came down to us trying to get apartment contracts so that they could move to a new apartment, there was a lot of lying and trying to work around it

In this scenario, Melanie described the actions and attitudes of the property manager towards both her organization and their tenants and explained the difficulty communicating with the property manager and retrieving significant documents from the complex. On multiple occasions, different social service organizations reported that the manager attempted to thwart
their fire relief efforts. Staff claimed that the manager not only projected outright disdain for organizational involvement, but also sent cease and desist letters to the community center, demanding that organizations stop helping the families immediately. In the midst of organizational activities, members claimed the property manager was unhelpful to families impacted by the fire and did little to aid the tenants in times of crisis. Hamia, a director for an Islamic health center who attempted to negotiate with the property manager, relayed an unsettling transaction with the manager following the fire:

The leasing office they refused, completely, to do and help the people that got affected because of the fire department, not the fire. That was so challenging, to tell them like, okay the apartment was not burned, but it has no doors or windows, and it’s freezing. They said I don’t care [laughs sarcastically].

Hamia believed that the management at Oakland Place was unhelpful and opted out of assisting the families living in water damaged units. Throughout my interviews, other staff members repeatedly expressed negative perceptions of the property manager at Oakland Place. In eight of 11 interviews, they characterized the property manager as negligent, uncaring and corrupt, and as someone who took advantage of refugees. Although refugees did not express the same disdain for the property manager, several members of refugee support organizations and non-profits spoke at length about corrupt leasing practices in Terrace Hills and demonized the role of the property manager at Oakland Place. Members placed the property manager at the center of insecure issues, and further blamed the manager for the dilapidated housing conditions in the neighborhood.

Days following the fire, several members described how organizations involved in relief efforts were instructed to donate money directly to the fire relief fund and were warned not to donate to the leasing office. According to several reports, members of refugee support organizations and non-profits were worried that the property manager would misuse the
donations and spend the money in ways unrelated to helping the families in need. Hamia perceived the property manager as a corrupt person and explained why the manager could not be trusted to distribute the funds to the tenants: “They stole a lot of checks from people, from agencies themselves. They said, oh we did not receive any check. And the agency, they have proof. I’m telling you they’re like this, stealing from refugee, even from resettlement agency.”

This situation emphasizes the tense relations between members and the property manager, as many members of refugee support organizations and non-profits perceived the management as malevolent towards refugees and organizations alike. Overall, I found that members of refugee support organizations and non-profits blamed the property manager for poor housing conditions at Oakland Place. The fire acted as a catalyst that uncovered members’ grievances with housing quality and property manager in Terrace Hills. Yet refugees themselves did not express negative attitudes towards their housing situations or the property manager. Instead, my respondents stated countless times how they felt at home in the neighborhood, as many shared connections with friends, family, and those of similar cultures in the neighborhood. In the following section, I will describe how home was conceptualized among refugees and how these perceptions impacted their experiences with housing.

Meanings of Home

Through in-depth interviews with refugees, I found that they understood home as a multidimensional concept involving three main ideas of home. First, the idea of home was strongly tied to their connection the community, thus associating a sense of home with family, extended family, friends, and neighbors. My respondents expressed feelings of social cohesion and were highly involved with others in their local apartment community. Respondents frequently gathered with neighbors and friends within the refugee community. For example,
Anuar described the importance of home for the purpose of hosting and the necessity of providing loving accommodations to all who enter his dwelling:

So number one, the home...example, my sister you live in your house, your home, no? And you doesn’t have any room, any garden. Your heart not inviting people. Because my guests coming, where they sitting? Where they eating? Where they gardening? Happy, where? This is very important. Because my heart want to invite to my house the guests and sister, brother. All the people come here and happy so much. No home? No

To Anuar, home was the center of social interactions and community gatherings. He describes the importance of welcoming guests and providing care to all who enter the home, thus highlighting the significance of community among refugees in the neighborhood. Many refugees I interviewed highly valued their family, friends, and neighbors, and described their community as the foundation of home.

I also found that there was a strong sense of community in the neighborhood, which preceded the fire at Oakland Place. Although the fire was devastating to some families, Dhia, a refugee from Burma who had friends and neighbors within several complexes across Terrace Hills, explained how being around family after the fire lifted the burden and made the situation more bearable: “I go to the house of my friends’ home and I was in there. Yeah, I think it’s not that bad because we have around family members then they called us to stay at least. Yeah, it’s good.” Above, Dhia’s words appear to lessen the severity of the fire her family experienced, stating the situation was alleviated through the presence and support of family members and friends. Although she, and many other refugees lost their apartments overnight, the presence of friends and family during this difficult time helped displaced residents feel a sense of connection amid the chaos.

Second, I found that ideas of home among refugees are tied to survival and associated with feelings of safety. In other words, home was often described by refugees as a place to meet
basic needs, such as sleeping, dressing, eating, and as a place to simply live and relax in a secure environment, safe from the streets and outside world. When asked why home is important, Junada describes how the home is simply a place to keep safe from harm:

We have to live with the family. If we doesn’t have the apartment, like home, we have to stay outside the road, right? And not me, everybody! So this way, important...for everybody. Home. Because after he come work and outside from anywhere they will stay home at night.

Quite literally, home in this sense functions as a place of protection, offering shelter from danger and undesirable living conditions. Junada expresses how home is an important aspect of life for everyone, as the home serves as a foundation of safety. As expressed by Milan, home is a place free from harm: “Home is safe for everybody. Family, safe is family. Home is safely place.” In the quote above, Milan clearly associates safety with the meaning of home, stating that families join together in the home to remain secure. Therefore, home is perceived as a place to perform the basic functions of life.

Last, the meaning of home was linked to the culture of origin. Of the refugees I interviewed, many stated how friends, neighbors, and acquaintances who live in the area shared similar cultural backgrounds as respondents, thus instilling a sense of home through associating with others from their homeland. Romaiya, who wore a traditional style dress from Rohingya and frequently connected with her community in Terrace Hills, explained how the presence of similar cultures in the neighborhood created a sense of community for her. By placing her at ease in the neighborhood and apartment, she stated: “I feel comfortable and I like it because all of Rohingya are in here...” She described how the locality and multitude of people of her culture helped her feel at home in a foreign land. Drawing on the significance of collective cultural backgrounds, Milan proclaimed how many refugees in Terrace Hills shared strong cultural bonds with others in the community. For example, he stated how many members of his community not
only lived in the area, but actively helped each other: “Too many people live here Nepali also, they help each other.” He affirmed how the large number of Nepali in the area helped him strengthen cultural bonds and provided valuable networks to refugees involved in the community. Overall, I found that shared cultures foster a sense of community among refugees.

When asked to define the meaning of home, refugees conceptualized home as a fluid, intricate concept that included varying combinations of home tied to family, safety, and culture. The categories of home were not mutually exclusive, as the refugees I interviewed often portrayed home as a complex phenomenon and often incorporated two or more meanings of home into their definitions. Across the board, all seven refugee families I interviewed associated the foundational meaning of home with familial and personal connections in the neighborhood. Though home was most commonly associated with family among refugees, I found that the meaning of home was articulated by six respondents as a combination of family and culture. Throughout my interviews with refugees, the idea of home was often related interchangeably to personal connections and was tied to similar cultures across the complex. Two of my respondents associated ideas of home with all three meanings, although this combination did not pertain to the majority of refugees I interviewed. Therefore, the entangled perceptions of home demonstrate the complicated and intricate nature of how home is defined by refugees.

Discussion

In this project, I examined refugees’ experiences with housing in one apartment complex in a low-income neighborhood in Dallas. Through a qualitative case study of an apartment fire, I find that refugees, like others of low-income status, experience varying degrees of insecure living conditions across the neighborhood, with some refugees living in much lesser quality housing than others (Desmond and Gershenson 2016; Sullivan 2018). In addition, the insecure
conditions place vulnerable communities at increased risk and may negatively impact low-income renters like refugees who rely on affordable housing. Refugees who are formally resettled into apartment complexes with insecure conditions are at additional risk for displacement and potentially other unfortunate and unpredictable events like apartment fires. This issue is especially pertinent because in most resettlement cases, refugees have little choice in the selection of their initial housing, as the location of relocation and place of residence are decided on their behalf before they arrive in the U.S. (Darrow 2015; Poppe 2013).

By reconstructing the case of an apartment fire that impacted a refugee community in a low-income neighborhood, I showed how an extreme event uncovered underlying dynamics between social service organizations and the property manager, identified perceptions of housing among respondents, and showed how refugees perceive home after resettlement in the U.S. First, I found that respondents who were engaged in the local community within Terrace Hills expressed positive views of housing in the neighborhood. On the other hand, respondents who lacked intimate connections with locals in the neighborhood expressed unfavorable attitudes towards the housing conditions and classified housing quality in the neighborhood as dangerous and rampant with hazardous conditions.

Despite the wide array of housing issues which were discussed by organization members, respondents who lived at Oakland Place expressed feelings of happiness and comfort towards their housing situations before and after the fire and de-emphasized insecure conditions. In this context, I found that refugees placed less importance on the quality of apartment conditions, while the value of social connections in the community were repeatedly discussed as significant. In effect, many members of refugee service organizations and non-profits blamed the property manager for the quality of housing at Oakland Place and was further scapegoated as a source of
corruption. During interviews, many organization members personified the property manager as a detrimental force who actively worked against refugees in the community. Accordingly, the property manager did influence refugees’ housing experiences, considering how the manager relocated refugees into new units. Yet research by Desmond (2017) and Sullivan (2018) demonstrates how property managers and landlords alike are often vilified for overarching, structural issues which extend beyond the oversight of a manager. Though the property manager at Oakland Place was scapegoated for the housing conditions experienced by refugees, issues of housing insecurity may have little to do with the person who maintains the property. These findings are not meant to imply that all refugees experience insecure housing conditions, or problems with property managers or landlords after resettling in the U.S., but rather highlights the experiences of refugee families following an apartment fire and how they navigated through struggles associated with insecure housing.

Last, I found that refugees' perceptions of home provide a nuanced understanding of the meaning of home among those of different economic, cultural, and social backgrounds. This analysis explored how refugees perceive the meaning of home in three distinct ways, thus associating home with family and significant others, as a place to meet basic needs, and through cultural connections. These ideas of home were discussed in combination with each other as multiple definitions of the concept were incorporated into a single description. Although all refugees I interviewed correlated home with the family and social connections in the neighborhood, six respondents expressed home as a combination of family and culture while two respondents identified with all three perceptions of home.

Although limited research has analyzed ideas of home outside of white, middle-class U.S. citizens, this article fills the gap in housing research through expanding the scope of “home” to
challenge normative understandings of the meaning of home (Mallett 2004; Tester and Wingfield 2013).

This case study adds to the existing literature on meanings of home through providing a more contextualized understanding of home, demonstrating the multiple ways refugees perceive their dwellings. Although the loss of home is noted in the literature as a traumatic event that is said to leave lasting marks on the individual (Laugharne et al. 2011), I found that refugees felt connected to their living situations and seemed to have positive associations with their housing situations despite the fire and prevalence of insecure housing conditions and embodied resilience in the wake of turmoil. Similar to research by Tester and Wingfield (2013) and Simich, Este and Hamilton (2010), my findings suggest that home is a fluid process that extends beyond the physical building. In the context of a low-income neighborhood, the meaning of home is perceived as a place of survival and relates to family, friends, and neighbors. Building on Tester and Wingfield’s (2013) definition of home in a low-income context, my research adds a third aspect of home that extends to cultural ties in the refugee community. This nuanced understanding of home gives more context to the experiences of refugees in the U.S., as cultural ties to country of origin have been associated with ideas of home among immigrants (Ehrkamp 2005). Overall, a strong sense of home within a community may mediate negative impacts associated with the loss of home.

Conclusion

This project draws attention to the experiences of insecure housing among refugees in a low-income neighborhood following an apartment fire which displaced 16 families. While previous housing studies have largely explored the living conditions of refugees in countries other than the U.S., this article evaluates the housing experiences of refugees within a U.S.
context. Through 18 interviews with refugees and members of refugee support organizations and non-profits I find that the fire exposes a history of insecure housing conditions in Terrace Hills, which range in quality throughout the neighborhood. Staff from social service organizations working with refugees in Terrace Hills portrayed favorable perceptions of their housing experiences and downplayed housing issues, while those who were less involved in the community expressed unfavorable perceptions of the housing conditions. The fire uncovered an array of dynamics between refugees, members of refugee support organizations and non-profits, and the property manager. According to members, the property manager was a hindrance to their relief efforts following the fire and many members criticized the property manager for insecure conditions at Oakland Place and perceived the manager as a barrier in refugees’ lives.

In addition, I found that refugees understood home in three distinct but overlapping ways relating to family and personal connections in the neighborhood, home as a place of survival, and home tied to culture. Although family was seen as the underlying meaning of home, the majority of refugees I interviewed articulated home as a combination of family and culture. Future research should further examine landlord-tenant relations amid refugees who rent from and rely upon affordable housing in the U.S. As noted in previous research, individuals of low-income status largely depend on the rental market. Therefore, landlords and property owners play a vital role in the housing situations of tenants. Moreover, subsequent research should explore the relational dynamics between service organizations and the refugees they serve. The fire created an opportunity for organizations in Terrace Hills to band together, officiate a relief response as a team, and form a network of support among refugee service organizations in the area.

This study supports an understanding of home as a contextualized experience among refugees and those of diverse economic, cultural or social backgrounds. This study contributes to
the literature on meanings of home by including more diverse perspectives. Multiple meanings of home are by refugees, as many expressed their perceptions of home as a combination of one or more ideas of home. In future studies, meanings of home among refugees should continue to be explored. The evaluation of multiple perspectives of home, as articulated by refugees of diverse ethnic backgrounds, may provide a greater understanding of home among cultural groups.
Table 1: Descriptive Information of Refugees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in U.S.</th>
<th>Years in Dallas</th>
<th>Refugee Camp</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number of Family Members Living in Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junada</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cahaya</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mayalasia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanjida</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romaiya</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Burma</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Descriptive Information of Members of Refugee Support Organizations and Non-Profits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years in U.S.</th>
<th>Years in Dallas</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emmy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Non-profit Adult Literacy Program</td>
<td>Outcomes and Evaluation Director, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camila</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Non-profit Adult Literacy Program</td>
<td>Student Services Manager, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Non-Profit After School Program</td>
<td>Social Worker, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petra</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>School Based Refugee Support Program</td>
<td>Program Coordinator, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Community Center</td>
<td>Refugee Ministry Leader, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Country of Origin</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Years in U.S.</td>
<td>Years in Dallas</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ansuya</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Empowering Refuge</td>
<td>Production Manager, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Empowering Refuge</td>
<td>President and Founder, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Empowering Refuge</td>
<td>Office Manager, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Empowering Refuge</td>
<td>Volunteer Coordinator, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Islamic Health and Services Center</td>
<td>Director, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Non-profit Emergency and Disaster Relief</td>
<td>District Manager and Support Liaison, Paid Employee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


